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THE MIGHTY
HAND OF GOD
is with you



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THE MIGHTY *Is with you* HAND OF GOD

By: Andrew Roebert

When we are facing challenges, or hard times, it can often feel like God has abandoned or deserted us. It can feel lonely, when things do not seem to be working out like we had hoped or expected. When our path does not take us straight to the destination, we had seen in our mind's eye, it's easy to get discouraged. When our brokenness and despair seems without purpose or end, we may be tempted to take our eye off the goal, and choose to look at the waves, that seem to have the power to overwhelm us. However, the truth of the matter is that the Lord is with you. His hand remains a mighty hand. He remains mighty to save, mighty to deliver, and mighty to bring about breakthrough and deliverance. The mighty hand of the Lord is with you today!

SCRIPTURE READING:

Exodus 13:9 For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with His mighty hand.

1. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE.

In Exodus 13, Moses repeatedly reminds the people of the mighty hand of the Lord, that was part of their lives, and this included their past, their present and their future.

Oh, to know that the mighty hand of the Lord is with you, is surely the greatest comfort any human being can know. When we begin to imagine a future without the Lord and His mighty hand in our lives, it brings fear, dread, anxiety, and hopelessness. When we contemplate a future, with the full knowledge that He, together with His mighty hand, will accompany us, we can be bold, determined, fearless, and secure. When we remind ourselves of the strength of His mighty hand, and the fact that His hand is with us, we can be filled with positivity and hope.

To underestimate something means to estimate it as being unable to deliver what it has promised. When we underestimate something, we estimate it to be smaller or less important, or less able to deliver, on our expectations. Begin to remind yourself that God is great and powerful, and remind yourself that His mighty hand is in fact MIGHTY BEYOND WORDS and reaches beyond all the limitations of life, and our opinions.

THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD REACHES DOWN AND MEETS US AT OUR POINT OF NEED.

Psalm 144:7 Reach down Your hand from on high; deliver me and rescue me from the mighty waters!

Mighty Waters represents a deep place of challenge and difficulty.

I am not sure what Mighty Waters you are facing today, but I know one thing for sure, that place is NOT beyond the reach of His mighty hand.



Exodus 13:14 With the power of His mighty hand, the LORD brought us out of Egypt, the place of our slavery.

The Lord did not expect the people of Israel to rescue themselves. In fact, they were so broken and devastated, after years of struggle and abuse, that they could not help themselves. Then, God in His mercy, reached down, with His mighty hand, and He lifted them up from the lowest and the most desperate place. He will do the same for you.

Psalms 40:2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

Romans 5:6 When we were utterly helpless (powerless), Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

When we reach that place where our strength is utterly exhausted, our hope is totally dashed, and all our efforts have left us exhausted and drained, then the Lord, and His mighty hand comes, to that very place in which we find ourselves, and He becomes the strength that we need. His hand reaches down to us and lifts us up, rescues and delivers us, and restores a spark of hope deep within our hearts.

THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD.

Exodus 13:3 Then Moses said to the people, Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand.

Egypt was the world's power of its day.

It was the most powerful force on earth at that time. It held sway over the affairs of humanity, and the people of Israel were held within its, seemingly, all-powerful grip. The Pharaoh ruled with a rod of iron and whatever he said was law and truth. It was truly an impossible situation, BUT for the mighty hand of the Living God. There are many things that have the potential to hold us in bondage and to hold us ransom, but there is One Who is greater and more powerful than anything else. His hand can break the hold of anything that is trying to hold you hostage or even trying to throttle the life out of you. Look away from the things that seek to destroy, look to Him and His mighty hand.

There is nothing too difficult for the Lord and nothing that His mighty hand cannot do or accomplish on our behalf. As you look at what you are facing, always look at it from the perspective of His mighty hand, and rest in His ability and plan.



TAKE HOLD OF HIS MIGHTY HAND.

