



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

THANKSGIVING EVERY DAY

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 92:1-5 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Leviticus 22:29-33 | Psalm 50:23 | 2 Corinthians 5:8

► SUMMARY

What comes to mind when you think about Thanksgiving Day?

For many of us, it would probably be turkey. After all, it's the centerpiece of our traditional celebration. As family and friends gather around the table, we generally offer a sincere prayer of gratitude to God for all His blessings before enjoying the food and fellowship. But what comes after dessert? For some people, it's a football game. Others start planning for Christmas shopping the next day. Although Thanksgiving always ends, our expressions of gratitude to God should continue throughout our daily lives.

► SERMON POINTS

Gratitude to God not only honors Him, but is good for us (Ps. 92:1).

In the Old Testament, God used the sacrificial system to teach His people to be grateful. When He established the Hebrews as His nation, He gave them very specific and detailed instructions concerning His laws and sacrifices so they'd know how He wanted them to live. Through these ordinances, He taught them three important truths: (1) God is holy, (2) man is sinful, and (3) obedience is essential.

Because Jesus was the final sacrifice, we are no longer required to offer animal sacrifices. However, the principles the Lord taught through the sacrificial system are still true and applicable for us today. One of the offerings He prescribed was called a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and it was performed every morning and evening (Lev. 22:29-33). The twice daily offering reminded the Hebrews that

the Lord was the One who brought them out of Egypt and gave birth to them as a nation. He alone saved, kept, and provided for them just as He does for us today.

Should we do less than the Hebrews—giving thanks to God every morning and evening in recognition of Him as the source of everything we have? One of His most precious provisions is His written Word, which instructs us and reveals everything we need to know about the Lord. Our gratitude for it can be gauged by our attention to it. If we're truly thankful for His Word, we'll diligently read it each day.

How can we follow the example taught by the daily sacrifice of thanksgiving?

We can begin by taking note of simple blessings that God provides each day. Having basic necessities such as food and shelter, and any other gifts God chooses to bestow within our life situation are all reasons to be thankful. So often we take these things for granted, but they are all provided for us by our loving heavenly Father.

Having a grateful heart keeps our minds focused on the Lord.

The daily thanksgiving sacrifice was a continual reminder to the Hebrews that their God provided for all their needs. Likewise, each morning is an opportunity to thank the Lord for a good night's sleep. Even if we tossed and turned all night, we can still be grateful that He's given us another day.

Gratitude honors God (Ps. 50:23).

When we acknowledge the Lord as the source of all

our blessings, we are exalting Him by declaring our dependence upon Him. Who hasn't breathed a prayer of thanks after narrowly escaping a car accident? Appreciation helps us realize that we cannot make it through life without God's help.

Thankfulness is expressed in a variety of ways.

Sometimes we gather in worship services to fellowship together and sing praises to God. But we can also worship the Lord when we're alone by letting everyday activities—no matter how simple—become reasons to thank Him. Another way to acknowledge the Lord as our provider and express our gratitude is to give Him the first part of our income.

A spirit of thanksgiving is the result of remembering all God has done for us.

Scripture describes many blessings and privileges that result from our salvation and should invoke gratitude in our hearts.

- God chose us before the foundation of the world.
- We are indwelt and sealed by the Holy Spirit.
- We are eternally secure.
- We have been given gifts of the Spirit.
- We have an intimate relationship with the Lord.
- We have the peace of God in our hearts.
- The Lord loves us unconditionally.
- We're never distant from the presence of God.
- The Lord provides for our needs.
- We have His divine protection each day.
- We have the promise of a bodily resurrection.
- We have the blessing of God's atonement through Christ and total forgiveness of our sins.
- We have an eternal home in heaven and the promise of the resurrection.
- We've been given the Word of God, the source of all knowledge and understanding.

True, heartfelt, daily thanksgiving has a powerful impact on our lives.

It results in a changed mindset and a desire to obey the Lord. Gratitude ...

- Keeps us continually aware that we are walking in God's presence. This contributes to a godly lifestyle.
- Motivates us to look for the Lord's purposes in everything in our lives. Even if we don't understand what He's doing, thanking Him lifts the burden.
- Helps us bring our will into submission to His when we suffer pain or loss. By thanking Him in the midst of our pain, we acknowledge His loving sovereignty.
- Continually reminds us that He is our God and motivates us to tell others about Him.
- Reminds us of our continuing dependence on Him.
- Helps us trust the Lord. Because He alone knows what's best, we can thank Him even if we don't understand why something's happening. God honors our thanksgiving the most when we feel like we have the least reason for gratitude.
- Is essential for rejoicing in the midst of suffering. When the bottom drops out of our lives and everything looks dark, songs of praise and thanksgiving restore our hope, assuring us that God is the Light in our darkness.
- Removes anxiety. Gratitude can drive out worry.
- Keeps our focus on the Lord. The situation may not change, but our attitude will.
- Energizes us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

► RESPONSE

- How can you make gratitude a daily practice in your life?
- What effect does thankfulness have on your thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions?
- What keeps you from thanking God in the midst of hardship or pain? What can you do to increase your trust in Him so gratitude will be your first response?

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