

LIFE CHANGING PRAYER – PART 2

Thanksgiving Spice

1 Corinthians 10:31 *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

A large part of the deliciousness of the Thanksgiving holiday meal comes from the spices used to bring out the flavors of the food. When you search the Internet you will find references concerning the secrets for the perfectly seasoned Thanksgiving turkey and every other Thanksgiving food item. Today, we look into a seasoning that is essential in the life of God's children – the perfect 'seasoning' for our prayer life. The name of the 'spice' is thanksgiving!

Read Psalm 100:1-5 (ESV) ¹ *Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!* ² *Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!* ³ *Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.* ⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!* ⁵ *For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Most often when we hear the words *Make a joyful noise to the LORD*, it is quoted as a reference to singing and most often by a person who considers themselves not to be vocally inclined. Yes verse 1 is connected to verse 2 which mentions singing. However, the Hebrew verb for make a joyful noise or shout is a highly charged command for public praise. The command is addressed not just to Israel but to all the earth. The Israelites were to be a people who would attract the nations to worship the One True God with gladness. We worship our Maker with gladness because *the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations*. These words are a 'spice' we can use in public praise and private prayer! In preparing holiday meals, the family cook loves to serve dishes he or she knows family and friends adore. Even just the aroma of the dishes being prepared brings delight. It is same with our Lord and Savior. When our prayers are flavored with 'thanksgiving spice', those prayers thrill the heart of God.

Read Psalm 34:1-3, 8 (ESV) ¹ *I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* ² *My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.* ³ *Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!...* ⁸ *Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*



Saying *I will bless the LORD at all times* easily rolls off our tongues when things are good. David sang these words in the time of his adversity. When God's children are afraid, we should worship. When we are filled with panic it is a time to praise..We

can bless God at all times because He gave His precious blood to pay the sacrifice for our sins. Those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus upon death are escorted by the angels into the arms of God. What better reason than that to praise!

Read Ephesians 5:20 (ESV) ²⁰ *giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Buddy Owens, a pastor at Saddleback Church in California, says, “Praise prepares us to pray. When we worship God as our Counselor, it strengthens our faith to pray for wisdom. When we praise Him as the Great Physician, it strengthens our faith to pray for healing. When we remember how He has provided in the past, it strengthens our faith to ask for provision again. Praise builds our faith in who God is: Redeemer Comforter, Savior, Deliverer, Defender, Friend.”

Is Thanksgiving Spice an ingredient to use only once a year during the Thanksgiving holiday?

Of course not! Praise and thankfulness should be the foundation for daily prayer – it is a key ingredient – it should never be an afterthought.

Read Psalm 69:30 (ESV) ³⁰ *I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving.*

David, the sweet psalmist, wrote of magnifying God with thanksgiving. The word “magnify” can be used in two different senses. It can mean: make something appear greater than it is, as with a microscope or a magnifying glass. **Or it can mean: make something that may seem small or insignificant appear to be as great as it really is.** Our magnificent God is so much greater than we can ever imagine. We should praise Him in song, we should magnify Him with thanksgiving; we should reflect His love from our heart. Our prayers should be loaded with thanksgiving spice! Thanksgiving is surely a ‘spice’ our Lord loves.

Read Psalm 9:1 (ESV) ¹ *I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.*

Real praise is not half-hearted praise meaning only from the lips and not the heart. If we are genuinely praising and giving thanks to God it will involve our entire being. **Psalm 146:2 (ESV)** ² *I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.*

David Legge tells this story of a man who settled in Arizona and began to farm. A few nights after he had moved there was a fierce storm, and within that desert everything was turned upside-down, the rain and the hail came down and the high winds blew. And after that night of awful storm, at daybreak the man got out of his bed fearing to look at the loss around him but he went outside. The hail had beaten the garden, the vegetable patch was destroyed, the house was

partially unroofed, the hen-house had totally been destroyed and there were dead carcasses of little hens all over the farm. Destruction and devastation were all around. And while he stood dazed, dismayed, evaluating the situation - he wondered what was left and what would happen in the future. Suddenly he heard a little sound, and a rooster began to climb out of the debris. It climbed to the top of the pile, and there it stood, dripping wet, most of its feathers gone, standing on the horizon of destruction -- and what did the rooster do? The rooster crowed. That bird, almost dead, flaps its bony wings, and proudly crows. Reminding the man and us that in the midst of destruction and perilous trials we can climb on top of the debris of our lives, forget about the destruction and praise the Lord.

