



## 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 Vujicic*  
(Born without arms and legs - see [www.lifewithoutlimbs.org](http://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!

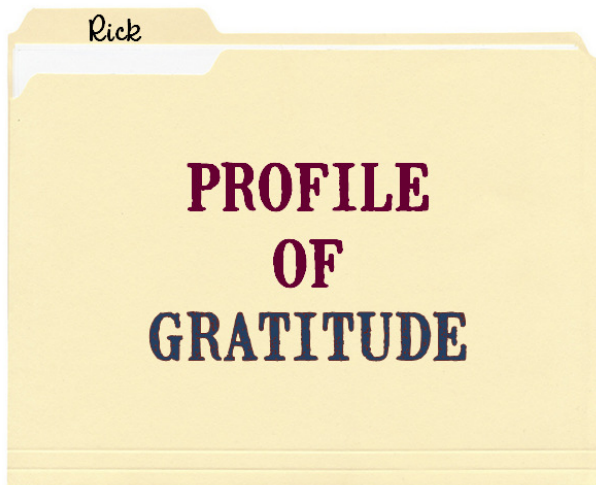
"Thankful Heart," (Verse 1) Petra

I have a thankful heart  
that you have given me  
and it can only come from you  
There is no way to begin  
to tell you how I feel  
There are no words to express  
how you've become so real  
Jesus you've given me  
so much I can't repay  
I have no offering  
I have a thankful heart  
that you have given me  
and it can only come from you



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) <sup>9</sup>*And 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.* <sup>10</sup>*Therefore 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!

The past week brought new challenges with Rick's dad. For the first time, he suddenly could no longer walk and was utterly confused, barely able to speak. It was traumatic for the family, who must now deal with these new circumstances.

Richard Sr. gave his heart to Jesus at only 12 years of age and never looked back. He has a heart of gold and a heart for God. He is now a confused, immobile shell of what he was. How do you have gratitude going through this experience?

  
"Thankful Heart," (Verse 2) Petra

There is no way to begin  
to tell you how I feel  
There's nothing more I can say  
and no way to repay  
Your warming touch  
that melts my heart of stone  
Your steadfast love  
I'll never be alone  
I have a thankful heart  
that you have given me  
and it can only come from you  
I have a thankful heart  
Words don't come easily  
But I am sure you can see  
my thankful heart

Rick is learning the process of gratitude through trial. Richard Sr. is very hard of hearing which complicates the process. Part of the challenge is learning to find ways to communicate through the disease and his hearing loss.

As a result, the family has had to learn to appreciate where he is - he is stuck in small parts of his past. Generally during the disease he has been pretty happy. This past week he started to get very angry as the family was doing things to him and for him that he could not fathom or accept.



How do you find gratitude in that? Understanding who you are dealing with. Rick knows his dad, his character and his heart. What his dad says is not "him," it is the disease. Part of gratitude is learning to understand and separate what is real in terms of character.

If you let just emotion take over, you would be fighting back and getting more and more frustrated. For Rick, no matter what the situation, he sees the man he always respected. Rick's gratitude is for the privilege of wanting to absorb his frustration so it does not get focused on his mom. He can be the "bad guy."

Richard Sr. was the youngest of seven children and thought that Rick and Rick's brother were their dad's older brothers, picking on him.

How can someone be grateful and learn to laugh in between the tears and the sadness? Because it is a privilege to serve his dad and absorb the difficulty. That is the big lesson. The silver lining is this effect might have been brought on by new medication, so we do not believe it was a stroke.

We can really only communicate by writing big notes and through body language because of his hearing loss. But it is the privilege of serving the one you love even if they do not recognize it and cannot reciprocate in any way.

"Thankful Heart," (Verse 3) Petra

Help me be a man of God  
a man who's after your own heart  
Help me show my gratitude  
and keep in me a thankful heart  
I have a thankful heart  
that you have given me  
and it can only come from you  
I have a thankful heart  
Thankful heart

**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!



Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.  
It turns what we have into enough, and more.  
It can turn a meal into a feast,  
a house into a home,  
a stranger into a friend.

- Melody Beattie

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.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: What we do for our parents is as if it were done to God. Matthew 25:40: *...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*



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.

