

## THANKSGIVING: A LIFESTYLE



The ability to be genuinely grateful is one of the purest and holiest impulses of the human heart. To be convinced of its purity, think how effortless and natural it seems to be for little children who have yet to learn the vice of greed. To see its holiness, you need only to recall how often the Bible praises gratitude.

As a matter of fact, the Bible commands gratitude. **"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful" (Colossians 4:2). "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).**

But who really believes that thanks can be offered on cue because of a commandment? The spirit of appreciation rises from hearts that have been touched with the reality of God's generosity and grace.

Is there any good thing in your world? Do you have a coat to

protect you from the cold? Will you have food to eat today? Is there constructive work for you to do this week? Does anyone love you? Did the Son of God die for you?

We are sometimes so cynical as to think that Thanksgiving Day should be removed from the calendar. Terrorism, war, political division, uncertain markets, drug addiction, family dysfunction, life-threatening illness – all of them frighten us, and some have touched us. So where is the place for gratitude this year?

The more cynical we allow ourselves to become, the less spiritual we are. Failing to glorify God by giving thanks is one of the marks that our hearts are slipping away from Him. It is less that God needs our thanks or that He will withhold from those who fail to give thanks than that we need to be a thankful people in order to be a spiritual people.

Giving thanks is always a route into the presence of God. Since He is the one who provides every good gift, gratitude inevitably moves us in His direction. One writer put it this way: Since we live suspended between blessings received and blessings hoped for, we should always give thanks.

As our nation observes the upcoming holiday with football, family, and food, resolve to do so with a consciousness of God.

**"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord . . ."** (Psalm 92:1).