

A Biblical Model of Thanksgiving  
2 Samuel 22:26-36,50-51  
August 19

For many people, thanksgiving comes hard. There may be two reasons for the problem of thanksgiving. First, some people have a problem with thanksgiving because disappointments in life. Life involves struggle, challenges, and difficulties. Second, other people have a problem with thanksgiving because they are self-made people.

In the biblical story of the epilogue or end of David's life (2 Sam. 21-24), the author incorporates a psalm that David wrote when he experienced deliverance from Saul's grasp (v 1). The Psalm, therefore, assists the readers to interpret the sad ending of David's life in light of this earlier psalm of praise. (David's song in 2 Samuel is reduplicated in Psalm 18).

How does David's song provide a model for biblical thanksgiving?

**First, David celebrated God as Holy and Just in the manner in which He responds to people (2 Sam. 22:26-29).** In terms of our personal relations with others, we all have felt at times, "I did not deserve that." No individual can say that God has treated him or her unfairly. David's song lists three attitudes that pleases God: faithfulness, integrity or blamelessness, purity, and humility. Faithfulness is a term that describes commitment to a relationship- a loyalty to the covenant with God. The Hebrew term translated "blameless" described a hero – a moral hero or moral champion. An individual that remained faithful in the battle arena of personal choices and societal pressures. "Purity" does not refer to the ritual purity required of worship; rather "purity" described pure in lifestyle. God responds to the faithful, blameless, pure person with faithfulness, blamelessness, and purity. One Old Testament scholar described this as divine reciprocity. God rewards the faithful by letting them experience His faithfulness in a way that unfaithful people never will.

David also described two attitudes with which God is displeased, namely, crookedness and pride. "Crookedness" describes a person twisted or perverted by sin. Sin warps us! Sin corrupts us! Often a crooked person is shrewd (CSB). The Hebrew term describes someone acting foolish. God responds to the foolishness of sin by proclaiming a message of redemption that appears foolish to human wisdom. God responds to prideful people by humbling them.

**Second, David celebrated God as a Shield, a Rock, and a Warrior (2 Sam. 22:30-36).** God's way is perfect (v. 31). As God guides David in His way, God makes David's way perfect (v. 33). The basic concept of the Hebrew term translated "perfect" is "complete." God has a "complete way" for David (v. 33). How may David know the way God has for him? God provides a lamp to make the path visible (v. 29). God provides the pure Word to guide David in the path (v. 31). God also provides protection for a believer walking in His way (shield – v. 31, rock – v. 32, and a refuge – v. 33). Not only does God provide a way and protection, God provides strength to the believer by making the believer's "feet like a deer" – an imagery of stability. God will keep a

believer from missteps. God enabled David to “burst forth beyond his own limitations” as one scholar expressed the meaning of this section.

**Third, David proclaimed the greatness of God’s salvation (2 Sam. 22. 47-31).** Believers express thanksgiving to God in two ways. First, like David, believers can verbally express thanksgiving to God. – “I thank you God.” Second, believers can proclaim to others the greatness of God and His salvation. David expressed thanksgiving to God among the nations (or Gentile unbelievers – v. 47). While biblical thanksgiving is addressed to God, divine thanksgiving needs to be shared. Thank God by telling others about Him!

Notice the emphasis on God’s salvation throughout David’s song of praise. God is the horn of my salvation (v. 3), the shield of salvation (v. 36), the rock of salvation (v. 47), and the tower of salvation (v. 51). All the images – horn, shield, rock, and tower – depict security.

God provided His salvation through the “anointed” descendent of David – the Lord Jesus the King – as God fulfilled His promise of a King and a Kingdom through David’s lineage.