

From Pastor's Desk...

Thankful heart, the most distinctive mark of a Christian

One of the most explicit Bible verses related to the matter of thanks giving is 1Thess. 5:18, "in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you".

Ingratitude is a sin. One of the Bible's indictments against rebellious humanity is that although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him (Rom. 1:21}. Thankfulness is the natural outflowing of a heart that is attuned to God. We are commanded to be thankful in all circumstances (Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; Colo. 3:15-17).

We live in a country which observes thanks giving day annually. When USA became an independent nation, the congress recommended one day of thanks giving for the whole nation to celebrate. In 1863 at the end of the bloody civil war, Lincoln asked Americans to set aside the last Thursday of November as a day of thanks giving. This country was built upon the strong Biblical foundation of relying on God for everything. George Washington in one of his speeches said "let us acknowledge the providence of almighty God to obey His will, to be grateful for the benefits and humbly to implore his protection and favor". The celebration is still in the country and most people consider it as an opportunity to get together with family.

A thankful heart and attitude is the essence of Christian living, no matter what is happening in our life. God is good at all times (1Chro. 16:34). His love lasts forever (Ps. 106:1). Remember his amazing grace (1Cor 1:11) and consider the wonderful things God does (Ps. 107: 8). He answers our prayers (Ps 118:21) and also reveals the truth and wisdom (Dan 2: 22-23).

As Billy Graham writes, giving thanks to God for all His blessings is the most distinctive mark of the believer in Christ. We must not allow a spirit of ingratitude to harden our heart and chill our relationship with God and others.

Thank God for His salvation in Jesus Christ.
Thank God for His continued presence and power in life.
Thank God in the midst of trials and persecution.
Thank God for the people in your life.
Thank God for the material blessings given in your life.

God bless you.

In His Glorious Ministry

Rev. K. P. Mathew

(Senior Pastor, IPC Hebron, Los Angeles)

Every day is Thanks giving Day

Biju Zacharias, Treasurer

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1Thess. 5:18
For a Christian, every day is Thanks giving day. Often, we pray for the will of God in our life to be revealed. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Apostle Paul tells us that the will of God for us is to give thanks in all circumstances.

Whether it is a bad day or good day, we have to be thankful to our Lord. Usually, there are three factors hinder a person from a thankful heart to God.

One is pride. If a promotion at the work or a good grade in a test makes a person to think that he is smart enough for those achievements, then he is led by pride and he cannot be thankful to the Lord.

Second one is spirit of criticism or complaining. God will not be pleased with people keep on complaining of everything than being thankful. This is evident from the wilderness wandering of Israelites before they reach Promised Land.

Third one is carelessness. There is a Malayalam saying, when you lose vision then only you understand the value of your eyes. We take granted many blessings as our right we do not feel like it is necessary to give thanks to God for everyday blessings we enjoy.

The will of God is linked to our prayer life as well. Holy Spirit who dwells in us, who knows all our thoughts, expects us to be thankful each and every moment. If our mind is filled with pride, complains and carelessness, how can Holy Spirit listens to our prayers? So let us change our attitude towards the circumstances we are in and be thankful all the time. By doing so we are obeying the will of God and our prayers are answered, every day.

Every '*Sthothram*' Matters!

Julia Robin David, Sunday school Teacher

The first and the last prayers in our toddlers Sunday school class revolve around giving thanks (saying '*Sthothram*') to the Lord for our Daddies, Mommies, Brothers and Sisters; and also for protecting us from all the harm and evil throughout the week and so on... I am sure it's not very different in the other Sunday school classes as well. We thank the Lord all the time, don't we all?!

However, there are times we kind of start taking it for granted and feel okay to not thank God every day. Even before we know a day has passed by, it's a week and sometimes a few months. By then, we might be going through hardships and wondering "why are we going through such situations even after being children of God?" Then, the truth ignites the fact that it was our attitude of not giving thanks to God that got us into such a mess.

Plaque settles in our tooth, which leads to the tooth decay, and the next thing we know is that our tooth needs to be extracted. Our hearts and souls belong to God and when we don't show the due gratitude to Him who has done it all, a few plaques like ignorance and arrogance creep into our hearts and souls, and soon you are pretty far away from the Lord.

So, take a moment and say '*Sthothram*' to thank the Lord. None of your '*Sthothrams*' will go in vain. All your '*Sthothram*' matters. So, thank the Lord at all times--during the good and even the bad times when situations are not in our favor. Easier said than done but let us acknowledge that every moment we take to thank God, takes us one step closer in our relationship with the Abba Father. Therefore, let us "continue steadfastly in prayer being watchful in it with thanks giving" (Colossians 4:2).