

News Brief

OCTOBER 2020

Give Thanks in Everything.

Are You Kidding? How is This Possible?

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 PUTS IT THIS WAY...

“BE JOYFUL, PRAY CONTINUALLY; GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. FOR THIS IS GOD’S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.”

But how can we possibly give thanks for the pandemic that has swept through our entire world destroying lives, the economies of nations and our “normal” way of life? And how is it possible to give thanks for loved ones who are dying of an unwanted disease that is ravaging their bodies and their minds or for those who are wounded or killed in an accident or by a hundred of other things?

Next month, we celebrate Thanksgiving Day, a cherished holiday for many in the U.S. It is a day set aside once a year to give thanks to God for all the He provides for us. Of course, there are a number of people in our country, and the list is growing, that refuse to acknowledge that there is a God since they don’t believe God exists and it is, therefore, foolish to suggest one should give thanks to someone who is simply a far-fetched idea.



Furthermore, how can one give thanks on behalf of those who are barely alive and somehow surviving in the deepest kind of poverty? How about those who are starving or suffering in ways we cannot even imagine? How can they possibly give thanks for all things?

One pastor made this observation: **“We don’t necessarily have to give thanks for the problem that confronts us. Rather, we are to give thanks that the Lord has promised to help us through the difficult time.”**



Our Savior said that he will never leave or forsake us. He also invites us to cast all of our burdens upon Him for He cares for us. And remember, He never breaks his promises.

But there is more. The Scriptures tell us to not only give thanks for all things but we are commanded by our Lord to love our enemies, to do good to those who persecute us. The Apostle Paul further explains what real love entails in Romans 12.

Romans 12:9-21

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

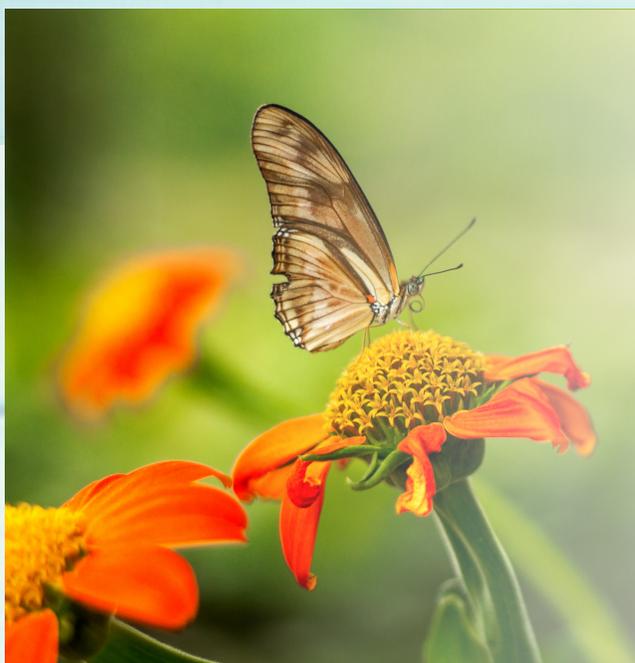


For many, the “game plan” outlined in Romans 12 is asking too much. Really? This is God’s plan. As a coach, I love it! It takes on a strategy that is totally unexpected. Love our enemies? Do good to those who persecute us? Love just happens to be one of our best offensive weapons. It confounds those who oppose us. Our enemy is stunned. I hit you and you didn’t hit back! Instead, you turned your other cheek to let me hit you again. I ordered you to travel with me and carry my load for a mile and instead you went with me two. Then I asked for a piece of your clothing and you gave me double for what I asked for. I am confused... it doesn’t make sense. I shout out to the people who are around me “who are these guys?” These guys are true followers of Christ who are sticking to the game plan no matter what.

And never forget, nothing, absolutely nothing, is impossible for God. I just love playing on God's team and being under the greatest coach in the world. A coach who can take a bunch of no-names and less than great players and turn them into winners. What could be better? By the way, it is not easy playing for this coach. There is a price to pay. But believe me, it sure beats losing. I always loved playing on winning teams and coaching winners as well.

So give thanks to our incredible Lord, not just at Thanksgiving, but on every day of the year especially as you look ahead to eternity. By all means do your best to see things as God sees them. It is a kind of perspective that breaks the grip of the enemy and defeats and shreds discouragement and depression.

And, by the way, eternity in heaven is not like a month-long vacation at a five-star resort. It is forever. I came across a Chinese proverb sometime ago that defines eternity as well as anything else that I previously unearthed. It goes like this:



“Picture the world as a solid piece of marble. Then picture a beautiful butterfly coming to this large piece of solid marble and landing on it. Moments later it takes off and returns every million years to land and immediately take off again. When this piece of solid marble the size of our earth is worn down to nothing due to the friction of the butterfly landing and taking off again, eternity has just begun.”

Sounds like a long time, doesn't it? In the meantime during a short stay on this planet we call earth, let's remember to pray for one another and turn our search lights on as we seek those who are lost. This is in obedience to Christ's command to all of us to...

“go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

(Matthew 28:18-20)

Thank you for going fishing with us as we seek to proclaim the Good News that God's love is real and is extended to all who simply accept his free offer to become part of his family.

May God bless you, protect you and encourage you as we draw a deep breath of courage and march into this dark world with our lights shining brightly and using our special weapon of love that can destroy the enemies strongholds and free those held in the concentration camps of Satan. Once freed from the prison, many of these prisoners will respond to **"the way the truth and the life"** that only Christ can provide. And the Angels will rejoice in heaven!

Blessings!

Russ Carr

GSSM President & Founder




P.S. From all of us at GSSM, have a happy Thanksgiving and thank you for your prayers and kind help for our ministry as God enables and leads you. I am also pleased to report that many of our students, staff and leaders are back into the harvest fields around the world sharing the love, grace and mercy of our Lord. Early reports indicate many have accepted Jesus as their Savior and are involved in a follow up program. Now that is something for which to really be thankful!

