

Songs of Thanksgiving: A Look at the Heart

By Kelly T. Dixon

Scripture: Psalm 28:1-7

As the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons approach once again, you try to get in the spirit. You know that you need to thank the Lord for all He has done and praise Him for sending His Son - but your heart just feels empty. Do you feel like you keep crying out to God, but He's not listening? Do you feel so distant from the Lord that you doubt your relationship with Him wondering where is the Holy Spirit that is suppose to be with me?

David, a man after God's own heart, must have felt the same way at times. In Psalm 22:1 he starts off by saying, "*My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me? Why do you remain so distant? . . .*" Then again in Psalm 28:1 he says "*Oh Lord, you are my rock of safety. Please help me; don't refuse to answer me. . .*"

What is one to do when they find themselves in this same state as David? As we look further in the 28th Psalm, we see David state, "*The Lord is my strength, my shield from every danger. I trust in Him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of Thanksgiving.*" (Psalm 28:7)

At this point, you're probably thinking, "Here we go again - another article about trusting in the Lord. Yeah, yeah I've heard it all before. '*Trust in the Lord with all my heart, lean not unto my own understanding*' (Proverbs 3:5)" While this basic lesson on trust is true and should be adhered to, that is not what this article as a whole is about. Many times we as Christians give our love ones the same answer - trust in the Lord - and they sit and think, "I thought I was trusting in the Lord, but I still feel empty." If you are finding yourself in the state that David expresses in his psalms, then my question for you is "Where's your heart?"

Many times we cry out to the Lord complaining that He has forsaken us when in reality He hasn't forsaken us - we have forsaken Him. Psalm 28:7 says, "*. . . I trust in the Lord with all my heart . . .*" Is all your heart ready to trust in the Lord? Or are you still "straddling the sidelines" putting one foot into God's Will while the other is in the world or your self will? Where exactly is your heart?

- Is your heart hanging onto unhealthy habits that satisfy you momentarily or is it giving up the unhealthy habits knowing the Lord will be pleased that the habit is not standing in the way so He may satisfy your soul eternally?
- Is your heart feeling empty because you continue to do the things you think the Lord wants you to do or are you overjoyed because you know you are glorifying His Kingdom by doing His Will?
- Is your heart wanting to hang onto the tithing money you know belongs to God or is your heart joyfully giving the money to the Lord?
- Is your heart being selfish of your time doing only the things that you want to do or is your heart joyfully seeking God and doing what He has planned for you?
- Is your heart daily committed to a selfish ritual or is your heart daily seeking and studying God's Word so He can fill it with the help you desperately seek?

As you know, the examples can go on and on.

Where is your heart? That is the question within. It's easy for us to say, "Well, if you trust in the

(Continued on page 2)

Songs of Thanksgiving: A Look at the Heart (continued . . .)

Lord with all your heart, then you will know the Lord is with you and not feel like He has abandoned you.” But I must break it down to say - you’re not trusting in the Lord with all your heart if your heart is still hanging onto your self will and you are not growing closer to God.

How do we know if our heart is growing closer to God? We must examine our hearts! How do we examine our heart? Look at your daily activities. Your hands will show your heart. Meaning, whatever your actions are on a daily basis - that is where your heart is also. Are your actions full of selfish desires or are they seeking God’s desires?

Trusting in the Lord with all our hearts is a process and that process encompasses the weeding out of selfish desires so the joy of the Holy Spirit can fill our hearts. Many times this is a painful process, but once you examine your heart; sacrifice self; and seek God’s desires then you are on your way to trusting in the Lord with all your heart. And it is then that the Lord will help you and your heart will be filled with joy. So much joy that you can’t help but break out in songs of praise and thanksgiving for the Lord.

My prayer for you is that you will examine your heart and grow closer to God so you, like David, can say:

“The Lord is my strength, my shield from every danger. I trust in Him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.” Psalm 28:7 ✠