



# BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



## A Thanksgiving Prescription for Peace

**T**he month of November reminds us Thanksgiving is here. For many, the significance of the holiday is overshadowed by the circumstances of life. Life often presents us with moments that stir anxiety within our hearts. Worries about the future, health, relationships, inflation, crime and other daily challenges can weigh heavily on us. And, oh yeah — the election! So what's a person to do?

Great question! Allow me to respond with the Word of God. God offers a powerful antidote to our worries and the ultimate medication that leads from anxiety to peace. It begins with the transforming power of prayer which can calm an anxious heart. In Philippians 4:6, the Apostle Paul encourages us, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*"

### 1. Acknowledge Stressful Feelings

First things first, though. We need to acknowledge those feelings that are creating our stress. Paul doesn't ignore our worries; instead, he invites us to handle them differently. We begin not by hiding them but bringing them to the surface.

### 2. Pray

Once we recognize the symptoms and determine the diagnosis, medication can properly be administered. Paul said our prescription is prayer. His words are not just religious-sounding ideas. They have power.

### 3. Give Thanks

How does the remedy happen? It happens when amidst our cry to the Lord, our words are infused with a spirit of gratitude. It is okay to acknowledge our hurts, pain and stress because God invites us to have that talk. And while we are praying, we can bring our cares or petitions to

Him with gratitude for being able to speak to the Creator of the universe!

Hebrews 4:16 encourages us, "*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*" The great news is God isn't distant or indifferent. He is a Heavenly Father who knows and cares about every one of His children. It doesn't matter how big or small we may be, we can come boldly to His throne of grace. We can trust He hears us, even when answers seem delayed.

### The Gratitude Shift

This is how thanksgiving changes our perspective. It shifts our focus. Instead of dwelling on the problems, we can be grateful we are connected with a Problem Solver. God reminds us in Jeremiah 32:27, "*Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. **Is anything too hard for me?***" (Emphasis added.)

When we realize the wonders of God's love, we will thank Him for His faithfulness. Remember what He has already provided. And as our thankfulness turns into praise and the medicine starts working, anxiety loses its grip. We are given a peace, a calmness that surpasses human understanding (Philippians 4:7). It isn't logical; it is supernatural. It stands guard over our thoughts and emotions, even when circumstances remain unchanged. That's because, after taking the medication, we change. Happy Thanksgiving!

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

# The Will to Give Thanks

**A** loud explosion interrupted President John Tyler's quiet cruise on the new steam warship *Princeton*. One of the ship's guns had suddenly exploded. When the smoke had cleared, several of the prominent guests on board, including the president's secretary of state and secretary of the Navy, were dead. Tyler would never forget the tragic events of this day for the rest of his life.

## Why Give Thanks?

There is another reason why President Tyler never forgot this day. Julie Gardiner, the single, adult daughter of David Gardiner, was on board the *Princeton* with her father when the explosion occurred. Sadly, David was killed in the blast. Julie was safe but shaken. Tyler personally carried her off the warship to a rescue boat. Through his thoughtful and consistent concern in the following days, the president won her heart. Four months later, they were married.

Had the accident never occurred, President Tyler might never have had the opportunity to build a relationship with Julie. Awful as the tragedy was, Tyler still had reason to give thanks.

First Thessalonians 5:18 says, "*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*" Maybe it's just me, but gratitude doesn't come easy in all circumstances because all circumstances aren't good: Miscarriage plunges a couple into grief. Terminal illness robs a child of life and their future. Ethnically-motivated violence makes our streets and neighborhoods less safe. A contentious presidential election exposes deep division in our "United" States.

## Universal Gratitude: Unrealistic or Wise?

How could thanksgiving be the will of God for us? Such advice may seem unrealistic in a modern age with complicated problems. Yet we know the counsel is sound because it was inspired by a God who works all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). Gratitude elevates us to see that good in our challenging circumstances.

This gives us two options: 1. Concentrate on God's character and give thanks, or 2. Concentrate on our circumstances and get irritated. The choice and the results are up to us, so we should choose wisely.

When I read "The Oyster Poem" below, it reminds me of the power of making the right choice when I face difficult circumstances:

There once was an oyster whose story I tell,  
Who found that sand had got under his shell,  
Just one little grain, but it gave him much pain,  
For oysters have feelings although they're so plain.

Now, did he berate the working of Fate,  
Which had led him to such a deplorable state?  
Did he curse out the government, call for an election?

No; as he lay on the shelf, he said to himself,  
"If I cannot remove it, I'll try to improve it."  
So the years rolled by as the years always do,  
And he came to his ultimate destiny — stew.  
And this small grain of sand which had bothered him so,

Was a beautiful pearl, all richly aglow.  
Now this tale has a moral — for isn't it grand  
What an oyster can do with a morsel of sand?  
What couldn't we do if we'd only begin  
With all of the things that get under our skin?  
- *Author Unknown*

## Gratitude and Your Grain of Sand

What is the grain of sand that is irritating you right now? It could be as nationally devastating as the *Princeton* explosion, or it could be something personal on a much smaller scale. You may not have power to remove or reverse it, but you can give thanks. That may be the first tiny step you take toward improving the situation and your outlook.

God is always working for the good of those who love Him – but it takes a thankful person to recognize this. Seek to become that person today.

- *Cam Edwards*

