



Authentic Thanksgiving Bible Study

By Anna Stone

Pathway of Hope Director, Hawaiian & Pacific Islands Division

The Apostle Paul admonishes us to ***be thankful in all circumstances.*** (1 Thessalonians 5:18). All means ALL. It is quite easy to mouth the words 'thank you' when things are going well. The 'all' is not difficult. The biggest test to be thankful is in the midst of adversity, whether self-inflicted or not. Let us look in God's word for a few elements of sincere appreciation.

1. Thankfulness requires a good memory.

Grateful people never forget, they have the ability to recall the markers of their faith journey. They remember God's faithfulness.

In 2 Chronicles 5-7, Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant back to the Temple. What a lavish commemoration. Solomon along with his constituents labored to build a lavish temple to make good on what his father King David promised the Lord, ***'for the name of the Lord God of Israel'*** (2 Chronicles 6:5). The priests sanctified themselves and were clothed in white, singing in unison, with harps and cymbals, praising and thanking God as they recount His goodness.

***I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.*** Psalm 77:11

But you, Lord, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations.
Psalm 102:12

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. Psalm 107:31

Prayer:

God, I often forget what you have done for me. It says in John 14:26, ***But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*** Please help me remember the words of life you have given me. I want to make space for you in my mind, restore in my memory your faithfulness.

2. Thankfulness requires the right perspective.

Authentic thankfulness comes with full awareness, with eyes wide open to see God moving in our lives. Focus on the good, look for the good. Through God's eyes we can be grateful in ALL circumstances.

Even our Lord Jesus Christ found his crucifixion a moment to question why, however, the perspective of eternity trumped the agony he was experiencing. In Matthew 27:46, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ***"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")***. What an excruciating experience for our Savior. Yet, that is what it took to become our Intercessor, our Redeemer.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. Psalm 34:8

Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:19b-20

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6

Prayer:

Father, help me see things through your eyes. Like that blind beggar in Mark 10, I plead, ***“Jesus have mercy, I want to see!”*** (v. 48, 51) I want to follow you, God. I want your perspective today. I have struggled, I want to see, please heal my senses today.

3. Grateful people are humble.

If every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights (James 1:17), then our immediate response from receiving His blessings is thankfulness. Thankfulness comes from acknowledging where wealth or materials things, opportunities, loving relationships, stuff that we hold dear, all come from. When we start giving credit to our talents, abilities, and pursuits, then we forget who the Source of the blessings are. It is foolishness. Without Him, we couldn't have attained that which we say we did nor achieved the stature we claim we have. The Apostle Paul warned us about such pitfall in Romans 1:21, ***For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.***

For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. Matthew 23:12

At the time of Solomon's dedication of the temple, found in 2 Chronicles 6:14-15, he said, ***“O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like you, you keep Your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it - as it is today.*** In this statement, the Lord God was exalted, not Solomon.

Prayer:

Father, everything I have is from you. You are the Vine and I am a branch. (John 15:1, 5), without you I am nothing. Thank you for your kindness to me and my family. I am where I am because you took the time to reach down to where I was so I could experience your forgiving grace. You are more glorious than I can ever imagine. Thank you for allowing me to experience what it is like to have an abundant life with You.

4. Gratefulness is Worship.

Our thanks and praise to God pleases Him. When we humble ourselves before the Almighty, we are brought to our place. King David, even with his power and influence, considered himself a servant of the Lord. He was overwhelmed by the majesty of God almighty; he wrote songs to God. He danced before Him, and yes, shamelessly.

King David spent long days taking care of sheep, didn't get recognition immediately for his abilities because of his stature in the family, became king with no prior experience, was chased by bandits, his life was threatened even by his own sons, took refuge in caves. It is King David who killed Goliath, tore a lion, committed adultery. He was not perfect, yet his song was:

"I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears." Psalm 18:1-6

King David remembered, he was aware, he was humble, and he worshiped God. His humility kept him from pride when things were going well.

Prayer:

I am in awe of you God. You embrace me with your kindness every day. You keep me even in my greatest struggles, you make me strong. Your presence is here with me today. When I am scared, you make me brave. You are the lover of my soul, and I am completely taken by your love for me. You say Come Away, I say I am here God. Amen.

Count Your Blessings

by Johnson Oatman, Jr.

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. Psalm 107:31

1 When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Refrain:

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.*

2 Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by. [*Refrain*]

3 So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end. *[Refrain]*
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