

November will be here soon! Here's
a useful message for Thanksgiving!
"Losses from Withholding Thanks!"

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ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" Volume 12 Number 10

Losses from Withholding Thanks

Romans 1:18-32

This "MM" is the 10th of 2013 -- and the 142nd email sermon overall. "Ministers' Minute" is a free service of encouragement to preachers, chaplains, donors, and Christian workers around the world. This sermon is a special Thanksgiving message from Romans 1. It was first sent in 2002 and we've added many subscribers since that time. All "Ministers' Minutes" are archived at

<http://www.abarc.org/Resources/Ministers%20Minutes/Ministers%20Minutes.htm>

Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it! May God bless your labors!

Rod Farthing, Development Director

ARM FAST FACT

AMERICAN BIBLE ACADEMY STATISTICS

JULY-AUG 2013 Summary

1,833 courses were sent to NEW ENROLLEES!

2,882 courses were sent to UPPER CLASSMEN!

4,715 total courses were sent to prisoners!

COURSES MAILED JAN THRU DEC 2012: 28,610

An average of 78 courses sent DAILY! New enrollees: 32 per day!

Losses of Withholding Thanks

Romans 1:18-32

**Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God
nor gave thanks to him..."**

Mark Twain once said, "If you pick up a starving dog and feed him and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man."

Is it true? Are humans basically ungrateful? Consider this passage as it relates to gratitude:

Rom 1:18-32

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and

divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.

27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,

30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;

31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (NIV)

Let us think so that we might THANK! Let us think today about the great losses incurred when we fail to be properly grateful for what our Creator has given us. Three "W's"

1. Failing to be thankful, we lose WISDOM! 20-22

- **When you omit gratitude, you harvest foolishness!**
- **We need to teach our children the fundamental attitude of gratitude: Consider this story:**
- One family traditionally begins the evening meal with a prayer of thanks. When they were old enough, they began letting the children say the meal prayer. Of course at first they would ask for a pony, a new bike, etc. They soon learned the more important things that should be included in the prayer. At Thanksgiving they had the whole family over. The nine-year-old wanted to say the prayer. It went like this: "Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the turkey, the rolls, the mashed

potatoes, the red jiggly stuff, and the bread stuff even though I don't like it. We ask that You not let us choke on this food." AT LEAST HE WAS LEARNING GRATITUDE!

- **When Gratitude is absent, note the regression of both intellect and emotion in verses 20-22**
- **Did not glorify nor give thanks: Ungrateful**
- **Futile thinking: Irrational**
- **Darkened hearts: Uncompassionate**
- **Became fools: Full of Folly**

Consider this parallel passage – (note specific parallels in bold):

Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the **vanity of their mind**,¹⁸ Having the **understanding darkened**, being alienated from the life of God through the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the **blindness** of their heart: 19 Who being **past feeling** have given themselves over unto **lasciviousness**, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (KJV)

2. Failing to be thankful, we lose TRUE WORSHIP! 23-25

- **Gratitude IS true worship. Without it there is only a counterfeit, perverted worship.**
- **Everyone around Israel worshipped the CREATURE not the CREATOR.**
- **An ungrateful culture exalts self by prioritizing personal preferences**
- **"Our way over God's way" is a form of idolatry – self-worship is creature-worship**
- **Materialism is idolatry! Colossians 3:5 says:**

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (NIV)

3. Failing to be thankful, we lose WHOLESOMENESS! 24-27

- **With Wisdom and Worship gone, Wholesomeness is impossible!**
- **Every debauched civilization has proven it -- Israel included.**
- **Ungratefulness leads to perverted worship and that to perverted behavior.**
- **Ungratefulness led Israel to Baal worship and gross immorality**

Is gratitude important? Consider the fruit of ingratitude:

Rom 1:29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (NIV)

A grateful heart! That's what we need!

CAN YOU FIND REASONS TO THANK GOD?

If one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them. But let me take a magnet, and sweep through it, and it will draw to itself the most invisible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies: but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings. *But the iron in God's sand is gold.*

Thank the Lord and find HIS gold!

Rod Farthing

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"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B



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