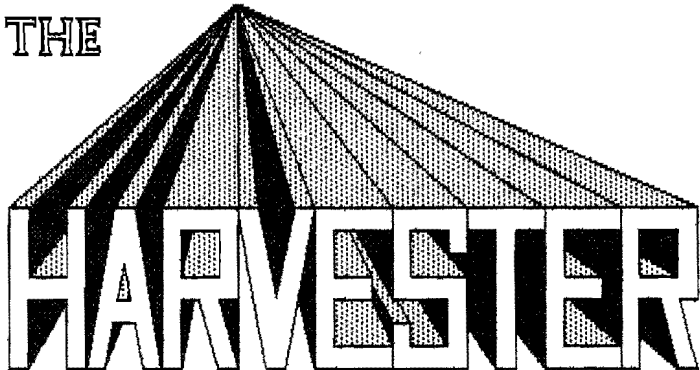


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"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

NOVEMBER 1995

No. 119

SPIRITUAL INGRATITUDE

A tourist was watching some women in Mexico who were washing their clothes at a spot where hot and cold springs bubbled side by side. They boiled the garments in the hot springs and rinsed them in the cold. The tourist said to his guide, "I suppose the people here think Mother Nature is generous to them, do they not?" "No, Senor," was the reply, "just the opposite. There is grumbling because she does not supply soap."

This little story points out one of the leading sins in America today -- ingratitude. As a nation we enjoy so many blessings and privileges and freedoms not known in other countries of this world. And yet we still find things to complain

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about! We do not seem to appreciate what we have and we rarely have time to enjoy our blessings from God because we are usually looking for more.

Luke gives us an interesting account concerning the topic of ingratitude. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem when he came to a certain village and saw ten lepers off in the distance (Luke 17:11-19). Under the Law of Moses, leprous people were required to dwell alone and outside of the camp (Lev. 13:46), keeping their distance from others. Nevertheless, these men cried, "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*" So Jesus answered, "*Go shew yourselves unto the priests*" and while on their way, they were cleansed of their leprosy!

Can you imagine how these ten men must have felt the moment they realized that they were healed? Leprosy was probably the most dreaded disease of that age and time. Nowadays most people fear cancer and AIDS. But in those days leprosy slowly destroyed the physical body. In addition, leprosy made one a social outcast. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with a leper. Yet now this terrible disease was gone from the ten!

How grateful were these men for the miracle which Jesus had just performed? Did they all give praise to God? Did all of them return and thank Jesus? Luke tells us that only one of the ten came back to show his gratitude and he was a Samaritan at that! So imagine the disappointment that must have been in Jesus' voice when he answered, "*Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?*" It was a matter of ingratitude.

Likewise, how many times has God blessed us and looking down asked: "Where are the nine?" Are we

really thankful that he is our Heavenly Father? Are we thankful for his Son who died on the cross for our sins? Are we even grateful for the church and the opportunity to worship God and study his Word? Or are we like the nine who disappeared once they got what they wanted?

It is the duty of every Christian to give thanks to God for all blessings. *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."* (1 Thes. 5:18) "Every thing" means exactly what it says: everything, good and bad. Sometimes things may seem bad to us, or they are not what we THINK we want but *"we know that all things work together for good to them that love God"* (Rom. 8:28).

Our gratitude should be a continual thing. *"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Eph. 5:20). Since God continually gives to us his richest blessings, it is only proper that we should continually be thankful. As long as God gives, we should return thanks.

Now let us mention a few things for which Christians should be very thankful. Obviously, our material blessings immediately come to mind: food, clothing, shelter, family, job, health, beauties of nature, etc. All of these are blessings from God, but sometimes we forget. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* (Jas. 1:17)

We should be thankful when God answers our prayers. Jesus illustrated this the time He went to Bethany to raise up Lazarus (John 11:32-42). He

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prayed to His Father, God heard Him, then Jesus gave thanks (v. 41)! Similarly, when we pray for a safe trip or for help in a certain situation or for the wisdom to make the right decision in a crisis, we must remember to give thanks to the God who heard our prayer.

Members of the Lord's church should be grateful for the victory we have through Jesus Christ. *"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Cor. 15:56-57) If we did not have Christ, then all of us would go to eternal damnation because of our sins. But through Christ we can enjoy the victory of eternal salvation and glory. Without this blessing from God, we would be the most miserable of men (1 Cor. 15:17-19)!