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



# Comparison

The small ↘ ↙ The BIG

The small happenings of our world...  
<sup>2</sup>The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. <sup>3</sup>He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

...compared to the massive happenings of the universe!  
<sup>4</sup>He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.



# Resulting Praise

<sup>5</sup>Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

# Comparison

The small ↘ ↙ The BIG

The activities of mankind on the earth...  
<sup>6</sup>The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.

...compared to the activities of God ordering the earth!  
<sup>8</sup>...who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains.



# Resulting Praise

<sup>7</sup>Sing 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...**

*<sup>9</sup>He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry <sup>10</sup>He 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!**

*<sup>11</sup>...The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.*

# Resulting Praise



*<sup>12</sup>Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!*

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.

# Comparison

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



# Resulting Praise

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

The Psalms truly teach us Thanks-Living!



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

))) My favorite part of Thanksgiving, *The Skit Guys*

- *This is it! This is my favorite part of Thanksgiving - taking out the trash. I know what you're thinking - my family is kind of a mess! And we are, but that's not why this is my favorite part of Thanksgiving. You see, just breaking away for just a moment it gives me the opportunity to remember how much God has blessed me and to realize that generally He uses messy people to do it.*

Julie

## PROFILE OF GRATITUDE

Julie has worked with the Christian Questions team since 2010 and is the “Rewinder in Chief” to help create these written Rewind transcripts after each program.

Gratitude is an action, so she took a moment to thank our listeners. We have some of the nicest, most kind-hearted listeners. One of her jobs here is working with the ChristianQuestions.com website on a weekly basis and she usually is the first to see the emails and blogs that come in. The questions we receive are thoughtful and thought-provoking. We really appreciate that people take time out of their busy day to write us and encourage

us. The listeners should know this gets distributed to the whole team, and we really take that as encouragement to move forward.

Rick asks how she fits in the extra work of Christian Questions on top of a stressful, time-consuming job.

Julie: Before I started working with Christian Questions, I had prayed that God could use my spare minutes. We all have them! I don't care how busy you are - we all have spare minutes. In reality, we have spare hours and we WILL find a way to fill those. We fill those with television, stupid app games that are time-wasters or being on the phone. I paid very close attention to where my spare minutes were going and prayed there would be a way that I could use them in some small way to glorify God. Very soon after that, the CQ Rewind opportunity came up.

Because we live in this stressful world and because my job is stressful, we have to think of ways to make it more manageable. And we are inflicted by physical pains, injustices around us, family stress and the work can be tough. We can really give in to the evil around us and have it extinguish whatever tiny little flame of light that we have.

Rick and Jonathan, each year you generally do a program on “paradigm shift,” and this was a really big thing that helped me with my work life: How to rethink how we go through our days so that we can be overcomers. So much of it has to do with our attitude where under the same circumstances we will either fold like a house of cards or we will go on to make it better.

Rick: How do you do that? Just because you think it, say it and pray it does not mean your job is less stressful.





Julie: I really sat down with management and laid out where my issues were, which clients were overwhelming and presented concrete ways to solve that by shifting the work around. It involved taking the emotion out of it and looking at it objectively to try to rearrange the puzzle pieces to free up time and let the stress lessen. There have been circumstances with relatives and friends of mine where the stress was so unbearable where they had to just leave the job. That may be an option. Sometimes it *is* just too much.

There is a song that has helped me shift my thinking. It is called in Hebrew "Dayenu." (pronounced "die-AY-new") This song is over 1,000 years old and is translated roughly, "That would have been good enough," or "it would have been sufficient."



**"Dayenu," (excerpt) traditional Jewish Passover song**

*If our God had taken us all out of Egypt and not judged them  
it would be enough for us!*

*Di-dayenu, di-dayenu, di-dayenu, dayenu dayenu! (repeat)  
If our God had fed us manna, and had not given us the Sabbath,  
that would be enough for us!*

*Di-dayenu, di-dayenu, di-dayenu, dayenu dayenu! (repeat)*

(More on this song in the Bonus section.)



When you receive a blessing and then ANOTHER blessing on top of it - when the first would have been good enough - it is a completely different way to count your blessings. So, instead of individually counting them, you are building them on top of one another until you have a giant heaping pile. It shows greater appreciation for all of them as a whole. Dayenu!

