

A Thanksgiving Proclamation
(Thanksgiving Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln, 1863)

It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nation are blessed whose God is the Lord.

We know that by his divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in their world. May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end or our national reformation as a whole people?

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.

THANKSGIVING

It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. (Psalms 68:19)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:33)

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. (Psalms 90:12)
As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Peter 4:10)

Holidays force us from our routine, force us to reflect.

Christmas, family together, gifts to loved ones, The Gift of God, His salvation,

New Years, plans, past and future, goals, progress, aspirations, purpose, His salvation

Easter, God's only begotten son, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His salvation

Memorial Day, Those departed, The price of Freedom and Liberty, Remembering His Salvation

July 4th Independence, One Nation Under God, A nation who chose God, Salvation of a Nation

Labor Day - Back to School, back to work, back to a schedule the beginning of a new work year,

Thanksgiving day, for 50 years now I have been asked to recite something I am most thankful for. His salvation.

The first Thanksgiving was observed in 1621 by Pilgrims and Indians in Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. Decreed by Gov. William Bradford, it was a day of feasting and expression of gratitude for the harvest. George Washington issued the first national proclamation of Thanksgiving in 1879, Abraham Lincoln, largely through the crusading efforts of Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, in 1863 made it a national holiday and fixed the day as the last Thursday in November. Congress in 1941 set it as the fourth Thursday. The turkey, a native American bird, and pumpkin pie are among the foods traditionally eaten at Thanksgiving. In Canada the day is observed on the second Monday in October. The University Society Encyclopedia@1971

For what things are you thankful. Name a few.

Who what when where why how

1) Who you are. Be Thankful!

The family I was born into.

Trying to find oneself

Trying to be someone else.

God made me me.

Psal 139:13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

Psal 139:14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Psal 22:9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my

mother's breasts.

Psal 22:10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

Psal 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

Psal 127:3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

Jere 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Jere 1:6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

2) What you are. Be Thankful!

What God enabled you to become

Not so much What you Got--- Small minds talk about things, great minds talk about ideas.

Stewards of His earth

Occupy the body He designed, built and cursed

Breath His air,

Drink His water,

Eat His food,

Psal 50:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Psal 69:30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

3) When you were born. Be Thankful!

May you live in interesting times

Conveniences, My grandpa had more work in his little finger than I have in my whole body.

God's timeline

4) Where you were born. Be Thankful!

One Nation Under God.

One Nation, indivisible

Once inhabited by Savages and Pagans,

Under God and the Lord Jesus Christ our Creator

Religion today, May 2,2000 "North Korea has publicly executed 23 Christians by firing squad since October," a religious liberty group says. "All of those killed were new converts," . . . "Most had fled to China, where they became Christians, then returned to North Korea to share the Gospel with their people. New converts are more vulnerable than older Christians, who know how to survive in the hard-line communist country."

In India: Australian Baptist missionary Graham Staines and his two sons, ages ten and eight, were murdered in Orissa in January 1999. Staines and his boys were sleeping in the vehicle when a mob surrounded it, caught it on fire, and refused to let them out. . . . All Bibles were seized from a missionary in Gujarat, India and burned. More than 150 homes of Christians were burned in 1999 alone.

Aug 2, 2000 Laos: "Christians in Laos are being forced to sign an official document renouncing their faith. The penalty for refusal to sign is "an indeterminate time of harsh imprisonment under extremely difficult and squalid conditions. Laos' repressive and secretive Communist regime last year declared Christianity the 'number one enemy of the state.'" There are currently about 60 Christians in prison in Laos.

China: The government intensified its nationwide crackdown on unregistered churches. The state has begun to target underground house-church leaders for arrest and dole out sentences of three-years "re-education" in their labor camps. Protestant leaders report that about 40% of inmates in Henan labor camps are there for belonging to the Christian underground.

France: A law proposed by France's National Assembly would make it a crime, punishable by up to two years in prison, for "Proselytizers." The Southern Baptist Convention is among the 173 blacklisted groups.

Russia: There have been many cases of trumped up charges against believers, such as phony traffic offenses and planting of illegal drugs. Pentecostal pastor Rashid Turibayev, of the Full Gospel Church in Nukus, Uzbekistan, was arrested in February 1999 and Bible literature was confiscated from him. He was also charged with possessing hashish, and in June 99, he was sentenced to prison for 15 months. Two other members of Turibayev's church were also arrested and sentenced on drug charges. Both received 10 year sentences. All three were freed by presidential decree in August 99. The men were beaten on numerous occasions while in police custody and deprived of food for extended periods.

Uzbekistan: Central Asia is the world's largest area of overlap between the post-Soviet and Islamic cultures - both inhospitable to religious freedom. The region's most powerful state remains a fortress of persecution. Uzbekistan explicitly criminalizes unregistered religious activities. If believers organize worship services not licensed by the state- even Bible studies in private homes - they risk prison terms of up to five years. To register, each congregation must prove it has 100 adult citizen members and pay a fee 50 times the monthly minimum wage.

