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How Often Does Thankfulness Occur to You?

Psalms 147:1: (NASB) *Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant and praise is becoming.*



Thanksgiving has come and gone. All that remains are leftovers from a great meal, the memories of family and friends, excitement or disappointment at the result of a football game or two and the results of Black Friday shopping! Was it fun? Yes! Was it worthwhile? Of course! Did our holiday really focus on the true intention of "Thanksgiving?" Hmm... Thanksgiving is one thing - "Thanks-Living" - well, that is an entirely different story!

Today we will focus on the art of giving thanks, not just on one day of the year, but as a theme for every day of every year. It has been said that we become what we think about - imagine becoming a vessel of gratitude, from which others can draw goodness and godliness. Attitude is contagious.

First, a biblical perspective on Thanksgiving:

Old Testament:

Thanksgiving: Strongs #8426 an extension of the hand, i.e. (by implication) avowal, or (usually) adoration; specifically, a choir of worshippers:—confession, (sacrifice of) praise, thanks(-giving, offering)

This word seems to imply a strong action and not merely a strong feeling!

Psalms 26:7: *That I may publish with the voice of **thanksgiving <8426>**, and tell of all thy wondrous works.*

Psalms 50:14: *Offer unto God **thanksgiving <8426>**; and pay thy vows unto the most High:*

Thanks: Strongs #3034 hdy yadah yaw-daw'; literally, to use (i.e. hold out) the hand; physically, to throw (a stone, an arrow) at or away; especially to revere or worship (with extended hands); intensively, to bemoan (by wringing the hands)

Again, *action* is paramount - not just a strong feeling.

Psalms 28:7: *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I **praise <3034>** Him.*

Psalms 30:4: *Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give **thanks <3034>** at the remembrance of His holiness.*

Gratitude starts on the inside, but it finishes its work on the outside. Then it touches others so their hearts can do the same. That is the power of truly being thankful.



Being thankful, *Motivational Minute #31, Nick Vujcic*
(Born without arms and legs - see www.lifewithoutlimbs.org)

- *When I was a kid going to school, I would see everyone else with arms and legs and I'm looking at what they could do, and running and playing football. I mean, it was hard to be thankful when everyone had more than I, right? I just want you to know in life that we can get so caught up in what "I wish I had," "what I wish was different," and I forget to be thankful for what I have now. Because you're never going to achieve your full potential in your life and a life without limits until you actually realize what you have and do your best with what you have. Accept what you can't change, change what you can and do your best. You know, in life without arms and legs, no one knew what kind of life I would have. I had a lot of fears. But one thing I was always remaining to be was a person who was thankful for what he had.*

"Thanks-Living" is our theme today. To illustrate such an idea, we will need to tell some life stories of how it can work, even under difficult circumstances. These "Profiles of Gratitude" will be real, practical and familiar. Each will be a life event in progress.



Some New Testament words and examples:

Thanksgiving: Strongs #2169 eucharistia; gratitude; actively, grateful language (to God, as an act of worship)

Philippians 4:6: (KJV) *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with **thanksgiving** <2169> let your requests be made known unto God.*

Thanks: Strongs #3670 homologeo (hom-ol-og-eh'-o); to assent, i.e. covenant, acknowledge

Hebrews 13:15: (KJV) *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving **thanks** <3670> to his name.*

How do you find gratitude when your parent or loved one is overcome by Alzheimer's?

Both Rick and Jonathan are dealing with fathers who have Alzheimer's. How do you live with thanksgiving when the person you have looked up to all your life has become like a child? So many people go through this!

Gratitude comes to the surface even when circumstances try to keep it down. It finds a way to express itself if you truly have a thankful heart in Christ. For Rick, many of the triggers of that gratitude are scriptural texts.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10: (NASB) *⁹And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Our reaction to dealing with a family member with a debilitating disease is to be overwhelmed, and rightfully so. If we believe that God's power is perfected in our weakness, then gratitude for weakness is in order!

Please listen to the program with the Full Edition Rewind for Rick's "Profile in Gratitude" in helping his parents and family deal with the devastation of Alzheimer's.

1 Corinthians 10:13: (NASB) *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

God does not lift the experience from us, but He is in control and can show us how to have gratitude when life falls apart around us. To master these things is to master Thanks-Living!

In our daily lives, where can we find the hiding places of a cause for gratitude?

Sometimes, causes for gratitude are hidden in plain sight!

 Unappreciated, *The Power of Thankfulness*

- *The business woman stood in front of a group of her fellow professionals and told a story from her past. She had decided to leave her employer, even though she loved her job. She found a position with a competitor and gave her two weeks' notice. When the senior partners of the firm that she was leaving heard about this, they threw a lavish dinner in her honor. One by one, they stood at the podium and told how much this woman had meant to their firm. As a final gesture of gratitude, they presented her with an exquisite, large Waterford crystal vase. And as she showed the group the vase and told us this, her eyes grew moist and her voice began to crack and she said, "The ironic thing is that the reason I decided to leave in the first place was that after six years with that same firm, I had never once felt appreciated."*

People can't feel appreciated if you do not express it - and oftentimes with more than just words. Let the people around you know that you are thankful for them.

Like so many of the Psalms, Psalm 147 is a song of praise. It teaches us to look at the small things of this earth and the big things of this universe so we can assimilate and express the concept of gratitude, for its reasons are all around us!

Psalms 147:1: *Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.*



Praise is an expression of gratitude and thankfulness. It is the outward manifestation of what is happening in our hearts. This Psalm compares the small with the big and then gives cause for praise.

Psalm 147:1: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.



No matter what it is, the end result of the Psalm is praise and gratitude! For gratitude to have its full work in us, it has to have a way of expression. It can be expressed through words, songs or action.

The Psalms truly teach us Thanks-Living!

Comparison

The small ↗ ↘ The BIG

The small happenings of our world...

²The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. ³He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

...compared to the massive happenings of the universe!

⁴He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.

Resulting Praise

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

Comparison

The small ↗ ↘ The BIG

The activities of mankind on the earth...

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

...compared to the activities of God ordering the earth!

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

Resulting Praise

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

Comparison

The small ↗ ↘ The BIG

God's basic care for all physical life on earth...

⁹He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry ¹⁰He does not delight in the strength of a horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.

...compared to His spiritual care for humanity!

¹¹...The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.

Resulting Praise

¹²Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!



Comparison

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;



Resulting Praise

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!

How do we find gratitude when life is overwhelmingly busy and stressful?

Please listen to the program with the Full Edition Rewind for Julie's "Profile in Gratitude" for how a 1,000-year old Jewish song and 80's video games helps her in dealing with stressful situations, including work life.

Where can we find gratitude when we must make decisions that others will disagree with and dislike?

Please listen to the program with the Full Edition Rewind for Joy's "Profile in Gratitude" to learn how she uses a figurative magnifying glass of gratitude to help her stay focused on thankfulness through difficult challenges. God is magnified and the problem gets smaller!

Psalms 69:30: *I will praise the name of God with song and shall magnify Him with thanksgiving.*

Where can we find gratitude when the battlefield is cancer?

Please listen to the program with the Full Edition Rewind for Vicki's "Profile in Gratitude" as she explains how gratitude is a learned behavior that starts with baby steps. She uses the analogy of a dark room and a tiny light to find your way. Our emergency lighting is always nearby if we live a life immersed with God!

*So, how often does thankfulness occur to you?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!*