We need the reality of His mighty hand to be a personal reality in our own lives. My great-grandfather was a shunter on the railways. He was responsible to connect and disconnect the trains and the coaches, depending on the purpose. In preparation for a train to be ready, the correct coaches had to be coupled together. One day, he lost a finger, as the coach was connecting with the engine, and his finger was caught, between the two coupling devices. He lived with the memory that you need to get your hands out of the way when two forces come together. Our lives need to be coupled to His mighty hand, then we need to keep our hands out of the way, as His hand and our lives connect in divine purpose and destiny.

- May there be a coupling in your spirit today.

You cannot do it without His mighty hand at work in your life. Remind yourself that your life is now coupled to His mighty hand. Remember the promise of His mighty and enduring presence in your life. Do not see yourself as a coach that is not connected to an engine, but see, in your mind's eye, how your life can be all its meant to be, because you are coupled to the powerful engine of His mighty hand. Do not allow your imaginations to take you down a deserted or an abandoned track, but see the engine of His mighty hand drawing you upwards and onwards, to all He has in store for you.

BELIEVE IN HIS MIGHTY HAND.

Ephesians 1:19-20 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honour at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

Isaiah 59:1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear.

For us, who believe in Him, there is an incredible greatness of God's power that we need to understand and grasp for ourselves.

We serve a GREAT, BIG and WONDERFUL God, for Whom nothing is difficult. He says: I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me? The only thing that will undermine the might and the power of His hand in our lives, is unbelief.

Mark 9:23 All things are possible to him who believes! Immediately the boy's father cried out, I do believe; help my unbelief!

Give Him your unbelief right now, and He will even work with that and bring you to the place where you believe. Believe, believe that His mighty hand is with you.

*'Believe in what your heart is saying,
Hear the melody that's playing
There's no time to waste,
There's so much to celebrate
Believe in what you feel inside,
And give your dreams the wings to fly
You have everything you need,
If you just believe!'*

*Words from the song Believe
by Josh Groban*

God called the entire nation of Israel to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). The church, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, is similarly called: “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10). God’s calling of Israel was to showcase God’s salvation to the pagan world. But because Israel rejected that call and followed idols, they never flourished in the way God wanted to prosper them. His call now is to all those redeemed by the blood of Jesus to showcase to our world God’s mercy, grace, and salvation (Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:16). The Bible often mentions people being called by God for a specific ministry or service. Paul was called by God: “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1). The Old Testament priests were called by God to their special work (Hebrews 5:4; cf. Exodus 28:1). To be called by God is to be chosen by God for certain purposes. When a person is aware of that call and surrenders to it, he or she starts living out God’s purpose for him or her (see Jeremiah 1:4–5; Isaiah 49:1;

WHAT DOES IT MEAN
TO BE
Called
BY GOD?

Based on the Article
by [GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org)

God is far more involved with His universe than some would like to think. Isaiah 46:9–11 is the cornerstone passage that removes all doubt about God’s sovereignty. Even though He has given humankind the freedom to make choices, His choices have already been made (Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:10–18). “God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29).

We are called by God to salvation. In fact, the Greek word translated “church” in the New Testament means “a called-out assembly.” The call to salvation involves conforming us “to the image of his Son.” His election and call to salvation are part of an eternal plan for us that guarantees our inheritance in heaven: “And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (Romans 8:29–30).

After salvation, we are further called to grow in Christian virtue and serve God by good works; in fact, it is this maturation process that confirms our calling by God (2 Peter 1:5–10). God gives us spiritual gifts to aid us in our call to service. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts as He sees fit and then calls us into a field of service that utilizes those gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1–11). For example, a young man may begin to have a burden for a particular foreign nation and its people. That burden was placed there by the Lord as part of His calling. The young man then begins to study that nation and enrolls in a missions-focused school. Once on the mission field, he is willing to suffer hardships and separation from family and friends because the call of God is his greatest motivation. Paul wrote, “I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16). God had placed a call on Paul’s life from the moment he was converted (Acts 9:15–16). That call became his motivating force.

Jonah was called by God but refused to surrender to that call; instead, he ran the other way (Jonah 1:1–3). The Lord pursued His disobedient servant until Jonah submitted himself to the call. Knowing of Jonah’s disobedience beforehand, God had already prepared a great fish to swallow him and spit him out when he was humbled enough to repent (Jonah 1:17–2:1). After Jonah was back on dry land, the word of the Lord came to him again with the same call, giving him another chance to obey. This time, Jonah did. God is patient with His children, working with us until we see things aright.

