

# Developing an Attitude of Gratitude

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## Definitions

**Gratitude** = thankfulness, appreciation

**Synonyms** = acknowledgment; obligation; recognition; thanks; appreciativeness; grace; gratefulness; honor; indebtedness; praise; requital; response; responsiveness; thankfulness; thanksgiving

**Antonyms** = censure; condemnation; ingratitude; thanklessness

## Gratefulness

1. Appreciative of benefits received; thankful: I'm grateful for your help.
2. Expressing gratitude: a grateful look.
3. Affording pleasure or comfort; agreeable: grateful relief from the hot sun.

## Theme Scripture:

Col 3:15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

## Why is it important to develop an attitude of gratitude?

### 1. A heart of gratitude doesn't have room for anything else.

Someone wisely said, "The Most destructive acid in the world is found in a sour disposition." Someone else said, "Whine is made from sour grapes."

In Ephesians 4:31 the Bible makes a list of these "sour grapes." The list includes bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice.

The Bible commands us to get rid of these things. But how? One way is to be developing an attitude of gratitude. A person cannot be gracious and hateful at the same time. A person whose heart is filled with thanksgiving will have no room for such negativity as anger, bitterness, and grumbling.

### 2. It is impossible to be thankful and anxious at the same time.

Our world, and our lives are full of anxiety.

A newspaper ran an article that discussed all the anxieties in the world today - weak economy, disease, threat of war, etc. Adding to the national stress levels are the everyday concerns of raising children, school, marriages, and personal finances.

Martin Luther claimed that the best preacher he ever knew was a tame little robin. Each evening Luther would place crumbs on his windowsill. The robin would hop in the sill and take as much as he needed. From there the little bird would fly to a little tree close by, lift up his voice to God, sing songs of gratitude, tuck his head under his wings, and go to sleep. The robin would not worry about tomorrow until the next day.

Oh - to be like that robin. Grateful. Thankful. Worry-free.

### **3. Your outlook determines your outcome.**

Over the California desert fly two birds; the vulture and the hummingbird.

The vulture looks for dead, rotting, decaying meat. The vulture thrives on the misery of other animals.

The hummingbird looks for the tiny blossoms of the cactus flower. The hummingbird thrives on what is living and growing.

Each bird finds what it is looking for.

What are you looking for? A better question is, "What are you finding?"

What you are finding tells what it is you are looking for. I am convinced that as I develop an attitude of gratitude, I will discover even more of which I can be thankful.

## **Gratitude in the OT**

They thanked him for the magnificence of the universe (Ps 19:1-4; 33:6-9; 104:1-24)

They thanked him for deliverance from enemies (Ps 18:17; 30:1; 44:1-8)

They thanked him for forgiveness of sin (Ps 32:5; 99:8; 103:3; Isa 12:1)

They thanked him for answers to prayer (Ps 28:6; 66:19)

They thanked him for compassion toward the afflicted and oppressed (Ps 34:2; 72:12)

They thanked him for executing justice (Dt 32:4; Ps 99:4)

They thanked him for guidance (Ps 32:8; Is 30:20, 21)

When they received good news, they thanked God for his goodness and deeds (1Chr 16:8-12)

When they received bad news, they also gave thanks, trusting that he was a just God (Job 1:21)

Gratitude was such a vital part of Israel's religion that it pervaded most ceremonies and customs.

Thank offerings acknowledged blessings from God (Lev 7:12, 13; 22:29; Ps 50:14).

Feasts were celebrated in remembrance of God's steadfast love (Dt 16:9-15; 2Chr 30:21, 22).

King David appointed Levitical priests to daily offer God thanks (1Chr 16:4).

Their worship was celebrated in a spirit of gratitude with:

shouts of joy (Ps 42:4), songs of praise (145:7; 149:1), music and dance (150:3-5)

## **Gratitude in the NT**

### **The apostle Paul thanked God for:**

the gift of grace (1Cor 1:4; 2Cor 9:15)

the ability to preach the gospel (2Cor 2:14; 1Tim 1:12).

### **When he prays for his disciples, he gives thanks to God for them**

Eph 1:15-16 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers (Phil 1:3-4; Col 1:3; 1Thes 1:2)

### **Gratitude effects our faith.**

Col 2:6-7 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

### **Gratitude is tied closely to faith therefore believers are encouraged to:**

#### **Pray with a thankful heart of gratitude**

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving (Phil 4:6; 1Thes 1:2)

**Be grateful in and for all our circumstances.**

1Thes 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Eph 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; (Rom 14:6; Heb 12:28; 1Thes 5:18).

**Give thanks before a meal and enjoy it.**

1Tim 4:3-5 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. (Jn 6:1; Ac 27:35; Rom 14:6)

**Gratitude effects our peace of mind and heart.**

Col 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

**Gratitude brings us into an awareness of God's presence**

Ps 100:4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name (Ps 95:2)

**Gratitude keeps us from walking in darkness**

Rom 1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

**Gratitude is an antidote to anxiety and fear.**

Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

**Being grateful is always appropriate.**

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

## Quotes

Gratitude is the memory of the heart. - JEAN BAPTISTE MASSIEU

Letters to Santa

A postal employee opened and read the mail which came to the Dead Letter Office in Washington addressed to Santa Claus. In the three months before Christmas, there were thousands of letters asking for something. In the months after Christmas, there was only one card addressed to Santa Claus thanking him. How quick we are to ask and receive. How slow we are to speak the magic word—thanks! - Chicago Daily News

If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man. - MARK TWAIN

The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings. – Reflection

When you drink from the stream remember the spring. - Chinese Proverb

Nothing is more honorable than a grateful heart. - Seneca

A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues.

It is better to say, "thank you," and not mean it, than to mean it and not say it.

"The man who has forgotten to be thankful has fallen asleep in life." - David McCarthy

“Gratitude is one of the most powerful human emotions. Once expressed, it changes attitude, brightens outlook, and broadens our perspective.” - Germany Kent

“It’s a funny thing about life, once you begin to take note of the things you are grateful for, you begin to lose sight of the things that you lack.” - Germany Kent

“Gratefulness has broad social implications. If you’re grateful, you’re not fearful, and if you’re not fearful, you’re not violent. If you’re grateful, you act out of a sense of enough and not out of a sense of scarcity and are willing to share,” David Steindl-Rast

According to a 2011 article in The New York Times - gratitude “has been linked to better health, sounder sleep, less anxiety and depression, higher long-term satisfaction with life and kinder behavior toward others, including romantic partners.”

“This is the key to life: To expect everything to be given to you from above, yet to be genuinely surprised and forever grateful, when they are. Expecting all good things to be yours, while not knowing how to take anything for granted. If there may be a key in life, this is the key.” - C. Joy Bell

## **Gratitude is the natural expression of thanks in response to blessings, protection, or love.**

### **References Used:**

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