



# RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

## Letters of Faith

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**“He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me;  
and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.”**

(Psalm 50:23 NASB)

**“I will praise the name of God with song, and shall magnify Him with thanksgiving.  
And it will please the Lord better than an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs.”**

(Psalm 69:30-31)

**“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.”**

(Romans 1:21)

Dearly Beloved,

The Scriptural admonitions to give thanks to our God and praise His name are multitudinous, and the benefits promised with our thanksgiving are mighty. The results of our not giving thanks are too monstrous to meditate.

It is a great privilege for us to be able to honor the Almighty God of the universe! And yet this awesome privilege is as simple as giving thanks to Him! Well, maybe not quite that simple, because the Word says, offer “a *sacrifice* of thanksgiving.”

The implication of these words is that it is costly to give thanks to the Lord. But look at the gain: we honor Him; we will see the salvation of our God, and we will please the Lord more than with the sacrifice of any physical possession. The body builder says, “No pain, no gain!” But what is their gain compared to ours as thanks givers?

As we searched the Scriptures to review “thanks” and “thanksgiving” verses, we were amazed to find how very few there are in the Gospels compared to the Epistles, and compared to the great number in the Old Testament Law and Prophets. We were even more intrigued to realize that with only two exceptions, the “thanksgiving” Scriptures in the Gospels were all recording Jesus giving thanks to His Father as He broke bread and initiated Communion.

The first of these exceptions is Luke 2:36–38, **“And there was a prophetess, Anna...And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. And at that very moment** (the moment Joseph and Mary brought the newborn baby Jesus to the Temple) **she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”** Anna recognized Jesus as the Messiah and gave thanks to God! She literally restarted the flow of thanksgiving to God from His people that had apparently dried up for well over 400 years. That’s right, chronologically the last time the word “thank,” or “thanks,” or “thanksgiving” is used in the Old Testament is in Daniel 6:10 where Daniel **“...continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously”** even though he knew that King Darius had decreed that anyone caught praying to any other “god” beside himself would be thrown into the lions’ den.

Daniel gave the ultimate sacrifice of thanksgiving: he put his life on the line! And God fulfilled Psalm 50:23 in his life by closing the lions' mouths, and using that to bring King Darius to see the light of God's salvation: **"I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever. He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."** (Daniel 6:26–27).

The only other reference to giving thanks to God in the Gospels, except where Jesus gave thanks to His Father, is in Luke 17:11–18. Jesus cleansed ten lepers, and then (vs. 15), **"...one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? Were none found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?'"**

Obviously it was rare to hear thanksgiving to God in Israel, even after a healing miracle had been received!

Jesus modeled how to give thanksgiving to the Father to the people of Israel. When He fed the multitudes, initiated the Lord's Supper, and prayed, He publicly gave thanks.

The Apostle Paul constantly emphasized the giving of thanks to God IN all things and FOR all things: **"in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."** (1 Thessalonians 5:18), and, **"always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;"** (Ephesians 5:20). He exhorted the young Church to give thanks to God so repeatedly because they apparently were not in the habit of doing so! **"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful."** and, **"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving"** (Colossians 3:15 & 4:2). Paul was concerned lest they fall back into the state of thanklessness that he addressed in Romans 1:21, and consequently their foolish hearts become darkened.

Every November, Americans celebrate the national holiday of Thanksgiving. It was established to honor God and to give Him thanks for the mighty things He has done, and for the mighty things yet to come from His hand, and it is God's will for all of His people.

Don't forget to thank God for the answers to little personal "flash prayers" that He has graciously granted. Remember the answers to the simple requests that no one else even knows about, the sweet secrets just between you and Him—the ones you haven't even "formally" prayed for. These answers show you that He is aware of your unspoken thoughts even about everyday things. Express to Him your awe and delight over His intimate care for you!

I remember such an incident a few years back that is etched on my heart. We had a long drive down a gravel road to our mailbox. Once there, we had to turn around to drive back and that took some careful maneuvering to avoid getting stuck in the ditches on each side of the road. "If only the County would widen the opening of our road and lay some gravel on it, we could simply turn around," I sighed as I tugged on the steering wheel of our 20-year-old farm truck.

A week later, as I approached the mailbox, I had to rub my eyes in disbelief—there was fresh gravel spread on a widened entry to our road, just as I had imagined! I burst

into thanksgiving! We still suspect that it was done by angels, because our poor county just doesn't normally do that kind of maintenance. What an awesome God!

God saw the desire in my heart and provided it! Because of my great prayers of faith? No! Because of His great love for me! Selah! (that means pause and think about that!)

Let us all learn to pour forth our thanksgiving so that Jesus will never say of our land, **“Were none found who turned back to give glory to God?”**

Let's all make thanks a major part of our daily walk with Jesus!

