

Thought For The Week

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Honoring God

A Lifestyle That Honors the Giver

Thanksgiving with Sacrifice

Last Thursday the calendars marked Thanksgiving, yet Scripture insists every day belongs to gratitude. Psalm 50:14 commands, “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.” Steve from Toledo Road rightly observed that God did not create humanity and then scramble to find a place for us. For six days He spoke galaxies, oceans, forests, and creatures into being—then, and only then, did He form man and breathe life into him. The world was ready, the table set, the pantry stocked before we ever arrived. Every sunrise since has been God quietly restating, “I am still providing.”

This staggering truth demands more than an occasional “thank you.” It demands a life of sacrificial thanksgiving.

The Essence of True Thanksgiving

Gratitude, biblically understood, is not a mood; it is a mindset and a discipline. Moses warned a prosperous Israel, “Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God... who gives you power to get wealth” (Deut 8:11, 18). Prosperity is the great amnesia drug. When bank accounts are full and pantries overflow, we easily imagine we built this life with our own hands. Thanksgiving is the antidote—deliberately tracing every gift upward to the Father of lights “with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

Thanksgiving has three inseparable facets: 1. Acknowledging God’s goodness as the source of every blessing. 2. Reflecting regularly on His past faithfulness (Psalm 103:2 – “Forget not all His benefits”). 3. Demonstrating gratitude through concrete actions rather than words alone.

Words are cheap. The sacrifice God desires costs something.

Sacrifice: The Proof That Thanks Is Real

Psalm 50:14 links thanksgiving with paying vows. In the Old Testament, a thank offering was never optional or symbolic; it required the worshiper to bring a costly animal, kill it, and give the best portions to God. Today the altar is different, but the principle remains: genuine gratitude always costs the giver.

Paul translates this into New Testament terms in 2 Corinthians 9: “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully... God loves a cheerful giver.” Notice the context—Paul is raising money for starving Christians in Jerusalem. Financial

generosity is presented as an act of thanksgiving, not fundraising.

Sacrifice takes many forms: - Time set apart for worship, service, and helping the weak (Romans 15:1). - Talents deployed for the church and the needy rather than personal empire-building. - Money given until the giver feels it, yet gives cheerfully because the Giver deserves it. - Preferences surrendered when they conflict with God's kingdom priorities.

These are not meritorious works to earn salvation; they are grateful responses to salvation already received through Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

The High Cost of Ingratitude

Scripture is blunt about the alternative. Ingratitude is not a minor character flaw; it is spiritual poison.

The wilderness generation saw plagues turned to deliverance, the Red Sea parted, manna from heaven—yet they complained. Their ingratitude provoked God to swear, “They shall not enter My rest” (Heb 3–4). Forty extra years of wandering were the direct fruit of ungrateful hearts.

Jesus cleansed ten lepers. Nine never returned to give thanks. Only one heard the words, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:11-19). The other nine were physically healed but spiritually untouched. Ingratitude robbed them of the deeper wholeness only Jesus gives.

Ingratitude today produces the same bitter harvest: - Spiritually – distance from God, weakened faith, stunted growth. - Emotionally – bitterness, chronic discontent, anxiety over what we lack. - Relationally – strained marriages, fractured churches, critical spirits.

A thankful heart, by contrast, is fertile soil where joy and peace grow in abundance.

Cultivating a Thankful Heart

Overcoming ingratitude is not mystical; it is practical and daily: 1. Keep a gratitude journal or, better yet, speak your thanks aloud to God each morning and evening. 2. Share specific stories of God's faithfulness with others—testimony is contagious gratitude. 3. Schedule generosity the way you schedule bill payments—firstfruits, not leftovers. 4. When tempted to complain, force yourself to name three specific blessings before voicing the grievance. 5. Meditate often on the cross. Nothing cures ingratitude like remembering the price already paid for sinners who deserved nothing.

A Call to Sacrificial Living

Steve closed with an invitation that reaches beyond that Sunday morning. God initiated relationship with us while we were still enemies. He did not spare His own Son. The only reasonable response is to present our bodies—our time, money, dreams, comfort—as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1).

Let every Christian resolve: - I will pray daily with thanksgiving before I present my requests (Phil 4:6). - I will give proportionately, cheerfully, and sacrificially to the Lord's work. - I will serve where I am needed rather than where I am noticed. - I will tell at least one person each week what God has done for me.

Thanksgiving with sacrifice is not a seasonal sentiment. It is the lifestyle of those who have tasted that the Lord is good. It honors the Giver far more than any words ever could, and paradoxically, it is the path to the deepest joy the human heart can know.

May we never again offer God cheap thanks. Let us bring the sacrifice He desires—lives poured, resources, and hearts laid gladly on the altar of gratitude.

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Honoring God Beyond Words

Thanksgiving with Sacrifice

Thanksgiving is far more than an annual holiday or polite “thank you.” Scripture calls it a sacrifice (Psalm 50:14), something that costs us time, energy, comfort, and preference. Steve reminded us that God did not create the world and then add humanity as an afterthought. He first prepared a perfect environment—light, land, seas, plants, animals—then placed man in it and continues to sustain every breath we take. True gratitude recognizes that every good and perfect gift descends from the unchanging Father of lights (James 1:17).

Gratitude is a deliberate choice, not a fleeting emotion. In a culture that constantly asks, “What can God do for me next?” the Bible flips the question: “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” (Psalm 116:12). The answer is not mere words but action—paying our vows, keeping our promises, and offering our lives as living sacrifices.

Sacrificial thanksgiving shows itself in three primary ways:

1. Cheerful, proportionate giving of our money and resources (2 Corinthians 9:7).
2. Investing our time and talents to serve God and His people (Romans 15:1).
3. Daily obedience that puts God’s will above our own convenience.

These are not payments to earn favor; they are responses to favor already received. They prove that our “thank you” is genuine.

Ingratitude, by contrast, is spiritually deadly. The Israelites grumbled in the wilderness despite daily manna and miraculous deliverance; their ingratitude delayed an entire generation from the Promised Land. Of the ten lepers Jesus healed, only one returned to give thanks—and he alone heard the words, “Your faith has made you whole.”

A grateful heart overflows into joy, peace, and stronger relationships. An ungrateful heart breeds bitterness, anxiety, and division. The difference is not circumstance but focus.

As we leave the Thanksgiving season behind, let us carry its spirit forward. Start each day naming specific blessings. Share your story of God’s faithfulness with someone else. Give sacrificially—whether of money, time, or preference—to the work of His kingdom. These are the sacrifices that please God more than any burnt offering ever could.

True thanksgiving costs something. That is precisely what makes it precious in God’s sight and

transformative in our lives.

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