

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG66 – Be Thankful

This is a podcast about Thanksgiving. I am very excited about this, because I believe that there is a power in our giving thanks. I would like to see something really transpire over this time of Thanksgiving, while the United States, at least, is celebrating it. I know different countries celebrate Thanksgiving at different times, and some countries don't have a Thanksgiving celebration; but maybe after this podcast, they will decide to do it.

What I believe we can see is really creating a thanksgiving in our hearts that begins to break some of the evil that is existing in our country of the United States, and throughout the world, because of a lack of thanksgiving, a refusal to give thanks. I think a lot of the woke mentality that we are seeing now transpire in this country is born out of a long time in which the American people have not been thankful to God for everything that they have. There is something that happens in your mind, there is something that happens in your perception, when you are not thankful. And so I believe in developing a thankfulness, which we are going to work with in this podcast. It is something each person should do, because out of that thankfulness, I believe there is a power to release the blessings of God and the favor of God in our lives, in our families, in our country.

As we prepare, at least here in America, North America, to have a Thanksgiving dinner and celebration as people traditionally do, let's believe that we can have something more than just a nice meal together. Let's believe that we can create an atmosphere that has the ability to change what is going on around us in this country and the world; to create a spirit of thankfulness; to bring a reversal to the consequences and the circumstances that have developed in our lives and in our country and our nation and the world because of not having a real thankfulness to God.

God has given us so many things. I like the Jewish celebration of Passover. In the Seder, there is a section called Dayenu, which means, "it would have been enough." If God just would have done this little thing, then that would have been enough; but then God went on. He delivered us from Egypt. He brought us out into the wilderness. He fed us with manna. He gave us all these abundant blessings. And so each little step that happened during the release from Egypt is a dayenu. It would have been enough if He just would have done this, but instead, God did more. And that is the truth. God is always doing so much more. He does exceeding, abundantly above all we could ask or think. He gives to us blessings in abundance. And there has got to be in us a thankfulness that we have. I think we should literally take this idea of thankfulness beyond a Thanksgiving celebration, or a Thanksgiving meal, and we should bring it into our daily lives. And I encourage you to do that. I encourage you to start your day with thanksgiving. I think we should wake up and we should write down three to five things that we are really thankful to God for that have happened for us over the last twenty-four hours. Do it at the beginning of your day, or do it at the end of your day. But write it down. Make it an expression of thanksgiving.

You will find that as you are going through your day, if you would do this, you will find that going through your day you will be looking for the things to be thankful for. It will actually change the way you relate to your day. It will change the way that your mind works. Do this for members of your family. Try

this at Thanksgiving dinner, in your celebration. Go around the table, and each person express to each family member at the table – or friend, or whoever is there with you – three to five things that you appreciate that they have done, and that you are thankful that they have done. Express that thankfulness one to another. And again, I would encourage you to make a habit of this. Do this on a daily basis. As you do, you begin to notice your family members and others around you, and you are watching their activities. You are looking for those things, "Okay, tomorrow I am going to be able to bring this up as something that I appreciate and am thankful for that they did, or that they are doing, or how they are behaving and acting." And it takes us out of this negative mode of where we look for things wrong.

That is really, to me, the best definition of woke mentality: how many things can you find wrong about everything? That is really what being woke means, is you are just negative about everything. You are not thankful about anything. You don't see the positive that has transpired in this world that we live in, in the cultures that we are surrounded by, and the blessings that God has given us. Let's get out of woke mentality. Let's get into the mentality that David had of thankfulness, that Paul had of thankfulness. Develop in yourself a thankfulness. And I guarantee as you do this, it literally will change the way you relate to your day, the way you relate to your family, the way that you relate to everything around you; because you begin looking for the positive, you begin looking for things to be thankful for and to appreciate, rather than the opposite.

I believe it would be a healthy change in our lives and our society. I think that if we did this, if enough people did this, we could turn the spirit world around that we are living under right now. We could break this evil, mental thought process that is going on around us, where everything is bad and everyone is bad. You will never correct anything by looking at the negative. You correct things by looking to the Lord in a positive faith, and being thankful to Him for all He has done; because in being thankful for all He has done, you know that He is going to continue every day to do more and more for you. So I encourage you: if you are in a country, in a place that celebrates Thanksgiving, do this exercise. Go around the table, be thankful to God for things. Then go around the table, and each one be thankful to one another for certain things that they have done. Express this love and thanksgiving to God; express this love and thanksgiving to one another. I think it is something simple, but with it, we could really change the world.

I want to read a Scripture out of First Corinthians four, starting at verse 7. It says, "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" This is something that Paul recognized. Everything we have, everything, everything – look around you – what is it that you have? You have received it. It is a blessing from God into your life. All of your finances, your family, your housing, your clothes, all of it. You say, "Well, you know, I'm like, I don't know if I should be thankful for my car. It's kind of an old clunker, you know, it's not really something I would think to be thankful for." Okay. Well, walk to work for the next five days, and I bet you will be thankful for that car, no matter what it looks like. There is always a way to be thankful for the things that we have around us.

