



## Is Gratitude Your Attitude?

**Hebrews 13:15:** (NASB) *Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*



Here is a question: what do the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving have in common? The most obvious answer is that these two celebrations are uniquely American in that their very founding were undeniably linked to the founding of the United States. The less obvious answer is that these two holidays were also founded in humble recognition of God Almighty. Just read the first and last parts of the *Declaration of Independence* and the first Declaration for Thanksgiving of the United States, and you will see that God was first and foremost. Here we are about 240 years later, and God is no longer first, and He certainly is no longer “for most.” As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, what can

we do to relight our own fire of gratitude towards God and towards one another? Let us start by talking about it.

This week we will focus on several Profiles of Gratitude. But first, we want to find out what gratitude can do for us.

 **What good is gratitude, Robert Emmons, Greater Good Science Center**

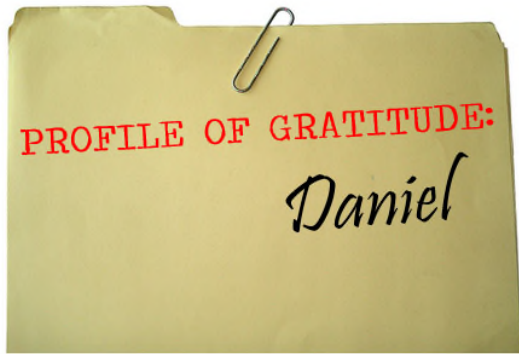
- *Number 1: It allows us to celebrate the present, a magnification of positive emotions. We know from research by emotion scientists that positive emotions wear off quickly. Our emotional systems like newness. They like novelty; they like change. We adapt to positive life circumstances so that the new car, the new spouse, the new house, the new whatever is not so new after a short period of time. We adapt to it. Gratitude involves the appreciation of the value of something, and so when we appreciate the value of it we are less likely to depreciate the value, which is to lose value; therefore we extract more benefits.*
- *Number 2: Gratitude blocks negative emotions, toxic emotions which can destroy our happiness, subjective well-being, optimal functioning, particularly in the domain of envy, resentment, regret, even depression. There is new evidence coming out showing that gratitude is effective in the prevention, reduces the episodes of depression, reduces the duration, and makes future episodes less likely. You cannot be envious and grateful at the same time. Try it, you can't. They're incompatible feelings. You can't resent someone for having something that they have that you don't if you are grateful. Those are very different ways of being in the world.*

Gratitude can have an enormous impact in our lives.





Daniel's life path was an unpaved road through uncharted territory. For more on the amazing life of Daniel, please see our three-part series called, "Why Was Daniel So Special?" March 23, 2014, April 6, 2014 and May 11, 2014. He was able to navigate that road with the compass of faith, the staff of courage and the sustenance of gratitude.



The following event was upon the revealing of the king's dream and its meaning:

**Daniel 2:19-23:** (NRSV) <sup>19</sup>Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night, and Daniel blessed the God of heaven. <sup>20</sup>Daniel said: Blessed be the name of God from age to age, for wisdom and power are His. <sup>21</sup>He changes times and seasons, deposes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. <sup>22</sup>He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him. <sup>23</sup>To you, O God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and power, and have now revealed to me what we asked of you, for you have revealed to us what the king ordered.

Daniel and his friends (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) prayed together over the problem of the king's request. Although the dream and its meaning were revealed only to Daniel, we see his great humility in saying *you have revealed to us* - he included his friends in the thank you, as they were all working together to praise and honor God.

 **What good is gratitude, Robert Emmons, Greater Good Science Center**

- *Grateful people are more stress resilient. There have been a number of studies showing that in the face of serious life situations (trauma, adversity, suffering) if people are dispositionally grateful, they recover faster. They're less bothered by some of the negative emotional symptoms - post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety symptoms in the aftermath of trauma if they are previously grateful individuals. It gives people perspective by which they can interpret life events, and that's why it's beneficial.*
- *The fourth, in terms of strengthening social ties, a sense of self-worth. When you are grateful, that's information that someone else is looking out for you. Someone else has provided for your well-being, or you notice a network of relationships, past and present, of people who are responsible for helping you get to where you are right now. You may not have thought about these people before. You may have taken them for granted. Once you start to recognize the contributions that they've made, either intentionally or unintentionally, you start to feel much better about your position in life.*





It is inspiring to have new reasons to have gratitude for those around us. It literally lightens your step.

