Answers *for a* Changing Culture

13 Why Do We Celebrate Thanksgiving?

Why do Americans set aside a day for thanks, and why should Christians especially make use of it?

EMBARK

Imagine a neighbor who just moved to the United States asks why we celebrate Thanksgiving. What would you tell them? How would your answer change if they asked whom we are thanking?.



1. What does Thanksgiving usually look like at your house? When does giving thanks actually happen?

Important Dates in Thanksgiving History

1621 · Plymouth. English settlers celebrated their harvest. The Wampanoag leader Ousamequin and about ninety men joined them for three days and brought five deer.

1789 · Washington. At Congress's request, Washington called for a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, acknowledging God's providence.

1863 · Lincoln. During the Civil War, Lincoln called for a national Thanksgiving and urged prayer for those grieving or suffering.

1941 · Congress. Congress established the fourth Thursday in November as the federal Thanksgiving holiday.

"The giving of thanks is one of our most fundamental Christian duties." *Kevin Bauder*

EXAMINE

READ Romans 1:21

2. What did people know about God, and how did they respond to what they knew?
3. Why do you think Paul puts failing to give thanks alongside failing to glorify God? What does giving thanks acknowledge about God and about us?

READ James 1:17

4. Where does James say every good gift comes from? What does he tell us about the character of the Giver?
5. Think of one ordinary good gift you received this week. Who helped provide it, and how could you thank both that person and your heavenly Father?

Listen to the podcast episode at **cbcroch.org/answers**

Join us for **Midweek Bible Study**, *Wednesdays at 6:30 PM*

READ Colossians 3:12–17

6. Where do you see thanks or gratitude in verses 15–17? What is happening around each mention?
7. In verses 12–15, what has the Lord already done for His people? How might remembering that change the way you respond to a grievance at church?
8. In verse 16, what does the word of Christ lead us to do for one another and for God when we gather?
9. In verse 17, whom do we thank, through whom do we give thanks, and how far does "whatever you do" reach?

READ Colossians 1:12–14

10. What has the Father given us in His Son that we can thank Him for in any season?

EXPOSE

We enjoy the gift and forget the Giver.
You can enjoy every bite of a meal someone brings you and forget to say thank you. James 1:17 reminds us that every good gift comes from the Father. Thank the person who helped you, and thank God for caring for you through them.

We take forgiveness for granted.
When a grievance fills our thoughts, it can crowd out the memory of how much Christ has forgiven us. Remembering His mercy gives us a reason to bear patiently with one another and forgive as He forgave us (Colossians 3:12–15).

We wait for life to get easier.
Paul calls us to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18). An empty chair may make Thanksgiving especially hard. You can tell God how much you miss someone and thank Him for the years you had together. Grief and thanksgiving can belong in the same prayer.

We leave thanks on the holiday calendar.
Thanksgiving Day gives us time to remember what God has done and say it aloud. Christians have reason to use that opportunity because giving thanks to the Father through Jesus belongs in every part of life (Colossians 3:17).

ENGAGE

Step 1. Name a gift.

What ordinary kindness from the Father might you have overlooked this week?

Step 2. Remember what Christ has given you.

Which gift in Colossians 1:12–14 can you thank the Father for today?

Step 3. Give thanks now.

Turn one answer into a prayer. Begin with "Father, thank You for…"

Step 4. Give thanks at your table.

At a meal this week, thank God aloud for one specific kindness. Invite someone else to name one, too.

MEMORIZE Colossian 3:17, CSB "And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Remember… *Thanksgiving Day gives us an occasion to practice what belongs in all of life. Give thanks to God the Father through Jesus Christ*