

# THE POWER OF THANKSGIVING

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Thanksgiving 2020, #2: 1 Timothy 4:1-5

November 15, 2020

*For everything God created is good,  
and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,  
because it is consecrated by the word and by prayer.  
1 Timothy 4:4-5*

## Context, context, context

<sup>14</sup> Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, <sup>15</sup> if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. <sup>16</sup> Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:

He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit,  
was seen by angels, was preached among the nations,  
was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.  
1 Timothy 4:1-3

- 1) The church (in Ephesus!) still matters – Paul has sent Timothy to hold the fort (see Acts 20:17-38)
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ still matters, and thanksgiving is going to help get us there

## The problem that arose in Ephesus: “spirit good, world bad”

*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. <sup>2</sup> Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. <sup>3</sup> They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For God created everything good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word and by prayer.*

1 Timothy 4:1-5 (with reference to Genesis 1:31)

- 1) The word is God's, the prayer is mine
- 2) Always be careful to declare something “unclean”

## The hardest lessons of Thanksgiving

### 1) The power to change my perspective about God's discipline

<sup>25</sup> See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? <sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." <sup>f</sup> <sup>27</sup> The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our "God is a consuming fire."

Hebrews 12:25-29 (quoting from Haggai 2:6 and Deuteronomy 4:24)

1) Moses tells the story of his experience of God's discipline – and his confidence in God's faithfulness

2) "Once" the Law warned on earth, "Once more" Jesus warns from heaven!

3) Thanksgiving enables me to receive – and grow from! – God's discipline

### 2) The power to enjoy God's creation

<sup>23</sup> "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. <sup>24</sup> No one should seek their own good, but the good of others. <sup>25</sup> Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, <sup>26</sup> for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." <sup>c</sup>

<sup>27</sup> If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. <sup>28</sup> But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. <sup>29</sup> I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? <sup>30</sup> If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

<sup>31</sup> So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. <sup>32</sup> Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—<sup>33</sup> even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 (with a wonderful quote from Psalm 24:1)

1) Edification and enjoyment aren't mutually exclusive – but they must begin with God, not my rights

2) Thanksgiving bolsters my conscience; develops my discernment

## Resources for further studies of Thanksgiving

Bob Deffinbaugh has a good intro to 1 Peter at <https://bible.org/seriespage/50-1-timothy-believing-and-behaving-household-god>

Ligon Dunan's sermon on 1 Timothy 4 isn't, I think, his best, but it is good intro to the passage at <https://www.fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/the-latter-times/>

Randy Alcorn has a great little article on enjoying God's good gifts at <https://www.epm.org/blog/2020/Nov/9/time-efforts-hobbies>

John Piper has a more eschatological take on Hebrews 12 at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/a-kingdom-that-cannot-be-shaken>

Nicholas Batzig's blog on giving thanks like Jesus at [https://feedingonchrist.org/thankfulness-jesus/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=thankfulness-jesus](https://feedingonchrist.org/thankfulness-jesus/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=thankfulness-jesus)

Kevin de Young has a series of Thanksgiving blogs, including these:  
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/stuffed-full-with-thankfulness/>  
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/gratitude-to-gods-glory/>