

# American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 [www.americandecency.org](http://www.americandecency.org)  
Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts November 2018

## Perpetual Gratitude



“... giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:20-21).

Paul does not command us to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and then immediately move on to other subjects. Thankfully, he gives several evidences of the Spirit-filled life that we might recognize the work of the third person of the Trinity. The first of these is the presence of song in our hearts and on our lips. Those who submit to the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying presence address others in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord” (v. 19). Here the apostle essentially repeats what he says about the indwelling “word of Christ”

in Colossians 3:16. If the Savior dwells in our hearts by His Spirit, His Word also dwells within us by His Spirit, and the Spirit uses this Word to make us holy and fill us with joy that overflows in song.

A second evidence of the Spirit-filled life, as seen in today’s passage, is an attitude of perpetual gratitude for all things directed to God the Father in the person of Jesus Christ. Since we are born into this world as fundamentally ungrateful people (Rom. 1:21), the Holy Spirit’s work of transformation includes changing us from ingrates into profoundly grateful people. In contrast to those in this world who are never content with God’s provision, the true Christian is thankful for everything, even the smallest joys. Believers understand that we deserve nothing but the Lord’s wrath, so we are thankful for all of our blessings.

Finally, Ephesians 5:21 also explains that our submission to one another is evidence of the Spirit-filled life. This mutual sub-

mission is not inconsistent with role distinctions within the body of Christ. After all, Paul in Ephesians 5:22–6:9 explains that certain individuals have positions of authority that are not shared by everyone in the church. The apostle’s view of submission here is the submission of service. All of us, no matter our responsibilities, are to put others first and seek to meet their needs before our own. John Calvin comments: “God has bound us so strong to each other that no man ought to endeavor to avoid subjection; and where love reigns, mutual services will be rendered. I do not except even kings and governors, whose very authority is held for the service of the community. It is highly proper that all should be exhorted to be subject to each other in their turn.” ...

[Used with permission: Ligonier.org]

***“Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.”***  
**Psalms 150:6**

# American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 [www.americandecency.org](http://www.americandecency.org)  
Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts November 2018

## Perpetual Gratitude



“... giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:20-21).

Paul does not command us to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and then immediately move on to other subjects. Thankfully, he gives several evidences of the Spirit-filled life that we might recognize the work of the third person of the Trinity. The first of these is the presence of song in our hearts and on our lips. Those who submit to the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying presence address others in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord” (v. 19). Here the apostle essentially repeats what he says about the indwelling “word of Christ”

in Colossians 3:16. If the Savior dwells in our hearts by His Spirit, His Word also dwells within us by His Spirit, and the Spirit uses this Word to make us holy and fill us with joy that overflows in song.

A second evidence of the Spirit-filled life, as seen in today’s passage, is an attitude of perpetual gratitude for all things directed to God the Father in the person of Jesus Christ. Since we are born into this world as fundamentally ungrateful people (Rom. 1:21), the Holy Spirit’s work of transformation includes changing us from ingrates into profoundly grateful people. In contrast to those in this world who are never content with God’s provision, the true Christian is thankful for everything, even the smallest joys. Believers understand that we deserve nothing but the Lord’s wrath, so we are thankful for all of our blessings.

Finally, Ephesians 5:21 also explains that our submission to one another is evidence of the Spirit-filled life. This mutual sub-

mission is not inconsistent with role distinctions within the body of Christ. After all, Paul in Ephesians 5:22–6:9 explains that certain individuals have positions of authority that are not shared by everyone in the church. The apostle’s view of submission here is the submission of service. All of us, no matter our responsibilities, are to put others first and seek to meet their needs before our own. John Calvin comments: “God has bound us so strong to each other that no man ought to endeavor to avoid subjection; and where love reigns, mutual services will be rendered. I do not except even kings and governors, whose very authority is held for the service of the community. It is highly proper that all should be exhorted to be subject to each other in their turn.” ...

