Lifelines

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Topic: Giving Thanks

The Importance of Giving Thanks!
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Our American Thanksgiving holiday is valuable, because it confronts us with the fact that we are creatures dependent upon God, the Giver of life, and of all good things. Unfortunately, the secularization of giving thanks has been captured by turkey, feasts, football, and shopping on Black Friday. Instead of being a quiet day to enjoy God and His blessings, the day has become a day of self-indulgence.

When I was a university student in Reno, my family lived in another state, almost 2000 roundtrip miles away, and my only transportation was a Honda 350. Driving that far in the winter, on a motorcycle, was a non-starter. Thankfully, for several years I lived with a Christian family in Reno. On Thanksgiving Day, their home was always filled with other college students who also could not get home, so Thanksgiving for me was never a lonely time.

Giving thanks to God is a frequently occurring theme in the Bible. Why do you think we need to be reminded to give thanks to God for everything, (Ephesians 4:20), and in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18)? In Eph. 4:20 (CSB) we read that as Christians we are to be: "Giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ…"

There are multiple reasons why it is important for us to verbalize our appreciation of God, life, and blessings. We humans tend to be very self-oriented. When something bad happens, we say: "Why me!?" When something good happens, we like to take credit for it, thinking "I deserved this wonderful outcome!" But extreme "me-ness" is self-destructive, and undermines our relationships with others.

God designed us to be caretakers over His creation, creatures, gardens and food supplies. We are designed to be partners, not loners; to be colleagues, not climbers; to be collaborative, not isolated. We seem to need to be forced to acknowledge the contributions of others who have, or still invest, in our lives. We need to be thankful for others, because we all need to interact with other people. A spoken "Thank you" is one of the best door-openers, and relationship-builders to be found anywhere.

Saying "thank you" acknowledges that the other person is a person of value, and acknowledges their influence in our life. What used to be common courtesy is today a rare commodity, which makes saying "Thank you" even more valuable and rare. I once read a fortune cookie which said: "He/She who loves only themselves, will find no rivals!"

Thus by saying "Thank you to others" we affirm that they are valuable and making a significant investment in whatever you both are involved in. It increases their self-worth to realize that someone recognized their contributions to a better: day, project, or living experience. When a person is appreciated, they give even more effort to make more and more contributions. Gratitude is important and contagious.

The need for us to say "Thank you!" helps keep us honest, and humble. It reminds us that we need others to succeed in life, to enjoy life, and to improve life. Further, we need to give credit where credit is due! God is the source of all good things, all good ideas, all good efforts, all good

relationships and all healthy personalities. Yet we rarely thank God for all the things we take for granted.

Saying "Thank you" to God should be our default attitude and default demeanor. Paul said in Ephesians 4:20 that we are to be continually giving thanks, always, for all things, for all people, for all experiences, for all relationships, for everything, at all times! We are to express thanks to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Thanksgiving time, why not plan to tell others how grateful you are for them, for their contributions to life, and to your life? "I am so thankful you could come, so thankful that you are my family, so thankful to God for brining us together this day!" Happy Thanks-giving!

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