

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

Meeting Weekly At Our Building Located At:
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Mixed Emotions

Years ago I heard a "hen-pecked" son-in-law define "mixed emotions" as "watching your mother-in-law drive over a cliff in your new Cadillac!" Likewise, the "holiday season" (i.e. - Thanksgiving until New Year's Day) is loved by some, despised by others, but for most folks it's a time of mixed emotions. For example, someone at our midweek service told me he is "very thankful" there will be no more cornbread dressing until near the end of December. Personally, I've been trying to talk Janice into driving to Texarkana or Greenville to sample the battered deep fried turkey at *Cracker Barrel*, which the restaurant chain advertised repeatedly during recent weeks. After all doctor Davis said fried chicken was not good for me, but I've not heard a word of opposition from him about fried turkey!

Before she died, my mother used to say the happiest sight in the world was seeing our headlights coming up the street with her grandchildren in tow for one of the national holidays. She also opined that watching our taillights disappear down that same street two or three days later was a welcome relief! I didn't think my children were all that ill behaved, but no one likes to admit their children are not perfect little "angels." The holidays definitely conflicted my mom with mixed emotions. What about you?

For what it's worth, I am sad that Grandma's house is empty again. The children and grandchildren have all returned to their respective homes, jobs, and schools. The dishes have all been washed and neatly stacked in the china cabinet. The house is clean and uncluttered again, and so very quiet! The linens and towels have all been washed, the beds in the spare bedrooms remade, and everything has been put back in its place. About all that remains is the carcass of the "big bird", and enough sliced, chopped, and chipped turkey to make the words "turkey surprise" sound like a death warrant!

During the recent "Thanksgiving holiday," I'm quite confident we all expressed our gratefulness to God for His numerous blessings, including the turkey and dressing. As the Apostle Paul penned, Christians are to "abound in thanksgiving" (Col. 2:7). Additionally he encouraged us to, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing; and in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:16-18). The Psalmist so beautifully enjoined God's people to, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:4-5). From these texts, and many more, it appears readily evident that no matter how you feel about "the holidays," gratitude and praise should permeate your daily life.

Whether your mind set about the holidays is like that of a middle-aged Scrooge, a reformed elderly Scrooge (the one who said, "God bless us everyone"), or somewhere in the middle, it seems we must try to look for the good and "our God" in every occurrence of life. When we do that; when we look beyond the temporal to the spiritual, two great things happen. First, the devil's influence is thwarted, for he prefers grumbling and complaining over the continual praise and thanksgiving of God's grateful children. Secondly, we discover a great personal reward for our thankfulness. After Paul admonished the brethren at Philippi, to take all of their anxieties to God in thankful prayer, he ended his exhortation with a precious promise. He wrote, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

No matter how ambivalent your emotions are about the holiday season, after the turkey is gone, there remains for the Christian the daily, calm, continual, thankful, supplication and prayer, which will result in the priceless prize of the "**peace of God, which passeth all understanding.**" With that in mind, we can even be thankful for "turkey surprise!"

David A. McCain