

## GOD

### Thankful for One Another

As born-again children of God standing together in the Body of Christ, we have so much to be thankful for. This includes being thankful for one another. We'll take a look at what it means to be thankful, why we should be thankful for one another in the Body, and how we can express our thankfulness for one another.

According to a Dictionary, the word "thankful" might be defined as "expressing gratitude or appreciation", where gratitude can be defined as "the quality of being grateful or deeply appreciative of some kindness or benefit received". When we are appreciative of something, we value it or regard it highly. We can express our thankfulness by words or actions, which as we'll see include, among other things, prayer.

God wants us to be thankful:

#### Colossians

3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

The word "thankful" in this verse is from the Greek word *eucharistos*, which is used only here. The word *eucharistos* comes from *eu*, meaning "good or well done", and *charizomai*, meaning "to grant as a favor, or kindness". The root of *charizomai* is *charis*, which we know means grace. Literally, then, *eucharistos*, translated "thankful", means "well favored", and it involves grace.

You may recall Acts chapter 2, verse 47, in which the believers fellowshiping together in the early days of the Church were "praising God, and having favor (literally, sharing grace) with all the people". Part of this "sharing grace" was being thankful for one another in the household.

While the word "thankful", as translated from *eucharistos*, appears only once, the words "thank", from *eucharisteō*, and "thanks" (or "thanksgiving"), from *eucharistia*, occur numerous times in the Bible. Both of these Greek words are derived from *eucharistos*, our word for "thankful".

Let's consider some of the reasons we should be thankful for one another in the Body of Christ. As we look at these verses, we'll see that our being thankful for one another is not because of what we do to deserve thanks, but because of what God did by His grace, His unmerited divine favor.

We'll begin with II Thessalonians chapter 2, where we'll read verse 13:

## II Thessalonians

2:13 But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

God has chosen each one of us to salvation: we should be very thankful.

## I Corinthians

6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body (*the rest of the verse is not in the Greek texts*).

Each one of us is “bought with a price”, and we should be thankful for God’s grace that made this available. Our response, to “glorify God in our body”, is to endeavor to walk in alignment and harmony in the Body of Christ to which we belong.

## Ephesians

2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;

2:21 In whom (*in Christ, in fellowship*) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord (*standing together in the household*):

2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

We are members of the Body of Christ, and each one of us has an important function in that Body. Look at I Corinthians chapter 12, verse 27:

## I Corinthians

12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Back up to verse 18:

12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

We are members of the Body of Christ by God’s grace, and as we continue to learn God’s Word, we can stand strong:

## I Corinthians

1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

1:5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance and *in* all knowledge;

## I Thessalonians

2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

As believers receive God's Word and believe it, they can stand strong with others in the Body of Christ. We should be thankful for one another as we do this together.

So, we've seen some of the reasons why we should be thankful for one. Now let's consider how we can express this thankfulness. We'll start in Galatians chapter 6:

#### Galatians

6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

As we live God's love, being thankful for one another, we endeavor to be especially good to each other.

We see more about how to express our thankfulness for one another in Ephesians:

#### Ephesians

4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

We're to be kind one to another. I Corinthians chapter 13, verse 4 tells us "Charity (the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation) ... is kind". When we renew our minds and manifest the love of God, we are kind. In fact, we can apply all the attributes of the love of God that are mentioned in Chapter 13 of I Corinthians when we consider how we can express our thankfulness for one another.

Consider Ephesians chapter 5, beginning in verse 19. This directly follows the section exhorting us to walk in love, to walk as children of light, and to walk circumspectly.

#### Ephesians

- 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
- 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear (*respect*) of God.

As we are thankful, including being thankful for one another, we can lovingly submit ourselves to one another.

We see more in Colossians chapter 3, where we'll begin in verse 12 to read the context surrounding the verse that we started with regarding being thankful.

#### Colossians

- 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
- 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

3:14 And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Manifesting the love of God as we renew our minds keeps us together.

3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

There's our word *eucharistos*, thankful, that we started with. As we are thankful for one another, we can do what the next verses say:

3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, (*there should be a comma here*) in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Now let's turn to I Thessalonians chapter 5, where we'll begin in verse 16:

#### I Thessalonians

5:16 Rejoice evermore.

5:17 Pray without ceasing.

5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

We see that God wants us to give thanks in everything. Notice that it doesn't say "for" everything – we're not thankful for bad things that happen. But, no matter what the situation, we can always give thanks for what God has made available.

We see from the immediate context that our giving thanks can involve prayer. When we consider being thankful for one another, we can see how prayer for one another is one way we can express our thankfulness. We can see this as we look at a few examples from the epistles written by the apostle Paul.

#### Ephesians

1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,

The remainder of this chapter is Paul's great prayer for the members of the household.

#### Philippians

1:3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

1:4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

1:5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

Notice that Paul says that every time he thinks about the believers in Philippi, his response is to thank God.

We also see this connection between thankfulness for the believers and prayer in I Thessalonians chapter 1:

### I Thessalonians

- 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;
- 1:3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith (*believing*), and labor of love, and patience (*endurance*) of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
- 1:4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

Finally, let's look at a great section in I Timothy chapter 2, beginning in verse 1:

### I Timothy

- 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;
- 2:2 For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.
- 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior:
- 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Even though these verses mention “all that are in authority”, including the leaders of the lands we live in, the “all men” in verse 1 also applies to other members of the Body of Christ. We should give thanks for each other and pray for each other, so we too can enjoy quietness and peace. Then, the Word of God can move so others can be added to the Church, and God's Word can be taught so all can gain the full, experiential knowledge of the truth.

We've seen the importance of being thankful for one another in the Body of Christ. We can express this thankfulness by renewing our minds to God's Word and acting accordingly in our interactions with each other, including praying for one another. As we do, we all can enjoy sweet fellowship with one another as we live and move God's Word.

- Dr. Rick Batt