

- To Be "Giving Thanks Always For All Things!" (Ephesians 5:20)
- Especially When We Remember:
- Just How Much We Have To Be Thankful For As Believers!

5. So - As We Hear What Paul Is Thankful For:
- In The Lives Of The Colossian Church:
 - Let Us Give Thanks:
 - For God's Work In Our Own Lives:
 - As Well!

* Because The First Thing You Ought To Be Thankful For Is:

1. God's Work Of Grace In You!

- Which We Can See In:
 - 1:3-5a - "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, / Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, / For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven!"
 - Sometimes - Even As Christians - We Forget:
 - All That God Has Done For Us:
 - As We Get Caught Up In The Regular Business & Busyness Of Life!
 - And This Can Even Lead:
 - To Great Discouragement - Because You Might Even Start To Think That God Has Forgotten About You!
 - Perhaps The Reason You Are Here Today:
 - Is So That You Will Remember:
 - That There Is So Much To Be Thankful For!
 - Now - Many Times:
 - We May Be Genuinely Thankful:
 - To God - For His Blessings & Provision!
 - And It Is Good To Give Thanks:
 - For Our Families & For Our Homes & For Your Health & For Our Jobs!
 - But The Reasons For Your Thankfulness As A Christian:
 - Go Far Deeper Than Just:
 - The Physical & Material Things That You Have!
 - Ephesians 1:3 - God "Hath Blessed Us With All *Spiritual* Blessings In Heavenly Places In Christ!"
 - This Is The First Thing Paul Thinks Of:
 - As He Give Thanks!
 - And So Should We!
 - Because The Greatest Blessing Is God's Work Of Grace In Your Heart & Life As A Christian!
 - So - Be Thankful For:
- The Gift Of Faith!
 - Even As Paul Was Thankful:
 - 1:4 - "Since We Heard Of Your Faith In Christ Jesus!"
 - Of Course - Faith Is The Way You Receive The Gift Of Salvation - But It Is Also Something That Will Grow & Develop As You Mature As A Christian!
 - And The Colossians' Faith Had Grown To The Point Where Paul Had Even "Heard" About Their Faith!
 - But - When Paul Thought About:
 - Their Faith - Who Did He Thank?
 - Not Them - But - 1:3 - "God!" - Why?
 - Because Their Faith Was A Gift Of God's Grace!
 - Even As Ephesians 2:8-9 Tells Us - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: / Not of works, lest any man should boast!"
 - So - Paul Was Not *Congratulating Them*:
 - For Their Faith:
 - He Was *Celebrating God*!
 - And So Should We!
 - Have You Put Your Faith In:
 - Jesus Christ As Your Savior?

- If So - Then You Have So Much To Be Thankful For!
- Be Thankful For:
 - Your Forgiveness From Jesus!
 - Your Fellowship With Jesus!
 - And Even Your Faith In Jesus!
- Also - Be Thankful For:
- The Gift Of Love!
 - Even As Paul Was Thankful:
 - 1:4b - “And Of The Love Which Ye Have To All The Saints!”
 - The Faith Of The Colossian Christians Blossomed Into A Genuine Love For God’s People!
 - So Much So - That Paul - At Some Point & In Some Way - Heard About This Too!
 - Perhaps He Heard That Their Church:
 - Loved To Be With Each Other!
 - And Loved To Share With Each Other!
 - Loved To Worship With Each Other!
 - And Loved To Pray With Each Other!
 - Is There This Kind Of Love In Your Heart Today?
 - Paul Describes:
 - The Depth Of Their Love:
 - As He Uses The Word “Agape” For The Kind:
 - Of Love They Had For Each Other!
 - It Was A Self-Less & Even A Sacrificial Kind Of Love!
 - Just Like Christ’s! He Also Describes:
 - The Breadth Of Their Love:
 - “Which [They Had] To All The Saints!”
 - Their Hearts Were Drawn To **All** God’s People:
 - No Matter Who & No Matter Where They Were!
 - But - Again - When Paul Thought About:
 - Their Love - Who Did He Thank?
 - Not Them - But - 1:3 - “God!” - Why?
 - Because Even Their Love Was A Gift Of God’s Grace!
 - Even As Paul Testified In 1 Timothy 1:14 - “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus!”
 - Any Love You Have:
 - For God & For His People:
 - Is A Gift Of God’s Grace!
 - And We Ought:
 - To Pray To God - When We **Need**:
 - This Kind Of Love!
 - But We Should:
 - Praise & Thank God - When We **See**:
 - This Kind Of Love!
 - Also - Be Thankful For:
- The Gift Of Hope!
 - Even As Paul Was Thankful:
 - 1:4a - “For The Hope Which Is Laid Up For You In Heaven!”
 - It Is Worth Noticing That Paul Refers To The Three Christian Graces That We Also Find In 1 Corinthians 13:13 - “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity!”
 - Only Here - In Colossians - The Order Is A Bit Different!
 - But No Matter What Order These Three Things:
 - Are Written - There Is A Close Relationship Between Them!
 - They “Always React Upon Each Other!” And “The More There Is Of One The More There Will Be Of The Others!” (Hendrickson)
 - Well - Here - Paul Is Tying **Their Faith** & Especially **Their Love**:
 - With **Their Hope** - That Is - That Their Christian Hope:
 - Is The Very Reason For Their Love & Faith As Christians!