Even when things are really bleak, there is always some tiny little light that can be found. If you can find that little blessing, you can build on it and build on it and in that way, can be continually thankful throughout your experiences.



Instead of crushing you, they will make you paradoxically more humble, yet stronger.

Rick: You can see blessings in a magnitude that are just snowballing! You said something to me about a video game...?



Julie: My other trick is a very simplified way I try to look at life - through the eyes of an 80's video game where the object is to complete a quest to a higher level. So let's say you start the game on Level 1 and your goal is to get to Level 15 to win the game. Sometime around level 2, you find a piece of cheese. Your character can't seem to eat the cheese or squash the cheese or throw it; the only thing you seem to be able to do is pick it up and take it with you. Why? I don't know, but you better grab it. You continue playing the game and on the next level you find a hammer. But there is nothing to do with that hammer! But you put it in your pack even though the size is awkward and you move a little slower because it is heavy.

It turns out that you don't find out until level 12 that there is a mouse in your way who will only allow you to pass if you feed him cheese. And that hammer? You can't win the game without breaking down the last barrier - so it's a good thing you picked that hammer up way back in Level 3!

If you watch carefully, you might see a pattern like this in your life. Many times I have been faced with a situation that is frustrating or stressful or on the flipside, something that seemingly doesn't make any sense, and it is not until sometime in the future I find out why I encountered it!

That sometimes happens with your study of the Bible. A subject will come up and if you pay really close attention, that same Scripture shows up on Christian Questions, or you hear it on Sunday. So there are things that if you “pick them up,” you may use them in another way.

Rick: The bottom line is, pay attention to that which is around you, take them with you and you will see a way God will let you use them later on.

Julie: He may need us to develop a special skill, knowing it will be required on our “Level 15.” So who is to question if you see a hammer sitting there? Pick it up!

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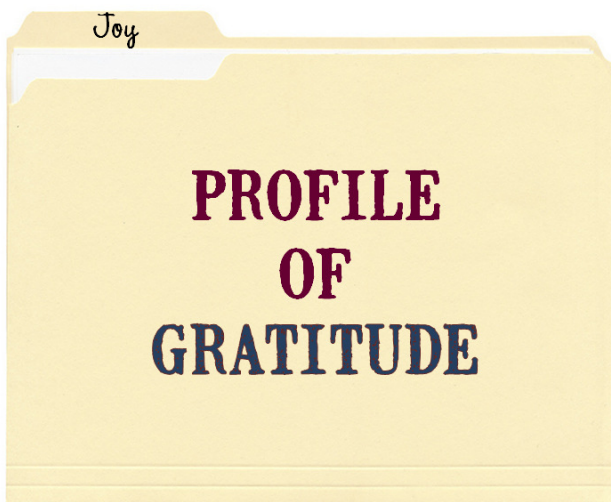
Remember when David was being hunted down by the jealous King Saul and he was fleeing all over the countryside of Israel? After David became king, he used all the knowledge of the terrain that he had gained while being hunted to defeat the enemies that came to destroy Israel. *If it weren't for those awful days of running for his life, he would never have known the hiding places, hills, valleys, etc.* that his enemies now thought they had so secretly found. So, as David was defeating all the enemies of Israel, he could look back and say, “Hey, if I wouldn't have been chased all over this country years ago, I could *never* be this successful now! Praise God!” No wonder he wrote so many songs of praise.



**The messy people, *The Skit Guys***

- *She is the hands and feet of Jesus - even if those hands are texting most of the time. For instance, Loraine always invites people over who need a little encouraging. Derek is different, but he also is the first one to help anytime someone needs a hand. "Unc," - he's not even really family. He's just a close friend and he makes me feel better about myself. Regina and Jerome may be high maintenance, but when the recession hit they paid my mortgage for a few months. When we're all packed in the house together, I tend to forget the good stuff.*

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



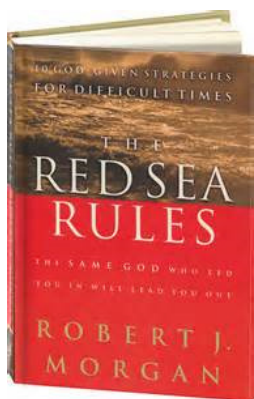
Joy is Rick's sister from Montana and a long-time contributor to Christian Questions. She runs a company and is continually faced with hard and life-altering decisions dealing with personnel of over 50 employees.

