

Friday Reflections

*Give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:18

We gather, every year at this time, to reflect on the blessings of God over the past year. But in most families, Thanksgiving is less about real gratitude and more about stuffing your face, watching football, and hanging with the family. Some actually dread Thanksgiving, because they're forced to sit in a room with people they really don't enjoy.

Now I'm all in favor of the food and the football. But this year, let's make Thanksgiving about giving and about thanks. This year, more than any, might force us to dig deeper. For many, it will mark a year since they've had employment. For others, Thanksgiving will bring another reminder that they haven't found that significant other. And there are those couples who have to face the family questions of why they still can't have children.

For many, this was a year marked by pain. So how do we summon the gratitude? Well, if you're a Christian, your basis is not your circumstances, but something greater. Paul tells the people of Thessalonica that they could "give thanks in everything." Why? Because this was the "will of God in Christ."

In other words, followers of Christ believe that every piece of hardship is a grace gift from the Lord, sent for their growth, sanctification, and further intimacy with the Almighty. We don't believe we're here on this earth all alone. We believe God is firmly in charge.

*Father, though life may get hard--and it does--it all falls under
your sovereign will and control.
And so we give thanks in all things! Amen*

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