



FAMILY STUDY

The First Thanksgiving

EPISODE
5D
NIV

Learn More About our Ministries, Products and Resources at www.truthquest.net



"The First Thanksgiving"

Thanksgiving = Giving Thanks

This week in Truthopolis we learned about the importance of being thankful. As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, we often get wrapped up in the preparations for a big dinner with family and friends, and we tend to lose the significance of why we are having this holiday in the first place.

Unfortunately, the world has almost completely lost sight of the true meaning of this holiday. Thanksgiving is not just about getting together with those we love and stuffing ourselves with food and watching football. There is nothing wrong with these things if we still observe the real meaning of Thanksgiving.

The true meaning of Thanksgiving is very simple. As the name implies, it is all about giving thanks. Thanks to whom? To God of course! Yet, we should remember the context in which the first years of Thanksgiving were originally celebrated. There was generally very little food, and only the most basic needs of life were met.

If put in a similar situation today, most of us would question what there was to be so thankful for. But on that first Thanksgiving, the Pilgrims realized that God had blessed them richly, with their health, the freedom to worship Him, and salvation offered to them in Christ Jesus. How often we lose sight of these most important blessings, and how often we fail to express our gratitude to God for them!

Below is a list of Scriptures that you and your family can study to help you enjoy your Thanksgiving Holiday in a spirit of true and Biblical thanksgiving. We encourage you to study these Scriptures and to reflect for a moment on the many blessings God has given you. We all have problems and difficulties in our lives, but if we focus our energy on thanking God for His blessings, we will find just how richly blessed we really are. May God bless you as you celebrate Thanksgiving this week, and remember that Thanksgiving = giving thanks!

Choosing to be Thankful

Being thankful is a choice, but it is an attitude that God desires us to have. We are commanded to give thanks.

1 Chronicles 16:8 Psalm 50:14 Ephesians 5:19-20
Colossians 3:15 1 Thessalonians 5:18 1 Timothy 6:6-8

Attitudes Backed by Actions

As we have seen in the previous passages, thankfulness is an attitude of the heart, but also an action. As we make the effort to thank and praise God, our attitudes change, our spirits are lifted and we are filled with joy. It's no wonder that God wants us to give thanks. Below are some reasons for giving thanks.

1. We should thank God for the many blessings He gives us.

Deuteronomy 8:10 Psalm 37:23-26 Psalm 100:4

2. We should thank Him for our salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:57 Colossians 1:12 Colossians 2:6-7
Hebrews 12:28

3. We should also praise the Lord for allowing us to tell others about Jesus.

1 Chronicles 16:8 Psalm 35:28 Psalm 51:15 Acts 2:47

4. We should always thank God whenever we pray.

Psalm 107:22 Psalm 119:64 Philippians 4:6

5. We should follow the example of those who gave thanks for the Lord's goodness.

2 Chronicles 5:13 Luke 2:20, 25-32, 36-38 Luke 17:11-19

Thankful Despite Circumstances

Your children learned that the Pilgrims gave thanks in spite of their circumstances. When we think back to what we know of the Pilgrim Thanksgiving story, we remember that they had a great feast because the Lord had given them a bountiful harvest. What many people don't know is that these same people had another Thanksgiving celebration in spite of a poor harvest. Thankfulness should be an attitude of the heart no matter if we are well fed and happy, or hungry and lacking. Below are several passages that speak about this very issue. As you will see in the following verses, we should give thanks to the Lord no matter what the circumstance.

Philippians 4:12-13 Colossians 3:17 1 Thessalonians 5:18
1 Timothy 4:4 James 1:2

Examples of Thanksgiving in spite of terrible circumstances.

Job 1:6-22

Job was tested in his faith. He lost all of his children, livestock, and wealth in a single day; yet he bowed down and worshipped the Lord in spite of all he had lost.

Acts 5:17-42

The disciples were flogged and put in prison, yet they praised God and felt blessed that they had been counted worthy to suffer for Christ.

Acts 16:16-34

In spite of being beaten and thrown into prison, Paul and Silas praised the Lord. As a result, people came to know the Lord.

As you prepare for your Thanksgiving Holiday, we hope that these verses will encourage you and your family to spend the day reflecting on all the blessings God has bestowed on you. We encourage you to make a game of it to see who can come up with the most blessings. You will be surprised at how this very act will bring you great joy and may even become the highlight of your holiday. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!