



How will you celebrate Thanksgiving in 2020?

By Daryll Stanton

Christians are encouraged to “Be thankful in all circumstances.” The apostle Paul stresses: “This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus” in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (Good News Bible). In these days of widespread COVID-19 and civil unrest, we can be tempted to overlook the many chances to be thankful. God continues to bless us, especially in these different and somewhat troublesome times. We need to count our blessings, especially in difficult times. Are we grateful for the things that are going right in our lives?

Thanksgiving is a special time to reflect on our blessings. However, these special intervals of thanksgiving are observed at different times and in differing ways around the world. For example, some Austrian, German, and Swiss communities celebrate a harvest thanksgiving festival. The timing of these Germanic festivals varies between September and November. In Canada, Thanksgiving Day is the second Monday of October, and in the USA, it is the fourth Thursday of November.

What are you doing differently during this COVID-19?

Someone asked me: “What are you doing differently during this COVID-19 crisis?” After a moment of reflection, I realized that I have been continuing with many of the same ministry functions even though I sometimes need to take a different approach. Although Verna and I physically left Africa Nazarene University in December 2017, I have continued with some volunteer online teaching and supervision of students. I am thankful to be able to continue mentoring African leaders like this. In January 2019, I was able to refocus my ministry toward Nazarene Sunday School and Discipleship as global resourcing coordinator. This ministry allows me to discover, develop, and deliver discipleship resources to our global church. Although this would normally involve some local and international travel, I am thankful

for the technology that enables me to do much of this ministry on the phone and the computer. I am also thankful for the many ways our six global regions are freely sharing their discipleship resources, enabling the church to stand strong during these stressful times.

Let us thank God for His priceless gift!

More than these others, “Let us thank God for his priceless gift” of salvation through Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 9:15, Good News Bible). I am currently reading through the Book of Acts in my two primary ministry languages and utilizing a study Bible. Certainly, in Acts, we see the many ways God blessed the early Church, even in somewhat troublesome times. My personal Bible application is a way of being disciplined by Jesus. I am following Hal Perkin’s approach to looking at and briefly responding to some of Jesus’ questions (*Walk with Me*: 2008):

“Who do I say that Jesus is?” (Mt. 16:13-15)

“Do I understand what God has done?” (Jn. 13:1-15)

“Am I listening to God?” (Mt. 17:5)

“Am I doing what Jesus wants me to do? Do I truly love God? Am I showing it as I care for and feed His sheep?” (Jn. 21:15)

“Do I believe what Jesus has promised?” (Jn. 11:17-26)

After reading the day’s passage of Scripture, I also look for ways to celebrate what God is doing in my life, and I think about people I might be able share with the amazing things God is doing in my life.

I am truly blessed! I hope you are too! If so, please share with us some of God’s blessings. You can email me at dstanton@nazarene.org, or you can share on <https://www.facebook.com/NazareneSDMI/>