

From the West Meadow
By Pastor Wes Higgins

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV), “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Note here it does not say we are to give thanks only for the good things.

The model prayer found in Matthew 6 opens with “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name.” The first things we are to do is acknowledge God's Holiness, His goodness and righteousness. In other words we are to enter into prayer with thanksgiving in our words and in our hearts.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God”, Philippians 4:6, NKJV. When Paul writes “in everything give thanks”, he is reminding us that as Christians we are to be thankful – not only for what we think are the good things God does in our lives, but for everything. As he wrote to the Romans “and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”, Romans 8:28, NKJV. In God working out our salvation, everything that happens to us is for our good.

In Genesis 1:26-28, we are informed of the purpose and destiny of mankind: to be created in the image of God. God has created mankind in the physical form He desired - “male and female He created them”, Genesis 1:27, NKJV. But that does not complete the image of God in us. “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”, Deuteronomy 5:29, NKJV. God is the great giver, the benevolent benefactor, providing for all mankind, and especially those of His household. God is completing His image in mankind through Jesus Christ “For this is the covenant that I will make – I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts”, Hebrews 8:10, NKJV. “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”, 2 Corinthians 6:18, NKJV. As sons and daughters of God, we can expect our Father to guide and direct us. As it tells us in Hebrews 12, It is the Father's duty to chasten and educate His children. And that we, who are the beneficiaries of that chastening, should be deeply grateful that the Father had a personal desire to see us molded into His image. “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials – But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing”, James 1:2,4, NKJV.

Remember, Jesus admonishes us “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect”, Matthew 5:48, NKJV. As Christians, it behooves us to be thankful in whatever situation we find ourselves. There is a popular Christian song in which one of the verses goes “God is good, He is so good – All the time”. If we truly see and believe that, we can be thankful “all the time”. Because:

“I will never leave you nor forsake you”, Hebrews 13:5, NKJV. Praise God.