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How Do You Live With Gratitude?

1 Thessalonians 5:18: (NASB) *in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Last week we talked about hope and its critical role in living a life of value. Hope seems to be the forgotten middle brother of faith and love. In the same way, this past Thursday we celebrated the forgotten middle brother of holidays - Thanksgiving. How do you compete with the costumes and candy of Halloween just a few weeks before and the gifts and glitter of Christmas a month later? So, what about the art of thanksgiving? How can we master the "attitude of gratitude" and live a transformed life?

What part does thanksgiving play in our daily lives?



"Thankfulness Song," Veggie Tales

A thankful heart is a happy heart! **Psalms 107:21-22:** *So, what are the sacrifices of thanksgiving?*

Actual sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered in **Leviticus 7:11-14.**

Please see more detail on this in the CQ Rewind Full Edition Bonus Material!

Hebrews 13:15-17: These things can be seen as sacrifices, as they are not all natural and easy reactions to the circumstances of our lives.

Which 20th Century president's Thanksgiving Proclamation began with **Psalms 92:1:** *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord.*



Today's gift, *Gratitude* (film) by Louie Schwartzberg

- *It's not just another day. It's the one day that is given to you today. It's given to you. It's a gift. It's the only gift you have right now and the only appropriate response is gratefulness.*

We owe God! We ought to be willing to live our thankfulness outwardly and consistently, day by day. Living thankfully is a transformational experience. **Psalms 116:12-16**

What about the origin of the holiday itself?

Even before George Washington's proclamation, there was this:

(Source: www.pilgrimhall.org) The Very First Thanksgiving Proclamation made by the Continental Congress: IN CONGRESS November 1, 1777

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance...And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.



))) **First and last day, *Gratitude* (film) by Louie Schwartzberg**

If you do nothing else but to cultivate that response to the great gift that this unique day is; if you learn to respond as if it were the first day in your life and the very last day, then you will have spent this day very well.

We should be conscious of the gift of "today."

Psalms 86:1-4: Notice this Psalm of thanksgiving begins with our acknowledgement of His greatness and our insignificance!

Even long before there was the Proclamation of the Continental Congress, there was this in 1623 - 3 years after the pilgrims landed!

"Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as he has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings." --William Bradford, Ye Governor of Ye Colony

President Barack Obama's 2012 Thanksgiving Proclamation: **Please see full text in the CQ Rewind Full Edition Bonus Material!**

Our nation started out trying to have this attitude - how are we doing now?

Psalms 86:5-8: Notice that this Psalm of thanksgiving continues in faith and praise.

Can gratitude really change your life?

))) **Open your eyes, *Gratitude* (film) by Louie Schwartzberg**

- *Begin by opening your eyes and be surprised that you have eyes you can open! That incredible array of colors that is constantly offered to us for our pure enjoyment...look at the sky. We so rarely look at the sky. We so rarely note how different it is from moment to moment with clouds coming and going.*

A smile can be the first step to being thankful. Finding something to smile about makes remembering to be thankful easier.

Psalms 86:9-12: Finally, this Psalm of thanksgiving marvels at the magnitude of His plan for all as well as His attention to one lowly soul! *Unite my heart to fear* (reverence) *Your name*: Our hearts are torn in many directions. This prayer is to direct our focus to reverence for God.

Here we see an unmistakable link between hope and gratitude:

- **Hope** is the expectation of future events;
- **Hope** is built on **faith**;
- **Gratitude** is the embracing of past, present, future events and lessons;
- Gratitude is also built on **faith**;
- The greater your **faith**, the greater your **hope** and **gratitude**!

True gratitude changes the way we look at life. We cannot take our blessings for granted.

Being thankful is put in perspective with the other "most important things": 1 Thessalonians 5:16-20: Doing all of the above is much easier with an attitude of gratitude!

We can reap the priceless benefits of faith and sanctification: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-25

Realize that God doesn't need our "things" or our lip service - He wants our sincerity! Psalms 50:7-14: True gratitude is a heartfelt expression that is specific in detailing the object of one's gratitude to the giver of that object, or to others, to stimulate their gratitude. True heartfelt gratitude is specific (what am I thankful for?) and directed (to God or to others).



