

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## THANKFULNESS

*And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. Ezekiel 16:6*

The foundation of true thankfulness, of necessity, must be in the understanding (given to us) that what we have is not the result of our own efforts, talents, or goodness but rather is the gift of Almighty GOD. Paul was well acquainted with this truth when he said, "*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*" (1 Cor 4:7) Thankfulness is a natural result of being made aware of WHO it is that has blessed us. (see James 1:17) When a man is made to know the weakness of his flesh, the sinfulness of his heart, and his natural inability to seek after righteousness, then that man will bow down and thank the LORD of heaven and earth for HIS great mercy and grace. But as long as a man entertains some notion of his own worthiness to receive the blessings of the LORD, he cannot and will not have a true spirit of thanksgiving, but will only pay lip service to being thankful while in his heart he is convinced that he is somehow deserving of those blessings or has performed some deed that has earned them for himself.

Humility and thankfulness go hand in hand. Pride is the enemy of thanksgiving. When speaking of the wicked, Paul said, "*when they knew GOD, they glorified him not as GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations,*" (Romans 1:21). The Pharisee in Luke 18:11 "thanked GOD" but it was the prayer of a hypocrite because he made reference to his own righteousness in the same breath.

**What should we thank HIM for?** He has given us all things. (see Eph.5:20) He has blessed us with the fellowship of our brethren in Christ. (see Eph.1:16; Col.3:15-17) He has caused our brethren to walk in faith and love bringing untold blessings to us by their example. (see Rom.1:8; Col.1:3-6). HE has given us our daily bread. (see Eph.6:23, I Tim.4:3,4). HE is a sovereign GOD who has no rival and needs no aid. (see Rev.11:17). HE is a holy GOD who delights in righteousness. (see Ps.30:4; 97:12) He is a GOD who delights in mercy and will display HIS goodness to HIS people. (see Ps.106:1). HE has given us HIS WORD. (see I Thes.2:13) HE has filled our hearts with joy. (see I Thes.3:9) HE has given to us the "unspeakable gift" of HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST! (see II Cor.9:15) HE has given us deliverance from, and victory over, the power of sin. (see Rom.7:23-25; I Cor.15:57) HE has granted us wisdom that we may seek HIM. (see Dan.2:23). HE has shown us the success and triumph of HIS gospel by the conversion of sinners. (see II Cor.2:4; Rom.6:17; Col.1:3-6).

**Why should we thank HIM?** HE has commanded us to thank HIM. (see Ps.50:14) The heavenly creatures have set the precedent for us as they have thanked HIM from the ancient times, both day and night. (see Rev.4:9; 7:11-12; 11:16-17) Our LORD and SAVIOR has set for us an example that we should follow in HIS steps and HE was continually thanking HIS heavenly FATHER. (see Mt.11:25; 26:27; Jn.6:11) It is a "good thing" to give thanks to the LORD. HE has

done so much for us, in this lifetime, that it will take eternity to come to speak forth the volume of our thanks. (see Ps.92:1).

**When should we thank HIM?** When we are alone in our prayer closet, our hearts should overflow and our lips cease not to thank HIM for all that HE has done for us. (see Dan.6:10). When we are gathered together with GOD's people in the place of public worship, thanks to HIM should be the theme of our gathering. Only those who are strangers to grace could think otherwise. (see Ps.35:18) When we go about our everyday activities in the presence of those who do not reverence HIS name we should give thanks. *"Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name."* (Psalms 18:49) When we sit down for a meal, rather than "saying a blessing" we should be thanking the ONE who provides every morsel of food we have ever eaten. (see the example of our LORD in John 6:11 and the example of the apostle Paul in Acts 27:35) In summary we should thank him at all times and for all things. *"Giving thanks always for all things unto GOD and the FATHER in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; "*(Eph 5:20)

**How should we thank HIM?** Giving thanks and praising GOD go hand in hand and are often used interchangeably in the scriptures. Giving thanks is an activity and not just a thought process. We thank HIM by opening our mouths and speaking forth thanks. *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."* ( Heb 13:15)

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