

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 5.
2. We are continuing our look at the consequences of being filled with the Spirit.
3. We looked at the first consequence in verse 19 and said it was singing.
4. When we're filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit puts a song in our heart that we sing to one another and to the Lord.
5. Now, we're looking at the second consequence and it occurs in verse 20.
6. Paul says in **Ephesians 5:20 (NASB77)** <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.
7. Where the Spirit reigns, there is gratitude to God,<sup>1</sup> when He's not; there is ingratitude and rank unbelief.

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<sup>1</sup>William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Eph 5:20.

8. A medieval legend tells of two angels sent to earth by the Lord to gather the prayers of the saints. One was to gather the petitions and the other the thanksgivings. The angel responsible for petitions was not able to carry them back to heaven in one load, while the angel responsible for thanksgivings carried his back in one hand. That legend developed from the sad fact that God's children are more prone to ask than to thank.<sup>2</sup>
9. God desires His children be thankful because being unthankful is the very essence of an unregenerate heart.
10. Paul identified unbelievers as unthankful when he said in **Romans 1:21 (NASB77)** <sup>21</sup>For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
11. When God regenerates an individual He produces a new heart that longs to obey.
12. This allows for no excuse to be ungrateful.
13. Thankfulness should be part of the very fabric of the regenerate life.
14. **Philippians 4:6 (NASB77)** <sup>6</sup>Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

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<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 264.

15. It is spiritually abnormal for Christians to be unthankful because they are not only called to be thankful, they are thankful.
16. **Colossians 3:15 (NASB77)** <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.
17. **Psalms 118:21 (NASB77)** <sup>21</sup> I shall give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me; And Thou hast become my salvation.
18. When the early church met, one of its main purposes was to give thanks to God.
19. **Acts 2:42 (NASB77)** <sup>42</sup> And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
20. **Acts 2:46 (NASB77)** <sup>46</sup> And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart.
21. Even after they were persecuted, **Acts 5:41 (NASB77)** <sup>41</sup> So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.
22. Being thankful is consistent with an obedient heart.
23. When Paul told the Thessalonians in **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NASB77)** <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus, that's exactly what they did.

24. As Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, thankfulness reflects the will of God.
25. We are to walk in it according to **Colossians 2:6-7** (NASB77) <sup>6</sup> As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him, <sup>7</sup> having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and overflowing with gratitude.*
26. We are to pray with it according to **Philippians 4:6** (NASB77) <sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
27. We are to sing from it according to **Psalms 30:4** (NASB77) <sup>4</sup> Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, And give thanks to His holy name.
28. So when we come to Ephesians 5:20, we see that thanksgiving is the result of Spirit-filling.
29. Kent Hughes says, “The fullness of the Spirit rules out a grumbling, complaining, negative, sour spirit. No one can be Spirit-filled and traffic in these things.”<sup>3</sup>
30. Paul gives us truths regarding *Spirit-Filled Thanksgiving*.
31. It first comes from his own life.

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<sup>3</sup>R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 176.

32. His life was consistent. Not only was he faithful and obedient but he was thankful in every circumstance.
33. In almost all of his epistles he begins with his thanks to God for his reader
34. **Romans 1:8 (NASB77)** <sup>8</sup> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.
35. **1 Corinthians 1:4 (NASB77)** <sup>4</sup> I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.
36. **2 Corinthians 1:11 (NASB77)** <sup>11</sup> You also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through *the prayers of many*.
37. **Ephesians 1:16 (NASB77)** <sup>16</sup> Do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers.
38. **Philippians 1:3 (NASB77)** <sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.
39. **Colossians 1:3 (NASB77)** <sup>3</sup> We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

40. **1 Thessalonians 1:2 (NASB77)** <sup>2</sup> We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers;
41. **2 Thessalonians 1:3 (NASB77)** <sup>3</sup> We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater.
42. **1 Timothy 1:12 (NASB77)** <sup>12</sup> I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service;
43. **2 Timothy 1:3 (NASB77)** <sup>3</sup> I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.
44. **Philemon 1:4 (NASB77)** <sup>4</sup> I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers.
45. Paul has already called his readers to “give thanks” in 5:4.
46. Now he tells them again but this time he shows them that this is the consequence of being Spirit-filled.
47. Notice what he says about thanksgiving: first, *it is continual*.
48. Look at verse 20 again.

**I. Singing (v.19)**  
**II. Thanksgiving (v.20)**

Paul says in **Ephesians 5:20 (NASB77)** <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

A. It is Continual (v.20a)

“Always give thanks”

Paul begins with the word “always” (pantote) which means “at all times” (GING).

The words “give thanks” (eucharisteo, pres.act.part.) means “to be thankful, to give thanks.”

