

Thanksgiving



**"Whatever is good and perfect
comes down to us
from God our Father,
who created
all the lights in the heavens."
James 1:17**

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Table Of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Contents</u>
3	Preface
4	Introduction
7	Let Us Give Thanks In Everything!
14	Why Is Giving Thanks To God So Important?
17	What Should Be The Focus Of Christians On Thanksgiving?
21	Don't Forget To Give Thanks For This
25	What To Forget And What To Remember
28	What Does The Bible Say About Ingratitude / Unthankfulness?

Preface

The most precious blessing we have to be thankful for is the love we share with God but the next most important blessing Debbie and I have to be thankful for is the love we share with our friends and family!!! Have a happy and blessed day dear friends!!!



**Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness:
come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that the Lord he is God:
it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise:
be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting;
and his truth endureth to all generations.**

Psalm 100:1-5

Thanksgiving

Introduction

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. 1 Chronicles 16:34

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus," wrote a man who had known more than his fair share of difficulties. His name? We know him as Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ. In one sentence Paul gives us the key to unlocking the door to a relationship of blessedness and gratitude. He is saying in simple terms that thanksgiving is not a holiday to be celebrated but an attitude of your heart to be daily observed because no matter how difficult the circumstances of your life—whether you are in a hospital bed or enjoying health, wealth, and happiness—God is in control.

Thanksgiving didn't begin with American pilgrims in 1621 when Governor William Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving and feasting, remembering that God had turned drought to rain that brought a simple harvest. Some 1400 years before, Paul instructed the Thessalonians to be thankful. Jews were instructed to celebrate deliverance from Egypt—a custom still observed in the Feast of the Tabernacle or Sukkot. When the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, Nehemiah instructed the people to stop working and celebrate a season of thanksgiving.

In 1680 the Massachusetts Bay Colony recognized a Day of Thanksgiving, making it official. By 1858, 25 states and two U.S. territories officially recognized a day of thanksgiving,

and, since 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the fourth Thursday of November to be Thanksgiving Day, subsequent American Presidents have followed the same pattern.

No matter where you live on planet Earth, every day should be a day of thanksgiving. For what should you be thankful? Don't limit your gratitude to my list, but may I mention some of the things for which I give thanks.

First, I give thanks for the assurance that I am God's child, that He has forgiven me and brought me into the Kingdom of His dear Son—not because I deserved it but because of the Father's great love for me.

Then I am thankful for my family and friends. I must tell you that God has so graciously touched my life with His favor. Yes, I'm thankful not only for His grace that meets me at the point of my weakness, but, honestly, I'm thankful as well for what hasn't happened.

I also thank God for the bumps in the road, challenges that bring me face to face with my weakness and cause me to cry out for God's help and provision that comes in such a way, I know He has provided—as opposed to something just happening. I'm convinced that what He has withheld, I haven't needed, and what He has given me is a stewardship to be used wisely for His work.

I'm thankful that in a world of turmoil, our great God will allow nothing to happen that escapes His attention or ability

to prevent. That's why Paul wrote, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV).

And what of the future? It will arrive just one day at a time, and when tomorrow comes, God's Son will be there to take my hand and walk with me through the valley one step at a time. Yes, be thankful, friend. May the sin of ingratitude never be on the "unforgiven" list. Never!

Let Us Give Thanks In Everything!



By
John MacArthur
Decision Magazine

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, the Apostle Paul writes, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Paul simply says very directly: No exceptions, no excuses, nothing is outside this parameter—in *everything* give thanks. No matter the situation, we are to find a reason to thank God.

Thanksgiving

Gratitude Is Normal

How does this thankfulness happen? Second Corinthians 4:15 says, “All things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.” Paul is explaining that as people receive the grace of God in salvation, it leads to abounding thanksgiving. The pattern of every Christian’s life should be that we endlessly give God thanks.

