



## How Do You Live Thankfully?

**Colossians 3:15: (NASB) *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.***



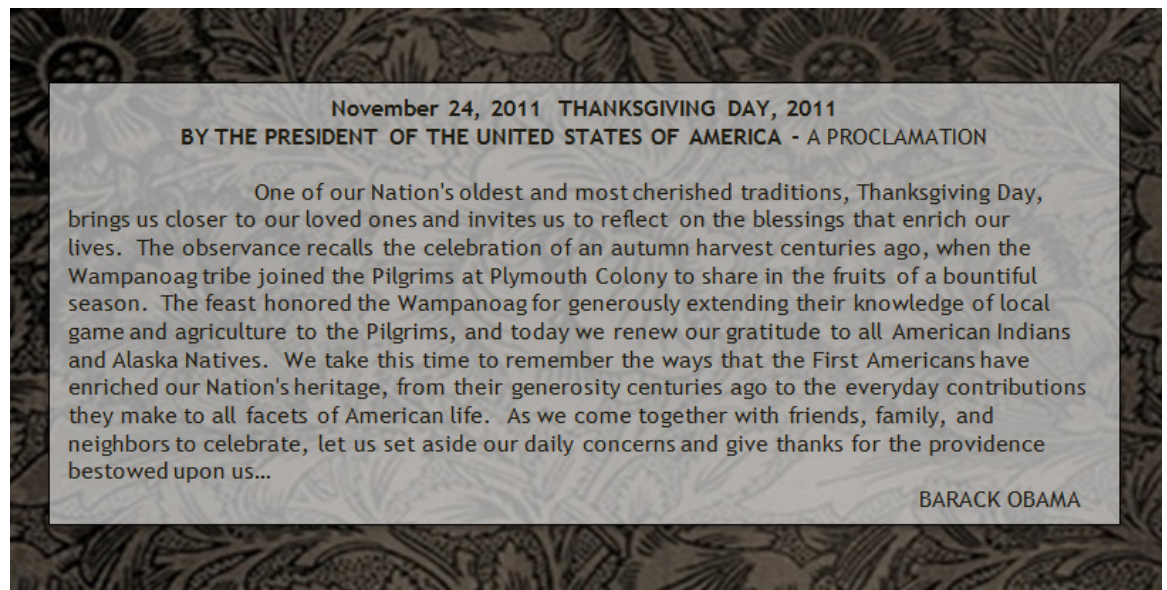
Its true meaning is practically forgotten these days. Why, with all of the fun costumes and excitement of Halloween just a few weeks in the past and with all of the gift buying, decorations, songs movies and glitter of Christmas in just a few more weeks, this holiday, almost by a perceived necessity has been reduced to a Thursday off where families get together to eat a lot, watch football and prepare for the biggest shopping day of the year on Friday. This holiday is Thanksgiving, a uniquely American holiday, and it has already come and gone. The question is, did

Thanksgiving have an effect on you (besides overeating) that has the capacity to literally change your life? Stay with us as we examine Thanksgiving and its true, life changing meaning.

 **Thanksgiving Daily, [LDS.org/Topic/Gratitude](http://LDS.org/Topic/Gratitude)**

- *Our minds have a marvelous capacity to notice the unusual. However, the opposite is true as well. The more often we see the things around us - even the beautiful and wonderful things - the more they become invisible to us. That's why we often take for granted the beauty of this world - the flowers, the trees, the birds, the clouds...even those we love. Because we see them so often, we notice them less and less.*

First paragraph of the 2011 Thanksgiving Proclamation from President Barack Obama:



(Source: [www.pilgrimhall.org](http://www.pilgrimhall.org))

There are two (and only two) primary sources for the events of autumn 1621 in Plymouth: Edward Winslow writing in *Mourt's Relation* and William Bradford writing in *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*: (In modern spelling) "They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all



well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides, they had about a peck of meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned but true reports."

### This reminds us of the following:

**Psalms 100:1-5:** (NKJV) <sup>1</sup>Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! <sup>2</sup>Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. <sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. <sup>4</sup>Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

Edward Winslow, *Mourt's Relation*: (In modern spelling) "...our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruits of our labors; they four in one day killed as much fowl, as with a little help beside, served the Company almost a week, at which time amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the Plantation and bestowed on our Governor, and upon the Captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful, as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want, that we often wish you partakers of our plenty."