There are so many other spiritual blessings for which all Christians should be grateful. To count them all would be impossible. But the following list is a good start. We should be thankful for:

- * The willingness to offer our property for God's service (1 Chr. 29:6-14)
- * The nearness of God's presence (Psa. 75:1)
- * The faith exhibited by others (Rom. 1:8)

- * The conversion of others (Rom. 6:17)
- * The deliverance through Christ, from indwelling sin (Rom. 7:23-25)
- * The supply of our bodily wants (Rom. 14:6,7)
- * The grace bestowed on others (1 Cor. 1:4)
- * The triumph of the gospel (2 Cor. 2:14)
- * The zeal exhibited by others (2 Cor. 8:16)
- * And Christ's power and reign (Rev. 11:17).

If we will only open our eyes and look about us, we will know that we have been richly blessed in countless ways (Eph. 1:3). But do we really appreciate it? Today will we take the time to sit down and thank God? Or will we be like the ungrateful lepers who disappeared once they were healed? *"But where are the nine?"*

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. For whose sake did God not take the kingdom from Solomon, after Solomon's disobedience?
2. What land did Abram leave when he went to Canaan?
3. What must one do to follow Jesus?
4. What did David say numbered more than the hairs of his head?
5. What Old Testament story does Peter say tells of God's patience with unbelievers?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Under what king was the Passover observed as it had not been since the days of the judges? JOSIAH (2 Ki. 23:22)

2. In the parable of the Rich Fool, what did he lack for his crops or fruits? A PLACE TO STORE THEM (Luke 12:17)
3. How does Peter say to meet one's adversary? RESIST STEADFAST IN THE FAITH (1 Pet. 5:9)
4. If a stone in the wall of an Israelite's house was judged to be leperous after the proper examination period, what was to be done? THE STONE WAS TO BE TORN OUT (Lev. 14:40)
5. What was the occupation of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law? A PRIEST (Exo. 18:1)

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING OUR CHILDREN HOW TO WORSHIP

1. Begin in the home. Teach them to be quiet and listen when the word of God is being read. Teach them to bow their heads during prayer. Turn off distraction, like the radio or television, during prayers and worship.
2. Take them to the restroom BEFORE services begin.
3. Do not allow them to run in the aisles or run up and down between the pews.
4. Have them sit beside you until they have proven that they can behave. When my feet would not touch the floor as I was sitting down, I would want to swing my legs. Mother did not allow that.
5. Do not let them crawl on the floor or under the pew during services.
6. Leave the toys, especially noisy ones, in the car. Bring paper and crayons or pencils for the

little ones. Do not let them color or write in the books or Bibles.

7. Do not allow them to talk aloud during the services. That means you, as a parent, must not talk aloud or whisper loudly. I think some adults and children have learned to whisper at a sawmill or while the vacuum cleaner was running.

8. Face the front. Discourage your children from "rubbernecking" to see what is going on behind them. That means you must set the example.

9. If you are late (and some are invariably so), do not come bursting through the doors during the middle of a prayer, Scripture reading, song, or other act of worship. Wait until there is a pause, then come in quietly and be seated.

10. Do not leave until the congregation is dismissed.

11. Sometimes it is necessary to take a child out of the assembly for disciplinary purposes, but such occasions should never be joyous. I well remember my mother's having carried a leather belt in her purse and having put it to good use on a few occasions. The board of education applied to the seat of knowledge does wonders for conduct.

12. Children should not be allowed to play when they are taken out of the worship services. I have heard that some parents will allow their children to play in the foyer or hall while services are being conducted. That is not teaching them to worship God.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
November 3 - 5 (F - Su)	Hokes Bluff Church Gadsden, AL 7:00 evenings	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
November 10 - 12 (F - Su)	Sun Hill Road Church Birmingham, AL 7:00 evenings	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
November 17 - 19	Napolean Church Woodland, AL	V. W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)
December 1 - 3	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL	David Carter Kevin Mills Max Gaskins Chad Prince

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(continued from page 7)

Parents, but especially mothers, have a big task in teaching children how to worship properly. There are times, no doubt, when a mother has asked herself, "Why did I even try to go to worship this morning?" But remember, your consistent efforts will pay rich dividends. *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (Gal. 6:9).

BEN F. VICK, Jr.
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KEEPING CLEAN BETWEEN THE EARS
IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN
KEEPING CLEAN BEHIND THE EARS.