Daniel was in a place where he could mentally and spiritually find gratitude because he was already attuned to God. But 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 "god" in his own eyes. He had great wealth and success and was very prideful. Daniel warned him about this to no avail.

Rick tells the story about how he and Jonathan used to volunteer together at a Bible youth camp. One year there was a skit about Daniel (played by Rick) and Rick's normally dignified father, Richard, agreed to play the role of Nebuchadnezzar as a beast. He was dressed with lots of hair, dirt and long fingernails. He crawled around on all fours, eating grass. The kids at camp were astonished! Rick thinks back on that with gratitude. Because his dad had an opportunity to make an impression on those kids, he was willing to put himself in that position.



Rick (Daniel) and Richard (Nebuchadnezzar)



### God set Nebuchadnezzar low for seven years:

Daniel 4:34, 36-37: (KJV) <sup>34</sup>And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation... <sup>36</sup>At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. <sup>37</sup>Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.

He was given back all he lost, so what would he do with it? *Praise and extol and honor the King of heaven.* We see a changed life.



**Whether we come from a place of sure and humble faith or pride and ego, gratitude can be equally powerful and transformative.**



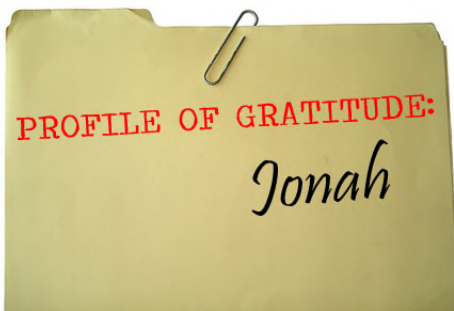
## The next profile is Jonah. But wait! Didn't he get swallowed by a big fish because of his disobedience?

Unfortunately, sometimes we miss opportunities to show gratitude.

 Split second decision, *Live Simply So Others Can Simply Live, Pretty Simple*

- *It was September 30, 2008 when the doctor came in, and he just said that my mom had a cardiac arrest. They told me that I had to make a decision. They said a.) we can try to revive her, but we will probably break every bone in her body and she's feeling all the pain, or b.) we just let life take its course and let her pass in peace. Frantically, I had a minute to decide either life or this, and I was told not to let the decision that I was going to make in that moment haunt me for the rest of my life. So, I made the decision to let her go. I just laid at her side, and I was just weeping like crazy. I told her everything I was grateful for. I told her, "Thank you so much for how you raised me." The sad thing about it was that was the only time I did it. I never did it before. I never told my mom how much I loved her. I never told her anything until that moment.*

Expressions of gratitude can be a "right now" thing. But often we put up walls, because no one likes to feel vulnerable.



Next is a person we would not normally view as one who was an example of gratitude, rather we often see him as an example of grudging obedience. For more on the story of Jonah, please see our program from June 12, 2011, "So, What's the Story with Jonah?"

At this point in the story, he is alive and conscious in the belly of the fish and had time to think.

**Here is the recorded prayer from the belly of the fish:**

Jonah 2:1-9: (KJV) <sup>1</sup>Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, <sup>2</sup>And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. <sup>3</sup>For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. <sup>4</sup>Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. <sup>5</sup>The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. <sup>6</sup>I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. <sup>7</sup>When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. <sup>8</sup>They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. <sup>9</sup>But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

*Thou heard my voice - even though he was as far away as possible from God.*

*Yet you have brought up my life from corruption - there was great faith and the beginning of gratitude.*

Verse 7 - Gratitude Step 1 - Recognition

He recognized he did the wrong things in life.