But we not only have salvation, we have everything. In 2 Corinthians 9:11, Paul says, “You are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.” Unending thanksgiving is the result of all that God is doing in our lives.

Ephesians 5:4 says, “Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather [the] giving of thanks” should come from our mouths. Paul is saying that when we open our mouths, what ought to come out is thanksgiving. When a person becomes a Christian, there is something different about the inner man. Built into that newness is a heart of thanksgiving that cries out in gratitude to God. It’s hard to find someone more thankful than a brand-new Christian. Thanksgiving becomes the fruit of the work of the Spirit within us. But how quickly Christians can become unthankful!

A thankless attitude is abnormal for a Christian. It cuts across the grain of the new life, the new nature, the new person. Because we can so easily fall to the sin of ingratitude, the New Testament repeatedly calls us to thankfulness.

The overarching umbrella that covers every issue of life is Romans 8:28: “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” The circumstance in itself may not be good, but

God will take a bad thing and turn it to a good purpose. If we believe that God is at work, controlling all of the contingencies of life, blending each component together to lead to a sovereignly-designed goal, then we can be thankful. We can be thankful for the pain of surgery if we know that healing will come because of it. As long as we look at the end result, we can be thankful even for a process that is less than joyful.

Holy Spirit-Inspired Thanksgiving

When the early church gathered, their purpose was to give thanks. It was a part and parcel of their worship. Someone had a psalm, someone had a prayer, someone had a word from the Lord, and a lot of people had an opportunity to say thanks. When we have fellowship with believers in smaller groups, it is good to have a time of giving thanks.

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul cautions us to be filled with the Spirit. And what will happen? "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Joy, rejoicing, prayer and praise will happen. In verse 20, he says, "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

According to Paul, a Spirit-filled believer is a thankful believer, a joyful believer, a praying believer. If you are filled with the Spirit, thanks will gush out of you for everything.

Even in times of trouble, Paul says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." In times of great anxiety, fear, worry and stress, be thankful. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ... Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:15, 17).

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, the responsibility of the believer to the Lord is described in terms of his heart attitude. He is to have inward incessant joy, continual unceasing prayer, constant daily thanks. And these three commands—rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks—penetrate the innermost recesses of the redeemed heart. They are the best gauge of a person's spiritual condition.

A lot of people can carry out religious functions, but if you want to know whether you are truly filled with the Holy Spirit, ask yourself, "Do I rejoice always? Do I constantly pray? Am I increasingly thankful?" Because that is the spring from within. It will lead to a right attitude in all your duties, responsibilities and ministries. If you're not a joyful, prayerful, thankful person, you're struggling with the flesh. When the Spirit controls you, those things fall into place.

Then Paul says in verse 18, "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." This is attached to all three of those commands, not just the last one. God's will in Christ Jesus is that you would have constant joy, constant prayer and constant thanks.

You may be thinking, *Do I have to drum these up myself?* No. It is not only God's will to will it; it is God's will to work it. Philippians 2:13 explains, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." God wills it and He works it by His Holy Spirit. That's why I say, if you're filled with the Spirit, you'll speak to yourself in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. That's rejoicing. And you'll offer that to the Lord, because that's prayer. You'll give thanks because it's the essence of the outflow from the inward spiritual control. It is routine because we should be filled with the Spirit as a matter of the course of life.

Why Aren't We Grateful?

Now we look at ourselves and say, "I wish that were true. I wish I went around all the time singing songs of praise and offering prayers to the Lord, thanking Him for everything, but I don't." What is it that corrupts those inner springs so that we're not always joyful, prayerful and thankful? Here are seven attitudes that form in the innermost parts of our hearts and hinder thanksgiving.

First is doubt. We doubt God's character. We're not sure that His Word can be trusted. If we doubt God's truthfulness and character, we'll have trouble being thankful because we're not sure that He will keep His promise to make all things work for our good. Or we trust that He has good intentions, but we doubt He has the power to deal with our issues. Some of us even question God's love. We say: "God would never let this happen if He really loved me." These doubts poison the springs of a redeemed heart that should be overflowing with gratitude.