Now is the time to establish this benchmark in our walk with God: **“...in everything...”** and **“...for all things...”** being thankful and making thank offerings.

If we learn now to give thanks for the abundance that often means so little to us, then in the future we surely will abundantly give thanks for the little that will mean so much.

It seems to us that America is becoming a thankless nation. Less and less do we hear a heart-felt “thank you,” which along with “please” is one of the “two magic words” of our youth that seem to be vanishing from the American vocabulary. It is disturbing to us to see this trend affecting the Christian community.

Thankfulness in the heart must be expressed outwardly through word and deed. But thanksgiving must also be graciously received! Some of our brothers and sisters in Christ seem to have also lost the ability to receive thanks!

Example No. 1: We said to a worship leader after a service: “Thank you! That was beautiful! We were really blessed!” She quickly responded: “It is all Jesus! Don't thank me! Praise the Lord! Give all the glory to God.”

Everything in us wanted to say: “It wasn't THAT good.” But of course we didn't.

Two hurtful things happened in this exchange. First, our thanks was brushed off so we felt disappointed, frustrated, and put down because our thanks was not received. We knew her voice was a gift from God, but we wanted her to know how much her use of it blessed us! Second, she was deprived of the encouraging appreciation that God has prescribed for all of us for good spiritual and mental health.

Example No. 2: We said to a friend as we were parting: “God be with you!” He responded offhandedly: “He is!” instead of saying “Thank you—I appreciate that blessing!” His flip answer quenched the Spirit and we were both robbed of the blessing of thanksgiving.

The primary reason for these experiences is a lack of understanding of God's grace and how we are to respond to it. God has created us to need loving affirmation from other people as well as counsel and correction. These are usually provided by the Holy Spirit flowing through members of the Body of Christ. If we cannot learn to accept positive inputs, we surely will struggle with receiving corrections! Even worse, we may subconsciously seek gratification of our God-given need for affirmation from some unlawful (spiritually speaking) source.

Please understand that you are not usurping God's glory by receiving compliments and thanks for something splendid that God has done through you! You only do that when you respond with thoughts of conceit and pride.

Learn to graciously receive compliments, praise, and thanks. Enjoy them without embarrassment! Then, at the end of the day, present each one as a thanksgiving offering to your Heavenly Father. *“Thank you, Father, that Paul and Gretel liked the song You gave me, and took the time to thank me. That blessed me, Father, and really made me feel good. Now I take that praise and give it to You as a thank offering.”*

One of our sweet friends sees affirming compliments for how she is used by God as a lovely bouquet of flowers gathered throughout the day to present to Him in the evening before going to sleep. Thus God actually gets double glory; once when He uses your gifts and talents, and again when you give Him back the blessing you received from the person who He ministered to through you.

A godly way to receive compliments and thanks and blessings is by saying: "Thank you! That is a real blessing to hear, and I accept it gratefully." You are accepting the thank offering of the person you have been used by God to bless, and you are firmly receiving the praise as a trophy to present to your God. The circuit of grace is thus completed to the full glory of God.

Join us in learning together to give God thanks continuously for all things and at all times along with the angels and saints around the throne of God, proclaiming **"...blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."** (Revelation 7:12) May thanksgiving always be found in your heart and on your lips, and may you learn how to give and to receive thanks and praise to the glory of God the Father.

Join us as we pray: *Heavenly Father, I can hardly start to pray without bursting into thanks for all You are in my life, and for the unfathomable riches of Your grace to me and to my family. Even now, I thank You for showing me that You bless thanksgiving, and that when I am thanking You, I am joining all of the hosts in heaven around Your throne in honoring You, and Your Son! I recognize that sometimes I have been ungracious in responding to praise. Help me to receive compliments and blessings in a way that honors You. Release through me a spirit of continual thanksgiving so that wherever I go and whatever I do, every life I touch will be filled with thanks to You. Amen.*

Hugs,



### **MINISTRY REPORT:**

On October 5<sup>th</sup> Gretel tripped on a step in the front yard and did a somersault with a full twist before landing on her derriere (that's bottom for the non-French amongst us). She would have received 9.5 on the Olympic scale if she had stuck her landing, but her right arm tried to catch her and her wrist "rebelled." So we spent the weekend meeting new doctors, experiencing new equipment, and praying really hard for Jesus to heal her arm.

The following Monday she had a surgical procedure to put everything back where it belonged from the major compression and cracking and started experiencing the delights of my culinary and housekeeping skills (which are rather limited).

We will be checking with her doctor on the 19<sup>th</sup> and fully expect her to be back with both arms before the end of the month. Needless to say, we have had to curtail our ministry and travel activities.

We are walking through John 20:29; **"Jesus said...Blessed are they who do not see [their prayers for healing answered the way they want] and yet believe."**

We are giving thanks in all things!