NOTE: The Mayflower arrived in Plymouth in December of 1620. No further ships arrived in Plymouth until immediately after that "First Thanksgiving" - the Fortune arrived in November of 1621. One of the passengers on the Fortune, William Hilton, wrote a letter home that November. Although he was not present at that "First Thanksgiving," he does mention turkeys.

There was an obvious thankfulness to God.



### Linus' Thanksgiving Prayer, A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving



In the year 1621, the Pilgrims held their first Thanksgiving feast. They invited the great Indian chief Massasoit, who brought ninety of his brave Indians and a great abundance of food. Governor William Bradford and Captain Miles Standish were honored guests. Elder William Brewster, who was a minister, said a prayer that went something like this:

*"We thank God for our homes and our food and our safety in a new land.  
We thank God for the opportunity to create a new world for freedom and justice." Amen!*



## Who did the very first National Thanksgiving Proclamation focus on thanking?

Even before George Washington's proclamation, there was this:

(Source: [www.pilgrimhall.org](http://www.pilgrimhall.org)) The Very First Thanksgiving Proclamation made by the Continental Congress:

IN CONGRESS November 1, 1777

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance...

The last paragraph states:

And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.



### "Thankful Heart," Petra

*I have a thankful heart that you have given me  
And it can only come from you  
I have a thankful heart; words don't come easily  
But I am sure you can see my thankful heart  
Help me be a man of God  
A man who's after Your own heart  
Help me show my gratitude  
And keep in me a thankful heart*

**Thanksgiving to God begins with our acknowledgement of His greatness and our insignificance:**

**Psalms 86:1-4:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Incline Your ear, O LORD, and answer me; For I am afflicted and needy. <sup>2</sup>Preserve my soul, for I am a godly man; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. <sup>3</sup>Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You I cry all day long. <sup>4</sup>Make glad the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

There is an attachment and determination in seeking God.



### It continues in faith and praise:

Psalms 86:5-8: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You. <sup>6</sup>Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; And give heed to the voice of my supplications! <sup>7</sup>In the day of my trouble I shall call upon You, for You will answer me. <sup>8</sup>There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours.

If we pray without thankfulness, something is missing from the prayer. If we are thankful without prayer, our thankfulness is incomplete. The two are intertwined, because God is deserving.

### It marvels at the magnitude of His plan for all as well as His attention to one lowly soul:

Psalms 86:9-12: (NASB) <sup>9</sup>All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and they shall glorify Your name. <sup>10</sup>For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God. <sup>11</sup>Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. <sup>12</sup>I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever.

### How do we expand our thoughts of Thanksgiving?

#### Realize that God is worthy of universal thanks:

Psalms 107:21-22: (KJV) <sup>21</sup>Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! <sup>22</sup>And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

Isaiah 25:9: (KJV) *It will be said on that day, Lo this is our God; we have waited for Him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*



"The Thank You Song," Kay Muriel

#### Thanksgiving in perspective with the other "most important things":

1 Thessalonians 5:16-20: (KJV) <sup>16</sup>Rejoice evermore. <sup>17</sup>Pray without ceasing. <sup>18</sup>In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. <sup>19</sup>Quench not the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Despise not prophesyings. <sup>21</sup>Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from all appearance of evil.

If we can give thanks in everything then everything becomes a matter of Godliness.

#### Then we can reap the priceless benefits of faith and sanctification:

1 Thessalonians 5:23-25: (KJV) <sup>23</sup>And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. <sup>25</sup>Brethren, pray for us.

We shouldn't just be thankful when things are going well.

#### True Thanksgiving is a result of action on our part in doing those things that we are obligated to:

Psalms 116:12-16: (KJV) <sup>12</sup>What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? <sup>13</sup>I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. <sup>14</sup>I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. <sup>15</sup>Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. <sup>16</sup>O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.





What shall I render to God for all His benefits towards me? What is our answer? Should this lead us to action? Should we be living thankfully?

### This gives substance to our sacrifices of Thanksgiving:

Psalms 116:17-18: (KJV) <sup>17</sup>I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. <sup>18</sup>I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people, <sup>19</sup>In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.



