



# In And For All

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Eternally Speaking Now

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**“...in everything give thanks;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”  
1 Thessalonians 5:18**

Over the years, I've heard people say we're to give thanks **in all** things, but not **for all** things. Some have further added, “It would be cruel if God told us to be thankful **for** everything, because that would include being grateful **for** bad things.”

This mindset granted me relief for years, as it doesn't feel natural or humane to say with a smile, “Thank you, Lord!” when death or sickness or accidents or sin come our way. It just doesn't feel right, does it?

Then I learned the truth. It's initially a hard truth, but once embraced, I can guarantee from personal experience that it will leave you not only more in love with the Lord but also more at peace with Him as you encounter life's difficulties.

The truth is, Scripture *does* tell us to thank God **for** everything. If you can hang in there with me as I explain, I can promise based on God's Word that this will end well. Very well. Consider these verses:

**“...giving thanks always for all things  
to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”**  
Ephesians 5:20

**“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers,  
intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men...”**  
1 Timothy 2:1

According to these Scriptures, we're to give God thanks always **for** all things, and we're to give Him thanks **for** all people. Yup, **for**. Yup, **all**. **For all things, for all people**. As I've heard other teachers say, the secret root word for the English word **all**, is **all**. That includes the good and the bad.

This begs the question, “Why would God tell me to be thankful **for** bad things?”

To answer that, let's look at what it means to be thankful. That may sound silly (who doesn't know what thankful means?), but you may be surprised by what I discovered. Surprised and enlightened. Psalm 100:4 says,

**“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,  
and into His courts with praise.  
Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”**

The Hebrew root word for **thanksgiving** in this verse is toda. It means:

**Extension of the hand, avowal, adoration, a choir of worshipers:  
confession, sacrifice of praise, offering of thanks.**

The Hebrew root word for **thankful** in this verse is yada. It means:

**To hold out the hand; to physically throw or cast down;  
especially to revere or worship with extended hands;  
intensively, to bemoan by wringing the hands:  
cast out, make confession, praise, shoot, give thanksgiving.**

Do you see anything in these definitions that requires us to feel happy in order to be thankful?

Let's look at the New Testament as well. The Greek word for thankful is eucharistos, and the outline of its biblical usage (and that of its variations) is:

**Mindful of favors, grateful, thankful, pleasing, agreeable,  
acceptable to others, winning, beneficent.  
Actively expressing gratitude towards.**

Again, there is no evidence of joyful emotions required.

Thankfully,  
being thankful  
doesn't require  
a warm and cozy feeling.

In our current culture, we may associate gratitude with positive vibes, but in its pure definition, thankfulness is not dependent upon emotions.

This is freeing! The Lord established the expression of our gratitude in such a way that we can always do it. No matter what.

"But Leanna," you may be thinking, "I don't want to be a fake. I don't think I can genuinely say thank you when I don't feel like it."

I understand. Completely. In fact, I relate first-hand.

While I was bedridden for 9 weeks and then ill and completely debilitated for over 3 years, the Lord taught me to believe He was good, even though I'd lost most my life and could see no future ahead. How was I to believe He was good, when He could have prevented the piercing pain, extreme nausea and crippling fatigue that riddled my entire body?

The last thing I felt like saying was "God, You are good."  
I didn't want to be a hypocrite, saying one thing and believing another.

But that was my problem: *I wasn't believing. I didn't believe He was good*, at least in the specific area of my life where I had pain. I was walking by sight and not faith. My eyes were on my struggles rather than on my Savior.

As the Holy Spirit convicted me of this, I did what His Word says to do:

I confessed it as sin,  
received the Father's forgiveness,  
immersed myself in Scriptures about God's goodness,  
hid those verses in my heart,  
and have never been the same since.

(To read the full testimony, [visit my site here](#), and scroll down to the title, "The Collapse & Great Trials.")

As a result of the Lord's discipline and training, there's such a chasm now between my circumstances and my assurance of God's goodness, that the feelings of joy come naturally as I praise and thank Him—as I choose to do so both **in** and **for all** things.

Is this easy? Not at first, but it becomes easier after you've made it a habit to intentionally choose and daily practice this depth of thankfulness.