Verse 8 - Gratitude Step 2: Contrition

He realized he was paying attention to his own thinking instead of the mercies of God.



### Verse 9 - Gratitude Step 3: Submission

In other words, "I will do what You set me out to do."

These all equal an attitude of gratitude. His life was spared! (But then he went back to complaining again! He still had some work to do on his character.)

### It's over, Live Simply So Others Can Simply Live, Prettye Simplet

- *After that, I kissed her and I said goodbye. I went inside the waiting room. I heard all these noises again but no pitter-patter of the feet, no nothing. I remember I looked up at him and said, "Is it over?" He said, "Yeah, it's over." To this day she's always in the back of my mind, every time I do my school work, everything I do; because she taught me how to love, how to be kind, how to be real, how to be genuine towards people. Live every second as it was your last and always help the poor. Live simply so other people can simply live.*

We have a tendency to make the Thanksgiving holiday about turkey and football games. Instead, let us make it about gratitude.



**We can be filled with gratitude even if we have missed opportunities, for our personal lack does not diminish the power of the gifts we have been given.**

In the Old Testament:

**Thanksgiving:** Strongs #8426 hdwt towdah; properly, 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).

**The following texts show the actions that true gratitude towards God provokes in our lives:**

**Psalms 26:1-7:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. <sup>2</sup>Examine me, O LORD, and try me; test my mind and my heart. <sup>3</sup>For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth. <sup>4</sup>I do not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with pretenders. <sup>5</sup>I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. <sup>6</sup>I shall wash my hands in innocence, and I will go about Your altar, O LORD, <sup>7</sup>that I may proclaim (hear intelligently) with the voice of **thanksgiving <8426>** and declare all Your wonders.

Our intention can be just like a choir of worshippers to God.

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

Say the words and do the action.



**Thanks:** Strongs #3034 hdy yadah yaw-daw'; 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)

**Psalms 28:6-7:** (NASB) *6Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of my supplication. 7The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall **thank <3034>** Him.*

This reminds us of the song that says, "We all need somebody to lean on..." By leaning on God, we are given promises to lift us and carry us through our daily experiences. Our deepest gratitude will always go towards those whom we trust the most. If we do *not* show gratitude, what does that say about our trust?

Without showing intentional gratitude, trust can begin to feel like an entitlement. Rarely would you feel grateful for something you feel entitled to. We could look at God's care for us and think, well, if I am a follower, He is *supposed* to take care of me. If we look at God's contribution to our lives and are in awe and feel deep, humble, gracious thankfulness for His overrulings, we will be deeply appreciative without having a sense of entitlement.

Gratitude is an intentional, clear action.

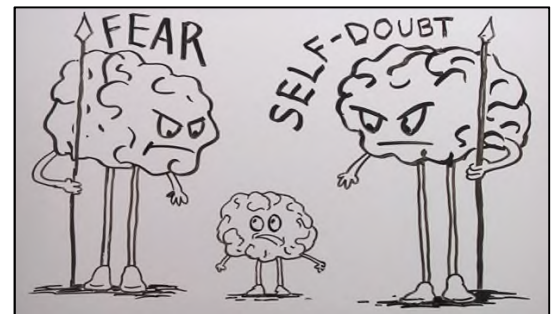
### **The Apostle Paul suffered constantly for Christ. Where did he find gratitude?**

**Philippians 1:3:** (NASB) *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.*

Paul found gratitude in thinking about his brethren. He saw them as having great value.