"We Gather Together," Celtic Woman

### Thanksgiving Daily, [LDS.org/Topic/Gratitude](http://LDS.org/Topic/Gratitude)

- *Those who live in thanksgiving daily have a way of opening their eyes and seeing the wonders and beauties of this world as though seeing them for the first time. Look around you. Notice the people you care about. Notice the fragrance of the flowers and the song of the birds. Noticing and giving thanks for the blue of the sky, the white of the clouds. When we open our eyes and give thanks for the bountiful beauty of this life, we live in thanksgiving daily.*

It changes the way we live, what we think about, and what we see.  
Thankfulness reduces stress!

### Realize that God doesn't need our "things" or our lip service - He wants our sincerity!

Psalms 50:7-14: (NRSV) <sup>7</sup>Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. <sup>8</sup>Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. <sup>9</sup>I will not accept a bull from your house, or goats from your folds. <sup>10</sup>For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. <sup>11</sup>I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine. <sup>12</sup>If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and all that is in it is mine. <sup>13</sup>Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? <sup>14</sup>Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High.

They were offering up sacrifices but not living sacrificially....there is a big difference! A thankful life is a happy life, even when under difficult circumstances.



Don't be sad that it's over,  
be glad that it happened!  
- Dr. Seuss

### What about some examples of Thanksgiving?

#### In the spirit of Thanksgiving, [mormon.org](http://mormon.org)

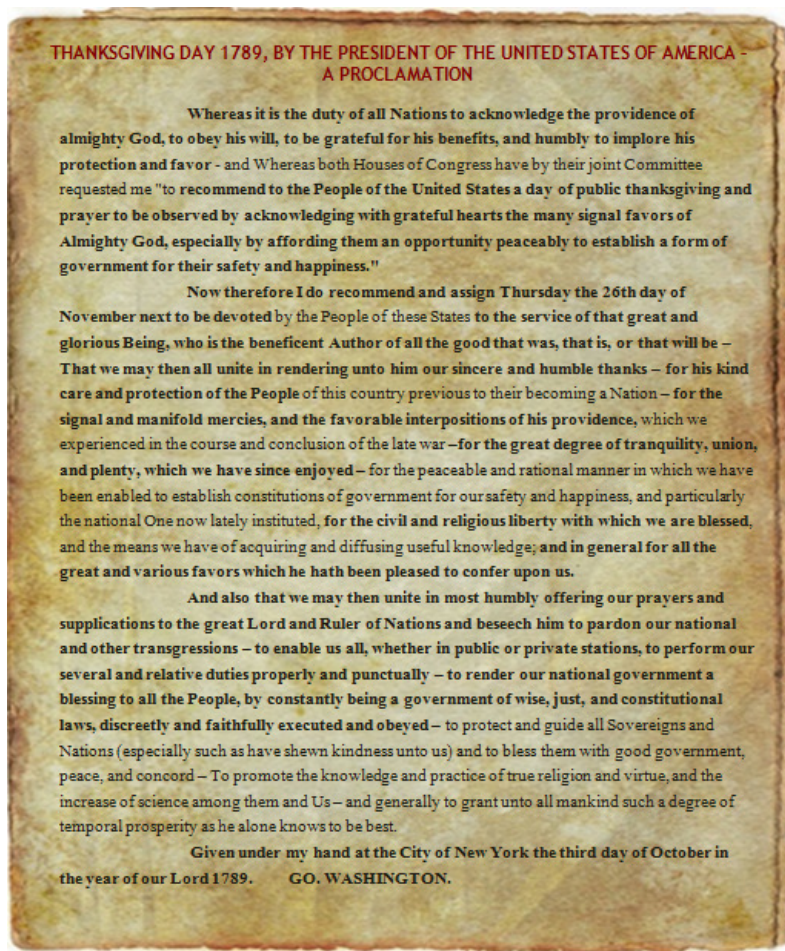
- *What are you thankful for? My job, health, wife, dog, family.*
- *I don't know where to begin.*
- *I love wonderful weather.*
- *When I can get to class or work on time and get a seat on the train.*
- *Breakfast, lunch and dinner.*
- *Donuts!*



Let's take our thankfulness and angle it towards God.