Every Christian has a calling on his or her life. We were designed before the foundation of the world to be His workmanship, glorifying Him as we bring forth the fruit He desires (Ephesians 1:4–5; 2:10). God’s specific call to service usually begins with a burden for a particular need that relates to the kingdom of God. Some are called to the political arena or to end human trafficking. Others are called to be pastors, teachers, worship leaders, Bible translators, or to a host of other avenues that honor the Lord. Each one utilizes the gifts the Spirit has given.

We discover our call to a specific area of service by walking closely with the Lord, practicing obedience, and offering ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1–2; Colossians 1:10). As we develop sensitivity to His voice, we move forward with what we know. When our hearts are set to obey the Lord, He confirms His call in a variety of ways: godly counsel, natural gifting, fruitful results, Scripture, and a sense of “rightness” that does not conflict with any of the other confirmations.

For example, a young nursery worker may read about babies languishing in Romanian orphanages. She loves small children, and what she learns pricks her heart as nothing else has. She pursues more information and educates herself as the burden grows stronger. She begins to pray for direction. Is she supposed to do something about this? She discusses her burden with her pastor and her spiritual mentor. She asks her Bible study group to pray with her about the matter. She contacts a Christian organization that operates orphanages in Europe and learns they have an opening for a worker. This seems to be a confirmation, but she continues to ask the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5). Then a distant aunt, unsolicited, sends her a sum of money, which happens to be the exact amount needed for airfare. With all these avenues confirming her decision, she feels confident moving forward into the call of God for her life. The orphans are helped, and God is glorified.

In following the call of God, we must be sure to obey His instructions in Scripture. When we are faithful to the call to obedience, He can call us to more specific areas (see Luke 16:10).

HOW DOES Prayer WORK?

By: GotQuestions.org

There is no magical formula for prayer. In the simplest of terms, prayer is staying in communication with God—talking to Him, spending time in His presence, and drawing near to Him. Through prayer, we express adoration and thanks to God, we make requests known to Him, we intercede for others, and we learn more about His character and His will for our lives.

Learning how prayer works is part of the natural process of growing in our relationship with the Lord. As we develop an active and continuous connection with God our Father through Jesus Christ His Son by the power of His indwelling Spirit, we discover the heart of prayer.

Prayer is a uniquely human activity; no other beings have the privilege of communicating in such a way with their Maker and Redeemer. But prayer can be intimidating, especially if you're unfamiliar with the practice or if you've been taught to see prayer as a complex, formal, or ritualized activity.

The foundation of prayer that works is a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus told us to pray in His name (see John 16:23–24), that is, to pray in His authority, on the basis of our union with Him, for what would honor and glorify God. Because Jesus is our “great high priest,” we can “approach God’s throne of grace with confidence” (Hebrews 4:14, 16).

Prayer that works—the effective prayer—must be offered in faith (James 1:5–7). Part of praying in faith, Jesus taught, is that we persevere in prayer and never give up (Luke 18:1). Prayer is relational. It is not meant to be forced but, rather, to flow comfortably from the heart since God knows our hearts (Psalm 44:21; Luke 16:15; Acts 15:8; Romans 8:27).

Prayer is based on God’s love for us. As children of a compassionate Father, we can trust God and turn to Him to care for our needs (Isaiah 64:8–9; Psalm 103:13–14).





If we genuinely want to know how prayer works, we will make it our mission to study the prayer life of Jesus Christ, God's Son. More than anyone else, Jesus shared a close personal connection with God the Father, and, therefore, He is our best example to follow.

Jesus gave His disciple this specific teaching about prayer:

"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!" (Matthew 6:5–8, NLT).

Jesus stressed honest, heartfelt prayer based on a loving relationship with God the Father. Through the Lord's Prayer, Jesus also gave His disciples a pattern for prayer. First, He showed them what their motives in prayer ought to be—that God's name be honored and His will be fulfilled: "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'" (Matthew 6:9–10).

