

## **ULTIMATE UPGRADE: Thank You God!**

The invention of the telephone was met with great thanksgiving. People no longer had to rely on writing letters or telegraphs for long distance communication. Thankfulness for telephones was really expressed in times of sickness. In the prior to the expansion of telephones into rural areas in early-mid 1900s, fires were almost always catastrophic. But when telephones came along, you could call the fire department & in a flash, they would call other firefighters & be on their way to help. The same thing was true if you had an accident or injury in the 1800s or earlier, you had to ride your horse to town to fetch the doctor, a slow process. But once home telephones came along, the doctor was an only phone call away. One Sunday in 1966, when I was just a baby, I got incredibly sick with a high fever & had violent convulsions. My parents got on the phone & called the doctor (Dr. Sweitzer), who came out (yes, a house call). Doc treated me & saved my life. My parents were very thankful for the phone & for Doc saving me that day. If it had been 1866, it might have turned out differently. So let's face it, we are very thankful for our phones in tough situations today right [forget your big school project at home, call mom; forgot get separated from your family in an unfamiliar place (like on vacation), call dad; car breaks down on a dark road, call AAA; a creeper tries to break into your house at 2AM, call 9-11]. There are many, many times when we're very thankful for our phones.

But there's also times when people seem to take their phones for granted. I see kids flipping their phone & tossing them around a lot here at the Journey. You know, maybe you got the "free upgrade", but you're still tossing around a \$500 to \$1000 piece of equipment. So are we thankful for our phone or are we taking these import items for granted? I mean, I also see a lot of people dissatisfied with their phone, desperately wanting a new, better or trendy one. I see people with "phone shame"- stuck with an iPhone 5 or worse yet, a flip phone! So let's take a hard look at the true source of every good thing in our life.

I'm just going to go over a few: things I'm thankful for: a great family, both wife and great kids. I'm thankful for good friends. I'm thankful for all the provisions of life: food, water, shelter, cars, a bed, electricity, the phone system, guitars, music, etc. I'm thankful for my health. I'm thankful for my freedom in this country. When I look at our money I still see "One Nation Under God".

But most of all, I'm incredibly thankful for Jesus Christ, whose death & shed blood freed me from myself, from the chains of sin & the certainty of hell. [Gal 5:1 (ERV) *We have freedom now, because Christ made us free. So stand strong in that freedom. Don't go back into slavery again.*] (Eph 1:7-8a NCV *In Christ we are set free by the blood of His death, and so we have forgiveness of sins. How rich is God's grace, which He has given to us so fully and freely.*) And I'm thankful that Jesus Christ's blood made it possible for me to be eternally adopted into God's family (Eph 1:5 NCV *Because of His love, God had already decided to make us His own children through Jesus Christ. That was what He wanted and what pleased Him, and it brings praise to God because of His wonderful grace. God gave that grace to us freely, in Christ, the One He loves.*)

I am thankful for God from whom all good things come. But I see that the world is turning from God & our great enemy, Satan, is trying to deceive as many people as possible that God doesn't exist & He cannot be the source of all good things. We are told fantastic tales of random particles forming together from a great space explosion to make everything. We are told that the material world is all that there is; everything is just a random collection of atoms & molecules & cells. Nothing is special. So a newborn baby is the same as a turkey or cranberry sauce or a rock. So if life is so easy & everything can just pop- into existence, then next week at Thanksgiving don't rely on your mom to make the turkey, just pull some atoms & molecules together & make one. If that's too hard, try to create a pumpkin pie out of elements or maybe some stuffing out of thin air. You see, that sounds absurd, right? But that's what the atheist professors & scholars & teachers & philosophers are basically telling you. Last week we looked at Rom 1:20, which tells us that God's existence is clear for all to see & no one is without excuse for knowing Him. If we read on it says, <sup>20</sup> *For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.* <sup>21</sup> *Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship Him as God or even give Him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.* <sup>22</sup> *Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.* The truth is that everything good comes from God (James 1:17), not from random, impersonal circumstances like chance, the "big Bang" & evolution. Those are lies of the enemy & dead ends that defy common sense.

So this Thanksgiving, please don't forget God, please don't forget to thank Him, please don't become a dark minded utter fool. Give thanks to God who made you, you loves you & send His one and only Son to die in your place to give you new life. Let every day be a day of thanksgiving to the Lord! I end with these wise words: Col 2:7 & Heb 12:28 (below).

### **Key Verses**

**James 1:17** Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

**Rom 1:20-22** For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship Him as God or even give Him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.

**Col 2:7** Let your roots grow down into Him [Jesus], and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

**Heb 12:28** Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful & please God by worshiping Him with holy fear & awe.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Dan talked about being thankful for phones & how one helped save his life. Have you ever been thankful you had a phone? Explain.
2. What are some things in life that you are thankful for? Why are you thankful for them?
3. Col 3:15c says, "...always be thankful". Are you *always* thankful? If not, why not?
4. Tonight's skit was pretty nuts, but did it represent some people's lack of thankfulness? Why are people often unthankful?
5. Read James 1:17 & Rom 1:20-22. These verses reveal starkly contrasting world views. Why do so many people not believe in God or give Him thanks for the good things in life? Where do unbelievers think everything came from? Where does their foolish thinking & unthankful attitude toward God get them?
6. THANKFUL PSLAMS: look up & read Ps 75:1, 92:1, 100:4, 105:1, 106:1, 136:4-7 & 136:26. What do these verses teach us about the ancient Psalm writers' attitude towards God? Are you thankful, first & foremost to God? Why or why not?
7. Read Col 2:7 & Heb 12:28. A.) How can thankfulness impact your life? B.) How does being rooted in Jesus impact your life?
8. Read Ps 105:1 again- "*Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim His greatness. Let the whole world know what He has done.*"

This Thanksgiving, will you thank God for all that He's given you? Will you proclaim His greatness & tell others what He's done?

**PRAYER:** Father God, forgive us for not thanking You enough. Help us to never forget you love, mercy, grace & provision in our lives. Thank you for every good thing in our lives. Most of all, we thank you for Jesus Christ, your son & our Savior, who died so we could live eternally with you!