

# Your Thankometer

Matthew 6:1-4; 6:19-21

## Introduction

Show video: Never ending thanksgiving prayer.

We have a meter for just about everything these days. We have a thermometer to measure temperature, an odometer to measure miles, a glucose meter to measure our sugar level, gas meters, water meters, electric meters, and the list goes on and on.

Just in time for Thanksgiving, I would like to introduce you to the Thankometer. The Thankometer provides a method of determining your level of thankfulness.

The Bible tells us to be thankful. None of us want to be considered ungrateful so why not have your very own method of measuring your level of thankfulness.

## Scripture – Romans 2:4

<sup>1</sup> *“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

<sup>2</sup> *“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

<sup>19</sup> *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*  
*Matthew 6:1-4; 6: 19-21 NIV*

## Introduction

Illus: It's Thanksgiving Day & the aroma of roast turkey fills Charlie Brown's house. Snoopy, outside, lying on top of his doghouse, smells that aroma, & he is thinking, "It's Thanksgiving

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Day. Everybody eats turkey on Thanksgiving Day.” So he lies there, watching the back door, eagerly awaiting his Thanksgiving dinner.

Finally, the door opens & here comes Charlie Brown with a bowl of dog food, & he puts it on the ground. Snoopy gets off his house & stares at the dog food with a disappointed look on his face. And he thinks, “Just because I'm a dog, I have to eat dog food on Thanksgiving Day.”

Then the next square shows him looking at the dog food more intently, & he is thinking, “It could be worse. I could be the turkey.”

As Thanksgiving is upon us, we must all ask ourselves, “Am I truly thankful or just pretending to be thankful?” Do we really look beyond the daily disappointments and struggles and find those things in life for which we are sincerely grateful?

Most of us take a great deal in life for granted. Many of us complain more than we thank. Many of us are more often displeased with something than grateful. Most of us live out of our abundance and not our need and yet we are far less thankful than we should be.

There are 138 passages of scripture that deal with the subject of being thankful. God places a high emphasis on being thankful and so should the church.

W. T. Purkiser said, *“Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving.”*

Your thankometer; the way to measure your true degree of thanksgiving is by what you do for others. What you do to help others not just during the holidays but all year long is your true way of measuring if you sincerely have a thankful heart.

Our text today teaches us some important things about giving and helping others in need.

## Content

### 1. We are obligated to help others

Illus: There was a man who was in desperate need of a little money so he decided to go from house to house to see if there were any odd jobs he could do. After being turned down by several homeowners he came upon a house where an older woman answered the door. He gave his usual pitch and to his surprise the woman said yes she could use some help – it was

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perfect that he happened to stop by for the painter she hired had just then cancelled on her.

She told the man, I need my porch painted. Walk around to the back of the house and there you'll see the porch, the paint and all the equipment you'll need. When you are done, come back to the front door and I'll pay you \$500.

This was better than he expected. He walked around to the back and to his surprise and delight; everything he needed was there ready to go. He set to work taping and prepping, then started painting and in no time was done.

The woman of the house was surprised that the man was so quick, but, she thought, maybe he had a lot of experience as a painter - so she counted him out the cash. The man pocketed the cash, thanked the woman and as he was leaving he hesitated and said, "By the way lady, just to let you know, it's not a Porsche that you have parked back there, it's a Mercedes Benz.

Fortunately, when we help others in need, it doesn't usually turn out that way. As Christians, we are expected to do things for others in response to the blessings we have received. There are people all around us with needs and our Lord expects us to be responsive and give for others. *"In as much as you have done unto the least of these, you have done unto me."*

Notice that our Lord assumes we are giving to the needy. In verse 2 he doesn't say "if you give to the needy" but rather "when you give to the needy."

Giving to those in need involves sacrificing and not hoarding our belongings. You have heard me say before that everything we own should be the Lord's; readily available for the furtherance of his kingdom.

Everything we see and touch will fade away no matter how we try to pretend it won't. Jesus doesn't reject the desire to accumulate in verse 19 -21, he redirects it. We are to store up our treasures in heaven by being generous to others.

