

Reflecting on Gratitude

Don't forget about our radio program. The broadcast is every Sunday morning from 8:00-8:45 on the HUM. The station can be found at 98.5 in Columbus and 98.3 in Seymour.

Daily Bible Readings

If you have any suggestions on a Bible reading plan we can do together next year let me know.

Gratitude has become a rare gem in the world that is dominated by cold and selfish calculations. The word "thanks" is becoming more and more obsolete. So many in our generation seem to think that the world owes them everything. Gratitude occupies no part of their thinking, much less does it find any expression in their vocabulary. Increasing numbers of our young people are becoming bums - moochers on society, getting all they can without a word of appreciation to anybody for anything. Dejected by a generation of ingrates, some reflections upon gratitude is appropriate.

Repulsive as it is, pity must also have a place in our hearts for so many youngsters who, having had improper guidance (or none at all) from their parents, are frustrated. It is my conviction that the impudence, ingratitude, selfishness, and indolence so common among our youth today reverts almost entirely to home background. A look at the homes from which so many of these bums and ingrates have come would indeed be revealing. We can be sure that genuine love, in most instances, was unknown or at least about. Expressions of kindness and appreciation were probably never heard. When I was growing up my parents

taught me at an early age to be polite and thank others for favors granted. This was a part of my early training and it was instilled into me as a part of my Bible teaching. I was taught to be respectful to grownups. The Lord has blessed us with three fine sons and three fine daughters-in-law. They are also teaching our grandchildren to be thoughtful, thankful, and appreciative. This kind of training was no doubt yours too, for at least most of you, so the previous comments are not intended to convey any impression of boastfulness. For what I have received, I am very grateful. But in contrast to this kind of home training, many of our boys and girls are never taught the lessons of thankfulness and appreciation.

Ingratitude has always been common to man. We recall that on one occasion Jesus healed ten lepers (Lk. 17:11-19). Only one of them was appreciative enough to come back to the bountiful Lord and say, "thanks." "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving

thanks: And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?" Pitifully, our Lord expressed His disappointment of those who were ungrateful. Notice that the majority were ingrates.

We are surrounded by young people who parade about the word "love" on placards, drive about our streets with the word on their bumper stickers and make it their main talking point. Yet, the very ones who make "love" their forte are among the most surly, rude, defiant, and ungrateful among human beings. Many of them are leaches who suck all the blessings and advantages. from the body of society, but never realize the true meaning of "love." Like Joseph Fletcher, author of Situation Ethics, who makes "love" the glorified "it" in his book but admits that it is a "semantic confusion" (see p. 15 of his book), so, many of his young followers are just as confused and do not begin to know what real love is. Living as bums and moochers and expecting a "hand-out" is not expressive of the kind of love taught in the Bible. For one thing, love expresses itself in gratitude

God's Plan for Money

Keys to Contentment - Thankfulness

Points to Consider

1. Who Should Be Thankful?
2. When Should We Be Thankful?
3. Why Should We Be Thankful?
4. How Do We Become Thankful?

Who Should Be Thankful?

John 11:40-43 *Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."*

Before _____ raised Lazarus, He took time to thank God.

Rev 7:11-12 *All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."*

_____ in heaven are thankful beings.

Col 3:14-16 *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

Christians are _____ to be thankful people.

Ps 50:12-14 *If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High.*

God expects us to _____ thanks to Him for what he gives us.

Luke 17:15-19 *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."*

Jesus expected _____ who received the blessing to be thankful.
Giving thanks is equated to giving God _____.

When Should We Be Thankful?

Eph 5:19-21 *Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

We should be people who are _____ giving thanks.

We should give thanks for _____ things.

We should give thanks to God through Christ.

Dan 6:10 *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.*

We should thank God _____ times a day in our private prayers.

Ps 119:62 *At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You, Because of Your righteous judgments.*

We should be willing to offer God thanks even in the middle of the _____.

John 6:10-13 *Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost."*

We should give thanks before we eat.

Neh 12:31-32 *So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. One went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate.... 40 So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me; ... The singers sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director.*

We should thank God after we accomplish _____ tasks.

Why Should We Be Thankful?

Ps 136:1-3 *Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. 3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever*

We should be thankful for God's _____.

1 Cor 15:56-57 *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We should be thankful that we have victory over death.

Dan 2:23 *I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's demand.*

We should thank God when He gives us _____.

Rom 6:17-19 *But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

We should be thankful when people are set _____ from sin. We should be thankful for the conversion of others.

2 Thess 1:3-5 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure*

We should be thankful when _____ demonstrate faith and love.

1 Tim 4:3-5 *...forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

We should be thankful for our _____.

How Do We Become Thankful People?

Rom 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

We become thankful people by _____ our minds.

Phil 4:8-13 *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things.... 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

We renew our minds by thinking on _____ things.

Make a _____ of people and things for which you are thankful. Add one thing to the list every day.

_____ tell others what you are thankful for.

Dedicate one prayer a day to thanksgiving.

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and giving. The love of God expressed in Jn. 3:16 is the most generous and bountiful manifestation of love on record. Our love to God is measured by service that we render to Him - the keeping of His commandments by faith to the very best of our ability (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3). Humbly we realize that there is no way by which we can repay God, who so bountifully gives us "richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). We sing the beautiful song with such a wonderful sentiment, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." But actually we cannot count all of our blessings; they are too numerous. However, we can try to enumerate them and at the same time thank the Lord for the ones that we are not aware of, giving a general thanksgiving for all of them.

Abundant are the verses in the Bible which refer to thankfulness. Such passages are: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17); "Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father" (Eph. 5:20); "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward" (1 Thess. 5:18); and, ". . . in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). The Psalms of the Old Testament radiate praise and thanksgiving.

Properly, emphasis should be placed upon the Christian's life, work, and worship; and while he should excel in all of these areas, gratitude must not be slighted for it too is an essential part of him. While we despise the ungrateful attitude which is so apparent in the world about us, how many of us as Christians express our gratitude to others? We are debtors to God and a niagra of praise and thanksgiving should come from our lips daily to Him. But we also owe much to our fellow-men, and especially Christians. Has the absence of gratitude had its effect upon us? Is it gradually fading out of our lives? Will it be a forgotten virtue in our posterity? Are we headed for a future generation of ingrates? Husbands, wives, children, parents, how long has it been since you sincerely expressed your gratitude for each other? Brethren, when have you expressed appreciation to the elders who serve well in the congregation where you are a member for their work? When was the last time that you expressed thankfulness to faithful deacons for their untiring, and too often unnoticed, efforts? How long has it been since you gave that sound and faithful gospel preacher a word of encouragement or some expression of appreciation? Or, when have you told that godly brother or sister in Christ how much his or her faithfulness encourages you? A genuine word of thanks can make the day for one who may be despondent or discouraged.

In a world where selfishness and greed have made it cold and dark, Christians can yet kindle the fire of gratitude and light the lamp of thanksgiving so that warmth and light will again prevail. Appreciation can be learned by those who have never known it. A sincere "thank you" costs so little, takes such little time to say, but means so much. Let us thank God for every wonderful gift of His love. Let us thank others for all that they have done and are doing for us. And, I thank you so much for sparing a few moments of your time to reflect with me on gratitude.

Hoyt H. Houchen

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Have things gotten any better since 1979?