

In Everything?

Sunday Morning, November 12, 2017

The next few weeks we will be examining various ways and reasons to be thankful for what God has done for us.

God loves it when we express our thankfulness to Him, it shows God our gratitude for His blessings upon us.

Expressing thanks to God is the start of gratitude, but failing to have or show a heart of gratitude is in fact an act of ingratitude to God.

Listen as I read an example of ingratitude:

Edward Spencer was a ministerial student in Evanston, Illinois, and also a member of a life-saving squad during his high school years. In 1860, a ship went aground on the shore of Lake Michigan near Evanston, and Spencer waded again and again into the frigid waters to rescue seventeen passengers. In the process, his health was permanently damaged. Some years later at his funeral, it was noted that not one of the people he rescued ever bothered to thank him.

So sad, but here's the exciting thing about having a grateful and thankful heart to God;

Gratitude opens our lives for God's will to be done for us, it becomes a door or portal to experience His perfect will for us!

How often should we express our thankfulness to God? You and I know that thankful hearts to God goes well beyond just thanking Him on Thanksgiving Day. How much does God want us to be thankful to Him? Consider **(I Thessalonians 5:18)**

in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Sometimes applying this verse is difficult especially in trying or painful times, but I assure you that if we sincerely look for thankfulness during these times, the Holy Spirit will reveal and guide us to things to be thankful for. In fact, God wants us to be grateful and thankful every day, determination and focus will help us to do just that. There are five things that can help us to be thankful 24/7. **1 of 4**

1. Be thankful for God's blessings on our lives.

(James 1:17)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Giving thanks goes far beyond being thankful for what we receive.

2. Be thankful in your prayers .

(Philippians 4:6)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Being thankful and grateful during our prayer time is God's formula for prayer. We are not just supposed to go to Him with requests alone. Our prayers should express our adoration of God and our thankfulness to Him for what He has done and is doing. We see this same formula expressed in

(I Thessalonians 5: 17 and 18)

17 pray without ceasing,

18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

And Isn't it amazing that we can enter the throne room of our Heavenly Father anytime we want to through prayer because Jesus died and rose for us!

(Ephesians 3:12)

in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

Now that's something to be thankful for! We should also thank God for the past things that He has accomplished for us. In doing so, we will be given courage to trust Him with challenges before us!

And finally, in regard to being thankful in prayer, let us remember **(Romans 8:28)**.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

3. Be thankful in your worship.

A basic element of worship begins with a thankful heart, without it, are we truly worshipping Him? Consider the Hebrews as they ascended up to the Temple Mount in **(Psalm 100: 1 – 4)**.

1 Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands!

2 Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.

3 Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

When we come to church our hearts should be thankful and praising Him. Usually for many this comes with a recent blessing of some kind, but with a deliberate and focused heart on God and His many and sometimes specific blessings, we too can enter our parking lots with thankfulness, praise and gratitude before even entering the church to worship together.

Look at **(Colossians 3:16)**

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And

(Hebrews 13:15)

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Let's not forget, focusing on the grace God has given us to know Him personally and the fact that God wants to use us for His glory should cause us to exalt Him with praise and thankful hearts!

4. Be thankful for fellowship.

The contact and relationship we have with one another in our church and outside our church should cause us to be thankful. **3 of 4**

(Colossians 1:3)

We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

In my opinion there is a special blessing that comes with thanking God for those He has allowed to enter our lives. Not only does this thankfulness for others bless us, but it causes our affection for or understanding of them to increase. Friendship is so important in our lives, especially with those who have past the test of time and have established lasting trust, love and respect for each other.

Howard Hughes reportedly had approximately 4 billion dollars and he said, quote:

“I’d give it all, for one good friend.”

It is sad for him and it’s sad for us when we too desire one, a truly proven, trustworthy, lifelong friend. What a gift from God we can thank Him for!

God is to be thanked for our Christian friends, many of whom we would never had connected with except for the common faith we share in Christ!

5. Be thankful for our sufferings.

(Ephesians 5:20) giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **And**

(Colossians 3:15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Consider Paul and Silas in **(Acts 16:25)**. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Paul and Silas certainly had reason to be upset, worried, angry or unthankful. But their focus on God’s Kingdom work and His glory and thankfulness for all that He previously had done for them, no doubt, changed their perspective. Their imprisonment provided them with new opportunities to see God work. A godly perspective that would keep them singing in prison. We have to not let our sufferings blur our perspective. We must be thankful and look at things through God’s perspective.

So are we practicing I Thessalonians 5:18? **4 of 4**