Of course we can look at the negative, but why do that? What does it accomplish us? Let us enter in to not just the Thanksgiving day. Can we enter into a life of thanksgiving? Can we enter into being a people of thanksgiving and thankfulness and worship? Can we have hearts that are filled with thanks to God? You know, this is something that has its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures. I don't know if we realize this, but many times, at least in the United States, we are taught that the Pilgrims kind of invented this idea

of a Thanksgiving meal. And I know that they had a Thanksgiving meal, but these were men and women of the Word and of the Bible, and they knew the Scriptures. And I believe the very concept of Thanksgiving Day came from the Scriptures, because these people understood that in the Hebrew, this idea of thanksgiving and an offering of thanksgiving to God was something that was clearly lined out in the Scriptures.

In Leviticus, the seventh chapter, verse 11, it talks about this, and we have the idea of a peace offering. The peace offering in the Scriptures had several expressions. One of them was of thanksgiving. So when we look at the peace offering, *Zevach haShelamim*, then we see it was a customary rendering of peace offering. That is what the Scriptures call it, if you look it up in English. It had maybe a better translation if we would call it a sacrifice of communion, or a sacrifice of relationship, that the individual giving the peace offering was looking for. The apparent purpose of the peace offering was just that – a searching for communion with God, in which the worshiper would initiate this idea of a ceremonial offering to the Lord.

Again, part of the peace offering, it had three different parts to it, or expressions of it, one of which was an offering of thanks, *Zevah haToda*. *Toda* in Hebrew means "thanks." We say, if we want to say thank you to someone, we say "toda raba," "thank you very much." So this was an expression of thanks. It was a part of the peace offering.

When you gave a thank offering, you gave a cereal offering at the same time, a grain offering with that sacrifice, as well as an animal sacrifice. It is interesting because when you gave that offering of thanks, the animal would be sacrificed, but the bigger portion of the meat was given back to the one bringing the offering; and you know what he would do? He would take that offering in the day that he brought it before the Lord, and he would prepare a meal for his family and friends, and they would sit down and have a thanksgiving meal. And they could do this anytime they wanted to. There was no requirement. You didn't have to bring it because you had done something. You brought it sheerly out of your heart as an expression of love and thanks to God for everything He had done for you. You could do it anytime you wanted to, and as many times as you wanted to. You would have this great meal of thanksgiving where you took that grain from the offering, the cakes that were made, and the meat that was sacrificed, and you would fix this wonderful banquet. You would have family and friends around you, maybe some of the priests from your city, and you would have a wonderful meal together as a thanksgiving unto God. So as we see, this idea of having Thanksgiving, really, I believe was something that the Pilgrims understood from the Scriptures. They were following the example, because they were thankful to be alive and thankful for all that they had and all that God had done in bringing them to a new land. So we see that the roots of Thanksgiving are really in the Hebrew Scriptures.

I will give you some Scripture verses so that you can go through and read this yourself and study it. You may even want to read these and look at them at the Thanksgiving table, and share the Scriptures together; or on a wonderful Shabbat together with family to read these verses. Leviticus seven, verses 11-13; Leviticus, seven, verse 15; Leviticus 22, verses 29-30. These are all examples of the Law about the peace offering or the offering of thanksgiving.

We have many examples of the offering of thanksgiving in the Hebrew Bible. We see it in First Chronicles 23:27. It says, "For by the last words of David the sons of Levi were numbered from twenty years old and upward." Then jumping down to verse 30, it says, "They are to stand every morning to thank and to praise the Lord, and likewise at evening." This is significant, because it is saying these were the last words; it is rehearsing the last words of David. What did he do as the last instructions that he gave

before he went to be with the fathers? He instructed the Levites that every morning they should give thanks and praise to the Lord, and every evening, likewise. Beautiful. We know that David was a man constantly giving thanks to God.

In Second Chronicles, 29:31, we see that Hezekiah told them to "bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the Lord." In Jeremiah 33, verses 10-16, we see this time of restoration being prophesied from the Lord. And part of what triggers the restoration that God brings is in verse 11, where it says, "'Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting'; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the Lord. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first," says the Lord." There is this idea that we have got to understand that we bring the blessings; to me it is expressed in the sacrifice itself. You would bring this offering to the Temple, to the priest to make a sacrifice. And what happened with it? It was given back to the one who brought it. Isn't that significant? And that is what we see here. Because they are bringing a thank offering to the Lord, the Lord restores to them the land and restores to them the blessings of God in their lives for the people in the land of Israel.

This is part of this thankfulness, and this is what we can do. Maybe it is why this country seems so devoid of God's blessings, because we are not bringing that thank offering. If we would bring the thanks to Him, He would bring back to us the blessings and the anointing. He would restore to us the things that we have lost. And this country needs a restoration of all that has been lost over the years.

We see it again in Nehemiah 12:27, after they had finished the wall and wanted to dedicate the wall, it says that they brought dedications "with gladness, with hymns of thanksgiving and with songs." They did that, according to Nehemiah 12:46, because that is what David and Asaph had done in ancient times; they would bring hymns and praises of thanksgiving to God. So in part of the restoration of the Temple, Nechemyâh recognizes this and brings about the restoration of praise and offerings of thanksgiving.

