

## **What does the Bible say about Thanksgiving?**

(by George Battey)

President George Washington made the following proclamation in 1789:

*Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection, aid, and favors ...*

*Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26<sup>th</sup> day of November next, to be devoted by the people of the United States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, and is, or that will be; and that we may all then unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country, and for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us. (Speaker's Quote Book, Zuck, p. 382)*

This country has forgotten God. It is virtually illegal in this country to mention God unless one is using His name as a curse word. Yet the founding fathers of this nation recognized that it was because of God's mercy and blessings that they existed. It is because of God's great love for men today that they have such abundance of clothes, shelter, and food.

### ***Psalms 50:14*** (NKJV)

*14 Offer to God thanksgiving,  
And pay your vows to the Most High.*

All men and women need to be thankful this week for the families they have and for the privilege of living in a free country.

A friend of mine, Nathaniel Westmoreland, lives his life in a wheelchair. He was in a wreck in the mid 1980s which left him paralyzed in both legs and his left arm. Nathaniel was in a coma for three months and many thought he would not live. He has a steel plate in his head. Besides this, his mother died when he was a small child. He was reared by his grandmother and a few years ago she died as well. Yet, in spite of all these hardships, Nathaniel says the same thing every year just before Thanksgiving. He says, "*Every day is thanksgiving brother.*" Nathaniel is a good example. He could whine and moan about how hard his life is, but instead he always smiles and has some word of encouragement to offer to everyone who knows him.

People need to learn how to thank God even during times of hardships. Some turn to drugs – legal and illegal. Some commit suicide. Others gripe and complain and make

everyone around them as miserable as they are. Yet people need to learn joy and thankfulness in spite of circumstances. If men could focus on the Lord and forget about themselves, they could learn to be joyful, not because of circumstances, but in spite of circumstances.

**Philippians 4:11** (NKJV)

*11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:*

Paul was in prison when he wrote this. He had learned to be content under any circumstance. He kept his attention focused on serving God first and others second and he placed himself third. By doing this, he was content.

**Leviticus 22:29** (NKJV)

*29 And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it of your own free will.*

Here the OT scriptures speak of a "sacrifice of thanksgiving" which Israel would offer long ago. The Lord wanted this to be offered from a person's "own free will." He did not want anyone coerced or forced to do this. When a person is forced to say "thank-you," then he might as well have said nothing. An expression of thanksgiving is accepted only when it is truly meant and not forced.

Let everyone, this Thanksgiving Day, be thankful for the wonderful blessings he enjoys. Let everyone freely, without coercion, give thanks to the God who holds each one's breath in His hand (Dan. 5:23) and freely gives all things to enjoy.

**1 Timothy 6:17** (NKJV)

*17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*