

Be Thankful

The scriptures clearly teach that Christians are to do good to all people as we have opportunity. And when we do a good deed, such as give food or money to a truly needy person or perform some act of kindness such as ministering to someone during sickness or loss of a family member, we generally feel good about ourselves because we have obeyed God and have shown love to a neighbor (Matt. 22:39). But good feelings do not always result from acts of kindness.

Several years ago, Edwin Jones and I visited an elderly lady in our community. She had recently obeyed the gospel late in her life and at the time of our visit she was bed-ridden. Her health prohibited her from attending services of the church. As part of our visit we did some small thing for her, at her request. I had never seen a person so thankful to God and especially for someone in her physical condition. She was thankful that she was a Christian and what we did for her on that occasion. I left her house not feeling good about doing a good deed but instead I looked at myself and saw a person that was not as thankful as I should be for how God had blessed me and my family.

The consequence of not being thankful to God is expressed in Romans 1: 21a: *because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful, but became futile in their thoughts...*, and through the remainder of the chapter. The absence of thankfulness leads to God's wrath. Conversely, a heart that is grateful that God has been mindful of mankind by sending His Son that we might have eternal life is the building block of a faithful Christian life.

In the motion picture "Patton" General George Patton, in a heated verbal exchange, said to General Omar Bradley, "Brad, I know I have a lot of faults but ingratitude is not one of them. You have done a lot for me." Given the setting and context of this statement, this was not intended to be a religious declaration but the sentiment expressed is clearly basic to our Christian faith. As we go about our activities of work, recreation, and family life we find that our effort to be Christ-like sometimes falls short but ingratitude toward God should never occur.

For the elders,
Don Denton