Submission to God's will was a defining characteristic of Jesus Christ's prayer life (see Luke 22:42). God answers prayer that lines up with His will: "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14–15).

Jesus taught the disciples that, through prayer, they could come to God to meet their daily needs: "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Our Father takes care of us. We don't have to worry about what we might need today or in the future; we talk to God about our needs, and we depend on Him as our faithful provider.

Prayer also involves searching our hearts, recognizing that we need God's forgiveness, and confessing our sins: "And forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us" (Matthew 6:12, NLT). Just as our Father graciously forgives us, we are to forgive those who wrong us. Giving and receiving forgiveness is a vital element of our intimate fellowship with God in prayer.

Jesus also taught that prayer is an opportunity to receive strength from God to resist the enemy's temptations: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13; cf. 26:41). Prayer keeps us tuned into the Holy Spirit's power and guidance to resist temptation and overcome sin.

Pastor and author Andrew Murray provided a good description of acceptable prayer, writing that "it must be to the glory of God, in full surrender to His will, in full assurance of faith, in the name of Jesus, and with a perseverance that, if need be, refuses to be denied" (With Christ in the School of Prayer, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895, p. 6).

So far, we've only scratched the surface of exploring how prayer works. The Bible has much more to say about it. The bottom line, however, is that prayer works through the believer's ongoing relationship with the living God. Those who are in Christ have the unique privilege of spending their lives discovering more and more about prayer through loving interaction with their heavenly Father.

adapted article from Seedtime.com

6 Tips To Be A Smart Black Friday Shopper

The Friday after Thanksgiving – Black Friday – can be a good time to get deals on just about anything imaginable. Retailers view it as the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, and consumers view it as a way to get steep bargains.

If you're not careful, you could fall victim to clever marketing and end up spending more than you should this Black Friday. Retailers are intelligent, but you can outwit them by being a smart Black Friday shopper. Here are some of the best tips I've come across to save money and get the best deals.

1. Use the buddy system.

Shopping with your spouse or a friend might reduce your spending. Preferably, shop with someone who you know will love you enough to tell you "you don't need that" when appropriate. Accountability is a very strong social force that you can leverage for your good. If you're the type that likes shopping for the sake of shopping alone, taking a buddy along can curb those impulse purchases. You might even find yourself leaving several items on the shelf simply because you'd be embarrassed to buy this or that knickknack in front of your buddy.

2. Allocate your gift money by person.

There's something about the Christmas season that can cause people to overspend. It used to surprise me year after year just how damaging Christmas was to my wallet. Why does Christmas tend to drain wallets? I figured it out some time later . . . Besides not saving up money for Christmas which comes at the same time every year,

I wasn't allocating my gift money by person. Once my wife and I sat down and wrote out a list of everyone we wanted to buy a gift for, we could easily budget appropriate amounts per person and spend accordingly. Such a simple solution, but it eluded us for years. (download our Christmas budgeting sheet)

