

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## Subject: THANKFULNESS: 1 Chronicles 16:4)

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO EXPRESS THANKFULNESS?

KEY BIBLE VERSE: David appointed the following Levites to lead the people in worship before the Ark of the LORD by asking for his blessings and giving thanks and praise to the LORD, the God of Israel. (1 Chronicles 16:4)

A true gentleman must have no mark of effeminacy visible on his face, or any other part of his body. Let no blot on his manliness, then, be ever found either in his movements or habits. Nor is a man in health to use his servants as horses to bear him. For as it is enjoined on them, "to be subject to their masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward," as Peter says; so fairness, and forbearance, and kindness, are what well becomes the masters. For he says: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be humble," and so forth, "that ye may inherit a blessing," excellent and desirable.

A woman who depends only on externals will soon run out of ammunition! She may attract attention, but she will not win lasting affection. Perhaps the latest fashion fads were tempting the women in the church at Ephesus, and Paul had to remind Timothy to warn the women not to get trapped.

The word translated "modest" (1 Timothy 2:9) simply means "decent and orderly." It is related to the Greek word from which we get the English word "cosmetic." A woman's clothing should be decent, orderly, and in good taste. "Shamefacedness" literally means "modesty, the avoidance of extremes." A woman who possesses this quality is ashamed to go beyond the bounds of what is decent and proper. "Sobriety" comes from a Greek word that means "having a sound mind and good sense." It describes an inner self-control - a **spiritual "radar"** that tells a person what is good and proper.

Ephesus was a wealthy commercial city, and some women there competed against each other for attention and popularity. In that day expensive hairdos arrayed with costly jewelry were an accepted way to get to the top socially. Paul admonished the Christian women to major on the "inner person," the true beauty that only Christ can give. He did not forbid the use of nice clothing or ornaments. He urged balance Of Adultery or Uncleaness.

**God knoweth their hearts without their outsides: and we know their hearts by their outsides.**

"It's getting harder and harder for a Christian woman to find the right kind of clothes!" a church member complained to me one summer. Whatever happened to old-fashioned modesty?"

Observe therefore, my children, restraint in wine; for there are in it four evil spirits-of (1) lust, of (2) wrath, of (3) riot, of (4) filthy lucre. But even if ye drink not at all, take heed lest ye sin in words of outrage, and fighting, and slander, and transgression of the commandments of God; so shall ye perish before your time.

Paul wanted young Timothy to know how to "conduct himself" as a leader of a local assembly. The Pastoral Epistles are guidebooks for conduct of a local church. Scores of books have been published in recent years, purporting to tell us how to start, build, and increase a local church; and some of them

contain good counsel. However, the best counsel for managing a local church is found in these three inspired letters. The young pastor in his first church, as well as the seasoned veteran in the ministry, should saturate himself with the teachings Paul shared with Timothy and Titus.

There are many different kinds of "assemblies," but the church is the assembly of the living God. Because it is God's assembly, He has the right to tell us how it ought to be governed. The church has been purchased with the blood of God's Son (Acts 20:28); therefore, we must be careful how we conduct ourselves. Church officers must not become religious dictators who abuse the people in order to achieve their own selfish ends (1 Peter 5:3-5; 3 John 9-12).

The pillar and ground of the truth (vv. 15 c-16). This is an architectural image which would mean much to Timothy at Ephesus, for the great temple of Diana had 127 pillars. The word ground suggests a bulwark or a stay. The local church is built on Jesus Christ the Truth (John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15); but the local church is also itself a pillar and bulwark for the truth.

It is likely that the pillar aspect of the church's ministry relates primarily to displaying the truth of the Word, much as a statue is Put on a pedestal so all can see it. We must hold "forth the Word of life" so the world can see it (Philippians 2:16). The local church puts Jesus Christ on display in the lives of faithful members.

As a bulwark, the church protects the truth and makes sure it does not fall (for elsewhere "truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter" - Isaiah 59:14). When local churches turn away from the truth (1 Timothy 4:1 ff) and compromise in their ministry, then the enemy makes progress. Sometimes church leaders must take a militant stand against sin and apostasy. This does not make them popular, but it does please the Lord.

The main truth to which a church should bear witness is the person and work of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:16-it is probable that this verse is quoted from an early Christian hymn). Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, not only at His birth, but during His entire earthly ministry (John 14:1-9). Though His own people as a nation rejected Him, Jesus Christ was vindicated in the Spirit, for the Spirit empowered Him to do miracles and even to raise Himself from the dead (Romans 1:4). The very presence of the Spirit in the world is itself a judgment on the world (John 16:7-11).

Seen of angels suggests the many times that the elect angels were associated with the life and ministry of our Lord. (The word angelos, translated "angels," also means "messengers." See James 2:25. Perhaps Paul was referring to the chosen messengers who witnessed the resurrected Christ.) However, Christ did not die for angels, but for lost sinners; and so He was preached unto the nations. This reminds us of the commissions the Lord gave to His church to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth, where He is believed on in the world. At the Ascension, He was received up in glory (Acts 1:2,22); and He will return one day to take His church to share that glory.

#### **WE SHOULD ALWAYS BE EXPRESSING THANKFULNESS.**

Certain Levites were appointed to give continual praise and thanks to God. Praise and thanksgiving should be a regular part of our routine, not reserved only for celebrations. Praise God continually, and you will find that you won't take his blessings for granted.

### **THERE ARE FOUR SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF THANKFULNESS.**

Four elements of true thanksgiving are found in this song (psalm): (1) remembering what God has done, (2) telling others about it, (3) showing God's glory to others, and (4) offering gifts of self, time, and resources. If you are truly thankful, your life will show it.

KEY BIBLE VERSE: It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to the Most High. It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening, (Psalm 92:1-2)

### **THANKFULNESS OUGHT TO BE A MAJOR INGREDIENT IN ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS.**

During the Thanksgiving holiday, we focus on our blessings and express our gratitude to God for them. But thanks should be on our lips every day. We can never say thank you enough to parents, friends, leaders, and especially to God. When thanksgiving becomes an integral part of your life, you will find that your attitude toward life will change. You will become more positive, gracious, loving, and humble.

KEY BIBLE VERSE: Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused. (Romans 1:21)

### **ONE OF THE FIRST MARKS OF REJECTING GOD IS FORGETTING TO THANK HIM.**

How could intelligent people turn to idolatry? Idolatry begins when people reject what they know about God. Instead of looking to him as the Creator and sustainer of life, they see themselves as the center of the universe. They soon invent "gods" that are convenient projections of their own selfish plans and decrees. These gods may be wooden figures, but they may also be goals or things we pursue such as money, power, or comfort. They may even be misrepresentations of God himself-making God in our image, instead of the reverse. The common denominator is this-idolators worship the things God or man made, rather than God himself. Isaiah there anything you feel you can't live without? Isaiah there any priority greater than God? Do you have a dream you would sacrifice everything to realize? Does God take first place? Do you worship God or idols of your own making?

KEY BIBLE VERSE: God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

### **THANKFULNESS OUGHT TO BE THE PRIME CHARACTERISTIC IN A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.**

When someone gives you a gift, do you say, "That's very nice-now how much do I owe you?" No, the appropriate response to a gift is "Thank you." Yet how often Christians, even after they have been given the gift of salvation, feel obligated to try to work their way to God. Because our salvation and even our faith are gifts, we should respond with gratitude, praise, and joy.

### **THANKFULNESS CAN TAKE ON A VARIETY OF EFFECTIVE EXPRESSIONS.**

We become Christians through God's unmerited grace, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we will seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness. While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit, but to serve Christ and build up the church (Ephesians 4:12).

