20261122 In Everything Give Thanks

Thanksgiving is absolutely central to the Christian life. It begins with the simple truth that "we love Him, because He first loved us!" (1 John 4:19, KJV). Those who are believers in Jesus will well remember a time when we came under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and realized how needy we truly were. I remember a time when I realized that I was hopelessly lost and in need of some help.

Let us pray.

I will never forget March 13, 2020. I was preaching through a service on Psalm 23. I had described in detail how God desires to be a Shepherd to each and every one of us. I was talking about how he fills our deepest needs and longings, and promises to take us through the valley of every unknown that we might encounter. Sometime in the middle of the sermon, a young man stood up and said in a loud voice, "Pastor, help me. I don't know what I need to do. I am not the husband, father, or man that I'm supposed to be!!!" I invited him down to the front, and there on his needs, he gave his life to Jesus. He had come to the point of believing that God loved Him and wanted him. This young man was compelled to belief by the love of God (2 Corinthians 5:14).

> ***14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Corinthians 5:14, NKJV).***

Our young man's story does not end there. Immediately, God took away his dangerous addictions, and little by little, over the last 6 years, God has chipped away at him helping him to become more Christlike. But many of the cares and problems of his life are still there. Despite a multitude of problems, there is a **heart of gratitude for what God has done** and for what He still will do in the future. This is how we love God back. When we trust Him and love Him, we have hearts filled with gratitude and thanksgiving. We literally throw ourselves before Him realizing and truly appreciating all that He has done for us. You see, the word for thanks in Hebrew is todah, which is closely related to the word Torah that we've been talking about lately. Thanksgiving is something we cast toward God, directing our appreciation towards Him for all that He is and for what He has done in our lives. Thanksgiving is a response to His grace and mercy.

When I was a little boy, my mother was determined to teach me Scripture. I think mom knew that when the winds of life would blow and assail, God's promises were the only truth that would get me through it all. One of her favorites was:

> ***[16]Rejoice always, [17]pray without ceasing, [18]in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.[19]Do not quench the Spirit. [20]Do not despise prophecies. [21]Test all things; hold fast what is good. [22]Abstain from every form of evil.[23]Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [24]He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, NKJV).***

Mom knew God's will for her children was: (1) to always rejoice, (2) to never stop praying, and (3) to give thanks for something in any situation and circumstance. Paul tells us right there in verse 18 of the above passage that "this is the will of God."

As I just mentioned, the word Torah means: instruction – aimed towards – shot like an arrow – directed towards – cast toward. Curiously, the Hebrew word for thanks is related to that. The word is not Torah, but todah. It also means "directed towards or cast towards".

> **<u>Root in a Physical Gesture</u>**
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> The word *todah* comes from the Hebrew verbal root *yadah* (יָדָה), which fundamentally means **to throw, cast, or extend the hands**. In biblical Hebrew, expressing gratitude was not a passive internal feeling or a casual polite phrase; it was a physical and public posture of **lifting or extending your hands** toward God—essentially casting your praise or acknowledgment outward.[1] It is raising your hands towards Almighty God thus saying "YOU AND YOU ALONE ARE WORTHY TO BE PRAISED!"

I like to look deep into the hidden meanings of Hebrew words. We learn much in doing that. Hebrew is a physical language. I think it is because the letters themselves are small pictures of things. Alpha is an ox. Beit is a tent. Gimel is a crooked camel's leg. Anyway, you get the idea. It is easy to see the meaning of yadah because a yad is a hand. We are talking about hands that are outstretched before a merciful loving God. The Hebrew word *yadah* (יָדָה, pronounced *yah-DAH*) does not have a secret code meaning, but it is overt. Think hands. Think hands outstretched. These gestures are associated with **praise, thanksgiving, confession, and surrender.** When we lift our hands before the Lord we are engaged in praise, thanksgiving, confession, surrender and yeilding oneself to the very will of God.

Getting to the Heart of Yadah

- **Praise and Thanksgiving:** Appearing 114 times in the Hebrew Bible (especially in the Psalms), *yadah* most often means to give thanks or praise. That's it! It's giving praise back where it is due. Yadah itself is also related to *todah* and *hodu* ("give thanks," as in Psalm 136).

[1] Vernal Christian Ministries

- **Confession and Acknowledgment:** The same verb carries the sense of confessing or openly acknowledging truth—whether admitting sin or testifying to what God has done. When I lift my hands in worship I feel the ultimate vulnerability and openness to God. I'm saying, "God I'm trying my best here to give you all that I am. I'm lifting before you all of my care, burdens, talents, treasure and all of my being. Take me. I am yours."

- **Throwing or Casting:** Embedded in the very picture of holding my hands up towards him, I am throwing and casting myself before Him. We see that word yadah used as casting as in Lamentations 3:53 speaking of casting stones, etc.

