

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 24

2024

## Be Thankful To God

In the first century, the apostle Paul instructed the saints in Colosse to “be thankful” (Colossians 3:15). You see, before Americans began the tradition of setting aside a day to reflect upon their blessings, and to be thankful for what they have (Thanksgiving Day), Christians were instructed to express their thanks for the blessings which only come from our one true Almighty God. So, with that thought in mind, let’s express our thanks to God because...

### **He Is The Almighty Creator and Giver of All Things.**

We need to be ever thankful to God, simply because He made the world and everything in it (Acts 17:24). You see, without God, we do not even exist. Knowing that, let’s be continually thankful to God for all of our many blessings which He provides, and let’s always remember, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). So again, be thankful and express your thanks to God our Almighty Creator and giver of all things.

### **He Is So Good.**

Another reason for why we should be thankful and express our thanks to God is because of the fact that He is good. You see, God is so good to both you and me, and the inspired Psalmist affirmed this when he penned, “For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations” (Psalm 100:5). Brethren, be thankful and do not neglect the goodness of God, but rather acknowledge His goodness, and keep these inspired words in mind, “The Lord is good to

those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him” (Lamentations 3:25). Yes, God is good, therefore give thanks to the Lord, for He is good (Psalm 107:1).

### **He Is Righteous.**

Not only do we need to be thankful to God because He is good, but we likewise need to be thankful to Him because He is righteous (Psalm 119:137). You see, God is righteous in all His ways (Psalm 145:17) and when one is righteous they are right or justifiable. In Psalm 7:17, David acknowledged the righteousness of God, when he declared that he would praise the Lord according to His righteousness. Therefore, praise the Lord our God, and be thankful for the righteousness of God.

### **He Is Loving.**

Furthermore, we should be thankful to God for His love for us. You see, God so loved the world (i.e. mankind) that He gave His only begotten Son, so that the world might be saved (John 3:16-17). In Romans 5:8, Paul writes, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The truth is, without the love of God, we have no hope. Therefore, be thankful to God, for He is rich in mercy and His love is great (Ephesians 2:4).

### **He Is Gracious.**

Last, but certainly not least, we need to be thankful to God for His grace (i.e. unmerited favor). You see, the grace of God is a gift (Ephesians 2:8) and His grace which brings salvation has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). In Psalm 84:11, the Psalmist informed, “For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” Remember that, my beloved brethren, and be ever mindful, and thankful for the grace (i.e. unmerited favor) of God.

Once more, we have so much to be thankful to God for, and because of that, I encourage us all to always express our thanks to our Almighty, Good, Righteous, Loving, Gracious, Father in heaven (1Thessalonians 5:17-18).

*✍️ Brad Phillips*

# “TOTAL COMMITMENT”

We frequently hear some speaking of having "total commitment" in their lives. I think most of them expect us to believe that this "total commitment" is to Jesus Christ. There are several different groups who place much emphasis upon their members having this "total commitment." As you examine these groups you will find that they have different teachings and practices. About the only thing they have in common is their criticism and ridicule of those they say are "traditionalists." We sometimes find such attitudes among those who identify themselves as members of the body of Christ.

These individuals who place so much emphasis upon this "total commitment" make claims of sincerity, devotion and love for themselves while, at the same time, maintain that the "traditionalists" (which happens to be anyone who questions their activities) are insincere, not devoted and lacking in love.

One sure way of being classed as a "traditionalist" by these individuals is to stress the need to respect the authority of God's word in everything you teach and practice. I have never been able to understand why you could ignore the authority of Christ and simply teach and practice what you please and you are filled with sincerity, love and devotion. On the other hand, you stress that you should teach and practice only those things authorized by Him and this makes you insincere, not devoted and lacking in love. Can you figure it out?

Maybe what we need to do is go back and look at this matter of "TOTAL COMMITMENT." When you speak of someone having "commitment" this really doesn't tell you much unless you also reveal that to which they are committed. In my talks with those who claim this "total commitment" for themselves I have found that they truly are committed. Let's note some things to which they are committed.

Many of them are committed to doing that which pleases them. If it makes them "feel good" about themselves or brings pleasure to them they are committed to it. Oh, I know they talk about Jesus and would have you believe that He is the center of their lives, however, Jesus, himself, said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

As we study through the pages of God's word we are made to realize that the teaching of Jesus or the apostles did not make those who heard it feel good about themselves. It made them realize that they were guilty of sin and were separated from God in their present condition. The dishonest and insincere became angry and often resorted to violence against the one telling them the truth (See Acts 7:54-60). Those who were honest were also made to feel bad upon learning of their condition but they received and obeyed the truth and then rejoiced (See Acts 2:41; 8:39).

By what standard do these individuals determine that if you emphasize strict obedience to and respect for the authority of Jesus you are insincere and not serving from the heart? How can they judge the hearts of others? It just may be that those who teach and practice only that which is authorized in the word of God are doing so because they are "totally committed" to pleasing and glorifying the Lord rather than themselves. In fact, this is the kind of "total commitment" we need to have. Don't be deceived by those who say they are "totally committed" to Christ but show otherwise by their actions. The person who is committed to Christ will demonstrate that love by keeping His commandments (See John 14:15,21; 1 John 5:3). To what are you committed?

*✍ James Hahn*

## Belleville church of Christ

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**Website: [www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)**

### Schedule of Services

|                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Sunday Bible Study .....     | 9:30 a.m.  |
| Sunday Morning Worship ..... | 10:30 a.m. |
| Sunday Evening Worship ..... | 4:00 p.m.  |
| Wednesday Bible Study .....  | 7:00 p.m.  |