

---

# BIBLE TALK

---

This week the question is: **What does the Bible say about Thanksgiving?**

Let me begin by sharing with you some history about the holiday of Thanksgiving.

President George Washington made the following proclamation in 1789 – listen carefully to what he said:

*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)

Our country has forgotten God. It is virtually illegal in this country to mention God unless you're 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 we are here today. It is because of God's great love to us – His creation – that we have such abundance of clothes, shelter, and food.

## **Psalms 50:14**

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

We need to all be thankful this week for the families we have and for the privilege of living in a free country.

A friend of mine, Nathaniel Westmoreland, was 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 had 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 would always tell me the same

thing every year just before Thanksgiving. He would say, “*Every day is thanksgiving brother.*” Nathaniel was a good example for me. He has passed on now. He could have whined and moaned about how hard his life was, but instead he always smiled and had some word of encouragement to offer to everyone who knew him.

We need to learn how to thank God even during times of hardships. Some people turn to drugs – legal and illegal. Some commit suicide. Others gripe and complain and make everyone around them as miserable as they are. But we need to learn to be joyful and thankful in spite of our circumstances. If we would focus on the Lord and forget about ourselves, we could learn to be joyful, not because of our circumstances, but in spite of them.

**Philippians 4:11**

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

**Leviticus 22:29**

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 offered long ago. The Lord wanted this to be offered from a person’s “own free will.” God did not want anyone coerced or forced to do this. When a person is forced to say “thank-you,” he might as well have said nothing. An expression of thanksgiving is accepted only when it is truly meant and not forced.

Let us all, this Thanksgiving Day be thankful for the wonderful blessings we enjoy. Let us freely, without coercion, give thanks to the God who holds our breath in His hand (Dan 5:23) and freely gives us all things to enjoy.