We are commanded to "OFFER HIM A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE"

> ***15 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.***
>
> ***16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. (Hebrews 13:15-16, KJV).***

Old Testament Passages (Featuring *Yadah*)

- **Psalm 100:4–5, ESV:** *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks (yadah) to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations* – Sacrifices of thanks and praise are the means to bring us into the very presence of God.

- **Psalm 107:1, ESV:** *Oh give thanks (yadah) to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!* This opening refrain anchors a psalm recounting how God rescues people from wilderness wandering, imprisonment, sickness, and storms.

- **Psalm 136:1–3, ESV:** *Give thanks (yadah) to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods... Give thanks to the Lord of lords…*" הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי-טוֹב: כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ. "Hodah L Yahweh, ci-towv, ci-L olam chesed" Every one of its 26 verses pairs a specific act of creation or deliverance with the refrain of enduring love.

- **1 Chronicles 16:34, ESV:** *Oh give thanks (yadah) to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!* King David includes this song of gratitude when bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. Maybe this is a phrase that all of as believers should memorize to let it be spoken in our private time of praise and in our assembly!

- **Psalm 9:1, ESV:** *I will give thanks (yadah) to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.* Here, thanksgiving is paired directly with testifying to what God has done.

New Testament Passages

- **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, ESV:** *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*" Paul presents gratitude not merely as a reaction to good fortune, but as a continuous spiritual posture.

  I spoke on this passage on Wednesday night. You may wondering what God's will is for you in your life. Why don't you start with this. Both in Micah 6:8 and in this passage God tells us EXACTLY what His will is for each of our lives. This is an extended attitude of praise that should surround our very beings. REJOICE ALL THE TIME – PRAY WITHOUT CEASING – GIVE THANKS IN ANY AND ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. **For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning each of us.**

- **Philippians 4:6–7, ESV:** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Giving thanks is like taking a spiritual anti-anxiety pill. Gratitude is directly related to overcoming anxiety and experiencing the peace that God intends for us to experience.

- **Colossians 3:15–17, ESV:** *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... And **be thankful...** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** to God the Father through him.* Gratitude is described here as an overarching attitude for daily life and community harmony.

- **Hebrews 12:28, ESV:** *Therefore let **us be grateful** for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God **acceptable worship**, with reverence and awe.* This verse grounds thanksgiving in the permanent, unshakable nature of God's kingdom and His personality. We must be grateful because we have a God upon Whom we can thoroughly depend.

I have read these key passages on gratitude and thanksgiving. I've explained to you some of the benefits of living a life that is filled with gratitude. As you know, lawyers love to exact and extract the negative side of texts as well. If you'll permit me to do so, listen to how a primary change in attitude changes the outcome in our lives.

"Don't rejoice in anything. Don't bother to pray about everything. Maintain an attitude of ingratitude and unthankfulness. Exercise these habits because in doing so, you'll be living in a way that is the exact opposite of what God intends for you." (1 Thessalonians 5 in reverse by Pastor Faber)

I did a google search and I asked google, "What do psychologists say will be the result of having and attitude of ingratitude?[2]

Psychological and Emotional Effects

- **Heightened dissatisfaction:** Chronic ingratitude leaves more room for discontent and lowers life satisfaction, even when positive things are happening.
- **Stronger negativity bias:** Without practicing appreciation, the mind tends to dwell more on flaws, problems, and what is missing rather than what is going well.
- **Lower stress resilience:** Gratitude helps buffer against stress and negative emotions; lacking it can make setbacks feel heavier.
- **Possible links to mood struggles:** An inability to feel grateful can accompany or reflect underlying issues like depression, burnout, or emotional overwhelm.

Relationship and Daily Life Impacts

- **Strained relationships:** Friends, partners, or coworkers may feel unappreciated or drained when kindness goes unacknowledged, leading them to pull back.

- **Social isolation:** Over time, distance from others can reduce support networks and increase loneliness. You'll end up isolated. Satan isolates before he assasinates.

- **Poorer sleep and habits:** Ruminating (chewing them over and over again in your mind) on negative events or grievances—especially late in the day—can make it harder to wind down and sleep well. That's why I ask you guys to call me before 6 pm if you want to discuss something negative or stressful. I don't want to hear anything about what is bad that is going on after about 6 pm.

God gives us a formula to live a peaceful, anxiety free life. It is all in the mind. Let your mind be transformed today (Romans 12:2). This is the easiest place to start. Make THIS THANKSGIVING the year that you truly learned the importance of thanksging, prayerfulness, and joy.

Let us pray.

[2] Psychology Today – and others.
https://www.google.com/search?q=What+do+psychologist+say+that+will+result+from+an+attitude+of+never+being+thankful+for+anything%3F&oq=What+do+psychologist+say+that+will+result+from+an+attitude+of+never+being+thankful+for+anything%3F&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBCjIzOTUzajBqMTWoAgiwAgE&sourceid=chrome&source=chrome.rb&ie=UTF-8

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.