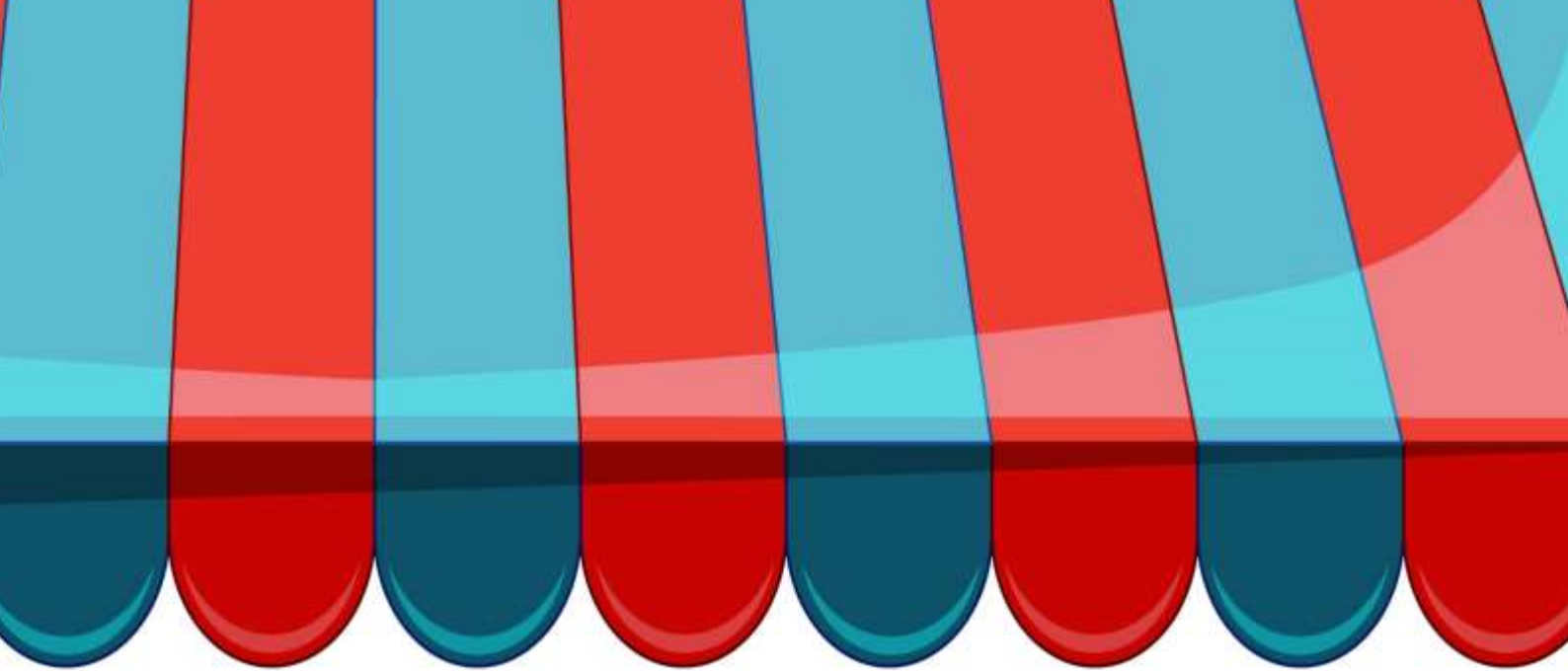
When you do your Black Friday shopping, be sure to allocate your gift money by person. Stick to a budget, and you'll thank yourself later.

3. Watch out for slick marketing campaigns and financing offers.

To make up for cheaper Black Friday prices, retailers launch extensive marketing campaigns to hopefully encourage more sales volume. We're all susceptible to marketing – albeit some more than others – so make sure to be aware of marketing campaigns and your responses to these marketing campaigns. Ask yourself, "Am I buying this because I really need it, or am I buying this because of a clever marketing campaign alone?" Especially be wary of special financing offers. If you see ads that encourage you to "buy it today, pay for it later," remember that retailers are hoping you'll pay for it not only later, but much later, when a hefty financing charge is slapped onto the bill.

4. Remember that "limited time" promotes impulsiveness.

People don't like the idea that doors might be closing, opportunities might disappear,



and deals are temporary. Built into Black Friday is the idea that, if you don't buy now, you'll might never get the same deal again.

It's a limited time offer!

Hurry in before inventory is sold out!

Click to order now, this deal won't last long! [Countdown timer included]

Resist the urge to buy something simply because time is running out. Instead, view these as opportunities not to buy something you don't need, and keep money in your bank account. Be smart. Buy for the right reasons.

5. Let your vision of the future guide you.

Are you living for today, or are you living for a better tomorrow? It's easy to live in the moment, not thinking about the future consequences of our actions.

Instead of thinking about the short-term benefits material possessions provide to you, consider the long-term benefits of saving money and building your financial future. What would your retirement look like if you invested the money you originally purposed for a new flat-screen television?

How might your children be blessed by an inheritance saved up by regularly saying "no" to your excessive wants and "yes" to your needs?

In order to be a smart Black Friday shopper, it's tremendously helpful to change the way you think about material possessions. The more content you can be with what you have, the better.

