

*understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.*

Paul knew that prayer WITH thanksgiving ushers in the peace of God to guard our hearts and minds, whereas thanklessness opens the door to oppression.

*Romans 1:21 NKJV – Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

### III. GIVING THANKS “IN CHRIST”

In everything you can give thanks because you are “in Christ.” Your salvation is permanent; your situation is temporary.

### CONCLUSION

*Ephesians 5:4 MSG-Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, Christians have better uses for language than that. Don't talk dirty or silly. That kind of talk doesn't fit our style. Thanksgiving is our dialect.*

*Jonah 2:1-3, 9 NKJV – (1) Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. (2) And he said: I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice. (3) For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; all Your billows and Your waves passed over me. (9) But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.*

*Psalms 103:1-2 NKJV – (1) Bless the Lord, O my soul; all that is within me, bless His holy name! (2) Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*

Learn to dance in the rain, or jump in the puddles instead of running from the storm.

# CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF THANKSGIVING

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## INTRODUCTION

“Gratitude will help me learn to dance in the rain instead of running from the storm.”

*1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV – In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

## I. GIVING THANKS – A PRIMARY PURPOSE

When we give thanks we are fulfilling one of the primary purposes for which we were made.

*Psalms 50:23 GWT – Whoever offers thanks as a sacrifice honors me.*

*Hebrews 13:15 NKJV – Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

I'm giving thanks not necessarily because THINGS are good; I'm giving thanks because He is good.

## II. GIVING THANKS “IN EVERYTHING”

Instead of giving thanks in everything, many hardly give thanks in anything.

### A. Matthew Henry

“I have so much to be thankful for: I am thankful that God wrought such a change in my heart that it was I who was being robbed, and not the one doing the robbing....”

The situation may not be God's will but my reaction in and to it can be God's will.

### **B. Joseph**

God's goodness allowed Joseph to go through tremendous difficulties (from the pit, to prison, to the palace). His goodness is seen in the end – in the salvation of a whole nation.

*Genesis 50:20 NKJV – But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

### **C. Corrie Ten Boom**

“Give thanks in all circumstances,” she quoted. “It doesn't say, ‘in pleasant circumstances.’ Fleas are part of this place where God has put us.” And so we stood between piers of bunks and gave thanks for fleas.

Sometimes His gifts come in rough wrappings/coverings, and it's difficult to recognize the blessing that is contained inside.

Faith says, “Even in this I believe God is good and His love endures forever.”

### **D. The Apostle Paul**

Paul the Apostle learned to give thanks and found a way to make the most of everything he went through...and if ever there was someone who experienced difficult circumstances it was Paul.

*2 Corinthians 11:24-27NLT – (24) Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. (25) Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and day adrift at sea. (26) I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. (27) I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.*

#### i. He Focused on Christ

*Philippians 3:8-9 NKJV – (8) Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.*

Paul was more concerned with knowing Christ and being in Christ than he was with his circumstances.

#### ii. He Focused on Being Like Christ

*Romans 8:28-29 NKJV – (28) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Paul knew that even the most painful circumstances would work to his good and in the process he would be made more like Christ.

#### iii. He Focused on Being a Witness

*Acts 16:23-25 NKJV – (23) And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailor to keep them securely. (24) Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. (25) But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

Paul saw each trial as an opportunity to advance God's kingdom and righteousness.

#### iv. He Focused on the Solution

*Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV – (6) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; (7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all*