

Coming Against One of Our Greatest Sins

It's always struck me as funny that we set aside one day in November to focus on all that we have to be thankful for, but we follow it up the very next day with the launch of BUY, BUY, BUY! A single day set aside for thanks is immediately followed by a season of coveting. We would never say that out loud, but don't we look at the ads with a little more interest? Don't we create a wish list on Amazon with an eye that says, "Ooo, I'd like that"?

Oh, sure, we put the spin on it by saying it's the Christmas season of giving, but even when we're buying for others, we often preface our buying frenzy with the question, "What do you *want* for Christmas?" 'Tis the season for wanting.

Yes, that has always struck me as ironically funny, but that's really not funny at all.

No one would deny that we have much to be thankful for, but thankfulness implies contentment. Consider the last of the Ten Commandments: Do not covet (Ex. 20:17). To state the Tenth Commandment in a positive way: Be content. If I'm content with what I have, I will not covet. If I am content with what I have, I'm also thankful for what I have.

We give lip service to thankfulness, but our actions often say otherwise. And therein lies the sin.

Francis Schaeffer helped me understand this. Earlier this year, a friend recommended a book by Schaeffer that I devoured: *True Spirituality*. I have previously referenced and recommended this book, so let me do so again. Schaeffer has some strong words for us to consider when we evaluate the depth of our thankfulness. Schaeffer begins by tying thankfulness to our love for God. We are to love God enough to be content with all He does and all He provides.

"A quiet disposition and a heart giving thanks at any given moment is the real test of the extent to which we love God at that moment. I would like to give some strong words to you from the Bible to remind us that this is God's own standard for Christians: 'But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks' (Ephesians 5:3-4).

"Thus, the 'giving of thanks' is in contrast to the whole, black list that stands above. In Ephesians 5:20

it is even stronger: 'Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'" [\[1\]](#)

Francis Schaeffer is not through with us yet.

"In Philippians 4:6 we read, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.' 'Be careful for nothing' here means: Do not be overcome by care in anything, by worry in anything, but rather 'by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.' Of course, this is a statement concerning prayer in contrast to the worry, but at the same time it carries with it the direct command to thank God in the midst of the prayer for the 'everything.'" [\[2\]](#)

A lack of deep, abiding, thorough thankfulness may be one of the biggest sins among Christians in America. We live in a land of plenty—even a land of surplus—but our continual accumulation of things reflects an attitude that implies "I'll be content—with just one more thing."

How sinful is that attitude? In Romans 1, where Paul began his treatise on the sinfulness and wickedness of people with God, he wrote:

"For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or *show gratitude*. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened" (Rom. 1:21, emphasis added).

Will you join me in this? Let's express our thanks to God with an equally strong emphasis on contentment. God has provided. Do we really need more? Even in the difficulties we face, can we be content to know that God is with us, walking with us, and providing for us? Frankly, to do anything otherwise is to be out of God's will.

"Give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18).

Happy Thanksgiving.

[\[1\]](#) Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Tyndale, 1971), chapter 1. Emphasis added.

[\[2\]](#) *Ibid.*