Rick: Talk to us about some of the difficulties and framing gratitude within those difficulties.

Joy: It changes every week but here is an example. I had an issue with reports of harassment between a couple of employees. I ended up doing an investigation and interviewing about 10 employees. The whole experience was very intense in trying to get to the bottom of the truth.

This was a difficult week. At the end of the week, we came to the decision that a certain person needed to be fired. And this was very difficult for me because I was aware of his personal experience as a single dad. On this one day, I had the conversation with him, and he was very upset and slammed the door on his way out. Immediately after that, I had to give a verbal warning to an employee. After that I had to change another employee's position because of the negative impact on his training approach.

I am praying, Lord, give me perspective. Help me to get through this in a way that will honor you. As soon as my office door was closed and everybody left, there was silence. My phone vibrated and here was a text from my sister in Christ. She mentioned "Red Sea Rule #5: Stay calm and confident. Give God time to work."



Rick: Red Sea Rules? That is about when Israel crossed the Red Sea?

Joy: Yes, Robert Morgan created ten principles from that Red Sea experience.

Rick: Christian Questions will do a program on this soon. So this text comes in while you are dealing with life-changing decisions? Not only for you but for your employees! You are dramatically affecting their personal lives.



Joy: Yes, and I don't take that lightly. The thing that was so amazing was at that point in time, that text refocused my thinking. And to me, that is the point of gratitude.

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

Gratitude and thanksgiving are a magnifying glass. It changes what we are focusing on. When you look through the lens of Thanksgiving, you see God "bigger." You see God's *intention*. You see His *perspective*.

When my phone gave me that little text message (which was really from God), that was my magnifying glass. That just completely reminded me to stay calm, stay confident and give God time to work. The very next day, the man I had fired came to my office to get his check. He said, "I want you to know, I'm not angry; I'm just really upset." And we had a wonderful discussion. This is part of giving God time to work - and it does not always turn out this way, but I was so grateful. He ended up shaking my hand and thanking us for giving him the chance that we did.

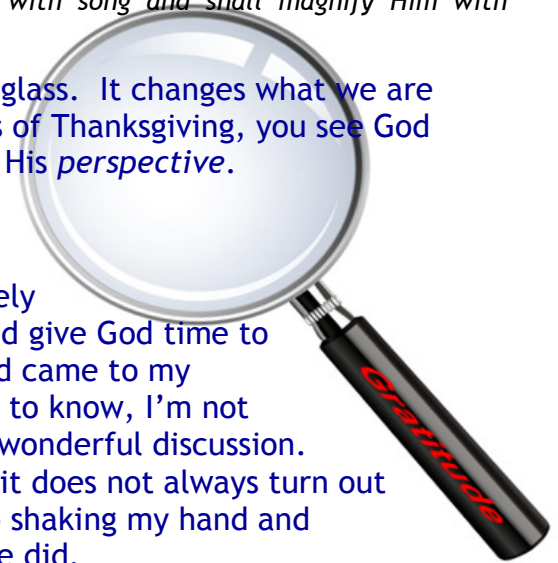
A few days after that, God led me to send him a special Christmas package for his daughter and a note and card with a message of hope. Here is a perfect example. Amidst this roller coaster of emotions and having to do the right thing, God broke through my fear and my reaction and reminded me - *refocused* me - on who He is, on His intentions. We have a choice: Either the problem becomes the biggest thing or we use the lens of gratitude, and God and what He stands for become the biggest thing.

Rick: When you fire somebody from a job, you are changing their life! I'm glad I don't have to do that! Who justifiably fires somebody and then sends their family something to encourage them? Joy, you do!

Joy: As led by God. Yes, that is what was planted in my heart to do.

Rick: So often things are planted in our hearts to do it and what do we do? We just think about it and talk ourselves out of it. We need to act on it, using the magnifying glass of gratitude to make that part of the experience bigger than the rest.