Second is selfishness. This is the attitude that says, "I am not content with the way God is working out my life. It's not what I desire." If God doesn't come in and fit the picture perfectly, then a person's self-will begins to run roughshod over the plan of God, and a thankless spirit results.

The third hindrance is the love of the world. This is someone whose vision is filled with pleasure, prominence and possessions. Do you know the hymn that says, "Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart"? That is the heart of the Christian's vision. We say to God, "It's You I see. It's You I long for." As long as that is our vision, we will see God's blessing pour into our lives. But if our vision is the material world, we will have no cause for thanksgiving. When everything we've attached our affection to doesn't fulfill us, it causes us to be thankless and ungrateful.

Fourth, a critical spirit will steal our thankfulness. A critical spirit criticizes everything that isn't exactly the way it ought to be. It rises from an enlarged ego that says, "I deserve better than this." It says "I've been hurt," or "I've been wounded by someone, and I'm going to take the pain and let it run through the rest of my life."

The fifth hindrance is impatience. Some of us don't give thanks simply because God doesn't move on our schedule. We don't say, "Thank you, Lord. I can see Your hand at work. The process is slow, but I see it." We are like the child who throws a tantrum and says, "I want it! I want it now!" We should learn to thank God for the process. We should not try to rush what is happening perfectly on time in God's economy.

Sixth is something I think a lot of people sense in the church today. You could call it apathy or lethargy. I use the word coldness, and I think about the lukewarm heart of the Laodiceans or the Ephesians in Revelation. There is a lack of love for Christ. We lack passion in worship. We neglect the Bible and prayer. We waste time on the trivia of life, and it leaves us empty and spiritually indifferent. Consequently, our hearts have no gratitude.

Finally, there is rebellion. We feel that our lot in life isn't what we wanted so we purposely withhold thanks because we're just flat out unthankful. We say, "I'm mad and I'm unthankful and I know it. And I'm going to stay unthankful!"

If any of these seven attitudes invades our hearts, we have gross sin. We are defying the command of God to give thanks in everything. We're defying the instruction of the New Testament that we ought to be always thankful for our salvation, for the unending blessings of God.

But, as I said before, we can't drum up an attitude of thankfulness on our own. That is why God works to will and to do of His own good pleasure in us. He's working to make us thankful through the power of the Spirit of God. If we're filled with the Spirit, He produces a grateful heart. And what happens when we're grateful? God is glorified, we are blessed, the church is built up and the lost are reached. We can have a tremendous impact on the world if we will only practice thanksgiving.

Why Is Giving Thanks To God So Important?



By
Got Questions

Thanksgiving

The Bible is filled with commands to give thanks to God (Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 1 Chronicles 16:34; 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Most verses go on to list reasons why we should thank Him, such as “His love endures forever” (Psalm 136:3), “He is good” (Psalm 118:29), and “His mercy is everlasting” (Psalm 100:5). Thanksgiving and praise always go together. We cannot adequately praise and worship God without also being thankful.

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 1:17). It is in our best interest to be reminded that everything we have is a gift from Him. Without gratitude, we become arrogant and self-centered. We begin to believe that we have achieved everything on our own. Thankfulness keeps our hearts in right relationship to the Giver of all good gifts.

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.

First Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” We are to be thankful not only for the things we like, but for the circumstances we don’t like. When we purpose to thank God for everything that He allows to come into our lives, we keep bitterness at bay. We

cannot be both thankful and bitter at the same time. We do not thank Him for evil, but that He is sustaining us through it (James 1:12). We don't thank Him for harm He did not cause, but we thank Him when He gives us the strength to endure it (2 Corinthians 12:9). We thank Him for His promise that "all things will work together for the good, to those who love God and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

We can have thankful hearts toward God even when we do not feel thankful for the circumstance. We can grieve and still be thankful. We can hurt and still be thankful. We can be angry at sin and still be thankful toward God. That is what the Bible calls a "sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15). Giving thanks to God keeps our hearts in right relationship with Him and saves us from a host of harmful emotions and attitudes that will rob us of the peace God wants us to experience (Philippians 4:6-7).

