

# Pastor's Ponderings

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## ***“What do You Have to be Thankful For?”***

by

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***“No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”***

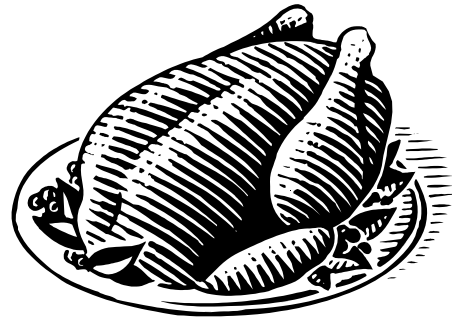
(1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT)

The title of this article could be answered from two totally different perspectives. That's because depending on where you put the emphasis on the different words in the question of the title determines the question itself. Am I asking, “What do you have (possess, own, control, manage) to be thankful for?” Or, am I asking, “What do you have to be (required, expected, necessity) thankful for?” Hopefully, the question connotes both of these meanings or interpretations in your thought processes. We do have much to be thankful for and God does expect us to be thankful.

As you contemplate all God has given you and all God is doing in your life this Thanksgiving, why not express your thankfulness in prayer, song, and sharing? Here's what I mean. Say a thanksgiving prayer by going around the table and letting each person say why he or she is thankful. Have cheat sheets available if you need them and sing a song before or after the meal. (This will be fun even if there are several who do not feel they have the gift of music.) And finally, discuss ahead of time with those who are coming for thanksgiving dinner what you can do to give to others.

Maybe, you could have everyone bring a “gift” on Thanksgiving Day and then a designated person could take them all to a nursing home, an adoption agency, the Salvation Army, a prison or jail, or maybe a

needy family or person in your neighborhood. Gifts aren't just for birthdays, anniversaries, and Christmas you know. After all, God gives gifts to us every moment of our lives. Why not express your thankfulness in a real way by giving something to someone who truly needs it.



I know this will be a challenge for most of us. I'm pretty good at praying on Thanksgiving...everybody (including family) expects the preacher to pray at meal time. But, I'm not much of a singer and I could certainly work on my generosity.

Most people will probably be uncomfortable with either praying or singing or giving. Some may not be comfortable with any of these three ways of expressing thankfulness. Maybe you have a better way of expressing your thankfulness. Then by all means do that instead.

Put your faith into action. Show your thankfulness to God by glorifying God and giving to others in some way. It may be as simple as sending a Thanksgiving card to someone whom you know needs an encouraging word. It may be a phone call or a visit to someone in the hospital, nursing home or jail. There are “gazillions” of ways to show your gratitude to God. Find one that **you can and will do** to honor God and help others.

The bottom line is: God wants us to be thankful. Don't let your insecurities, misconceptions about yourself or others, or anything else, keep you from ***“Always being thankful...No matter what happens.”*** Ever ask, “What is God's will for my life?” ***“...this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”***