Joy: We continue to have ups and downs of experiences. Even with the weather, we just had an experience over the weekend with this sudden storm and I think the wind chill factor went down to 30-40 degrees below zero. We just spent all day Saturday trying to keep some of the lines from freezing. If our kiln line freezes, it would shut our business down. The electricity went out for eight hours.





This whole time I'm thinking, Okay, Lord. I've got to get through this. I want to honor you in my attitude, and I was having all kinds of other labels for this experience. One of the verses that really got me through this is [Luke 1:37,38](#). The angel was talking to Mary and told her she was going to bear the Son of God. He said, *Nothing will be impossible with God.*

This is a progression. Gratitude is when we realize who God is and apply it to our experience. *Nothing will be impossible with God.* To her that must have meant not only did God have the ability to do this amazing thing and implant the life of the Son of God in her womb - not only does He have this power, but He can protect her life from people stoning her as a consequence of having a child without the marriage relationship.

Her response was *I belong to the Lord, body and soul.* That is what gratitude does. It brings us to a point of greater trust and greater faith. Then she said, *Be it done to me according to Your word.* And that brings us to the point of agreeing with God and surrendering to whatever will happen. This was the process I went through yesterday.

Rick: I know! You called me in a panic!

Joy: I did!

Rick: But when she called me, she had that Scripture already in mind and in a panicked attitude she was saying, “This is how I have to apply it! I have to apply gratitude in this!” And literally, her business is hanging in the balance and that is the focus. If we use the magnifying glass of gratitude, it can take our very difficult, immediate experiences and shed a different light on them.

Joy: I realize that when we dwell in God's presence and go there with our attitude, negativity or fears, and we focus on that magnifying glass of thanksgiving focusing on who God is, it changes everything. It changes our perspective. When we see from God's standpoint, all of a sudden there is space for His possibility to work in our heart and His power to work there. It is an amazing experience. I am so grateful that we have a God of creative deliverance!

### Where can we find gratitude when the battlefield is cancer?



Take a moment, *The Skit Guys*

- *So, taking out the trash, it just gives me a moment out here. I remember how much God loves us; how much He's blessed us, no matter how big a mess we are. It doesn't take much. Just a moment or two. That's all it takes to think.*

Vicki is our next guest. She is a longtime friend, sister in Christ, CQ backup co-host and contributor, and she is currently battling breast cancer. Please refer to the program from June 29, 2014 called, “What is the Fruit of Your Life? (Part II).”



Rick: You have been battling breast cancer for some time. You went through surgery a week ago. Breast cancer. Gratitude. The two do not fit in the same sentence, I'm sorry.

Vicki: Yes, they do. First of all, I am very grateful to even be talking about this with you because when you called, I was in the middle of a pity party. The gratefulness comes from when I had prayed to the Lord to pull me out of the depths of

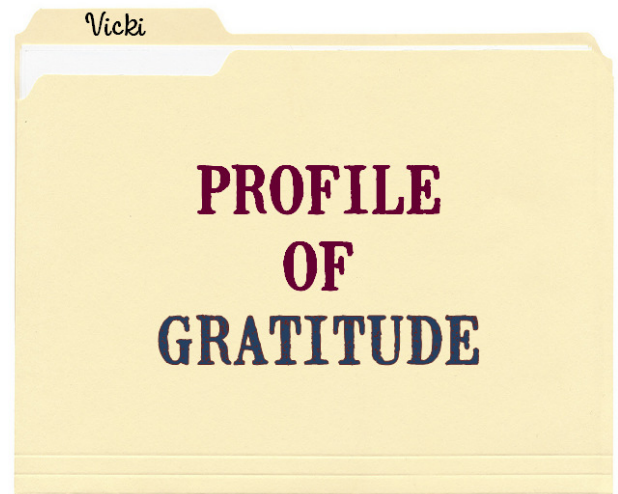
ridiculous, stupid pity, self-centered, focusing on what I didn't have or what was going wrong. And you called and said, "Hey, would you mind focusing on thanksgiving?" Well, there is no better way to crawl out of the pit! And you weren't the first ladder the Lord sent me. It took a couple during this pity party. So, I want to publically thank Him for that and for you as well.