What Should Be The Focus Of Christians On Thanksgiving?



By
Got Questions

Thanksgiving

The original thanksgiving celebration was held by the Pilgrim settlers in Massachusetts during their second winter in America in December, 1621. The first winter had killed 44 of the original 102 colonists. At one point their daily food ration was down to five kernels of corn apiece, but then an unexpected trading vessel arrived, swapping them beaver pelts for grain, providing for their severe need. The next summer's crop brought hope, and Governor William Bradford decreed that December 13, 1621, be set aside as a day of feasting and prayer to show the gratitude of the colonists that they were still alive.

These Pilgrims, seeking religious freedom and opportunity in America, gave thanks to God for His provision for them in helping them find 20 acres of cleared land, for the fact that there were no hostile Indians in that area, for their newfound religious freedom, and for God's provision of an interpreter to the Indians in Squanto. Along with the feasting and games involving the colonists and more than 80 friendly Indians (who added to the feast by bringing wild turkeys and venison), prayers, sermons, and songs of praise were important in the celebration. Three days were spent in feasting and prayer.

From that time forward, Thanksgiving has been celebrated as a day to give thanks to God for His gracious and sufficient provision. President Abraham Lincoln officially set aside the last Thursday of November, in 1863, "as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father." In 1941, Congress ruled that after 1941, the fourth Thursday of November be observed as Thanksgiving Day and be a legal holiday.

Scripturally, we find things related to the issue of thanksgiving nearly from cover to cover. Individuals offered up sacrifices out of gratitude in the book of Genesis. The Israelites sang a song of thanksgiving as they were delivered from Pharaoh's army after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15). Later, the Mosaic Law set aside three times each year when the Israelites were to

gather together. All three of these times [Unleavened Bread (also called the Feast of the Passover) (Exodus 12:15-20), Harvest or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21), and the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-36)] involved remembering God's provision and grace. Harvest and Tabernacles took place specifically in relation to God's provision in the harvest of various fruit trees and crops. The book of Psalms is packed full of songs of thanksgiving, both for God's grace to the Israelite people as a whole through His mighty deeds, as well as for His individual graces to each of us.

In the New Testament, there are repeated admonitions to give thanks to God. Thanksgiving is to always be a part of our prayers. Some of the most remembered passages on the giving of thanks are the following:

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1).

Of all of God's gifts, the greatest one He has given is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus paid our sin debt, so a holy and just Judge could forgive us our sins and give us eternal life as a free gift. This gift is available to those who will call on Christ to save them from their sin in simple but sincere faith (John 3:16; Romans 3:19-26; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8-10). For this gift of His Son, the gift which meets our greatest need, the Apostle Paul says,

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

We, like the Pilgrims, have a choice. In life there will always be those things that we can complain about (the Pilgrims had lost many loved ones), but there will also be much to be thankful for. As our society becomes increasingly secular, the actual “giving of thanks to God” during our annual Thanksgiving holiday is being overlooked, leaving only the feasting. May God grant that He may find us grateful every day for all of His gifts, spiritual and material. God is good, and every good gift comes from Him (James 1:17). For those who know Christ, God also works everything together for good, even events we would not necessarily consider good (Romans 8:28-30). May He find us to be His grateful children.

Don't Forget To Give Thanks For This



**By
Dr. Harold J. Sala
Guidelines For Living**

**Give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:18**

Thanksgiving

Do you ever say, "Thank you, God!" for what could have happened to you but did not? The human tendency is to say, "Thank you!" for the wonderful things that happen like when you get a raise at work, or when someone gives you a well-deserved compliment, or your child's team wins; but what about giving thanks for what could have happened, but did not?