 **Broody's first trait, A Very Happy Brain, [stressfree.org](http://stressfree.org)**

- *Friends, this is the story of how Broody, a very unhappy brain, became very happy. You see, Broody struggled with fear and self-doubt. He felt unsafe and unworthy. He didn't know what to do. Then Broody's friend suggested an idea. Together they went to school to learn about the brain and about themselves. Come, let's find out what they learned.*



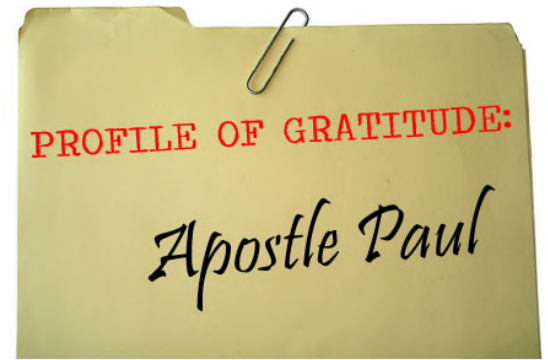
- *A short course in happiness: Your brain has trillions of junctions, that magic millions of its functions. Let's learn about three traits of the brain that in overdrive can get you drained. First trait: Your brain feels others' pain as its own. Your brain hurts just the same in personal or a beloved's pain. The same neurons fire when you are in despair and when someone else is hurting about whom you care.*

Our brains feel others' pain just as it feels our own pain. We can learn gratitude through compassion.



2 Corinthians 11:27-29: (NASB) <sup>27</sup>I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup>Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup>Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

Paul joined his brethren in their pain, suffering, trials and mistakes. He had a connection with them.



 **Second and third traits, *A Very Happy Brain*, [stressfree.org](http://stressfree.org)**

- *Second trait: For your brain, imaginary is real. Your brain lights up the same nerve bundles for events real or imagined stumbles. If you dream of a spider on your shin, it might cause the same dread as the real thing.*
- *Third trait: The brain can't tell physical pain from emotional hurts. The pain of a mean scorn stings the same as agony of a hurtful thorn. Broken bone and broken heart both cause the same smart.*
- *To find inner contentment and plentitude, snug yourself in a comfort of gratitude. Your greatest joys come from passions that are lush with true and deep compassion. Once you're lost in healing others and start seeing strangers as brothers, your brain will become the happiest of all, be it summer, spring, winter or fall.*

Our brains see our imagination in the same way they see reality. Our brains do not differentiate physical pain from emotional hurt. Living with gratitude changes your brain from "broody" to bright!

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! <sup>8</sup>Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. <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.

Paul found gratitude in his weakness and his lack, because he knew that Christ could sustain him. He was content in the knowledge that through his weakness the power of Christ is more obvious and effective. His weakness (likely poor eyesight) taught the Apostle Paul to not depend on himself so much.

Giving our difficult experiences to the Lord helps to remove the effect of the pain, leaving us with peace.

 **Pursue gratitude, *A Very Happy Brain*, [stressfree.org](http://stressfree.org)**

- *Broody the Brain came back from school with two important concepts. First, seeing others in pain, physical or emotional, fires his own pain network; and second, his imaginary fears cause him real damage. The school also taught him solutions to these neural predispositions through cultivating deeper gratitude and compassion. The daily practice of gratitude and compassion made Broody happier and stronger than ever. He defeated fear and self-doubt*



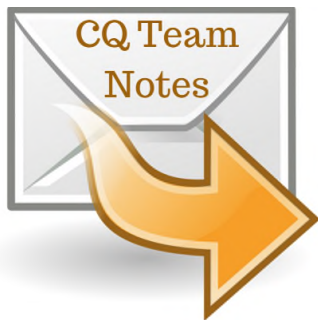
*and then felt safe and worthy. The brains that feel safe and worthy become happy. Happy brains - when they get busy in meaningful, creative and altruistic activities - become very happy. Here is the secret to a happier life: Because of the way your brain operates, the pursuit of gratitude and compassion will make you happier than the pursuit of happiness.*

The pursuit of gratitude and compassion will make you happier than the pursuit of happiness. Gratitude and compassion are major tools to create brain happiness and therefore life happiness. Gratitude is rooted in contentment and the ability to be thankful for "what is," even if it is not what you prefer.

