

Thanksgiving as an Act of Worship

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Did your parents teach you the “magic words” when you were young? “Please, thank you, and you’re welcome” were given special status as words that made us polite in society. Little Lachlin, aged 2, says, “tank oo”: and “welkum” and “pwease” and we clap our hands in delight. Yet, these words became auto responses, often without any feeling of what we were saying.

As adults, we still often say these words without thinking and truly being thankful in our hearts for what we have been given. “Thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus” can become a superficial mantra every time something goes our way without much thought behind it.

As Christians, we recognize the blessings of God...or at least we should...on a daily basis. The privilege of life, skills, talents, health, safety, are all part of our lives. Yet we often think these are things we deserve. We may take them for granted until we face someone who doesn’t have these “basics.”

There are two extravagant gifts that you possess. These have been granted to you from your Heavenly Father. The first is life itself. Your body is performing according to design. Every second, 15 million blood cells are destroyed in the human body. At the same time your body is making over 3.8 million new cells every second. Your heart pumps about 11mL of oxygen into your lungs every 60 seconds, I could go on, but suffice it to say, just breathing is a complicated, ingenious gift from God.

The second amazing gift you have is eternal life. The price for this gift is well beyond Neman Marcus’ most expensive item. Jesus’ blood has paid a high price to erase your sin and put it upon Himself. If you calculated the number of sins you have committed just during childhood - disobeying, having a bad attitude, rebelling, cheating, lying, etc. – your shame would taint your life forever. Yet God has not only forgiven through Jesus each sin, but has forgotten them. If that isn’t an excuse for thanksgiving, I don’t know what can be!

This isn’t just a “glass-half-full” plea. This is a call to live in a world where thanksgiving becomes an act of worship. Look at an example. Mary, mother of Jesus, was shocked at the angel’s declaration that she would bear the Messiah. At first she asked for an explanation but then her heart embraced the situation, and her thanksgiving for being chosen turned into a phenomenal worship song:

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name... (Luke 1:46–55)

Do you hear how her heart moved beyond thanksgiving to rejoicing to worship? She recognizes her unworthiness and God's holiness. She esteems His plan above her own. She relinquishes her will to His. Do you think God felt honored? Do you think He received her worship? How could you think otherwise?

How can we make our thanksgiving turn into an act of worship? First, think about a time when you have been **really** grateful. Perhaps thinking about it today brings you to tears, or to an overwhelming sense of awe.

Even in the little things, you can transition from rote thanksgiving to pure worship. It is like the secular saying of "take time to smell the roses," but with the caveat that Jesus is in those little things that you take time to notice.

The act of worship costs us something. Like Mary, we must realize our estate and His sovereignty. We must agree to David's principle that, "I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:24) That means we are never too busy to have a worship break. (Coffee breaks are second best!)

Start filling your life with thanksgiving and worship and you will be surprised at the results. I have seen lives turn from melancholy to exuberant. I have watched the grieving mother find true peace. I have witnessed the downtrodden become blessings to others. There is a life exchange that awaits each one of us. So:

1. Start your day with thanks. Always.
2. Schedule several "worship breaks" into your day's agenda.
3. Make yourself go to bed before you are so tired you can't think. Write some points of thanksgiving about your day to God and let Him tuck you in.

You are the apple of God's eye, woman of God. Enjoy His presence as you multiply your thanksgiving and worship each day!