

Church Partnership at The Gathering

October 2, 2016

"I Will Be a Thankful Partner"



A storyteller by the name of Kevin Kling was born with a birth defect—his left arm was disabled and much shorter than his right. Then, in his early 40s, a motorcycle accident nearly killed him and paralyzed his healthy right arm. While he was in the hospital recovering from the accident, Kling learned a life-changing lesson about "the three phases of prayer."

In the first phase of prayer, he says, we pray to *get things from God*. In the second phase, we pray to *get out of things*. While he was in rehab for his accident, Kling learned that we also pray to *give thanks to God*.

He says: I'd been through many surgeries during my six week stay in the hospital. And each day, I would ride the elevator to the ground floor and try and take a walk. After my walk, my wife Mary and I went into the gift shop, and she asked if I wanted an apple. She said they looked really good.

Now, I hadn't tasted food in over a month ... I lost a lot of weight because food had no appeal. So I said no, but she persisted. Come on. Try it. So finally, I said all right. And I took a bite. And for some reason, that was the day flavor returned, and that powerful sweetness from the apple rushed into my mouth. Oh, it was incredible.

I started to cry, cry for the first time in years. ...It felt so good to be alive. I blurted out, "Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you for this life." And that's when my prayers shifted, again, to give thanks to God.

Kevin Kling, "Prayer, Once a Last Resort, Now a Habit," NPR (1-10-07); On Being, "The Losses and Laughter We Grow Into," American Public Media (3-7-13);

In my study this week I looked up the words "give thanks" in the Bible. Do you know how many times those two words appear side by side in the Bible? Give thanks....73 times.

1 Chronicles 16:35 ESV

Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and deliver us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

Psalm 9:1 ESV

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

Psalm 28:7 ESV

The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Psalm 54:6 ESV

With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good.

Psalm 100:4 ESV

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

Daniel 2:23 ESV

To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might....

1 Corinthians 1:4 ESV

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus....

1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

And so on, and so forth.... Seventy-three times in the Bible, with many more verses talking about “thanks,” or “thanksgiving,” and other related words.

Giving thanks seems to be important, wouldn't you say?

Perhaps we should

Give thanks more and complain less

Give thanks more and criticize less

Give thanks more and grumble less

Why? Because...

1. Thanksgiving Glorifies God And Pleases Him

Ps 69:30-31 NIV

*I will praise God's name in song
and glorify him with thanksgiving.*

³¹ *This will please the Lord more than an ox,
more than a bull with its horns and hooves.*

2. Thanksgiving Complies With The Will Of God

1Thes 5:16-18 NLT

Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

3. Thanksgiving Releases God's Deliverance

Ps 50:14-15 ESV

*Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and perform your vows to the Most High,
and call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."*

God's deliverance seems connected to the sacrifice of thanksgiving, doesn't it?

4. Thanksgiving Cultivates The Fullness Of God's Spirit

Eph 5:18-20 NIV

¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Giving thanks to God the Father for everything is evidence of being filled with the Spirit. And giving thanks cultivates your daily walk in the Spirit.

5. Thanksgiving Strengthens Your Marriage

Philippians 1:3 NLT

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God.

On the vertical plane, if I give thanks to God every time I think of my wife, and
On the horizontal plane, if I express thanks to my wife every time I think of her, then
My marriage is going to be deep, and healthy, and strong.

6. Thanksgiving Keeps Your Kids On Your Team

Ephesians 6:4 NLT

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Parents don't need to point out every single mistake their kids make; instead, acknowledge your children, recognize them, show appreciation to them and for them when they do something right. Give thanks!

7. Thanksgiving Ushers In The Peace Of God

Phil 4:6-7 ESV

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Wouldn't you love to partner with brothers and sisters in Christ who are committed to giving thanks with benefits like that?

If you'd like to become an official partner or member here at The Gathering, we ask you to listen to all four talks in this sermon series, or read them on our website,

"Church Partnership"

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1. Listen to the 4 sermons on Partnership
 2. Read the articles and watch the videos at [thegatheringwindsor.com / church partnership](http://thegatheringwindsor.com/church-partnership)
 3. Attend one of the remaining Partnership Seminars
Wed. Oct. 5 at 7 PM
Sat. Oct. 8 at 9 AM
www.thegatheringwindsor.com

do the homework online at thegatheringwindsor.com on the Partnership tab, and then attend a seminar.

Now, I've given you 7 radical benefits of thanksgiving. Let's say them out loud together:

Thanksgiving glorifies God and pleases him.
Thanksgiving complies with the will of God.
Thanksgiving releases God's deliverance.
Thanksgiving cultivates the fullness of God's Spirit.
Thanksgiving strengthens your marriage.
Thanksgiving keeps your kids on your team.
Thanksgiving ushers in the peace of God.

And this is good for *everybody*!

Everybody can benefit from giving thanks, right?

This is not only for new members or new partners! This is for everybody!

Give thanks ... 73 times in the Bible!

So, if we were going to ask our pending Partners to sign a commitment card or a response card today ... and we're not ... but if we were it might look something like this:

I am a church partner.

By the grace of God, and for His glory and pleasure, I will seek to give thanks in every circumstance. I understand that thanksgiving releases more of God's deliverance into my life, and it cultivates the fullness of God's Spirit, too.

So, I will lead my family in giving thanks to God for our church, our pastors, our leaders, and our brothers and sisters in Christ. We will worship together in our church, and be thankful. We will serve together in our church, and be thankful.

The church is not about my personal preferences! I have no personal agenda! So I will ask Jesus to help us fall deeper in love with The Gathering because He gave his life for her.

Can you imagine what might happen in our lives and in our homes if we walked this out day by day?

Can you imagine what kind of grace-explosion might occur in our church if we committed ourselves to giving thanks in all things?

Would you like to try it? This week. Only words of thanksgiving in your relationships. No criticism. No gossip. No foolish talk. No off-colored jokes. No cussing. Just giving thanks.... What do ya think?