

## Being Spiritually Thankful

To “walk by faith, not by sight” (2Cor.5:7) is difficult for everyone. After all, we are given sight, but must develop faith! It’s so very easy to “look” with our eyes at physical things rather than to “see” with our faith the spiritual things, 2Cor.4:18. The challenge is to live spiritually in a physical world. To do so, we must become “partakers of the divine nature” (2Pet.1:4) sufficiently to be able “see” things, at least to a degree, as God does.

Think about it... it’s fairly easy to be “Thankful” for some things (especially when we have a national holiday and family gatherings to help out):

- Physical *Bounties of Food!* On whatever particular fare we feast, in reality, it is but a reminder of the overall blessings we enjoy... a not so subtle a sign of our relative prosperity, and for it we appropriately give thanks.
- Physical *Families!* What a wonderful treat to get see our brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, children, in-laws, and to be together- “family” one and all. Be together again reminds us how much we love and miss one another during the times we’re apart living our “own” lives.
- Physical *Health!* At such times, we’re reminded of how fortunate we are to still have each other. Certainly, some members have passed, some are currently poor in this regard, and perhaps others won’t be present next year, but still... we are typically and rightfully grateful for the relative health that allows us to be “together.”

What’s the point? Thanksgiving is, in large measure, a feast celebrating and giving thanks for our physical blessings. Certainly, there is absolutely nothing wrong with this! But, as we are challenged to “walk by faith and not by sight”, perhaps we should consider a few of the corresponding spiritual blessings that can only be “seen” by faith:

- ✓ Our Spiritual *Bounties of Food!* Once a year we are reminded of our physical bounties of food. However, every week Christians are reminded of their spiritual food bounties- not just the “milk” and “meat” of the Word of God (cf. 1Pet.2:2 or Heb.5:14), but also the feast divine of the Lord’s Supper, 1Cor.11:23-34! This “feast” is for the spiritual nutrition of our souls. But if we partake sporadically, or improperly (as did the Corinthians when they failed to grasp the spiritual significance of their eating together), then we become spiritually weak, sickly, and dead, cf. 1Cor.11:30! Be thankful for the spiritual food God gives to sustain our souls!
- ✓ Our Spiritual *Family!* Again, once or twice a year our physical families get together and are reminded of the wonderful blessing of family- that sense of love, belonging, trust, etc. But again, if we are truly “seeing” by faith and not just by sight, then the Christian is reminded daily of the blessing of spiritual family through conversation with a divine heavenly Father. In any family, we learn to love and appreciate one another primarily in one way: we spend time with each other. As siblings, there are countless hours of playing together. As spouses, likewise there is a tremendous amount of time spent dating and courting to get to know one another. As parents, we spend literally years completely bound to our children which in turn creates tremendous emotional attachment. The point? We don’t learn to truly love our spiritual Father through a bleary-eyed, two-minute, one-way recessitations of what we want a few times a week before we nod off. Nor is it achieved through a “when

*it's convenient for me*" visit to His house! And likewise, how can we truly love our *spiritual Husband* of Jesus Christ by just visiting Him once a week rather than living with Him every minute of every day? We have tremendous opportunities with a *tremendous spiritual family* that we often neglect and spurn. And these things do not even begin to address that spiritual family issue of *brethren!* How can we have a *"friend that sticks closer than a brother"* (Prov.18:24b) if we never spend more than a few minutes with them each week? Think about it: if you were to select one person completely at random with which to become "friends," how would you go about it? Do not the same principles apply to those who are supposed to be not only your friends but also your spiritual *family*? Those who truly have a close *spiritual family* through well-established personal relationships with God the Father, Jesus the Husband, and Christians brethren, should be extremely thankful for such family!

- ✓ Our Spiritual *Health!* Unfortunately, it sometimes takes the loss of a physical blessing for us to truly appreciate the spiritual ones. When we lose our *physical families* to the world or to death, then our *spiritual families* are the ones who carry us through. When our *physical strength* is depleted through disease, our *spiritual strength* is what shows who we really are. We are truly dichotomous creatures made up of both *body* and *spirit*. It is up to us in which we choose to live, love, and develop our strength, character, and reputation. Be thankful for those things that, through God's gracious provision, allow for our *spiritual health* and *well-being*: *spiritual nutrition* from His Word; *spiritual exercise* through being busy in and for His kingdom; and *spiritual freedom from the disease of sin* through Jesus' sacrifice!

When realize and appreciate our *spiritual* food, family, health- and the gracious God who provides them, we tend keep our *physical* food, family, and health in their proper place. Unfortunately, the inverse is often also true. Enjoy your food, family, and the measure of health you have this week, but be sure that your *spiritual* food, family, and health take precedence always!

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