- And This Is True - When You Remember What Your Hope Is Like!
- Your Hope As A Christian:
 - Is A Certain Hope!
 - Because It Is “Laid Up” For You!
 - This Means That Everything God Has Promised You Is Now Reserved & Preserved For You!
 - Even As Peter Says In 1 Peter 1:3-4 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, / To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you!”
- Your Hope As A Christian:
 - Is A Celestial Hope!
 - Because It Is “Laid Up For You In Heaven!”
 - This Means That Your Greatest Treasures Are *Not* Here On Earth, But Are *In Heaven* Above!
 - And There Is No Comparison!
- Your Hope As A Christian:
 - Is A Comprehensive Hope!
 - Because It Consists Of Jesus Christ & All Of His Promises To You!
- And You Ought To Be Thankful For:
 - Your Christian Hope:
 - Because It Too Is A Gift Of God’s Grace!
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:16 - “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father . . . hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace!”
- Do You Regularly Think About:
 - God’s Work Of Grace In Your Life:
 - As A Christian?
 - If Not - Think About These Spiritual Blessings In A Fresh, New Way Today!
 - Remember How:
 - All That The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Supplies:
 - Your Faith & Your Love & Your Hope:
 - Are All Gifts Of God’s Grace:
 - To You!
- And Give Thanks!

* But There’s Something Else That You Should Be Thankful For - And That Is:

2. ***God’s Work Of Grace Around You!***

- Which We Can See In:
 - 1:5b-6 - “Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; / Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth!”
 - Not Only Is It Easy For Us - Even As Christians:
 - To Forget About God’s Work *In* Us:
 - It Is Even Easier To Forget That God Is Still At Work *Around* Us As Well!
 - And This Can Lead Us:
 - To Loneliness & Even Despair:
 - When We Think That We Have Been Left Alone & Are All But Forgotten!
 - All Too Often We Get “Tunnel Vision” About Our Own Lives & Our Own World!
 - And We Need To Lift Up Our Eyes!
 - Because - 1:5 - The “Word Of The Truth Of The Gospel” Is Still At Work In This World!
 - The Word That God Used:
 - To Give You Hope - God Is Still Using:
 - To Give Others Hope!
 - And For This - We Can Be Thankful! Because Of:
 - The Great Pervasiveness Of The Gospel!
 - Paul Wanted To Remind & Reassure The Colossians:
 - That They Were *Not* Alone:
 - And They Were *Not* Forgotten:

- No Matter How Far “Off The Beaten Path” Their City Was!
- And So - In 1:6 - Paul Refers To The Gospel:
 - “Which Is Come Unto You, As It Is In All The World!”
 - When Paul Wrote These Words, He Was Bound In A Prison In Rome!
 - And At That Time In History, Rome Was The World! At Least, The Recognized World!
 - But How True Is This Today!
 - Where The “Word Of The Truth Of The Gospel” Can Be Accessed With Just A Push Of A Button!
- And This Is Why:
 - As Christians & As A Church:
 - We Too Need To Remember That:
 - We Are **Not** Alone & We Are **Not** Forgotten!
- Because God’s Reach:
 - With His Grace & His Gospel:
 - Is Vast! “Deep & Wide!”
 - We Can Be Thankful! Also For:
- The Great Power Of The Gospel!
 - Paul Continues In 1:6b - “And Bringeth Forth Fruit, As It Doth Also In You!”
 - This Too Would Have Been Encouraging News:
 - For That Church In That Declining Town:
 - Where There Probably Was Not A Whole Lot Of Outside News!
 - Especially News About Other Christians & Other Churches!
 - And **No** News Was Not **Good** News:
 - For Them!
 - But Paul Once Again Reassures Them:
 - And Us That:
 - “The Word Of God Is Not Bound!” (2 Timothy 2:9)
 - Instead - It “Bringeth Forth Fruit!”
 - Remember Jesus Parable:
 - In Matthew 13:31-32 - “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: / Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof!”
 - The Gospel Of Jesus Christ:
 - Is Powerful & Fruitful!
 - And We Can Be Thankful! Also For:
- The Great Purity Of The Gospel!
 - In The Rest Of 1:6 - Paul Reminds Them:
 - “Since The Day Ye Heard Of It, And Knew The Grace Of God In Truth!”
 - He Is Talking About The Time When:
 - They First Heard The Gospel & Responded By Faith In Jesus!
 - And When They Responded:
 - They “Knew The Grace Of God **In Truth!**”
 - This Means That The Message They Heard From Epaphras:
 - Was The **True** Message Of The Gospel!
 - It Was The Same Message He Had Heard From Paul! And - It Was The Same Message That Had Been Changing Lives All Over The World!
 - And So - It Was The Only Message They Could Trust!
- And We Too Ought To Be Thankful:
 - That God Continues To:
 - Faithfully & Graciously Preserve:
 - The Truth Of The Gospel!
 - So - We Must Never Forget About:
 - The Spread Of The Gospel:
 - And God’s Ongoing Work Of Grace:
 - All Around Us!
 - The Gospel Is Still:
 - Pervasive & Powerful & Pure!

