

**Who's the Turkey?**

The family of a certain turkey farmer was quite fond of the leg portion of the turkey and complained at dinner that there were never enough legs for everyone. So, the farmer set out to breed a better turkey. After many frustrating attempts, the farmer found success and was relating the results of his efforts to his friends at the general store.

"Well I finally did it! I bred a turkey that has 6 legs!"

"Great!" they all said. "How did it taste?"

"I don't know" said the farmer. "I never could catch the thing!"

Thankfully, God not only knows what we truly need but he is also able to deliver it to us in abundance. This week, let's study together what it means to be properly thankful for all he has done, developing thankfulness as a lifestyle that honors God in all we do.

**Monday – Things to be Thankful For**

Asked to write a composition entitled, "What I'm thankful for on Thanksgiving," a student wrote, "I am thankful that I'm not a turkey."

1. Please read Philippians 4:8-13. What concepts in verses 8-9 guide you in developing a thankful attitude? Which are most appealing to you now? Which are most difficult for you to consider adopting?
2. Take a look at Galatians 5:19-21 and describe how these acts would interfere with being thankful for the good things God gives you.
3. According to James 1:16-17, where do the good things in our lives come from? What does this tell you about being properly thankful?

**Making it Personal:** In his book, "Thanks!" Dr. Robert Emmons (an FBC member) makes the point that thanking and thinking come from the same root word. In other words, if we are casual in our thinking, we are not apt to be thankful. Dr. Emmons suggests that gratitude is not for the intellectually lethargic. Are you making the effort to recognize what God has done and is doing in your life? If not, consider changing your practice of gratitude.

**Tuesday – Anxiety or Contentment**

"Contentment makes poor men rich. Discontentment makes rich men poor." Benjamin Franklin

1. Please read Philippians 4:10-11 along with 2 Corinthians 11:24-29. What do you think was happening in Paul's life such that he found the ability to be content in all circumstances?
2. Look at Psalm 55:22 and 1 Peter 5:7. What does it mean to cast your cares on God?
3. In Psalm 16:8-11, Psalm 125:1-2 and Hebrews 12:28, what assurances are we given about God's ability to sustain us even in the most troubling times?

**Digging Deeper (optional):** Read Psalm 62:1-12 and describe what the psalmist was going through. When have you experienced similar need for God to protect you and keep you from being shaken?

**Wednesday – Good Times and Bad**

"The riddles of God are more satisfying than the solutions of man." G.K. Chesterton, *Introduction to the Book of Job*

1. Please read Philippians 4:12. Considering what Paul described in 2 Corinthians 11 (from yesterday's reading), what can you learn about being content in all circumstances?

**Text Insight:** Paul wrote 2 Corinthians while he was traveling on his missionary journeys and he wrote Philippians a few years later while imprisoned in Rome under the cruel Emperor Nero.

2. In Job 1:1-22, how would you characterize Job's life? What is his relationship with God? How did Job express his faith in God in both good times and bad?

**Making it Personal:** Do you find that your attitude toward God depends on what is happening to you? Ask him to guide you in his steadiness to be steady yourself as you anchor yourself in him.

**Thursday – The Strength of God**

"The strength of a man consists in finding out the way God is going, and going that way." Henry Ward Beecher, 19<sup>th</sup> c. American pastor

1. Please read Philippians 4:13. Looking back over verses 8-12, what "things" do you think Paul had in mind?
2. In Mark 10:17-27, what did Jesus say about his abilities when it came to matters of eternal consequence?

**Text Insight:** The people around Jesus considered wealth to be a sign of God's approval, so Jesus' response to the rich young man must have been an eye opener for them.

3. What do learn of our needs and God's strength in Psalm 28:1-9? How does this apply to your life?

**Prayer Focus:** Do you know someone who is in need of God's strength and protection? Pray for them now.

**Friday – Recipe for a Thankful Heart**

"A state of mind that sees God in everything is evidence of growth in grace and a thankful heart." Charles Finney, 19<sup>th</sup> c. American evangelist

1. Please read Philippians 4:4-7. How can following these instructions lead to a lifestyle of thankfulness?
2. In John 6:60-69, what did Jesus' closest friends do that others failed to do? Why? How do you show your faithfulness in your relationship with God?
3. Look at the three commands in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and describe how you can adopt them in your life.

**Making it Personal:** What would a lifestyle of thankfulness look like for you? How can you lead such a life?

**For the Weekend:** Re-read Philippians 4:4-13 and list the concepts that apply to your life. Ask the Lord to guide you in developing an attitude of thankfulness to him, the giver of all good things.