**Daniel 2:19-23:** (NRSV) <sup>19</sup>*Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night, and Daniel blessed the God of heaven. <sup>20</sup>Daniel said: Blessed be the name of God from age to age, for wisdom and power are his. <sup>21</sup>He changes times and seasons, deposes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. <sup>22</sup>He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him. <sup>23</sup>To you, O God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and power, and have now revealed to me what we asked of you, for you have revealed to us what the king ordered.*

Daniel's thanksgiving is specific and therefore dynamic. Daniel lived that thankfulness.



**THANKSGIVING DAY 1789**  
(George Washington)

**BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION**  
Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor - and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.



"Thanksgiving Prayer," Johnny Cash

**Should we REALLY give thanks in everything?**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:** (NASB) <sup>16</sup>*Rejoice always; <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing; <sup>18</sup>in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

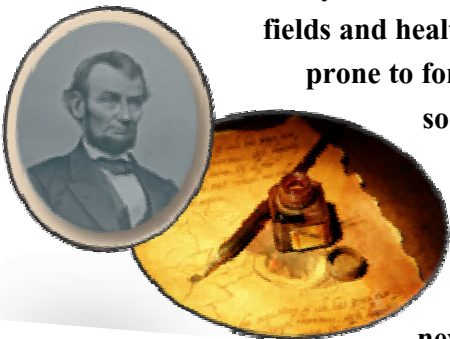


**"In Everything Give Thanks," Charlotte Ritchie, Jeff and Sheri Easter**

*In everything give thanks,  
with all your heart give praise  
for the Lord we serve will never let you down...  
the Lord can take a circumstance and turn it all around...*

## THE FIRST IN AN UNBROKEN SERIES OF AUTUMN PROCLAMATIONS:

### THANKSGIVING DAY 1863 ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION



The year that is drawing toward its 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 to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, 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...

*Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation of Thanksgiving*

Thanksgiving was set aside to be thankful to God (not for overeating or football...) and it reminds us of the transformational effect living thankfully can have.

 **In the spirit of Thanksgiving, [mormon.org](http://mormon.org)**

- *My parents are in love. I'm thankful for that example.*
- *A wonderful husband.*
- *Macaroni and cheese - it is a heartwarming thing for me because my mother used to make it for me.*

God has given us the capacity to see and observe things.

### It is really possible to be thankful in all things?

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10:** (NASB) <sup>7</sup>Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! <sup>8</sup>Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. <sup>9</sup>And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. **Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses,** so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. <sup>10</sup>Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.





## Yes, and even when life looks hopeless!

**Jonah 2:5-9:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, weeds were wrapped around my head. <sup>6</sup>I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, but You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. <sup>7</sup>While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to You, into Your holy temple. <sup>8</sup>Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, <sup>9</sup>But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD.

## How do we stop long enough to become thankful in our daily lives?



### "Blessings," Laura Story

*What if your blessings come through raindrops,  
what if your healing comes through tears,  
what if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know you're near.  
What if the trials of this life are your mercies in disguise...*

Be aware of your surroundings and **choose the environment** that you want your mind to flourish in:

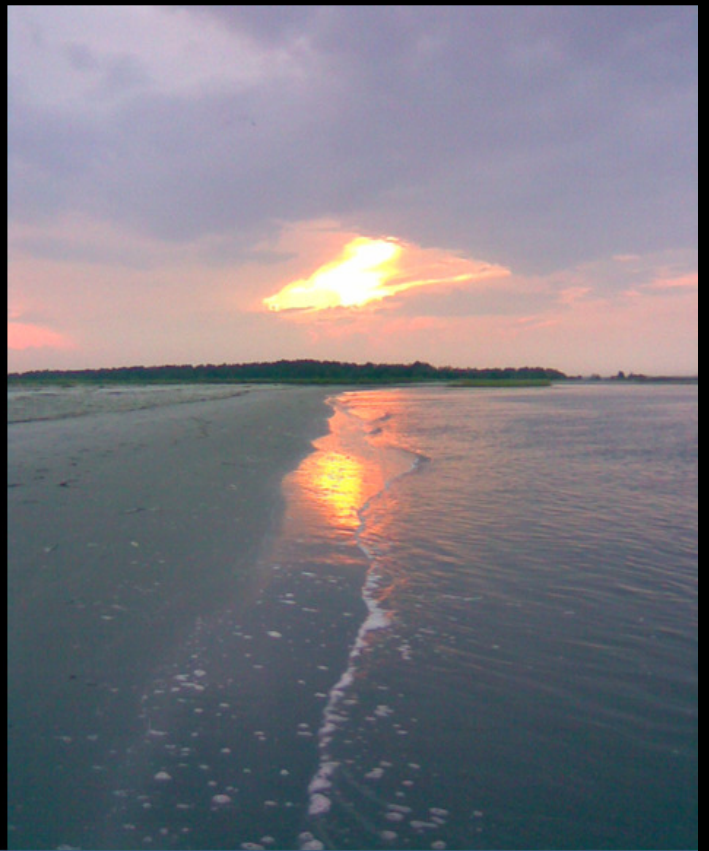
**Psalms 1:1-3:** (NKJV) <sup>1</sup>Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; <sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup>He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.





