

Why Be THANKFUL?

[Originally from Youth Magazine – Oct/Nov 1984;
this copy edited by the Bible Fund editors, September 2022]

Instructions: The format of these mini-studies is similar to that of the Bible On-Line Study Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions further explain the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Each year, some countries around the world celebrate a day of giving thanks.

For example, in Canada it's the second Monday in October. In the Virgin Islands it is celebrated on Oct 24, at the end of hurricane season. Liberia has chosen the first Thursday in November, while the United States commemorates the fourth Thursday of that month.

The custom of Thanksgiving Day in the United States began with a group of settlers known as the Pilgrims in 1621. Those who survived their first year in the new world held a festival in gratitude for a successful harvest. They recognized God as the source of their blessings and gave Him thanks for their still being alive and having food to eat.

But the giving of thanks to God should not be limited to one day a year. It should be a daily occurrence, for each of us has so incredibly much to be thankful for!

In this study, we'll discuss some of the things for which we should be grateful, as well as some of the ways we can show our appreciation for the many blessings that the Almighty showers on us daily.

But before you begin this study, be sure to get a Bible, pen or pencil and paper. Reading and writing out the Bible verses given in this study will help you remember the important principles you will learn.

1. Just how great and powerful is God? Revelation 1:13-16; Job 42:1-2; Psalm 147:5, 4; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Matthew 19:26. Is He the source of every good thing that we enjoy? Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 104:24; James 1:17.

God is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of the entire universe, estimated by astronomers to contain more than 40 sextillion stars! (That's the figure 40 followed by 21 zeros.) He made the star systems and planets, the seemingly limitless variety of plant and animal life on the earth, as well as human life – the most intricate and complex of all His physical creations!

2. Do the angels in heaven, who are very much aware of God's supreme power and glory, thank and praise God for all His wonderful works? Revelation 4:8-11; 7:11-12; 11:16-17.

3. Does God want us to thank Him for all the many blessings and opportunities He has given us? Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Psalm 92:1.

Consider for a moment just a few of the things we have to be thankful for. We are alive and breathing. We have minds that can think, reason, plan, design and come to conclusions based on acquired knowledge. These incredible blessings are from the Creator God!

Furthermore, God gives us air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink. Other gifts from God include the ability to see a beautiful sunrise or sunset, to hear a symphony orchestra, to taste a delicious, mouth-watering piece of apple pie or to smell a rose! Our talents and ability to develop them were also given to us by God.

4. Was King David a man who was well aware of and thankful for the many blessings he received from God? Psalms 28:6-7; 30:12; 103:1-5. Was he a man after God's own heart – a person in whom God delighted because he did God's will? Acts 12:22.

One of King David's greatest qualities was his gratitude toward God. Even amid sorrow, trials and persecutions, he constantly praised God. He often sang psalms of thanksgiving and appreciation for God's mercy, goodness and boundless blessings. David knew that when he faced difficulties God would deliver him and was he ever thankful for that!

5. Are young people encouraged to rejoice – to be thankful and happy – during their youthful years? Ecclesiastes 11:9. Is it also important for them to remember God in their youth? Ecclesiastes 12:1.

While we are still young, we should thank God for the strength, health, energy and vitality that He has given us.

Besides thanking God for all He has given to us, we should also show our gratitude to other people for the good things they give us.

For example, our parents deserve a great deal of credit and thanks. Young people who are truly thankful will cheerfully and promptly do household chores without being told to and will help in other ways. They will thank their parents for the time they spend with them and for all of the things that they receive from them.

A grateful young person will demonstrate his or her appreciation for summer employment by working enthusiastically for the employer. And he or she will show appreciation for receiving an education by diligently studying class assignments.

There are many other ways to express our gratitude and appreciation. The easiest, simplest and least costly is simply to smile and say, "thank you." Sending thank you cards is another good way to show appreciation. Small acts of kindness count much and may even be remembered for a lifetime.

6. Will the young person doing his or her best to live God's way enjoy peace of mind and abundant well-being? Psalms 119:165; 128:1-2.

A young person who understands and follows God's way of life, as revealed in the Bible, can be especially thankful for the blessings that will come.

God gave His law to promote the health, happiness and welfare of each of us. God's law is the way to success, accomplishment and joy.

It is the way to freedom from every headache and heartache, from every war and financial panic – literally from every sorrow that faces humanity today.

Those who know and understand the priceless knowledge God has revealed to us in the Bible can be exceedingly thankful. If we diligently follow God's way early in life, we can avoid making mistakes that lead to unhappiness, frustration and disappointment later in life. We will enjoy a happy and productive life both now and in the future!

7. One important way to express thanks for the many blessings God has given us is to share them with others. Did Jesus stress the benefit of giving? Acts 20:35. And is it important to give cheerfully? 2 Corinthians 9:7. Will a generous person be blessed? Proverbs 22:9. Will God see to it that he or she does not lack the necessities of life? Proverbs 28:27.

The truly thankful people experience the joy of giving. They appreciate their blessings and want to share the generosity that has been expressed toward them by God, parents and friends. They will spend time helping others – including fellow classmates, the elderly and those less fortunate than themselves.

8. When we acknowledge God in all our ways, what has He promised to do for us?
Proverbs 3: 6. (“To give thanks” is one meaning of the word acknowledge.)

Giving thanks to God for His many blessings should be a regular part of our daily lives. If we acknowledge God and try to the best of our ability to please Him, we will have His continued blessings, including His guidance and direction.

God shows that being really thankful to Him and expressing it is a wonderful way of life – a way of life filled with great rewards!