In verse 21 Jesus says, *"<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* We will never be able to hide from those words. *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

**A great way to measure your degree of thankfulness is by your giving to the needs of others.**

## 2. We must give from the heart

We also learn from our text that we must give with a sincere heart. We are not to give for the recognition or accolades of men but rather quietly and sincerely.

Illus: This reminds me of the letter from a father to a young man to apologize to him for not allowing his daughter to marry the young man. The letter went as follows:

Dear Marty,

I have been unable to sleep since I broke off your engagement to my daughter. Will you please forgive and forget?

I was much too sensitive about your Mohawk haircut, tattoos and pierced nose. I now realize motorcycles aren't really that dangerous, and I really should not have reacted the way I did to the fact that you can't hold down a job.

I am also very sure that some other very nice people live under the bridge in the park, too. Sure my daughter is only 18 and wants to marry you instead of going to Harvard on full scholarship. After all, you can't learn everything about life from books. I sometimes forget how backward I can be. I was wrong.

I was a fool. I have now come to my senses and you have my full blessing to marry my daughter.

Sincerely,  
Your future father-in-law.

P.S. Congratulations on winning the Power Ball Lottery!

Too often we give for the wrong reasons. We give for selfish motives or for the benefit of others to see our actions. This is why many charitable organizations publish donor's names as gold, silver or bronze supporters. Who wants to be a bronze donor? They are appealing to our ego and desire for recognition.

Our Lord tells us we must support the needy but we must also do it with a sincere heart and for the right reasons. When we do things for the recognition of men, that recognition is our only reward we get. We should give for the glory of God instead.

Illus: Have you ever been in a place of business where there was tip jar on the counter? When we get our change, we wrestle with our conscious for what seems like a moment of battle. Do I put my change in the jar or not? Will they think I am cheap if I don't?

But the change is a good bit of money. It all races through our head in a matter of seconds.

I remember doing this recently and finally putting the money in the tip jar just because I didn't want the person to think I was cheap. When the money went in the jar, the person at the counter said, "Thank You."

I immediately thought, "Yes she was noticing, if I had not put the money in the tip jar she would have noticed and thought I was cheap." But, that was the extent of my reward. I did it for the wrong reason and here recognition was my only reward.

Jesus tells us the same principal applies with our helping others. We are to do so in private not seeking the recognition of others but for the glory of our Lord.

**A great way to measure your degree of thankfulness is how private you are in your giving and helping others.**

### 3. We are rewarded for by God

When we give or help those in need for the recognition of others, we get our only reward at that moment - the recognition. But look at the alternative.

I find verse 4 fascinating; "*Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*"

The Bible doesn't tell us exactly what the reward will be but it is a reward from God so you know it is going to be good. I can think of no better reward; no better promise than for the heavenly father to say I will reward you and I will decide on the reward.

In the bulletin there are many opportunities to help others in need during the holiday season. In addition, we all encounter others in need. The rewards are great from our heavenly father if we will give in private and with a sincere heart.

We are accustomed to dividing life into the "spiritual" and the "material"; but Jesus made no such division. In many of His parables, He made it clear that a right attitude toward wealth is a mark of true spirituality.

If we have the true righteousness of Christ in our lives, then we will have a proper attitude toward material wealth. Nowhere did Jesus magnify poverty or criticize the legitimate earning of wealth.

God knows that we need certain things in order to live. In fact, He has given us "richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). **It is not wrong to possess things, but it is wrong for things to possess us.**

Materialism will enslave the heart, the mind and the will if we are not careful. We can allow ourselves to become shackled by the material things of life, but we ought to be liberated by using our blessings for the glory of God.

What does it mean to lay up treasures in heaven? It means to use *all that we have* for the glory of God. It means to "hang loose" when it comes to the material things of life. It also means measuring life by the true riches of the kingdom and not by the false riches of this world.

### Conclusion

So, this thanksgiving as you enjoy your meal, football and family, be truly thankful. Thank God for your blessings and ask God how you can return the blessings by helping others. Ask God to lay someone or some ministry on your heart and allow you to help in a special way.

Remember, the amount you give and sacrifice for the needs of others is the true measure of just how thankful you really are.