



WOW: Word Of the Week

Thanksgiving – Words or Actions?

November 24, 2021

The understanding is pretty common: giving thanks means saying something. “Will you give thanks?” usually means “will you word the prayer?” Nothing wrong with saying “thank you.” I encourage it, but...

What if thanksgiving is better expressed by actions? Translation from one language to another is often a challenge. Many times, words don’t match, exact translations word for word are not available. How do you say “thanksgiving” in Spanish? Put the word “thanksgiving” in Google translator and you get “acción de gracias,” action of thanks.

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. What will that mean for you?

Should we reconsider “Thanksgiving normal”? Instead of asking “What are you thankful for?” and generating a long list of “things,” what if we asked, “How will you be thankful?” What if we were seeking to understand new possibilities with “actions of thanks”?

In the U.S. culture where many assume abundance, even as others experience want, we Christians earnestly desire to grow beyond simply making an annual list of things. On Thanksgiving Day, we want our grandchildren to see more than possessions and physical blessings. We seek to express gratitude that is in fact beyond words, as Paul to the Corinthians, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.”

Three suggestions.

I will remember. Ungrateful people have forgotten what they are ungrateful for!

I will seek humility. I depend on those around me, forces beyond me. Better to be humbly grateful than grumbly hateful! Is it true that the opposite of gratitude is pride?

I will rejoice always. With Paul, I want to learn contentment in every life situation.

Prayer

“Lord, help me escape the great limitation that ‘what’ places on my gratitude. Expand my perspective, help me think about who, when, where, why, and how. Help me creatively think of those actions that will reflect my gratitude, and not merely to be satisfied with words. Hear my heart, yes, Lord, but see also my action of thanks, and know that I appreciate your presence in my life, in Jesus’ name, Amen.”