Driving along the beautiful Aegean Sea from Athens toward the ancient city of Corinth some 40 miles away, you see numerous shrines alongside the highway, and you might immediately think that someone was killed there, and family or friends built a tiny shrine to their memory. But that is not the situation at all. True, the highway is narrow and winding as it snakes its way on the edge of the mountains beside the beautiful water which is part of the Mediterranean. True, there have been frequent accidents taking the lives of those who drove carelessly or ventured too close to the edge of the highway. But some of these shrines, filled with candles and religious artifacts, have been built to offer thanks to God for those who were involved in accidents but were not killed.

It is their way of saying, "Thank you, God, for what did not happen." How about it? Have you ever said, "God, I want to thank you for what could have happened but did not?" "Thank you that when I came down with stomach pains the doctors were quickly able to diagnose and correct the problem." "Thank you, that I am able to fill my lungs with fresh, clean air and that my mind is sound and my body is healthy." It is an interesting thought—that we can say, "Thank you, God," for those things that in His wise providence He keeps from happening, that could well have happened.

Like the man and woman who sat in church as a memorial gift was presented to the congregation in memory of a young man in the military who had given his life in the service of his country. As the presentation was completed, the woman wiped

tears from her eyes and nudged her husband. "Let's do the same thing for our son," she whispered.

"Why?" countered the man, "Nothing's the matter with our son—he is still alive!"

"That is just it," responded the woman. "We ought to be even more thankful, because he is alive and well!"

Gratitude has become a lost art in the lives of many people. We are so busy putting in our orders as to what we want from heaven, that we have forgotten how to say, "God, thank you for what you have done," and part of gratitude is saying, "God, thank you for what you, in your wise providence, have kept from happening."

There is only one way that you can really learn gratitude for what does not happen, and that is by relinquishing the control of your future to His will and accepting the fact that He really knows best. The Apostle Paul taught us by his life that we may make our plans but God directs our steps, and when He points us in a different direction, we must just as joyfully say, "Thank you, God, for what did not happen," as we say, "thank you," for what did happen.

When Paul wrote in the Bible book of Thessalonians he encouraged, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Stop today and think for a moment. Could you make a list of events that certainly could have happened, but gratefully, did not?

Are you able to see in your own life, as Proverbs 16:9 says, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps?" Yes, let's thank God for directing our steps in His perfect will, thanking Him for all—what happened, and what didn't!

What To Forget And What To Remember



**By
Dr. Harold J. Sala
Guidelines For Living**

Thanksgiving

"In some parts of Mexico," writes James Hewett, "hot springs and cold springs are found side by side—and because of the convenience of this natural phenomenon the women often bring their laundry and boil their clothes in the hot springs and then rinse them in the cold ones." On one occasion a tourist, watching nature's laundromat, commented that "Mother Nature is pretty generous to supply such ample, clean hot and cold water here side by side for their free use." To his great surprise, however, the friend replied, "No señor, there is much grumbling because she supplies no soap."[1]

Such ingratitude! Yet, are we not just as guilty, for no matter what we have, we want more! For what are you thankful? Take a few moments and ponder the following questions:

Can you walk, talk, and hear the sound of my voice? Did you see the sun this morning drive back the fog or paint the hills on the distant horizon? Or did you simply miss "the soap"?

Is there someone, anyone in this vast world of people, who cares quite deeply for you, someone who would mourn your death, who would, indeed, miss you should you be swept off Planet Earth? OK, going one step further, is there just one person who cares deeply enough about you that you can say, "Yes, there is at least one person in the world who loves me. Or have you simply focused on "the missing soap"?

Do you have a family? I mean are you surrounded by one or two individuals, whether they are blood relatives or very close friends, who are family? Or have you simply noticed that other people have more "soap" than you and you feel shortchanged in life?

