

Day Seventeen

you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through the prayers of many. -2 Corinthians 1:11

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; -Colossians 4:2

Thanksgiving in Prayer

William Ward said, “*God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today, did you use one of them to say thank you?*” Ouch, that one hurt! One of the most often heard complaints in counseling is that people don’t feel appreciated. They feel taken for granted. Imagine how God must feel?!

If you would find a theme among the words of Paul to the Church at Colossae one of the prominent ones would surely be thankfulness. *joyously giving thanks to the Father, Col 1:11b-12a*

having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. - Colossians 2:7

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. -Colossians 3:15

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. -Colossians 3:17

Ok, what is there to be so thankful about? What is there to NOT be thankful about? Someone once told me that when we complain we might ought to be careful lest we be like the man who complained about his leaky basement to Noah. No matter how bad we may have it, there is almost surely someone who will have it worse. But, that is not really the objective to see our miserable life as one that could be even worse. It is finding the joy that God has given us. We are urged to give thanks in ALL things, not just what we perceive as that which gives us temporal happiness. Joy does not depend upon the external, it is a condition of a grateful heart that sees beyond the shell of this earthly tent.

What causes someone like Paul to rejoice in a Roman prison? What causes the early apostles to rejoice that they were counted worthy of

persecution? There is a distinct change that occurs between the Old Law and the New Law. The likes of Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Daniel and so forth mourned over the fact of their separation from Jerusalem and the temple. Now we find that nothing can separate us from Christ. *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. -Romans 8:38-39*

Today’s challenge, and every day’s challenge, is to find as many things to be thankful about as you can. If you are not in the habit of doing so, it won’t take long before time will not permit you to list all the things you are truly thankful for. Don’t think in terms of “stuff”. Think in broader terms. Get specific, right down to the air you breathe. Spiritual gifts as well. Remember what Peter said: *seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. -2 Peter 1:3-4.*

Now, listing things that we ‘should’ be thankful for is a far cry from truly being thankful. Once again, it’s from the heart. Look what Paul told the Church at Philippi: *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. -Philippians 4:6.* We’ll talk later of supplications. But Paul’s urging of us is for our prayers to go up with Thanksgiving. In trials. Give thanks, in persecution, give thanks, in temptation, give thanks. Why? Because they are gifts from God. Gifts so that we shall become perfect. It’s easy to be thankful in times of plenty. It is far harder to give thanks in the trying times.

Prayerful Thoughts: Our Father, we thank Thee for all the blessings of this life, both spiritual and physical.