After listening to Julie and you and Joy and building on all these things whether it is a video game or a magnifying glass, the common denominator for all of it is thankfulness is a learned behavior. It does not come naturally. If you go up to someone who is not thankful, it is no different than going up to someone who has the flu and saying, "Oh, don't be sick!" "Be thankful!" Oh, okay! It requires work.

I really appreciated the example through prayer. I see the Lord in my life as a light. In good times, I have made Him the focus of my life. He truly is the center of everything that I am. Now I know the Lord - I know who He is; I know His character. I'm not *guessing* it; I *know* it. It is very familiar. It is like I am "home" with Him. So, when the lights go out, I'm not afraid. I may have to

stumble around a little while to find the candles, but it is not like I'm in an unfamiliar territory. If I just popped into the Bible on occasion - "Oh well, I've had a bad day; I think I will read a verse," - and *then* the lights go out...? You are not familiar. You are scared, you are stymied, you are stopped. "Oh, my golly, I can't move! I'm afraid I'm going to fall into something! Things are going to get worse."

But when you base your life on thankfulness and you try to truly learn how to do it, whatever it takes for you - we have heard different examples and it is different for each of us, then you go out whether you still have a little moonlight or the whole place is pitch black dark, you have the familiarity of the Scriptures and the Lord to *know* (not to *think*, not to *hope*) that you are thankful. Maybe not at the moment for the experience but that will come. But you are thankful that He is leading you.





Rick: In all of our life's experiences, sometimes the lights go out. You don't have to be afraid of the dark because the dark is just a temporary situation. You know how to turn a light on - even if it is just an emergency light. What you are saying is your emergency light is having been devoted to Christ and finding Scriptures that can lift you up and bear you through those difficulties, even when the lights are out and it is dark outside.



Vicki: And sometimes I have trouble finding the candle. Sometimes I think it is going to be a Scripture but that is not doing it. Sometimes I think it might be a hymn and instead I get a phone call that says, "Can you do Christian Questions?" All of a sudden, the whole thing turns around.

Or you bump into somebody you barely know. I had that experience right before you called. I went to the store and someone had just found out two weeks previous that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. She was scared to death. That conversation changed my focus from, "Oh, poor me," to "How blessed am I to be able to help this poor person who is at the beginning of this, and here I am in the middle or nearing the end, Lord willing." It was just a paradigm shift. It was a perspective change. Call it what you will, but you have got to have a tool basket you have drawn from all your life. It can't just be, "Maybe I will read this Scripture today."

Rick: It is like the video game. Sometimes you get tools you don't know how to use, but as life goes on, it becomes evident.

You have been dealing with cancer since April. It has been a long haul. It has been painful, difficult, you lost your hair. Put the gratitude in perspective with the ugliness of cancer.

Vicki: I think for me to say, "I'm grateful for cancer," if you are a new Christian, or one not familiar with the Lord and know Him intimately or deeply, it sounds like either I am an idiot or I am lying.

To give people in the beginning baby steps, you can always think of someone who is worse. So I can sit and say, "I'm thankful that I don't have this happening to me." If I have trouble seeing thankfulness in my outward experiences, all I have to do is look within. I play a game called "The Glad Game." Things can always get worse. I will give you an example (and there are hundreds) - I went to a Sunday meeting one day and came home. The minute I walked through the door, I had a horrible upset stomach. I was a mess. I could have sat there and said, "I'm sick! Why am I sick? This isn't fair!" Instead, I turned it around and said, "Thank you, Lord, that I didn't get sick when I was in the car, or still at church or anywhere else. I'm home, it is convenient; this is comfortable, thank you."



You have to start in small steps before you can even think to get to the point of being thankful for cancer. Being thankful for cancer for me has been because I know - and that is the real thankfulness -that God is walking me through it. I know every step of every day of every experience that He knows, and I am so thankful for it.

Rick: Gratitude is really a perspective. It is learning how to put things in a different context. The context you have put cancer in is that it is simply your battleground to crystalize your character. It is the Lord's battle. Therefore, you say, you are thankful. Being thankful like that is not easy. God is still greater than the cancer and any pity party.