6. Be a good example.

Your children are watching you. If you stand in line for hours with your children in the cold waiting for a store to open, what does that communicate to your kids?

Are they going to place an emphasis on material possessions because you're braving the crowds to get the latest trinket?

Remind your children, especially if you're going Black Friday shopping with them, that it's important to have the proper perspective on stuff. Stuff is only stuff. It's not what's important in life. Give your children proper perspective and make Black Friday shopping a learning opportunity. A few lessons kids can learn include:

- If I don't get the deal I want, that's okay – the sky isn't going to fall.
- If I don't have enough money in my budget for what I want, that's okay – I'll save up money to make purchases later.
- Frugality is a good thing, but I'm not going to trample others to get the latest deal – people are much more valuable than the latest gadgets.

Final Thoughts

Black Friday can be a great time to get some deals. When you go shopping, make sure to shop smart. Think before you even leave your house or get online to get a deal. Be intentional with your shopping, not reactionary, impulsive, or compulsive. Have fun, be safe, and be thoughtful while grabbing some smart deals.



A

GODLY

Heritage

By: Andrew Roebert

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 16:5-6

'The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: you maintain my lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage.'

WHAT IS A HERITAGE?

What is an inheritance? It is a gift. It is part of the history that has been passed down from one generation to the next. It is those unique things that descend from one generation to another. It can include a legacy or characteristics passed down to heirs. At a root level the word means to inherit. In this scripture we see it spoken of as a cup. That which has been passed to you. A man's "cup" is, in Scripture, his lot or condition in life - that which is given him to drink.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN LEAVE BEHIND IS A GODLY HERITAGE!

Years ago I met with a psychiatrist who had dealt with many people over many years. She made a statement to me that it was very difficult, if not impossible to escape your upbringing. Our upbringing forms us and shapes the way we see things and the way in which we interpret the world around us. We inevitably take on the coping mechanisms of our parents. We mimic or copy the examples that have been set for us. So we need to set the right example. We need to live our lives in such a way that it bring glory to God and shows our children how we should live our lives and how we should follow the example of Christ. It is not a matter of do as I say and not as I do. It is a matter of do as I do. I believe God wants to help us to be able to achieve this. We do not need to do it on our own.



HOW DO WE LEAVE A GODLY HERITAGE?

By the way we live our lives. By the way we handle things, especially the little things. By the example we set. By the influence we exert. By the effect our lives have on those around us. By recounting your own experiences with the goodness of God to your family. Be concerned about the spiritual wellbeing of those around you. Tell them of God's great salvation. Tell them about God's great mercy and His amazing grace. Tell them about the hope for the future we have in God. By making wise Godly decisions during the course of life. By watching what we say and how we say things.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED A GODLY HERITAGE?

Recognise it! Learn the lessons and let them to a stepping stone and not a stumbling block. Forgive, bless and move on. It starts with you. You can break the chain of the past and set up the future generations to receive a Godly heritage. It starts today. Don't wait until tomorrow. See your life as having an inter-generational effect. Remember God is your inheritance!

Numbers 18:20 The LORD said to Aaron, 'You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites.'

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE HERITAGE I HAVE RECEIVED IS A MIXED BAG?

Identify and recognise the negative so that you can learn what to avoid. If we will learn from the mistakes of those that have gone on before we can be strong in that area and avoid history repeating itself. Don't try to eliminate it or live in denial. If you pretend it did not happen, in all likelihood it will happen again. Celebrate the positive. Harness the positive aspects and learn from them. Stand on the shoulders of the success of the past so that you can reach higher than you could have. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

GOD'S PLAN IS FOR AN INTER-GENERATIONAL GODLY HERITAGE.

Romans 11:16 And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their descendants will also be holy--just as the entire batch of dough is holy because the portion given as an offering is holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too. (New Living Translation)

Isaiah 59:21 "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants--from this time on and forever," says the LORD.

IT IS THE SMALL FOXES THAT CAN DESTROY THE VINEYARD!

It is the little things that can destroy everything.