Jeremiah 30, verses 18 through 19 have this. In verse 19 it says, "From them will proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who celebrate." Again, what is this tied to? It is tied to God restoring to Israel His Presence and His blessing. And that is what we need. We need it in our families, we need it in our nation. One I really love is in Jonah, the second chapter, verses 9-10. I encourage you to read it, because we know what happened to Jonah. He went through a time of rebellion, and refused to do the will of God. God brought along this gigantic fish that swallowed him – not too wonderful a way to spend your day in the belly of a fish – but it certainly caught Jonah's attention. And so we see that born out of his repentance, something sprang forth. He didn't just repent; but instead, he became thankful to the Lord. Isn't that interesting? It says, "'But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord.'" Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land."

Now this is great. Jonah's deliverance came after he became thankful. He wasn't being thankful because of his release and deliverance. If you are in a place where you need something, you are looking for deliverance, you are looking for release from oppression or demonic assault against you or your family, or something oppressing your finances, whatever it is, don't wait for God to move. Don't sit there and complain to Him about how hard your life is. Start being thankful. "For what?" you say, "I'm in trouble." Whatever you have, look again; be thankful for the little things that God has given you and are around you. Believe me, when you begin to develop a thankful heart, God will bring the bigger deliverances that you are looking for.

We know, of course, when we look at the Hebrew Scriptures, that Psalms are filled with this idea of thanksgiving. So I'll just give some different Psalms, I will read little pieces of them. Psalm 28:7 is a great one. Psalm 54, starting at verse 6, says, "Willingly I will sacrifice to You. I will give thanks to Your name, O Lord, for it is good." Willingly. See, when you get to this thanksgiving, it is something that we do willingly. It is not required of us. But it is, I tell you, what God is waiting for to come forth from us. Psalm 107 is a beautiful one. Starting at verses 20-21, it says, "He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness." See, the Lord is going to bring deliverance. But I tell you, whatever deliverance He has already given and blessings He has already given, we better be expressing our thanks to Him for the lovingkindness that we already have. Then we can look for more. He says in verse 22, "Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving." We have to remember that our thanksgiving must be a sacrifice to Him. It is not something that we are obligated to do.

Psalm 116:17 says, "To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving." In Psalm 26:7, it says, "That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders." These are wonderful Scriptures. Psalm 50 is another one; Psalm 69; Psalm 100. Read these Psalms. Again, it is something great to do around the Thanksgiving table. It is something to do in the morning with your time together in the Word as a family. Oh, you don't do that? Well maybe you should start. Just get together in the morning, read some of these Scriptures; and then take the time to express to one another your thankfulness for each other and for things that you have done that have been a blessing to one another in the family.

Of course, we see in the New Testament a great expression of thanksgiving. I will start at Hebrews chapter 13. Verse 15 says, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." Wow. How much more clear can it be that we should be constantly, continually offering up this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and peace offering unto the Lord. Colossians 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." If you are going to request something from God, begin with thanksgiving for what He has already done; then make your request. That is what he is saying.

I encourage you to go through the Scriptures about Paul. One of the things we see, I will read First Corinthians 1:4, it says, "I thank my God always." He makes that statement at the beginning. There are nine other verses where he starts that way, where he says, "I thank my God." Take a concordance, see if you can find it. Again, this would be a fun activity at your Thanksgiving table, to try to find every place where Paul said, "I thank my God," or "I thank the Lord Jesus Christ." He was a man of thanksgiving. David was a man of thanksgiving. We should follow this example.

One thing I want to say, too, as we begin to come to the conclusion of this, that we need to recognize seriously. I have mentioned many times about what is going on around us today in the world and the negativity of it, and that the source of those problems and negativities, like woke thinking, are really based on a lack of thanksgiving to God. The Scripture bears that out. In Psalm 50:22-23, it says, "'Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you in pieces and there will be none to deliver. He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.'" There is a consequence for not being thankful. God said, "You forget Me? Then I will tear you to pieces, and there will be none to deliver." Are we moving towards that in this country? I think we are. But I also believe that we can stop that motion, and we can erase those consequences, if

enough of us can become a force of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord. Let us take heaven as our example. In Revelation seven, starting at verse 11, it says, "And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever, amen.'" Our praise, our worship, should always include thanksgiving to God. That is what transpires in heaven all day long. Wouldn't it be wise for us to follow that example?

As we end this podcast, I want to just emphasize a few points, as always. Number one, you choose and determine to be thankful. It is not a requirement. Two, being thankful brings God's blessing into your life. It is that simple. Also, being thankful changes your attitude. It changes your ways of thinking and perception of the world around you. Also, again, I just want to encourage you: write down five things every day that you are thankful to God for. And, I would include your family, and write down three to five things that you appreciate and are thankful for about your family. Speak it to them. I would encourage you to do it daily, but if not, at least do it on Sabbath. Sit down together for a Sabbath meal and express your thankfulness and your love, one for another. I wish you a happy Thanksgiving, and believe God's blessing to be on your life. Amen.