

GRATITUDE AND THANKSGIVING

By: Pastor/Mr. Tracy Headley



Because the *expression* of gratitude is *tied* so closely to the *response* of faith, *believers* are encouraged to give thanks in ALL things.

Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer who died at the age of 39 in a German concentration camp in 1945 said; "It is only with gratitude that life becomes rich!"

Christian and Athlete, Tim Tebow who was persecuted in the NFL for his 'Christian beliefs and loyal following' says; "I'm

just thankful for everything, *all* the blessings in my life, *trying* to stay that way. I think that's the best way to start your day and finish your day. Thankfulness keeps everything in perspective."

Obedying these three commands—*be joyful*, *keep* on praying, and *be thankful*—often goes against our natural inclinations. That is why Paul counseled this *persecuted church* to always be joyful. The reason Paul did this is he knew that *true joy* surpasses the rolling waves of circumstances and that *true joy* comes from a consistent relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pastor and writer Tony Evans says; "God says to give thanks in everything. That doesn't mean you need to give thanks FOR everything. You don't need to give thanks FOR that bad day. Or FOR that bad relationship - Or being passed over at work - Financial hardship. Whatever it is – you *are not* to give thanks FOR the difficulties, but rather IN the difficulties. That is a very important distinction, and one I think we often miss. Giving thanks IN everything shows a heart of **faith** and that God is bigger than the difficulties and that He can use them, if you approach Him with the right heart and spirit, for your good and His glory."

When our lives are intertwined with Christ, he will help us to walk through adversity without sinking into debilitating lows and to manage prosperity without moving into deceptive highs. The joy of living with Jesus Christ daily will keep us joyful and thankful.