- And It Still Gives Hope:
 - To Sinners Like Us!
 - So - Let's Give Thanks!

* Another Thing You Ought To Be Thankful For Is:

3. *God's Work Of Grace To You!*

- In 1:7-8 - Paul Talks About Their Pastor:
 - "As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; / Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit!"
 - And So - Paul Expresses His Thanksgiving:
 - To God For Giving Those Colossian Christians A Servant Like Epaphras!
 - Now - How Many Times Do You Find Yourself:
 - Each Week Or Even Each Day:
 - Complaining About:
 - The People Who Are Around You!
 - Perhaps About Your Boss Or Your Teacher!
 - Or Certain Members Of Your Family!
 - Or Even People In Your Church!
 - But - Instead Of Complaining About & Criticizing Others:
 - We Need To Start Thinking About:
 - And Being Thankful For:
 - Those Whom God Has Sent Into Our Lives To Love Us & To Serve Us & To Help Us!
 - As Servants Of God & The Gospel! And We Need To Start Seeing Them As:
- Fellow Servants!
 - Here - In 1:7 - Paul First Describes Epaphras As:
 - "Our Dear Fellowservant!"
 - So, Paul Did Not Consider Epaphras:
 - As His *Own* Servant, But As A *Fellow-Servant* - Of Christ!
 - This Meant That:
 - Since They Had A Common Master:
 - They Also Had A Common Service!
 - And So There Was No Rivalry, No Jealousy, No Competition, And No Reason To Complain!
 - And So - Even Though Paul Could Not Be There:
 - In Colosse - He Did Not Have To Be!
 - Because Epaphras Was!
 - They Were "Fellow-Servants!"
 - This Is How We Need To See Each Other:
 - As Well!
 - We Serve The Same Master:
 - And So We Have The Same Mission!
 - And We Ought To Be Thankful For Every Member:
 - And Every Gift God Has Given To Our Church!
 - Because God Has Been So Gracious To Us! He Has Also Given Us:
- Faithful Servants!
 - Paul Also Describes Epaphras - In 1:7 - As:
 - "A Faithful Minister Of Christ!"
 - This Meant That He Was Committed To:
 - The Lord - And To Do:
 - His Work His Way!
 - Think About Who Has The Lord Has Put In Your Life:
 - Who Has Been A "Faithful Minister Of Christ"?
 - A Parent? A Friend? A Pastor?
 - **IE:** I Often Think About My Mom! Who Is So Much More Than Just A Mom! Faithfully Serves The Lord & Me!
 - And Even Though Sometimes What They Say To You May Be Difficult To Hear - Yet As The Proverb Tells Us - "Faithful are the wounds of a friend!" (Proverbs 27:6)
 - Be Thankful For:
 - The Faithful Servants God Has:

- Put In Your Life! But Also For The:
- Fervent Servants!
 - Like Epaphras - "Who" - According To 1:8 - "Also Declared Unto Us Your Love In The Spirit!"
 - Epaphras Knew Them:
 - Personally & Intimately:
 - And Could Share The Truth Of Their Spiritual Life & Love To Paul!
 - There Are Some People:
 - God Has Placed In Your Life:
 - Who Know You Well - Your Ups & Downs - Your Life & Your Love - The Good, Bad & Even The Ugly - But Are Committed:
 - To Your Welfare & To Your Best!
- Remember That These Servants Of The Lord:
 - These Servants Of The Gospel:
 - Are Part Of God's Work Of Grace To You!

Conclusion:

1. And For All Of This - Paul Offers His Thanks!
 - Because - Back In 1:3 - He Writes - "We Give Thanks To God & The Father Of Our Lord Jesus Christ!"
 - We Too Need To Remember That:
 - Not Only Is He Is The *Source*:
 - Of All Of Our Blessings!
 - He Is Also The One Who *Sent* Us:
 - Our Greatest Blessing!
 - "Our Lord Jesus Christ!"
 - And So - He Deserves Our Thanks!
 - Psalm 106:1 - "O Give Thanks Unto The Lord, For He Is Good!"
2. *Are You Thankful Today?*
 - Perhaps You Need To:
 - Retrain Yourself:
 - To *Think* More About God & His Work Of Grace!
 - His Work Of Grace:
 - *In* You:
 - Through The Supply Of The Gospel:
 - And The Faith & Love & Hope That It Has Brought Into Your Life!
 - His Work Of Grace:
 - *Around* You:
 - Through The Spread Of The Gospel!
 - And His Work Of Grace:
 - *To* You:
 - Through The Servants Of The Gospel!
3. And As You Think About:
 - These Things:
 - Open Your Heart & *Give Thanks!*
 - *Give Thanks* - To The One:
 - "From Whom All Blessings Flow!"
 - For The Lord:
 - Deserves Your Thanks!

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