

**QUIET TIME GUIDE
FOR 6/12/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD**

Greeting:

It was not safe to be near my grandmother's kitchen table on Thanksgiving! Our entire extended family always gathered at "Ma Ballard's" for Thanksgiving. I will not lie! The best thing about the whole ordeal was the food! I know I am supposed to say the best thing was the family – but you don't know my family! They are all as crazy as I am. But the food- oh, the food was awesome! Any time we ate at Ma Ballard's you could count on a couple of key items. There was always "Uncle John's fried chicken." It was simply the best fried chicken ever cooked on the planet Earth. He had been a cook in the military and his wife, well, barely knew where to find the stove. Cooking was Uncle John's forte. Fried chicken was his specialty. Then Aunt Ruth, God bless her heart, made the best home made biscuits a southern boy every put butter on. Ma Ballard had a pot of potatoes that were to die for. My Mama would throw in some cornbread. Then, and I know I am revealing my southern roots here, there was always pinto beans, cooked for a minimum of an entire day. Give me those pintos and some corn bread or some home made biscuits and life was great. Of course Ma Ballard made what people today don't even know can be made. It was home made banana pudding, cooked in the oven, with a big thick meringue on top of it and served warm. Then, if it was thanksgiving, we threw in a turkey for good luck! Please God, turn back the clock just long enough for me to go there and do that one more time! When I say it was a dangerous place to be, I was not kidding. You see there was me, the nice kid in the family, and then there was my brother, my cousins Larry and Dean. Oh yeah, there was David and John Robert. If you let one of them get in front of you there might not be anything left to eat. They were pigs! I, on the other hand, was always one who ate in moderation and with complete regard for others in the family. *(If you believe that I have some swamp land I would like you to buy.)* This does not even factor in the parents or grown ups or the girls into the equation. I must tell you that those were some of the greatest days (*meals*) of my life. I know that today is not even close to being thanksgiving but as I read Psalm 100 I was aware that this is one of the most famous Psalms in the entire Bible. It is the Psalm most often used for Thanksgiving. If you have not done so before, read this Psalm at Thanksgiving.

Scripture for today:

Psalm 100: 1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Life Application:

If you are a believer or a devoted follower of Christ you truly have so much to be thankful for. You have a reason to "***Shout for joy to the Lord.***" You have a reason to "***Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.***" Thanksgiving is not

just an annual event to be celebrated in November. Thanksgiving is to be a way of life. We are to daily ***“give thanks to him and praise his name.”*** Yet I find, all too often, many believers are more pessimistic than optimistic. We tend to be more negatively oriented than thanksgiving oriented. How often do you stop to just say thanks to God for all he has done for you? I would dare say all of us, even those of us who are in a very deep and troublesome time right now, have so much to be thankful for. Speaking of my family, I remember hearing them say that we can always *“find some one who is worse off than we are.”* We have so much to be thankful for. As a matter of fact, growing up and traveling and spending literally hundreds of nights in homes all across this country and after eating meals in the homes of hundreds of Christian families across this land I have discovered that those with the least are often the most thankful for what they have. One thing every person who knows Christ has to be thankful for is that we can ***“know that the LORD is God.”*** What comfort there is in knowing that he is in control of, not only my life, but the whole world! Our family used to sing the song every family sang at some point, *“he’s got the whole world in his hand...”* Yes he does. I am so thankful for that. Life can never be out of control. It can be out of my control but ***“the Lord he is God!”*** Here it even gets better, ***“It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”*** This great God, who has the whole world in his hands, made me. I was ***“fearfully and wonderfully made.”*** I am not an accident. I was created and designed with a purpose. Each of us are unique and special. We have a DNA unlike any other individual in the whole universe. God made me to fit into his plan. I am so thankful that God made me with a purpose. He is my Shepard who will lead me and guide me in life. I am not on this journey by myself. Be thankful today that you are not left alone, isolated in a sea of trouble. You have a Shepard to lead you, guide you and protect you as you take each step each day. He has left me a manual I can read daily to get instructions from him on how to live. I can be thankful that ***“the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”*** No matter what I face in life he will always be there for me. He is faithful. His love for me is unconditional. He does not drop me like some temperamental teenage lover who has found a new object of his attention. I count on his mercies every day.

Spiritual exercise:

Be thankful today. Stop and tell God you are thankful. Having a hard time doing so because of some situation in your life? Learn this lesson. Paul said in the New Testament, ***“I have learned to be satisfied with whatever I have. I know what it is to be poor or to have plenty, and I have lived under all kinds of conditions. I know what it means to be full or to be hungry, to have too much or too little. Christ gives me the strength to face anything.”*** Like Paul, I have had times in my life when *“all my ducks were in a row.”* I had plenty of money and the job and the family were great. I have also had times when I was dead broke, the family was in disarray and I had no job. I have learned that I can be thankful regardless. Regardless of what your circumstances are today stop and find a reason to ***“give thanks to the Lord!”*** If you wait for perfect conditions to be thankful it will never happen. Start today.

Thought for the day.

Give thanks to God for He is great!