Hong Kong, Sudan, Yeman,

A Supreme Court Decision, of 1892 states, "Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of The Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise' and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian... This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation... we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth... These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation."

Woodrow Wilson stated, "A nation which could not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about."

5. Why you are here.

The Bible is the only book that authoritatively answers three questions:

Where did I come from, Why am I here, Where am I going.

Reve 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Eccl 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

6. How you will do it.

How can I be thankful in all things?

Phil 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

ThanksGiving

2Cor 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

2Cor 9:11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

Phil 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Colo 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Colo 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

1Tim 4:4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

Reve 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Hope Biblical Counseling Article

Thankfulness-Without It the Christian Fails

I recently shared with our families at Hope Baptist Church how important thankfulness is in our lives. We receive hundreds of emails and phone calls a month from people asking for help through *Hope Biblical Counseling Center*. Almost all of the people have very serious issues and are in destruction mode in their lives. There are many factors to the destruction people do in their lives and to others around them. **However, one very important issue is not learning how to use the tools God has given them or knowing the tools and not using them.** Here in the Biblical Counseling Center we teach people Biblical tools and how to use them. **One of those tools is thankfulness.** Most of the people we counsel have never learned how to be thankful people. They are not thankful people even though they might think they are. One of the areas Satan seeks to deceive people is in the area of thankfulness and praise. More than 100 times in the Bible God tells us to be thankful people and praise Him. So, how do I do that?

Psalms 100:4, *Enter into his gates with **thanksgiving**, and into his courts with **praise**: be **thankful unto him, and bless his name.***

I Thessalonians 5:18, *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

So many times we do not get our prayers answered because we do not give thanks. How important is this? Very! I am convinced that one of the problems with children growing up to walk with God is because they have never been taught to be thankful people or how to do so.

Philippians 4:4-9, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (5) Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. (6) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (8) Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (9) Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

Did you notice in verse 4, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice?* Is this your life? Be honest about that. Maybe you really know it is not and you know something is missing. What is missing is thanksgiving and praise!

You must learn the submission principle. James 4:7, **Submit yourselves therefore to God.** *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* The devil every day, multiple times a day, will put outside pressure on your life. He does this many times with our lusts.

Romans 6:12-19, *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the **lusts** thereof. Neither **yield (submit)** ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield (submit)** yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye **yield (submit)** yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have **yielded (submitted)** your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now **yield (submit)** your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

So, how do I submit? I have to learn to submit and be controlled by the Holy Spirit at different times throughout the day **at the point of spiritual impact.** Every time a lust, evil thought, or outside pressure comes up, which I call the point of spiritual impact, "Lord, I want to turn this over to you. Forgive me for this thought or desire and I want to turn from it. I submit myself to you to be controlled and filled by the Holy Spirit." In the book of Philippians it talks about "Rejoicing in the Lord always." **The only way to rejoice in the Lord always (moment by moment) is to be a Spirit controlled person by submitting to God at the point of impact.**

Philippians 4:4-9, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (5) Let your moderation (self-control) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand (in your life). (6) Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (8) Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, **and if there be any praise**, think on these things. (9) Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

I want you to notice in verse 6 the phrase "**prayer and supplication.**" Supplication means to ask for something humbly (submitted). Then I want you to notice in verse 6, **thanksgiving.** Then notice in verse 8, **praise.** So, at the point of impact rather than be anxious, Lord I want to turn this over to you, I ask you to forgive me, I want to submit this to you and to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Since most problems begin in the mind, **Lord what do you want me to praise you for and**

thank you for? Then verse eight comes to play **proper Spirit controlled thinking rather than let your mind worry, fret, and think on the wrong things. It must become a daily moment by moment part of your life to be a Spirit controlled person.**

Hebrews 13:15, *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. When? Continually!*

In the Bible, the heart and the mind are used interchangeably. There is a very important principle in II Corinthians 10:5, **Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

See the word imaginations? It means fantasies. Every person who is rebellion in their life is because they are living in a fantasy world. A place where they allow their minds to run off and fantasize about living in another time, another place, with another woman, another man, being immoral with a boy or girl, man or woman, sports, activities etc.. Many people spend hours in their virtual reality world where they think no one else sees. Let me clue you in God sees!

II Corinthians 10:4, *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

Notice the phrase, *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."*

We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Therefore, our weaponry is not carnal (fleshly). However, it is in fact powerful through God for the pulling down of strongholds. (Interesting word). Strongholds where? In the mind. **The word strongholds literally means "a heavily fortified containment and is used of a false argument in which a person seeks "shelter" (a safe place) to escape reality."** Ephesians 6:13-18 describes some of the spiritual weaponry God has given for us.

When a person is in rebellion to their parents, Biblical authorities, boss, etc. it never fails that they have not controlled their thought life or they do not know how to do so.