E.M. Bounds says it “is the expression of an inward conscious gratitude to God for mercies received. It is an inward emotion of the soul, involuntarily arising therein. It is born of meditation on God’s grace and mercy, and it is opposed to all murmurings at God’s dealings with us. Gratitude and murmuring never abide in the same heart at the same time.”<sup>4</sup>

Paul uses the present tense when speaking about thanksgiving.

Thanking God at all times is being thankful when we are blessed; in anticipation of blessing and victory to

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<sup>4</sup> E.M. Bounds, The Essentials of Prayer. 37-38, 40.

come; and in the midst of the battle, while we are still undergoing trouble and testing.

John MacArthur says, “If we can only thank God when things are going well, our thankfulness is on the bottom rung of faithfulness. If we can thank Him in anticipation of what He will do in the future, we show more spiritual maturity. But to thank God while we are in the midst of pain, trials, or persecution shows a level of maturity that few Christians seem to know but that our heavenly Father wants all His children to have.”<sup>5</sup>

Paul could call his readers to “always give thanks,” because that was the disposition of his life.

He wrote to Philemon in **Philemon 1:4 (NASB77)** <sup>4</sup> I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers.

B. It is Comprehensive (v.20b)

It is “for all things.”

John Piper says, “When Paul gets to verse 20 of Ephesians 5, he is not in some dream world where all is easy and healthy and holy. He is not telling us to do any more than the Lord has given him grace to do: be thankful for everything. It does not say “in” everything

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<sup>5</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 266.



(like it does in 1 Thessalonians 5:18). It says "for" everything.

But let us be very careful here. It doesn't say you should dance around the coffin. It doesn't say you can't cry if you have cancer. It doesn't say there is no place for anger against injustice. But it does say, "Always be thankful for everything." And this is the word of God, not merely the word of man.

If it puzzles us, if it even provokes us, we must not become cynical or rebellious; we should be like Mary when the angel said she would conceive a son without a husband. She asked humbly, "How can this be?" And Gabriel gave her not a whole explanation, but all she needed: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you . . . with God nothing will be impossible."

And is that not the same answer Paul would give to our perplexity here in Ephesians 5? Wouldn't he say from verse 18: It is beyond your understanding and beyond your emotional ability to give thanks to God for all things; it comes with the filling of the Holy Spirit: "Be filled with the Spirit."

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:10). If you trust him, he will unfold for you how your omnipotent and all-wise Father in heaven can even take the evils of the world and work them together for your eternal good.

And when he begins to teach you that lesson, you will experience the truth and the depth, and maybe even the

unity, of this first paradox: the days are evil, but give thanks always for everything to God the Father. He is wise and He is sovereign and He is good.”<sup>6</sup>

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 “this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” to “give thanks” “in everything.”

“In everything” points to the circumstances of their thanksgiving. ‘In connection with everything,’ and *everything* makes the injunction all-inclusive.<sup>7</sup>

Paul wants his readers to meet adverse circumstances with “a spirit of unflinching gratitude” (Hiebert). Such an attitude is made possible only by the grace of God.

D. Edmond Hiebert says, “When we realize that God works all things out for good to those who love Him and are yielded to His will, thanksgiving under all circumstances becomes a glorious possibility” (Ibid., 242).

The spiritual believer sees God’s wise and loving care in the difficulties and trials as well as in blessing and prosperity. He thanks God for a job even if it is demanding and unfulfilling. He thanks God for his health, even if it is far from being what he would like it to be. He thanks God even when his dearest loved ones

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<sup>6</sup> John Piper, Sermon manuscript: Urgency and Gratitude, Ephesians 5:15-20, preached on November 23, 1986.

<sup>7</sup> **Error! Main Document Only.** D. Edmond Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles. 242.

die, saying with Job, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).<sup>8</sup>

He’s like the beggar that Tauler, the fourteenth-century mystic and preacher, met one day who after meeting him said to the beggar, “God give you a good day, my friend.” The beggar answered, “I thank God I never had a bad one.” Tauler said, “God give you a happy life, my friend.” “I thank God,” said the beggar, “I am never unhappy.” Tauler, in amazement, responded, “What do you mean?” “Well,” said the beggar, “when it is fine, I thank God; when it rains, I thank God; when I have plenty, I thank God; when I am hungry I thank God ... why should I say I am unhappy when I am not?”<sup>9</sup>

When you know that God carries our burdens daily, then you can say, as **Psalms 68:19-20 (NASB77)** says, <sup>19</sup> Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God *who* is our salvation. Selah. <sup>20</sup> God is to us a God of deliverances; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death.

C. It is Consistent (v.20c)

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<sup>8</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 267.

<sup>9</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 176.