The primary key for me that's unlocked a lifestyle of exuberant gratitude is discovering the purpose for giving God thanks. Why do we even do it?

Our true purpose for thanksgiving supersedes the tangible.  
Psalm 106:1 says,

**"Praise the Lord!  
Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!  
For His mercy endures forever."**

Do we thank God because we feel like it? Because we are happy? Or, do we lift up our eyes with a higher purpose, opening our mouths and declaring, "God, I will thank you **in** and **for** this, because You are good and Your mercy endures forever."

We aren't thanking Him joyfully because we're glad negative things have occurred. Of course not. (That *would* be disturbing.) Somehow we need to isolate the act of thanking from the feeling we assume we need to have in order to be thankful.

Yes, gratitude is often naturally accompanied by sincere joy. Our hearts swell over something positive, and we spontaneously overflow with expressions of thanks. This is a huge part of having a grateful heart, and it is a beautiful way to live! But we're also to thank God **for all** things, and we are free to do so because we know that He is good, and His mercy endures forever.

Not only that, but we also know what He will do with **all** our unpleasant experiences:

**"But as for you, you meant evil against me;  
but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day,  
to save many people alive."  
Genesis 50:20**

*Rarely are we aware at the time of affliction how the Lord will use our sufferings for good. Years from now, we may see how He's used our difficulties to literally save others.*

**“And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”**  
Romans 8:28

**“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”**  
Romans 8:18

Do we believe this?

Do we believe that God knows how to handle **all** our challenges? Do we trust Him to remember us and to take care of everything? Do we know with full assurance that He will be faithful to keep His word and indeed bring beauty from ashes?

If so, then we can thank Him **for** the things that don't make sense.

When we do this,  
we are mysteriously,  
gloriously  
set free to live as if  
He really is in charge.

Once we dare to take a step of faith by thanking the Lord both **in and for all** things, we find ourselves standing more confidently on the solid ground of God's sovereignty. And that's when breakthrough comes.

**“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,  
the One who is and who was and who is to come,  
because You have taken Your great power and reigned.”**  
Revelation 11:17

## CHALLENGE

We can tend to resist accepting that God is in control and knows what He's doing, because it leaves us with having to face the fact that the very thing we didn't want to happen *did* happen...and it occurred on His watch. He was in charge all along, and yet it still took place?

Does this resonate with you?  
Were you left feeling betrayed by Him,  
as if overlooked and abandoned?  
How do we process this?

All I've known to do in those situations is to fall on my knees, cry, and talk through it with Him. I may not get immediate answers, and I may not feel better in that moment, but I always walk away in greater intimacy with my Heavenly Father, strangely able to trust Him more than when I stood shaking my fist an hour before.

*Speaking of shaking the fist...*

Did you notice that the definition of thankfulness (at the beginning of this blog) repeatedly references the act of **extending our hands** to the Lord?

At some point, we must  
**uncurl those white-knuckled fists,**  
**bemoan and wring our hands,**  
**then extend them to the Lord and let it all go—**  
**throw it all down— at the feet of Jesus,**  
**choosing gratitude** by an act of our will.

**“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to  
God,  
that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”  
Hebrews 13:15**

You don't have to feel it to do it.  
Just thank Him.  
Thank Him **in all** things,  
and thank Him **for all** things.

This posture frees you to do **all** He's called you to do without needing to feel it first. That doesn't make you a hypocrite. It makes you obedient.

Hold out your hands to Jesus.  
Revere Him and offer a sacrifice of praise.  
Then walk in the freedom that complete gratitude brings.  
**In and for all.**

**“And whatever you do in word or deed,  
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”  
Colossians 3:17**

***Scroll Down for Bonus Links***



### **Forward Thanking**

Many of you have referred to this writing as a favorite, and it's one of mine as well! Enjoy revisiting this playful way to view thankfulness through the eyes of a child. May it catapult you into a fresh season of giving thanks to God-- before your requests have been fulfilled.

[Blog](#)

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### **Best Ever**

Here's another powerful lesson from a youngster. Treats from God can be expressed through the delightful innocence of a child-- even in the worst of times. I pray this blesses you.

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