Can you read? "Oh," you say, "That's a pretty silly question. Can't everybody read? Friend, some people can't read the label on the soap! They are functionally illiterate. Some are like the Kenyan,

an old gentleman whose face is etched in my memory, who came to a medical outreach in his village hoping that someone could give him glasses strong enough to allow him to once again read. I doubt that I will ever forget the look of disappointment or rejection written on his face when he picked up his battered, broken hat and walked away.


Do you have at least one friend? Is there at least one person who understands and loves you—warts, bumps, flaws, and blemishes?

Do you have a change of clothing, a second pair of shoes, enough food to last for a week? If so, you are in a minority in our world. Focus on the hot and cold water—not the missing soap.

Most important of all—has God revealed Himself to you in such a way that you know when you die, you will spend eternity in the home Jesus went to prepare for you? Do you have a Bible that tells you of God's nature and character, and do you rejoice that He has included you in His family? If so, friend, you have not only hot and cold water, but you have experienced the cleaning power of the Holy Spirit that washes away all sin.

A final thought: He who has no gratitude can never be on speaking terms with God. The Bible is a photo album of God's gracious gifts to us. Instead of focusing on the "missing soap" in your life, focus on the hot and cold water. Forget about the soap, and lift your heart in rejoicing, giving thanks for the abundance of blessings God has poured out in your life. Forget the soap! Focus on the blessings!

What Does The Bible Say About Ingratitude / Unthankfulness?



But love your enemies,
and do good, and lend,
expecting nothing in return,
and your reward will be great,
and you will be sons
of the Most High,
for he is kind to the
ungrateful and the evil.

-Luke 6:35-

LoveGodGreatly.com

By
Got Questions

Thanksgiving

The Bible says much about gratitude as well as the lack of it. God knows how we are made, and He designed us to thrive when we are humble, moral, and thankful. When we are arrogant, immoral, and ungrateful, we cannot have fellowship with Him, nor can we experience all it means to be created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). So God included repeated commands in His Word about being thankful, reminding us that a grateful heart is a happy heart (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Colossians 3:15; Psalm 105:1).

Ingratitude is a sin with severe repercussions. Romans 1:18–32 gives a detailed description of the downfall of a person or a society. Listed alongside idolatry, homosexuality, and every kind of rebellion is unthankfulness. Verse 21 says, “Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him.” This tells us that God takes gratefulness—and ungratefulness—seriously. As long as a person or a culture remains thankful to God, they retain a sensitivity to His presence. Thankfulness toward God requires a belief in God at the very least, and ingratitude fails to fulfill our responsibility to acknowledge Him (Proverbs 3:5–6; Psalm 100:4). When we refuse to be thankful or to express gratitude, we grow hard-hearted and proud. We take for granted all God has given us and become our own gods.

Jesus’ healing of the ten lepers gives an example of how highly God values thankfulness (Luke 17:12–19). Jesus healed all ten men, but only one returned to thank Him (verse 15). The Bible specifically records that the thankful leper was not even a Jew. He was a Samaritan, a fact that drove home the idea that Jews were not the only people who could reach the heart of God. The Lord notices those who thank Him, regardless of socio-political status or level of spirituality. His questions “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?” (verse 17) show His disappointment at the ingratitude of the majority.

Second Timothy 3:2 describes what people will be like in the last days, and one characteristic is ingratitude. When pride and self-rule become fashionable, the human heart has no one to thank. We become convinced of our own supremacy and consider all we have as a just reward for our efforts. We are wise to heed Paul's rhetorical questions "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Ingratitude toward God is not so much a cause of evil but the result of it. Once we have hardened our hearts to the point that we no longer see God as the source of our gifts, nothing is off-limits. We become a law unto ourselves. One reason the Bible takes such a strong stance against unthankfulness and ingratitude may be that God knows that the end result of such arrogance is a reprobate mind (Romans 1:24). When we remind ourselves often that all we are and all we have is a gift from God (James 1:17), we are guarding ourselves against idolatry and pride.