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”

The term “name” (onoma) refers to “name, title, person, authority, power, status, category” (UBS) “reputation, and character” (WSNTDICT). It refers to all that is implied in a name.

When Paul says to give thanks “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” he is saying that they are to give thanks consistent with who He is and what He has done and this is given “to God, even the Father.”

The chief element in all is thanksgiving to GOD.<sup>10</sup>

Paul said in **Colossians 3:17 (NASB77)** <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

What do Spirit-filled believers thank God for?

1. We thank God for His holy name – Psalms 30:4 (NASB77) <sup>4</sup> Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, And give thanks to His holy name.

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<sup>10</sup>*Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text With Notes and Addenda*, ed. Brooke Foss Westcott, bp. of Durham and John Maurice Schulhof, [from old catalog (London; New York: Macmillan and co., limited; The Macmillan company, 1909). 82.

2. We thank God for His goodness and mercy –  
**Psalms 106:1 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.
  
3. We thank God for those who receive and apply His Word – **1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NASB77)** <sup>13</sup>  
And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
  
4. We thank God that Christ has delivered us from the power of indwelling sin – **Romans 7:23-25 (NASB77)** <sup>23</sup> but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.
  
5. We thank God because He has given us victory over death – **1 Corinthians 15:57 (NASB77)** <sup>57</sup>  
But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
  
6. We thank God for His wisdom and strength –  
**Daniel 2:23 (NASB77)** <sup>23</sup> To Thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For Thou hast given me wisdom and power; Even now Thou hast

- made known to me what we requested of Thee,  
For Thou hast made known to us the king's matter.
7. We thank God when He saves someone – **Romans 6:17 (NASB77)** <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.
  
  8. We thank God for those who share the gospel with others – **Romans 1:8 (NASB77)** <sup>8</sup> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.
  
  9. We thank God when we see believers working hard for the sake of the kingdom and showing love to one another – **2 Thessalonians 1:3 (NASB77)** <sup>3</sup> We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;
  
  10. We thank God for the grace that He gives to believers – **1 Corinthians 1:4 (NASB77)** <sup>4</sup> I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,
  
  11. We thank God for those who have a zeal for Christ manifested in their lives – **2 Corinthians 8:16 (NASB77)** <sup>16</sup> But thanks be to God, who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

12. We thank God that Jesus will soon return for His own – **Revelation 11:17 (NASB77)**<sup>17</sup> saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Is thanksgiving a part of your life or are you a complainer?
2. If complaints come more from your mouth than thanksgiving, then you're not letting the Spirit of God control you.
3. When He controls you there will be a song in your heart that is expressed with the saints to God and there will be a heart of gratitude where you, as **Colossians 3:17** says, **(NASB77)**<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
4. Listen as the psalmist expresses his thanks to God.
5. Notice the common thread that runs through these thanksgivings.
6. **Psalms 7:17 (NASB77)**<sup>17</sup> I will give thanks to the LORD according to His righteousness, And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.
7. **Psalms 9:1 (NASB77)**<sup>1</sup> I Will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Thy wonders.

8. **Psalms 18:49 (NASB77)** <sup>49</sup> Therefore I will give thanks to Thee among the nations, O LORD, And I will sing praises to Thy name.
9. **Psalms 54:6 (NASB77)** <sup>6</sup> Willingly I will sacrifice to Thee; I will give thanks to Thy name, O LORD, for it is good.
10. **Psalms 57:9 (NASB77)** <sup>9</sup> I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to Thee among the nations.
11. **Psalms 86:12 (NASB77)** <sup>12</sup> I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Thy name forever.
12. **Psalms 109:30 (NASB77)** <sup>30</sup> With my mouth I will give thanks abundantly to the LORD; And in the midst of many I will praise Him.
13. **Psalms 111:1 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with all *my* heart, In the company of the upright and in the assembly.
14. **Psalms 118:21 (NASB77)** <sup>21</sup> I shall give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me; And Thou hast become my salvation.
15. **Psalms 119:7 (NASB77)** <sup>7</sup> I shall give thanks to Thee with uprightness of heart, When I learn Thy righteous judgments.
16. **Psalms 139:14 (NASB77)** <sup>14</sup> I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, And my soul knows it very well.



17. What's the common thread running through these Psalms?
18. The psalmist is say this is something he has made an effort to do. He says, "I will give thanks to God."
19. What about you?
20. If you do not personally know the Lord Jesus Christ, then you cannot express a true heart of thanksgiving to Him because you haven't received the new birth He offers.
21. I want to call you to repent from your sin and turn to Christ.
22. **Isaiah 1:18 (NASB77)** <sup>18</sup> "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.
23. Turn to Jesus now as we pray.
24. Let's pray.