



# FAMILY STUDY

Thanksgiving Every Day

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## "Thanksgiving Every Day"

### Our Thanksgiving Holiday...

Did you know that we have a woman to thank for America's national holiday of Thanksgiving? It's true. Sarah Josepha Hale spent nearly forty years trying to convince the government to make a national day of Thanksgiving an annual event. After petitioning presidents and politicians for years, Abraham Lincoln finally agreed with her that a national holiday of Thanksgiving was needed in America. Yet our national holiday that we celebrate today is nowhere near what Sarah Josepha Hale or Lincoln had in mind when Thanksgiving became a national holiday.

The words of these two great Americans explain the value of a day of Thanksgiving: "Let us consecrate the day to benevolence of action, by sending good gifts to the poor, and doing those deeds of charity that will, for one day, make every American home the place of plenty and of rejoicing... and gratitude to the Divine giver of all our blessings." (Sarah Josepha Hale, "Editor's Table," Godey's Lady's Book.)

### Lincoln's Proclamation...

Abraham Lincoln, in a proclamation in 1863, said, "The year that is drawing to a close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God... No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed fit to me and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens... to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens." (Proclamation of President Abraham Lincoln, October 3, 1863).

### A Day for Praising God

Amazing, isn't it? Our national holiday of Thanksgiving was meant to be a day of giving thanks to GOD and to share our blessings with one another. Instead, today it's a day of gorging ourselves, watching football, and spending time with family. While in and of themselves these things are not bad, we've missed the point. Today, revisionist historians have told us that the origin of Thanksgiving was to give thanks to others for what they have done. They have tried to remove God from the picture. Let us not forget the reason why we have a holiday of Thanksgiving. It is a day to celebrate God's mercies and blessings.

Yet, why should we limit thanking God to just one day? Does He bless us only once a year? Then why do we set only one day a year for thanksgiving? Why not make it a daily attitude of the heart? Let us live out thanksgiving every day. In the next column are some practical ways to live a life of Thanksgiving.

### Keep a Daily Thanksgiving Journal

As a family, begin keeping a record of things you are thankful for. Let everyone in your family contribute one thing per day. This is a wonderful teaching tool for your children as they learn the importance of thanksgiving.

Psalm 42:4                      Jonah 2:9                      1 Chronicles 16:35  
Ephesians 5:19-20              Colossians 3:16              1 Timothy 4:4-5

### Read a Bible Verse for Each Day of the Month

Below are thirty-one verses that you and your family can read and meditate on. We encourage you to read one verse each day of the month, and then spend some time thanking God for all He has done.

- |                      |                    |                     |                   |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Psalm 69:30       | 9. Psalm 28:7      | 17. Psalm 107:15    | 25. 2 Cor. 2:14   |
| 2. Psalm 95:2        | 10. Psalm 30:11-12 | 18. Psalm 118:1     | 26. 2 Cor. 9:15   |
| 3. Psalm 100:4       | 11. Psalm 35:18    | 19. Psalm 118:19    | 27. Eph. 1:16     |
| 4. Phil. 4:6         | 12. Psalm 75:1     | 20. Psalm 118:28-29 | 28. Eph. 5:20     |
| 5. 1 Chron. 16:8     | 13. Psalm 105:1    | 21. Psalm 119:62    | 29. Col. 1:12     |
| 6. 1 Chron. 16:34    | 14. Psalm 106:1    | 22. Psalm 136:2-4   | 30. 1 Thess. 5:18 |
| 7. 1 Chron. 29:12-13 | 15. Psalm 107:1    | 23. Isaiah 12:4     | 31. Rev. 11:7     |
| 8. Psalm 7:17        | 16. Psalm 107:8-9  | 24. 1 Cor. 15:57    |                   |

### Memorize Several Verses on Thanksgiving

Why not spend the year memorizing the verses from above? If you are reviewing them every month, it shouldn't be too hard. Spend a little time every day memorizing a verse that reminds you to be thankful.

See Psalm 119:11

### Begin and End Each Day by Thanking God

We should be spending time in prayer with God every day. When you do this, remember to give thanks to Him for the many ways He blesses us. Thank Him every morning when you first wake up. After all, He is giving you one more day to do His work. Thank Him every evening before you go to bed. This is a great time to thank God for all the many ways He has taken care of you throughout the day.

Psalm 119:62                      Daniel 6:10                      1 Chronicles 23:30

### Look for the "Silver Lining"

A big part of having a thankful attitude is learning to be thankful in all circumstances. Yes, this includes the bad times too. You've heard the saying "Every cloud has a silver lining." Well, that means that for every bad situation, there is something good that can come out of it. Try looking for it. Just ask God to help you through it and see the good in it.

Romans 8:28                      Philippians 4:6                      1 Thessalonians 5:18  
1 Timothy 4:4-5

### Using Thanksgiving as a Witnessing Tool

When other people see you being thankful, especially when times are tough, it becomes a great witness to them. If they don't know Jesus as their Savior, then they want to know what you've got that they're missing. If they already know Jesus as their Savior, then you can be a great encouragement to them. So keep a thankful attitude. You never know who may be watching...

Jeremiah 30:19                      2 Corinthians 4:15                      2 Corinthians 9:12