**Make a conscious effort to focus on Thanksgiving at a time when it can be high priority:**

Psalms 4:3-8: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him. <sup>4</sup>Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. <sup>5</sup>Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the LORD. <sup>6</sup>Many are saying, Who will show us any good? Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O LORD! <sup>7</sup>You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound. <sup>8</sup>In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.



**Live firmly in the present - not with one foot in the past or the future:**

Exodus 16:1-3: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>The sons of Israel said to them, Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.





How small did they think God was? Did they think he would miraculously deliver them only to starve them later?

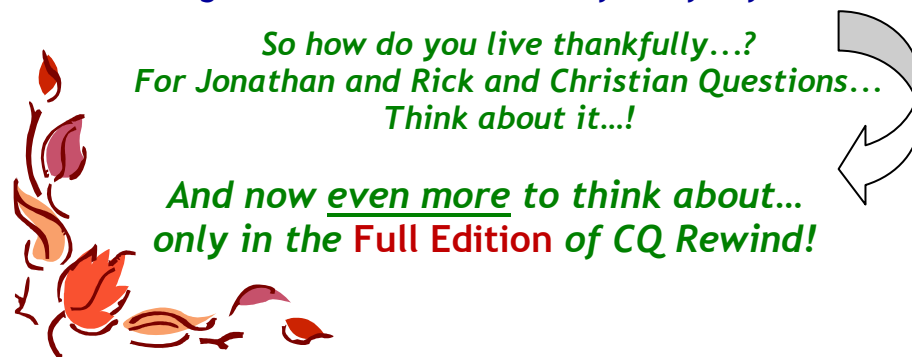
**Interesting how their "selective memory" only focused on one thing - food:**  
Exodus 1:8-11: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup>He said to his people, Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we... <sup>11</sup>So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor...

The past is a reference point, but our feet must be planted in today and be thankful.

Psalms 100:1-5: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. <sup>2</sup>Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. <sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. <sup>4</sup>Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.

Shout joyfully to the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness and joyful singing! When we look at the American history of Thanksgiving, we see the focus on God's mercy, compassion and blessing.

Think about making this a transformational day every day of our lives.



**One text on not living in the future and maintaining a thankful present:**

Luke 12:16-21: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>And he told them a parable, saying, The land of a rich man was very productive. <sup>17</sup>And he began reasoning to himself, saying, What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops? <sup>18</sup>Then he said, This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry. <sup>20</sup>But God said to him, You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared? <sup>21</sup>So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

**Context of our theme text - outlining our responsibilities as followers towards Thanksgiving:**

Colossians 3:12-17: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; <sup>13</sup>bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. <sup>14</sup>Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. <sup>15</sup>Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup>Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.



## More on the importance of meditating upon the Lord for a thankful focus on all of life:

Psalms 63:6: (KJV) *When I remember thee upon my bed, and **meditate** on thee in the night watches.*

**Meditate:** Strong's #1897 hagah (daw-gaw'); to murmur (in pleasure or anger); by implication, to ponder: KJV-- imagine, meditate, mourn, mutter, roar, sore, speak, study, talk, utter.

