Thankfulness/gratitude
One of the essential virtues of the Christian life is that of thankfulnss or gratitude. Thankfulness is that due esteem and appreciation that we give to God for His divine blessings of life, health, forgiveness and both temporal and future benefits. It is both a heart attitude and also a duty we offer with words and service. So often when thanksgiving is expressed in Scripture, it is a result of some good thing that God has done for us, or to recognize His own good nature for which we are thankful.

Psalm 100:4-5 - 4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving. And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. 5 For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting. And His faithfulness to all generations. NASB

Thanksgiving is pure praise! It is to properly give glory to God for being the source of our wellbeing and blessed state (Luke 17:11-19). Thanksgiving is a form of praise and therefore praise is closely related to thanksgiving and often associated with it. Many times praise is the response of a thankful heart, so thanksgiving can also be referred to as praise.

Hebrews 13:15 - 15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. NASB

There are many things that the Bible says we are to be thankful for. Consider that God being the Creator and Sustainer of all that is, we are owing to Him for our life, and breath and all that we have. We are totally dependent on God’s Providence for everything we experience in the course of daily life. If God did not give us life and peace and health, we would die in misery and pain. The blessing of wellbeing comes from the hand of divine Providence!

Matthew 6:31-33 - 31 "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. NASB

Therefore all creatures are owing to God for their life and wellbeing. God is the one who providentially rules over people and history, with an intricate involvement in the blessing and care of all people everywhere and therefore it is the duty of every creature to give God praise and thanksgiving. Shall we ignore or disdain the hand that feeds us? God forbid, rather praise!

Acts 17:24-25 - 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things. NASB

In fact our obligation to God for praise and thanksgiving is so great, that we can hardly discern all the ways in a day that God cares for our needs. Sun, moon, stars, food and water, inhabitable weather, the restraint of war, the functions of the human body to sustain life and many other things all come to us every day from the good hand of providence.

1 Chronicles 29:11-13 - 11 Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. 12 Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone. 13 Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. NASB

Therefore it is fitting and proper to give God praise and thanksgiving for His goodness to us. It is a great sin to be ungrateful and to ignore and take for granted the many blessings of God. Indeed it is listed among some of the world’s greatest sins in Romans chapter one and also in 2 Timothy. When people cease to honor God for who He is and cease to give Him thanks, they have descended into the darkness of sin being foolish and futile in their thinking, ignoring the very One who gives them life! For such great sins God says people are “without excuse!”
Romans 1:20-23 - 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. NASB
2 Timothy 3:1-2 - 1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, NASB

Therefore it is said to be “becoming to the upright” to praise God and thank Him, and God’s people are commanded to give Him praise and thanksgiving.

Psalm 33:1-5 - 1 Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones. Praise is becoming to the upright. 2 Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. 3 Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy. 4 For the word of the Lord is upright; And all His work is done in faithfulness. 5 He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord. NASB

When we thank God we properly honor Him as the giver of life and blessing and we give Him the due esteem and glory due Him for His mercy and lovingkindness to us. And so we thank God for being God, and we thank Him for all His good promises to us, and we thank Him for every blessing we have. This is not only our duty, but our great privilege to have this knowledge that God is the giver of life and blessing. For this the saints are told to thank God and have grateful hearts in all that we do, especially in our worship of God.

Psalm 50:14-15 - 14 “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving. And pay your vows to the Most High; 15 And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.” NASB
Psalm 106:1 - 1 Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting. NASB
Colossians 3:15-17 - 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. NASB

We have so many things to thank God for that we can hardly count His blessings to us in a day, much less a lifetime. We should thank Him for temporal blessings, such as health, food, clothes, shelter, work and rest. We should thank Him for spiritual blessings, such as the Bible, the Gospel and its blessings, such as free grace (election, calling, regeneration), justification, pardon and forgiveness, adoption, sanctification, the church and the ordinances and other means of grace. We should thank God for eternal blessings, and the enjoyment of God and His blessings through all eternity because of Christ in the future state.

Psalm 86:12-13 - 12 I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Thy name forever. 13 For Thy lovingkindness toward me is great, And Thou hast delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. NASB

We should thank God for all that is past, what we now enjoy, and what is promised; for private blessings and public blessings, for ordinary and extraordinary blessings; for prosperity, and even adversity, for even our trials are fashioning us into His virtuous and glorious image, and in the end we shall be glorified in immortality with Him forever. Therefore we can give thanks to God for every circumstance, in fact this is our duty.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - 16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. NASB

Let us therefore glorify God by thanking Him for everything we have from His good hand.

James 1:17 - 17 Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. NASB