

## Learning to be Thankful

*"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"*  
Ephesians 5:20

It is not always easy to be **thankful**. To give thanks always for all things is not a natural human response. I'm sure none of us have fulfilled this command completely. Have we even had one day in which we were thankful for all things? Even for long lines, chores, and lima beans?

It was not easy for the **pilgrims** to be thankful after suffering through sickness, crop failure, disease, famine, and even the death of loved ones - yet they were thankful. It was not easy for the **apostle Paul** to be thankful after being persecuted, beaten, robbed, shipwrecked, imprisoned, and even forsaken by fellow believers - yet he was thankful.

How can this be? Thankfulness must be learned, as you parents well know. It is not natural to be thankful. It is natural to be unthankful and implacable (Romans 1:21,31). In order to be truly thankful, I must **realize I have nothing of my own**: everything I have has been given to me. "And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? (I Corinthians 4:7) "...He [God] giveth to all life and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25).

Further, **realize I deserve nothing**. *"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not"* (Lamentations 3:22). All I deserve is judgment, anything more than that is mercy and grace. If we can keep these two thoughts always in mind, we can be thankful always for all things.

I heard a story that illustrates this truth. A couple lost their son in the war, so they wanted to give a \$200 cheque to the church in memory of him. When another father heard about this, he said to his wife, "Honey, make out a cheque for \$500 to the church." She replied, "But our son is alive". "That's exactly the point. Our son came home from the war alive, without even a scratch. If they can give \$200 because their son died, we can show our thanks to God by giving \$500 because our son is still alive."

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