[Used with permission: Ligonier.org]

***“Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.”***  
**Psalms 150:6**

## True Gratitude



One of the grand traditions of America is our tradition of taking one day out of the year and setting it apart as a special holiday—a holy day—a day to commemorate the benevolent providence of God. It was originally called Thanksgiving. The idea of Thanksgiving day has its roots in our own history, in the bitter struggle that the original founding fathers of this country had with the elements.

The pilgrims who came to these shores in 1620 had their ranks depleted by almost fifty percent in the first year of their struggle in the new world. They lacked the shelter, food, and supplies that they needed to endure. But instead of being bitter at the severe losses that they experienced, as people and as Christians they were grateful to God for His kindness. And it was in their culture that the first Thanksgiving took place.

It was then given new impetus during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, who made a national proclamation to restore this time of reflection and celebration of the goodness of God.

But we live in an age in which the culture has changed dramatically. It is now called the “secular age,” but we still have the tradition. Do you notice the subtly in which the meaning of this tradition has gradually eroded? Now it is almost as commonplace to hear this particular Thursday in the month of November being described as “Turkey Day” as it is to be described as “Thanksgiving.”

Thanksgiving is a moment to express profound, deep, sincere and genuine gratitude to the providence of God for a year’s worth of tender mercies that we have received from the hand of His benevolence. From his care, from His comfort, from His guidance, from His government of our lives, we are to take time to be grateful.

I think the resistance to that spiritual dimension of Thanksgiving is not something that is particu-

larly symptomatic of our generation or culture. The resistance to authentic Thanksgiving is inherent to fallen humanity. It is not inherent to humanity as such because when we were created originally in the image and the likeness of God, in the pre-fall Garden of Eden, every day was Thanksgiving day. Every day was a day of feasting upon the fruit that God had made available for His creatures. And every moment God came into the garden He was greeted by loving, adoring creatures whose hearts were filled with gratitude to even be in the presence of God.

But with the fall something serious happened. Something penetrated the very soul of our humanity that still persists to this day. And that is a deep rooted reluctance toward gratitude before God.

— R.C. Sproul

[Used with permission: Ligonier.org, November 2009]

***“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”***  
**1 Thes. 5:18**

## True Gratitude



One of the grand traditions of America is our tradition of taking one day out of the year and setting it apart as a special holiday—a holy day—a day to commemorate the benevolent providence of God. It was originally called Thanksgiving. The idea of Thanksgiving day has its roots in our own history, in the bitter struggle that the original founding fathers of this country had with the elements.

The pilgrims who came to these shores in 1620 had their ranks depleted by almost fifty percent in the first year of their struggle in the new world. They lacked the shelter, food, and supplies that they needed to endure. But instead of being bitter at the severe losses that they experienced, as people and as Christians they were grateful to God for His kindness. And it was in their culture that the first Thanksgiving took place.

It was then given new impetus during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, who made a national proclamation to restore this time of reflection and celebration of the goodness of God.

But we live in an age in which the culture has changed dramatically. It is now called the “secular age,” but we still have the tradition. Do you notice the subtly in which the meaning of this tradition has gradually eroded? Now it is almost as commonplace to hear this particular Thursday in the month of November being described as “Turkey Day” as it is to be described as “Thanksgiving.”

Thanksgiving is a moment to express profound, deep, sincere and genuine gratitude to the providence of God for a year’s worth of tender mercies that we have received from the hand of His benevolence. From his care, from His comfort, from His guidance, from His government of our lives, we are to take time to be grateful.

I think the resistance to that spiritual dimension of Thanksgiving is not something that is particu-

larly symptomatic of our generation or culture. The resistance to authentic Thanksgiving is inherent to fallen humanity. It is not inherent to humanity as such because when we were created originally in the image and the likeness of God, in the pre-fall Garden of Eden, every day was Thanksgiving day. Every day was a day of feasting upon the fruit that God had made available for His creatures. And every moment God came into the garden He was greeted by loving, adoring creatures whose hearts were filled with gratitude to even be in the presence of God.

But with the fall something serious happened. Something penetrated the very soul of our humanity that still persists to this day. And that is a deep rooted reluctance toward gratitude before God.

— R.C. Sproul

[Used with permission: Ligonier.org, November 2009]

***“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”***  
**1 Thes. 5:18**