

In the Hot Seat with Jesus

Questions Jesus Asked

Where are the Nine?

Gratitude

Luke 17:11-19

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Nov. 13, 2011

I. When You Cultivate Thankfulness in Your Life You Put Scripture Ahead of Your Feelings

There's a big difference between simply feeling grateful... and expressing gratitude or giving thanks. The Bible talks repeatedly about GIVING thanks. It doesn't talk about feeling anything.

Psalms 118:1 "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever."

Psalms 105:1 "Oh give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples."

Psalms 107:8 "Oh that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Ephesians 5:20 "Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"If Christians only worshiped when they felt like it, there would be precious little worship that went on. Feelings are important in many areas, but completely unreliable in matters of faith. The Bible wastes very little time on the way we feel. We live in what one writer has called the 'age of sensation.' We think that if we don't feel something there can be no authenticity in doing it. But the wisdom of God says something different; namely, that we can act ourselves into a new way of feeling much quicker than we can feel ourselves into a new way of acting. Giving thanks is an act which develops feelings for God, not a feeling for God which is expressed in an act of worship." *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*, Eugene H. Peterson, p. 49-50

II. When You Cultivate Thankfulness in Your Life You Simply Catch Up with the Praise & Worship of the Rest of Creation and All of Heaven

Luke 17:15

Cultivate thankfulness in your life... so that you can be the one that never gets over what Christ has done for you... that never settles down... that stays loud – for the glory of God.

Psalms 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God..."

Isaiah 55:12 "... the trees of the fields shall clap their hands."

Revelation 7:9-12 (See also Rev. 4:8-11; Rev. 11:17)

Being thankful allows us to get in on what's going on in heaven before we even get there.

III. When You Cultivate Thankfulness in Your Life You Stand Out as One of God's Grownup Children

A connection to the past and hope for the future feeds gratitude for the present. And without gratitude you drift... and you start to obsess over the 'right-here-right-now.' You're not interested in what God has done... or what He's going to do... it's all about now.

That's what characterizes unbelievers as they chase after everything in THIS life... trying to GET satisfaction... and never GIVING thanks.

Romans 1:20–22

"The problem is this: I have such a fantastic life that I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for it; I am fortunate beyond words. But I don't have anyone to express my gratitude to. This is a void deep inside me, a void of wanting someone to thank, and I don't see any plausible way of filling it." Bart D. Ehrman, *God's Problem* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 128.

Romans 1:21-22

IV. When You Cultivate Thankfulness in Your Life You Ease Up on the Human Relationships Around You

As soon as you're thankful, your human relationships around you get healthier. You become more dependent on God and less dependent on others.

Romans 8:31–37

As ungratefulness settles in more and more – instead of loving God and loving others – we start ignoring God and excessively needing other people... and making demands of other people... and constantly being disappointed in other people.

But gratitude can set you free from that vicious cycle. When you live with a thankful understanding of God's good purposes for you... what you EXPECT of other people... and what you FEAR about other people diminishes.

V. When You Cultivate Thankfulness in Your Life You Can Side-Step a Lot of Other Ugly Sins

We should 'front-load' thankfulness because of all that we know of God and His promises – and this will prevent all kinds of other problems.

- If you're thankful it's much harder to be self-righteous and angry
- If you're thankful it's much harder to be bitter and unforgiving.
- If you're thankful it's almost impossible to be hopeless

Questions to ask yourself...

- Am I cultivating an attitude of gratitude and becoming a thankful person?
- Would anybody that knows me well... and rubs up against me at close range say that thankfulness is one of the things characterizes me most?