

## MONDAY MANNA

22 November 2021

### CULTIVATING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

By Jim Mathis

The annual American observance of Thanksgiving Day comes later this week. This has become one of my favourite holidays because I know that, as author and speaker Zig Ziglar used to say, "Your attitude determines your altitude," and an attitude of gratitude determines your joy. Gratitude and thanksgiving go hand in hand.

So many people seem angry and dissatisfied these days, far from exhibiting the thankful attitude this holiday calls for, but with just a little effort, we all can find multiple reasons for thanksgiving. Here are some of mine:

I am thankful that my wonderful wife and business partner has been by my side for the past 50 years.

I am thankful for parents that loved me and each other and did what was necessary for me to get a first-rate education, not only through school but also through many extra-curricular activities.

I am thankful for all my friends I have met through various activities and pursuits. This includes my photography friends, music friends, Chamber of Commerce friends, and especially my friends at church with whom I share a love of God and a relationship with Jesus.

I am thankful for the gift of music. Music is not a big part of many people's lives, but I am happy and grateful that it has been in mine.

I am happy that I have been able to cultivate a "good eye," being able to quickly see when something looks good and when it does not. This is a learned skill that has allowed me to make a living as a photographer, and as a designer when needed.

I am thankful to live in a place where the weather changes and every day can turn into an adventure – with heat/cold, rain/sunshine, or snow and sleet – but also knowing that most days, the weather is perfect. The "average" temperature in my home state of Kansas is 70 degrees, but there are no "average days."

I am thankful every time the phone rings and someone starts to tell me about their old picture that needs work, since photo restoration is one of my specialties.

I am thankful to have wonderful tools and devices made by companies I respect – for photography, music, computers and other purposes – helping to make my life and the lives of other creative professionals better.

What are you thankful for? In reading the Scriptures, I have discovered it says much about giving thanks. To help you prepare for a time of thanksgiving, here are just two examples of what it has to say about giving thanks – and why we should do it:

**We should be thankful for all God is and all He has done.** The Creator God had made possible all that is mentioned above. He deserves to be acknowledged and praised for that. *"Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations"* (Psalm 100:3-5).

**We are to be thankful for all things.** It is not uncommon to feel thankfulness when things in our lives are going well, but even times of hardship and adversity can provide reasons for thanksgiving – if only through hindsight. *"Be joyful always...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus"* (1 Thessalonians 5:16,18).

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© 2021. Jim Mathis is a writer, photographer and small business owner in Overland Park, Kansas. His latest book is *The Camel and the Needle, A Christian Looks at Wealth and Money*. He formerly was an executive director of CBMC in Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri.

### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

Even if you do not have a personal or national tradition that sets aside a specific day for thanksgiving, what do you think of the idea?

How would you respond to the question that Mr. Mathis asked – what are you thankful for? Explain your answer.

One Bible passage he cited states we should direct our thanks specifically to God, believing He is the source of everything we have and experience, even if much of it has come about through our hard work and efforts. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

How can we feel and express thankfulness in the midst of difficult, painful or even tragic experiences? Can you think of any times of adversity that now, in retrospect, you can feel thankful for having gone through them? If so, in what ways?

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:*

1 Chronicles 16:34-36

Nehemiah 12:27,43

Psalms 106:1-5

Romans 7:25-8:2