Psalms 77:9-14: (NKJV) *<sup>9</sup>Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah. <sup>10</sup>And I said, This is my anguish; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. <sup>11</sup>I will remember the works of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. <sup>12</sup>I will also **meditate** on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds. <sup>13</sup>Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; Who is so great a God as our God? <sup>14</sup>You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples.*

Psalms 1:1-3: (NKJV) *<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; <sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he **meditates** day and night. <sup>3</sup>He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*

Proverbs 15:28: (NKJV) *The heart of the righteous **studies** how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.*

Mark 4:33-41: (NKJV) *<sup>33</sup>And with many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. <sup>34</sup>But without a parable he did not speak to them. And when they were alone, he explained all things to his disciples. <sup>35</sup>On the same day, when evening had come, he said to them, Let us cross over to the other side. <sup>36</sup>Now when they had left the multitude, they took him along in the boat as he was. And other little boats were also with him. <sup>37</sup>And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. <sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup>Then he arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still! And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup>But he said to them, Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? <sup>41</sup>And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey him!"*



November 24, 2011 THANKSGIVING DAY, 2011  
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION

One of our Nation's oldest and most cherished traditions, Thanksgiving Day, brings us closer to our loved ones and invites us to reflect on the blessings that enrich our lives. The observance recalls the celebration of an autumn harvest centuries ago, when the Wampanoag tribe joined the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony to share in the fruits of a bountiful season. The feast honored the Wampanoag for generously extending their knowledge of local game and agriculture to the Pilgrims, and today we renew our gratitude to all American Indians and Alaska Natives. We take this time to remember the ways that the First Americans have enriched our Nation's heritage, from their generosity centuries ago to the everyday contributions they make to all facets of American life. As we come together with friends, family, and neighbors to celebrate, let us set aside our daily concerns and give thanks for the providence bestowed upon us...

Though our traditions have evolved, the spirit of grace and humility at the heart of Thanksgiving has persisted through every chapter of our story. When President George Washington proclaimed our country's first Thanksgiving, he praised a generous and knowing God for shepherding our young Republic through its uncertain beginnings. Decades later, President Abraham Lincoln looked to the divine to protect those who had known the worst of civil war, and to restore the Nation "to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union."

In times of adversity and times of plenty, we have lifted our hearts by giving humble thanks for the blessings we have received and for those who bring meaning to our lives. Today, let us offer gratitude to our men and women in uniform for their many sacrifices, and keep in our thoughts the families who save an empty seat at the table for a loved one stationed in harm's way. And as members of our American family make do with less, let us rededicate ourselves to our friends and fellow citizens in need of a helping hand.

As we gather in our communities and in our homes, around the table or near the hearth, we give thanks to each other and to God for the many kindnesses and comforts that grace our lives. Let us pause to recount the simple gifts that sustain us, and resolve to pay them forward in the year to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 24, 2011, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage the people of the United States to come together whether in our homes, places of worship, community centers, or any place of fellowship for friends and neighbors to give thanks for all we have received in the past year, to express appreciation to those whose lives enrich our own, and to share our bounty with others.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA



(Source: [www.pilgrimhall.org](http://www.pilgrimhall.org))

The Very First Thanksgiving Proclamation made by the Continental Congress:

**IN CONGRESS**

**November 1, 1777**

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance; That it may please him graciously to afford his Blessing on the Governments of these States respectively, and prosper the public Council of the whole: To inspire our Commanders, both by Land and Sea, and all under them, with that Wisdom and Fortitude which may render them fit Instruments, under the Providence of Almighty GOD, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human Blessings, INDEPENDENCE and PEACE: That it may please him, to prosper the Trade and Manufactures of the People, and the Labor of the Husbandman, that our Land may yield its Increase: To take Schools and Seminaries of Education, so necessary for cultivating the Principles of true Liberty, Virtue and Piety, under his nurturing Hand; and to prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth "in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost."

And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.



## THANKSGIVING DAY 1789, BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor - and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be - That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks - for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation - for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war - for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed - for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions - to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually - to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed - to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord - To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us - and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789. GO. WASHINGTON.





**THE FIRST IN AN UNBROKEN SERIES OF AUTUMN PROCLAMATIONS:  
THANKSGIVING DAY 1863 by ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

**BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION**

The year that is drawing toward its 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 can not fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

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 to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, 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. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore if, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purpose, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity, and union.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed. Done at the city of Washington, this 3d day of October A.D. 1863, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**