

Why Thanksgiving?

by Lynda Odom

Thanksgiving is a wonderful Christian holiday that was inspired by the Pilgrims who came to America in 1621 and celebrated their new life of freedom in their newfound country. They had suffered greatly on their journey and endured a harsh winter. Yet they still set aside time to enjoy that first bountiful meal of thankfulness and gratitude to God.

President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863. Later, President Roosevelt declared it to fall on the fourth Thursday of November each year. As a nation, we must continue to be grateful for our blessings, especially the freedom to worship God. Even in this strange year with all its challenges, we can be thankful.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. - Lamentations 3:22

A big lesson the Thanksgiving holiday teaches us is that as Christians we should be thankful in our every day life. God's hand is always at work protecting and guiding us even when we don't realize it.

*Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.
2 Corinthians 9:11*

Being thankful for God's provisions is the first step to a peaceful heart which we all want. Knowing that God will always be with us is an anchor we can trust whether we are on the mountains or in the valleys of life. We can always celebrate the blessings God has provided instead of dwelling on the burdens. Being content leads to a joyful life.

*Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have:
for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. - Hebrews 13:5*

Here are some ways to keep Thanksgiving in your heart:

- * I encourage you to make a list of blessings. There will be more than you realize. Remember to make the most of what God has given. Then, thank the Lord for each thing on your list and rejoice in His great love. *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice. - Philippians 4:4*
- * Teach your children and grandchildren to use the tool of finding the good things and they will be able to use it throughout their lives to lift their spirits. *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. - Psalm 69:3*
- * Set some time aside to gather together as a family and challenge each member to express how thankful they are for their family and encourage them to describe in their own words how they feel about each other. *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another. - 1 Thessalonians 5:11*
- * Live out your thankful heart by attending church and worshiping God in His house regularly. If you are not able to attend in-person services, be sure to stay faithfully engaged in live-streamed services through your church's social media accounts. *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him; and bless his name. - Psalm 100:4*
- * When praying, start like Jesus did with praise to God. Tell Him how great and awesome He is before you ask for answers. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. - Philippians 4:6*

If the Pilgrims who risked their lives and health so long ago to come to America could take the time to celebrate Thanksgiving, how much more can we be thankful to live in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Why Thanksgiving? Because being thankful can change your life!