The essence of the submitted Christian life is to ask God questions. Remember James 4:7 says the devil is involved and the only way to walk in the Spirit is to have a submitted life with God. That is where our power comes from, being submitted moment by moment, at the point of spiritual impact. In the question asking with God, use the: who, what, when, where, how, and why method. Lord who do you want me to witness to today? Lord what do you want me to pray about today? Lord, what can I praise you for today? Questions are submission. Remember to stop, think, turn it over to God, and listen. Always ask God questions.

The sadness of the hour in which we live is that many Christians do not have a real relationship with God. Folks, do not think that I have said memorization of Scripture is not good. It is, but by itself will create a self-righteous life. If you memorize it, meditate on it. How does God speak to you through the verses? Also, you have to read your Bible to meditate, but you have to stop to study and listen to the Spirit of God when He wants to show you what He wants for you from God's Word. Do not just keep on going because you have three or four chapters you must read today. **You have to stop and listen!** A real relationship requires we spend quality time together. Kim (my wife) is my best friend. She is someone I can talk to and listen to. She is the love of my life. My relationship with the Lord is to be like that as well.

We have a booklet on our web site www.hopebiblicalcounselingcenter.com called, *How to Have a Daily Time With God*. It will show you step by step how to have an intimate, personal, passionate relationship with the Saviour. When you have a real intimate personal, passionate relationship with the Lord, you are focused and rejoicing! When the devil comes along with his outside pressure, you are focused on the Spirit of God speaking to your spirit, and your soul is then controlled by the Spirit of God and so is your body, **thus you are Spirit controlled and walking in the Spirit.**

When there is outside pressure from the devil, instead of responding to people with anger, meanness, harshness, or other responses, you are responding with the fruits of the spirit, Galatians 5:22-22, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance."

Once I learned what it was to have a real relationship with God, as a father, I knew I had to teach it to my children. I wanted them to really know the Lord and to be thankful in their lives! When a person learns how to be thankful it changes their demeanor, their actions, and their spirit. **Thus they have a right spirit and now they can be teachable and not until then!** I discussed it with them about what all this meant. I wanted them to know how to have a real relationship with God. Without a real relationship with God their lives will be a disaster when they leave my house. Many times I would ask my daughters when they were growing up, "What is God speaking to you about?" Their answers were always revealing to me. I did not just hope it would happen. I wanted them to taste of the Lord and see that He was good! We spent time talking about our relationship with God. I would ask them what God was speaking to them to pray about. We talked about it and as they got older they would come with real excitement to tell me what God was speaking to them about or what God had taught them. We would have that excitement and joy together.

I believe the principle of Ephesians 6:4 is very important here. *And, ye Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:* How would a father provoke his children to wrath? Could it be because he did not teach them to have a real relationship with the Lord? We did not teach them to be thankful people? So they learn in their lives, when the outside pressure comes from Satan, how to respond by being controlled by their soul and respond in the dictates of the flesh. One of those is "wrath", Galatians 5:19-21. The rest of Ephesians 6:4 says, *but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* It means training with structure. I say again folks, how can a parent get the heart of their child and train them to have a relationship with the Lord if they are living a self-righteous (living the Christian life in their own power) or unrighteous life and not being a thankful person? It is not going to happen and the end result for the child's life is the works of the flesh list of Galatians 5:19-21. (Read that list over and meditate on it. Are you or your children in that list?). The kind of life the self-righteous Christian lives is a real grind. It is over and over the same thing - keeping the rules, but not experiencing the power of a real relationship with God. The Christian who lives that way takes on the 19 characteristics (from II Timothy 3:1-5) of the apostate age in which we live. How does it end? *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."* What a miserable life and a destructive life! It does not have to be that way. We can have victory through the power of the Spirit of God who indwells us and wants us to have a real relationship with Him.

I am firmly convinced that much of the failure in marriage and children growing up to walk with God is not knowing how to be thankful people.

Hebrews 13:15-17, *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. (16) But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. (17) Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

Did you notice that we are to offer praise and thanks continually from our lips in verse 15? Then notice verse 17 about obedience. A non-thankful person will never learn to obey those who the authority over them!

Colossians 3:15-17, *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. (16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (17) And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Did you notice in verse 15 to have peace you have to learn to be thankful? You have to learn to be thankful before the word of Christ can dwell in you richly. A word controlled person is a Spirit controlled person. Why? So, your words and deeds will be by a person who gives thanks.

Folks, this is huge in our lives and so much missed to day. In this article we have given you the tools of thanksgiving and praise for your life. They are vital to your walk with God. Also, to your marriage and what happens to your children spiritually.

I encourage you today to read this article more than once. Realize the importance God places on thanksgiving and praise and implement it in your life to be all you can be for God. Without it the Christian will miserably fail. Just think what it will be like when you can, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice,* Philippians 4:4.

God wants you to rejoice and have peace! Why not start today by learning to be a thankful person?