Song of Solomon 2:15 Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

Recently in our family were celebrated my daughter's birthday. She wanted a cake that she could decorate herself. We purchased a cake mix together with an icing mix in order to make this cake. We also purchased the additional ingredients that the recipe called for, oil, milk and eggs. The next day my wife poured the mixture into a mixing bowl and added the salt, oil, milk and eggs. As she broke the last egg into the bowl it turned out to be a bad egg. It was pitch black in colour and had an awful odour. Nothing could be saved. Everything had to be thrown away and we had to return to the shops to start all over again.

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO A CHOICE

*Joshua 24:15 Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.
But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.*

As you allow Jesus Christ to the authority in your home, there is no greater blessing you can give your family. When you operate according to Biblical principles you set your family up for success. When you encourage a Spirit filled lifestyle in your home it will show you offspring how to live a life that honours God.

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 says, 'Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes, You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. That your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land in which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth'.

*What should be the focus of
Christians on*

THANKSGIVING?

By: GotQuestions.org

The original thanksgiving celebration was held by the Pilgrim settlers in Massachusetts during their second winter in America in December, 1621. The first winter had killed 44 of the original 102 colonists. At one point their daily food ration was down to five kernels of corn apiece, but then an unexpected trading vessel arrived, swapping them beaver pelts for grain, providing for their severe need. The next summer's crop brought hope, and Governor William Bradford decreed that December 13, 1621, be set aside as a day of feasting and prayer to show the gratitude of the colonists that they were still alive.



These Pilgrims, seeking religious freedom and opportunity in America, gave thanks to God for His provision for them in helping them find 20 acres of cleared land, for the fact that there were no hostile Indians in that area, for their newfound religious freedom, and for God's provision of an interpreter to the Indians in Squanto. Along with the feasting and games involving the colonists and more than 80 friendly Indians (who added to the feast by bringing wild turkeys and venison), prayers, sermons, and songs of praise were important in the celebration. Three days were spent in feasting and prayer.

From that time forward, Thanksgiving has been celebrated as a day to give thanks to God for His gracious and sufficient provision. President Abraham Lincoln officially set aside the last Thursday of November, in 1863, "as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father." In 1941, Congress ruled that after 1941, the fourth Thursday of November be observed as Thanksgiving Day and be a legal holiday.

Scripturally, we find things related to the issue of thanksgiving nearly from cover to cover. Individuals offered up sacrifices out of gratitude in the book of Genesis. The Israelites sang a song of thanksgiving as they were delivered from Pharaoh's army after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15). Later, the Mosaic Law set aside three times each year when the Israelites were to gather together. All three of these times [Unleavened Bread (also called the Feast of the Passover) (Exodus 12:15-20), Harvest or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21), and the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-36)] involved remembering God's provision and grace. Harvest and Tabernacles took place specifically in relation to God's provision in the harvest of various fruit trees and crops. The book of Psalms is packed full of songs of thanksgiving, both for God's grace to the Israelite people as a whole through His mighty deeds, as well as for His individual graces to each of us.

In the New Testament, there are repeated admonitions to give thanks to God. Thanksgiving is to always be a part of our prayers. Some of the most remembered passages on the giving of thanks are the following:

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1).

Of all of God's gifts, the greatest one He has given is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus paid our sin debt, so a holy and just Judge could forgive us our sins and give us eternal life as a free gift. This gift is available to those who will call on Christ to save them from their sin in simple but sincere faith (John 3:16; Romans 3:19-26; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8-10). For this gift of His Son, the gift which meets our greatest need, the Apostle Paul says, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

We, like the Pilgrims, have a choice. In life there will always be those things that we can complain about (the Pilgrims had lost many loved ones), but there will also be much to be thankful for. As our society becomes increasingly secular, the actual "giving of thanks to God" during our annual Thanksgiving holiday is being overlooked, leaving only the feasting. May God grant that He may find us grateful every day for all of His gifts, spiritual and material. God is good, and every good gift comes from Him (James 1:17). For those who know Christ, God also works everything together for good, even events we would not necessarily consider good (Romans 8:28-30). May He find us to be His grateful children.

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