

In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God

What if you woke up today with only the things you thanked God for yesterday?

It is not happy people who are thankful, it is thankful people who are happy.

Thanksgiving has been celebrated off and on since 1789, after a proclamation by President George Washington. Abraham Lincoln made it a federal holiday in 1863 for the last Thursday in November. In 1939, Franklin Roosevelt declared the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving, rather than the last Thursday, because sometimes November has five Thursdays. Thanksgiving and Christmas are part of the broad holiday season.



I always think of Norman Rockwell's famous painting, "Freedom From Want," when Thanksgiving is upon us. How blessed we have been! And how often we forget how blessed we still are!

Giving Thanks

As for me and mine, this Thanksgiving and Christmas will be one of great joy. Our nation has a reprieve, and a new leader, and he's already off to a great start. But this article is not about our new President, it's about all of us and how blessed we truly are.

Here I sit in front of my computer, in a warm, comfortable home, the dryer is running with a load of clothes, the dogs are sleeping at my feet, and my sweetheart is on the phone with one of our old friends. What a blessing! Thank you, Lord!

I'll go to bed tonight in comfort with pillows and blankets, and Lord willing, sleep soundly. While I sleep, the dishwasher runs, and they'll all be clean and dry in the morning. I'll wake up tomorrow to a great breakfast, a hot bath, and hopefully some rain because we're in a drought with fires all around us. What a blessing! Thank you, Lord!

With a flip of a switch, there are lights in the dark, there's a song on the radio, there's a friend or family member on the phone. What a blessing! Thank you, Lord!

Giving Thanks is Good for Us

Feeling and expressing appreciation is good for us. Like any wise father, God wants us to learn to be thankful for all the gifts He has given us (James 1:1-7). It is in our best interest to be reminded that everything we have is a gift from Him. Without gratefulness, we become arrogant and self-centered. We begin to believe that we have achieved everything on our own. Thankfulness keeps our hearts in a right relationship to the Giver of all good gifts. Psalm 138, "I thank you Lord with all my heart."



Giving thanks also reminds us of how much we do have. Human beings are prone to covetousness. We tend to focus on what we don't have. By giving thanks continually we are reminded of how much we do have. When we focus on blessings rather than wants, we are happier. When we start thanking God for the things we usually take for granted, our perspective changes. We realize that we could not even exist without the merciful blessings of God. And count that all joy!

Family and Friends

Then there's family, and there are friends. Sometimes our friends are chosen family. If you have family to gather with, to enjoy, to love, and to care about, you are so blessed. Children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, siblings, parents and grandparents fill our lives. And if there are folks you can call dear friends; you are so blessed.



Many families live far apart today, and there is travel to be home with loved ones. What a blessing to gather with those you love. I remember well the many long rides to my grandparents' farm in northern Indiana. What a thrill it was to be with all my wonderful family. Cherish these blessed times, for too soon they become fond memories. Thank you, Lord!

Holy Days

This season is my favorite time of year, even though it's so very busy. Remember to stop with the hustle and bustle, and to thank God for all He has given to us. The joy overflows when you just list the many wonderful things we have. Smile at everyone, you never know what that smile will do for someone else.

I wish you all a most wonderful and blessed Holy Season, one filled with joy, love, and above all, thanksgiving to our Creator for the bountiful blessings we enjoy every day.

Thank you, Lord!