Which 20th Century president's Thanksgiving Proclamation began with Psalms 92:1: "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." Answer: President John F. Kennedy, Thanksgiving Proclamation (1961) - See the text in the CQ Rewind Full Edition Bonus Material!

What are some practical examples of gratitude?



People's faces, *Gratitude* (film) by Louie Schwartzberg

- Look at the faces of people you meet. Each one has an incredible story behind their face. A story that you could never fully fathom. Not only their own story, but the story of their ancestors. We all go back so far. In this present moment, on this day, all the people you meet, all that life from generations from so many places flows together and meets you like a life-giving water, if you only open your heart and drink.

Having an approach of gratitude helps prevent us from jumping to conclusions and helps us deal with others in a more effective way.

As a great Old Testament example, Daniel's life path was a paved road of gratitude, even from his youth!

Daniel 2:19-23: Sometimes the path to gratitude is protracted - early in King Nebuchadnezzar's life he appreciated God, specifically after the dream interpretation. But as time went on, the King lost any godly perspective and became a god in his own eyes.

So God set him low for seven years: Daniel 4:34-37

Let's take a closer look at the context of the first line of the 1961 Thanksgiving Proclamation: Psalms 92:1-4:

Gratitude can be day and night, creatively expressed through instruments, or even sung right out loud! It is a life changing experience, so it can come through many different aspects.

How do we put thanksgiving into the center of our lives?

How to "centralize" Thanksgiving:

Pause: Just STOP a moment!

Perceive: Notice God's goodness in things great and small!

Praise: Tell God in words and actions of your appreciation!

We are going to illustrate those three "P's" with Psalms 147, a Psalm of praise and thanksgiving.

First we pause to stop and read the Psalm. It then takes us through the application of steps 2 and 3 over and over again. The perceptions and praise here bounce between the smallest human things and the largest heavenly things.

Pause: Just STOP a moment!

Setting the context of praise and thanksgiving: ¹Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. Praise is a way of showing gratitude.

Perceive: Notice God's goodness in things great and small!

²The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. ³He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. ⁴He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.

God pays attention to the big things and the little things. When we give God gratitude, that power of thankfulness changes our lives. We see things through the eyes of light rather than the eyes of darkness.

Praise: Tell God in words and actions of your appreciation!

⁵Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

Perceive: Notice God's goodness in things great and small!

⁶The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.

Praise: Tell God in words and actions of your appreciation!

⁷Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God,



Perceive: Notice God's goodness in things great and small!

⁸who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

Perceive: Notice God's goodness in things great and small!

⁹He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry. ¹⁰He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. ¹¹The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.

Praise: Tell God in words and actions of your appreciation!

¹²Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! When we see "praise," in the Scriptures, we should think "gratitude." We need to pause and consider.



Civilization's Gifts, Gratitude (film) by Louie Schwartzberg

- Open your heart to the incredible gifts that civilization gives to us. You flip the switch and there is electric light. You turn a faucet and have warm water and cold water, drinkable water - the gifts that millions in this world have never experienced. So these are just a few of an enormous number of gifts to which we can open our heart. So I wish you would open your heart to all these blessings and let them flow through you, that everyone whom you will meet on the street will be blessed by you.

Perceive: Notice God's goodness in things great and small!

¹³For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you. ¹⁴He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest wheat. ¹⁵He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly. ¹⁶He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes; ¹⁷He casts out His hail like morsels;

Praise: Tell God in words and actions of your appreciation!

Who can stand before His cold? ¹⁸He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow. ¹⁹He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. ²⁰He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!

We have all of these gifts from God through Jesus, so what is our response? We love and follow Him with a response of gratitude. Gratitude is perspective. We choose to see life through the eyes of thankfulness, rather than the eyes of frustration, or depression, or grief, or sorrow, or pain.

Should we give thanks for everything? 2 Corinthians 12:9-10: If we believe that God's power is perfected in our weakness, then gratitude for even our weaknesses is in order! 1 Peter 4:12-16: To the degree you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice! We need to focus on being God-honoring in all details of our life. Final keys to gratitude:

- True gratitude is a heartfelt expression that is specific in detailing the object of one's gratitude to the giver of that object, or to others, to stimulate their gratitude.
- Gratitude is built on faith.
- It is appropriately expressed creatively, and often to others and to one's self.
- Pause - perceive - praise!

**So how do you live with gratitude...?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**