

Don't You Want to Thank *Someone*: A Thanksgiving Meditation

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As we enter thanksgiving week, it is good to reflect on the nature of giving thanks. Many have observed praise is fundamental to what it means to be human, yet, not all praise honors God in a way he deserves. Therefore, we should consider how we might give thanks and give thanks in a way that makes God the object of our gratitude.

Ingratitude: The Arrhythmia of Man's Heart

If we think about it, one of humanity's greatest 'sins' is our quickness to complain and our slowness to give thanks. In the Old Testament, Israel was rebuked strongly because of their murmuring. And personally, it happens too often that my own heart moves towards complaint instead of contentment.

In fact, Romans 1:21 indicts all of us when Paul says that part of humanity's idolatry stem's from our unwillingness to honor God *as God* or to give thanks to him.

Sadly, ingratitude is the arrhythmia of every fallen heart. It can only be 'reset' by the new birth. When God gives us a new heart, he exchanges our thankless heart for a heart that longs to thank someone.

Indeed, when we are born again God gives us new impulses that beckon us to give thanks; and not just generic thanksgiving, but thanksgiving directed to the One who has given us every good and perfect gift. As we enter thanksgiving week, therefore, it's good for us to consider the posture of our hearts.

One place to pursue such recalibration is Psalm 111. It is a powerful psalm of thanksgiving that praises God for his creation and his redemption. It calls us to worship him not based on the strength of our gratefulness but on the splendor of his grace. Consider Psalm 111's words.

Praise the Lord!

*I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.*

*Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.*

*Full of splendor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.*

*He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.*

*He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.*

*He has shown his people the power of his works,
 in giving them the inheritance of the nations.
 The works of his hands are faithful and just;
 all his precepts are trustworthy;
 they are established forever and ever,
 to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
 He sent redemption to his people;
 he has commanded his covenant forever.
 Holy and awesome is his name!
 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
 all those who practice it have a good understanding.
 His praise endures forever!*

Recalibrating Our Hearts to Thank *Someone*

While it is appropriate to give thanks for creation, true praise is always connected to Christ's redemptive work. That is to say, while we may begin with thankfulness for the day's new mercies and the plate of food before us, thankful hearts must eventually move from creation to cross, from the cross to the empty tomb, and from the resurrection to the return of Christ and the new creation. Indeed, to have a spirit of gratitude without an object of thanksgiving is to replace the giver of every good gift (James 1:17) with some impersonal feeling or amorphous idol.

By contrast, when we turn hearts of gratefulness towards the triune God and reflect on all he has done to bless us in creation and redemption, it tunes our hearts to sing *his* praise. This is the point of Andrew Peterson's ballad, "[Don't You Want to Thank Someone](#)." In his song, he powerfully reminds us this world drives us to praise *Someone* and that ultimately that *Someone* is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus.

As Scripture teaches, God is his greatest gift. The Son of God crucified in our place is the climax of his revelation (Hebrews 1:1–3) and the pinnacle of his generosity. The cross is the reason why the Father can give sinners good gifts. Indeed, in the Spirit we have God himself, and as Romans 8:32 teaches, if God was willing to give his Son, there is nothing needful he will withhold from us.

Therefore, as Psalm 111 teaches us, the good gifts of God lead us to give praise for God himself. His work of redemption is what brings us back to the source of all good things, and thus purifies our praise for everything in creation. Truly, God is the source of all good things. And as we take time to give thanks this week, may we do so with God in mind.

Have a happy thanksgiving and may all your thanksgiving lead you closer to the Lord.

Soli Deo Gloria, ds