

The Gift of Gratitude

The Gifts of God - Week 6 (11-30-22)

1 Thes. 5:18

I. Key to happier living

A. Stability

1. "It's not happy people that are thankful but thankful people that are happy."
2. Happiness is no longer a rollercoaster dependent upon physical things and people but rather on thankfulness of God and His faithfulness (which is always constant).
 - a) You don't have much control of your happiness/emotions, but you have complete control of your gratitude.
 - (1) "Rejoice in the lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." - Philip. 4:4
 - (a) This is expected and even commanded from God. We are fully capable of living a life of gratitude because God supplies what we need in order to accomplish what He asks of us.

B. "Discouragement cannot grow in a grateful heart."

C. Peace - Philip. 4:6-7

1. An environment of gratitude is conducive to God's presence and His peace.
 - a) Jesus said "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you..." John 14:27

II. Key to our Sanctification

A. 1 Thes. 4:3-7

1. God's will is not only to give thanks in everything but also to sanctification and holiness.
 - a) I believe that Thanksgiving is the road to our sanctification and holy living.
 - b) We can't be grateful for something that we have not yet recognized, and it is God's grace that carries us to our sanctification.

B. For gratitude to be present there must first be knowledge and recognition of something or someone's positive impact on you.

1. Romans 1:21

- a) You cannot honestly recognize God and His positive impact on your life and Not be grateful.
 - (1) Have you ever truly sought after God from your heart and come away ungrateful??
- b) To come to God at all is to recognize His existence, and to be grateful for His gift of life.
 - (1) "Gratitude goes beyond the 'mine' and 'thine' and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift." - Henri J. M. Nouwen
- c) Even if we only know a little about God and His nature we know enough to be grateful for eternity because He will never change and will always be faithful.

C. Gratitude is the polar opposite of Entitlement!

1. There is nothing that will kill your gratefulness and happiness in life than an attitude of entitlement!
2. You won't be grateful in receiving what you think you deserve.
 - a) Entitlement is rooted in selfishness and pride!
 - (1) 1 Peter 5:5 and James 4:6
 - (2) A quick path back to gratitude is a good dose of humility! Either by circumstance or by revelation.

D. Content - Philip. 4:10-13

1. Dangers of greed
 - a) Prov. 1:19 - Taking away from your own life!
 - (1) God has truly designed to operate in gratefulness and worship to Him.
 - b) Prov. 15:27 - Troubling not just yourself but your whole house.

III. Key to Living by Faith

- A. If I'm continually reflecting and being thankful for God's character and faithfulness, then naturally my faith will grow. - "faith comes by hearing...." and hearing, and hearing, and hearing!
- B. Jesus knew that the Father always heard Him, but still He said "...I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always..." John 11:41-42
 1. Our gratitude is an expression of Faith!
- C. Philip. 4:6
 1. If we are commanded to bring our requests to God with thanksgiving, then our gratefulness must effect our faith.
- D. Mark 11:22-24 If you believe you have received it when you pray, you might as well be thanking Him for it!
 1. Expressing gratitude toward God for something that has not yet manifested is an act of faith based on His word and faithfulness.
 - a) "...He calleth those things that be not as tho they were." Romans 4:17
 - b) Romans 4:18-21 - Abraham gave glory to God before the promised son was born because he had waxed strong in faith.