I'm almost speechless! Do you understand the value of your experiences? The profiles of gratitude we heard today, you can apply these to your life. These are real Christian individuals going through real, traumatic problems. The bottom line is everyone found a way to find gratitude. May we do that every day! Be thankful every day! Show gratitude every day!

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

*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind*



HAPPY  
THANKSGIVING







First, a little more on the background of the song that Julie spoke about:

(Source: Wikipedia) Dayenu (Hebrew: **דַּיָּנוּ**) is a song that is part of the Jewish holiday of Passover. The word "Dayenu" means approximately "it would have been enough for us", "it would have been sufficient", or "it would have sufficed" (day in Hebrew is "enough", and -enu the first person plural suffix, "to us"). This traditional up-beat Passover song is over 1,000 years old. The earliest full text of the song occurs in the first medieval haggadah, which is part of the ninth-century Seder Rav Amram. The song is about being grateful to God for all of the gifts He gave the Jewish people, such as taking them out of slavery, giving them the Torah and Shabbat, and had God only given one of the gifts, it would have still been enough. This is to show much greater appreciation for all of them as a whole. The song appears in the haggadah after the telling of the story of the exodus and just before the explanation of Passover, matzah and the maror.

The song has 15 verses, each talk about a gift God gave to the Jewish people starting with being brought out of Egypt and ending with the building of the Temple, and then DEYANU is sung repeatedly.

[Psalms 107:21-22](#): (KJV) <sup>21</sup>*Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* <sup>22</sup>*And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*

Now, time to compare and contrast! Take a look at the Thanksgiving Day Proclamations given by our current President Barak Obama and then the original Presidential Proclamation given by George Washington in 1789. As you read through them, ask yourself what the focus of the holiday is according to our nation's leader...

Presidential Proclamation -- Thanksgiving Day, 2014

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
A PROCLAMATION

Thanksgiving Day invites us to reflect on the blessings we enjoy and the freedoms we cherish. As we gather with family and friends to take part in this uniquely American celebration, we give thanks for the extraordinary opportunities we have in a Nation of limitless possibilities, and we pay tribute to all those who defend our Union as members of our Armed Forces. This holiday reminds us to show compassion and concern for people we have never met and deep gratitude toward those who have sacrificed to help build the most prosperous Nation on earth. These traditions honor the rich history of our country and hold us together as one American family, no matter who we are or where we come from.



Nearly 400 years ago, a group of Pilgrims left their homeland and sailed across an ocean in pursuit of liberty and prosperity. With the friendship and kindness of the Wampanoag people, they learned to harvest the rich bounty of a new world.

Together, they shared a successful crop, celebrating bonds of community during a time of great hardship. Through times of war and of peace, the example of a Native tribe who extended a hand to a new people has endured. During the American Revolution and the Civil War, days of thanksgiving drew Americans together in prayer and in the spirit that guides us to better days, and in each year since, our Nation has paused to show our gratitude for our families, communities, and country.

With God's grace, this holiday season we carry forward the legacy of our forebears. In the company of our loved ones, we give thanks for the people we care about and the joy we share, and we remember those who are less fortunate. At shelters and soup kitchens, Americans give meaning to the simple truth that binds us together: we are our brother's and our sister's keepers. We remember how a determined people set out for a better world -- how through faith and the charity of others, they forged a new life built on freedom and opportunity.

The spirit of Thanksgiving is universal. It is found in small moments between strangers, reunions shared with friends and loved ones, and in quiet prayers for others. Within the heart of America's promise burns the inextinguishable belief that together we can advance our common prosperity -- that we can build a more hopeful, more just, and more unified Nation. This Thanksgiving, let us recall the values that unite our diverse country, and let us resolve to strengthen these lasting ties.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 27, 2014, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage the people of the United States to join together -- whether in our homes, places of worship, community centers, or any place of fellowship for friends and neighbors -- and give thanks for all we have received in the past year, express appreciation to those whose lives enrich our own, and share our bounty with others.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand fourteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-ninth.  
BARACK OBAMA



## THANKSGIVING DAY 1789, BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor - and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be - That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks - for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation - for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war - for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed - for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions - to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually - to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed - to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord - To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us - and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789. GO. WASHINGTON.