

# *Thanksgiving:* **More than Just a Holiday**

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*In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (I Thessalonians 5:18).*

*Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20).*

## **THANKSGIVING IN THE UNITED STATES**

In the United States *Thanksgiving Day* is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. The exact origin of this holiday is debatable. Many hold that the first celebration took place in 1621, at Plymouth Plantation, in Massachusetts. Although some believe that the first official *Thanksgiving Day* in America was established by the Virginia settlers at Berkeley Plantation on December 4, 1619, a year before the pilgrims arrived at Plymouth. Their Proclamation on the banks of the James River was,

Wee ordaine that the day of our ships arrival at the place assigned for plantacon in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God.

Many years later the Continental Congress made a *Thanksgiving Day Proclamation* in 1782, followed by a Presidential one in 1789 by George Washington,

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.

*Thanksgiving Day* has been observed on various dates throughout the history of the United States. It was not until 1941 that the United States Congress established it as a national holiday to be held annually on the fourth Thursday in November.

**THANKSGIVING DAY  
vs.  
DAILY THANKSGIVING**

Many years ago, as a teenager, after reading Paul's many exhortations to *continued* thanksgiving, the thought occurred to me: Instead of *one day* dedicated to "thanksgiving," wouldn't it be better to dedicate one day to murmuring and complaining – an *Un-Thanksgiving Day*, and have the remaining 364 devoted to thanksgiving?

**UN-THANKSGIVING DAY**

Now obviously it would be ludicrous to have a day set aside for complaining; but is it any more ludicrous than devoting *only* one day to thanksgiving? I am certainly not advocating a day of complaining, but it is a thought that has returned to me every year of my adult life. Although I certainly enjoy a day to break from the normal activities of life and spend it with family and friends, is not "normal" life the real place to give true thanksgiving?

Instead of a *special day* of thanksgiving, why not make *every day* a holiday of thanksgiving as to the Lord? Should we not be thankful every day? Should we not have a heart of gratitude even in the middle of trials? Should not every day, for the believer, be Thanksgiving?

*One man esteems one day above another; another every day alike* (Romans 14:5).

**JOINING THE  
APOSTLE OF THANKSGIVING**

Clearly, as believers we are not bound by man's traditions, national or otherwise. Why not, then, join with Paul, *our apostle of thanksgiving*, and let us rise to a much higher plane and make every single day our own special holiday of thanksgiving to the Lord?

I'm all for Thanksgiving, but let's just expand it. Thanksgiving should be *a way of life* for the believer, not just reserved for one day out of the whole year. Let's devote *ALL* of our days to giving our Father the worship of thanks He so greatly deserves.

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