It is a beautiful picture concerning waiting on the Lord and then mounting up with wings like eagles, but that may take some time to reach those heights. In the meantime, we can rise to the top of life's disasters and crow like that rooster. Praising the Lord when we are down and out is beautiful to hear for those around us and also it is a sweet sound to the ears of our Maker.

Read Psalm 107:8-9 (ESV) ⁸ *Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!* ⁹ *For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.*

The Bible speaks often of God's steadfast love. Stephen Altrogge, a pastor from Indiana, writes, "My love for the Lord and others is so fickle. Some days I'm hot, some days I'm cold, some days I'm thankful, some days I grumble. If someone does something to irritate me, my affection for them dries up. If I wake up with a headache, I'm more tempted to grumble than to rejoice. But incredibly, God's love is steadfast. Immoveable. Unchangeable. Faithful." Looking for a special thanksgiving spice? Thank Him for His personal steadfast love for you!

Recalling the wondrous works of God is another way to use 'thanksgiving spice.' The words of a hymn written in 1864 come to my mind. *For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies. Christ, our Lord, to you we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise. When we feel down and depressed, we can look all around us in every season of the year at the changing beauty of God's earth – His wondrous fingerprints are everywhere and we have reason to praise our Creator.*

There was a secular song from my teen years entitled – I Can't Get No Satisfaction – well that is not the case when it comes to the LORD God Jehovah: *For he satisfies the longing soul, We can be sad and depressed at times not even realizing the reason and then we turn to the One Who Loves us and we are comforted and experience the satisfaction that only He can offer.*

Sometimes we have a meal and that meal just wasn't what we wanted. Maybe it didn't taste that good or it was leftovers or we were just tired of it. Others folks have bragged about a special restaurant and when we go and it just wasn't satisfying to us. We experience genuine satisfaction when we taste the LORD because *the hungry soul he fills with good things.*

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

As we grow in applying the Word of God to our everyday lives, we must also grow in our expression of praise privately and publicly. Paul does not mean that we should thank God *for everything* that happens to us, but thank Him *in* everything. Most often these words concerning giving thanks in all things comes to mind during the bad times or possibly awesome experiences. But, our focus should be on giving thanks in everything even the mundane times. Yes, the meal was leftovers but we can be thankful we didn't have to cook it this time. No, we didn't care for the meal at the restaurant but we can be thankful we got out of house. Some of us may need to cultivate optimism in our thanksgiving more than others. **Matthew 10:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ *But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.* Our God is concerned with the small things and we should thank Him even for the seemingly mundane.

Also, remember to thank Him for the greatest gift of all!

Read Colossians 1:12-15 (ESV) ¹² *giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.* ¹³ *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.* ¹⁴ *in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Paul lists five reasons God gives all believers to be thankful for through Christ: (1) Jesus has qualified us to share in His inheritance. We can praise God because we are saints in light. (2) Our Lord has rescued us from Satan's kingdom of darkness and made us His children. We can praise Him that the best is yet to be. Darkness does not reign. (3) Part of the sadness of this life is that it is so fleeting. We can thank Jesus because He has brought us into his eternal Kingdom meaning we will live with Him forever. (4) Christ has purchased our freedom from sin and judgment with his blood. He should be thanked frequently for His supreme sacrifice. And (5) We have a magnificent reason to be thankful. He has forgiven all our sins. Being a part of God's family provides many benefits. We have much to be thankful for – not just one day – but all the days of our time here on earth.