#### **Paul taught us about gratitude:**

**Romans 8:35, 37-39:** (NASB) <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... <sup>37</sup>But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul found gratitude in his conviction that we are led and protected through all trial and suffering, no matter how it happens in our lives.



**Ella:** What does gratitude mean to me personally? I am grateful for my life and for God's dealings with me. He has given me (this undeserving person) an opportunity to be part of the heavenly body of Christ. My feeble attempts of thankfulness do not even come close to the gratitude God deserves!

Turning 70 is sobering. Friends and relatives in my age group are aging and some are now dying. I am getting ever closer to the end of this life as I know it, and it is a bit frightening. However, scientists confirm that feeling gratitude makes an aging person happier (probably because one is less focused on self and more focused on others and on God). Therefore, now more than ever, I need to have a new appreciation for what I still have (my God-given faculties) and use them in service to the best of my ability. I need to be grateful each and every day to the Lord for all his gifts. My goal: Making gratitude to the Lord, like prayer, my constant companion.

Gratitude is not just a feeling. It is an attitude and a decision about how we are going to live our lives, helping us walk a more fulfilled path.



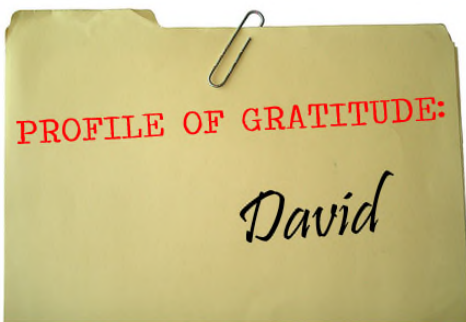
**We are surrounded with reasons for gratitude. We fellowship, we bear each other's burdens, we suffer for Christ and see his deliverance. All can EQUALLY bring gratitude!**





 **The benefits, *The Science of Gratitude*, [tremendo.us](http://tremendo.us)**

- *Research shows that adopting an attitude of gratitude - simply expressing appreciation and being more thankful - can measurably improve your overall well-being. Studies prove that gratitude can increase happiness, reduce depression and strengthen resiliency. Grateful people often experience reduced blood pressure, less chronic pain, increased energy, even longer lives. People who purposefully express more gratitude report higher self-esteem than those who don't, and they're more likely to help others; a pro-social behavior also linked to greater happiness. People who capture grateful thoughts before bed sleep better than those who don't. Why so many positive changes? Because gratitude actually rewires our brains, kick starting the production of dopamine and serotonin. Like anti-depressants, these feel-good neurotransmitters activate the bliss center of the brain creating feelings of happiness and contentment.*



Gratitude and praise drove this faithful servant of God. The entire podcast could be about him, but we will focus on his gratitude in one of his most difficult times.

**This shows us how David grew back toward God and gratitude:**

Psalms 32:1-7,11: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! <sup>2</sup>How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! <sup>3</sup>When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. <sup>4</sup>For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah. <sup>5</sup>I acknowledged my sin to You, and

my iniquity I did not hide; I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD; and You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah. <sup>6</sup>Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him. <sup>7</sup>You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah... <sup>11</sup>Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

*My vitality was drained away - David's sin had left him broken.*

*Selah - meaning, "pause and consider."* Absorb the depth of despair he was feeling.

David is telling us to pray to the Lord like he did and be completely vulnerable. Turn your sin over to Him.

*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice...shout for joy - His pathway back to God was humbling, painful and long, but once he could again see the light of God's love his gratitude overflowed! Gratitude brought him back to God.*



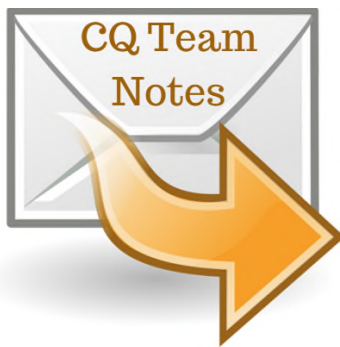
A caller from Connecticut suggests gratitude has to have a foundation of humility. Psalms 110:7: (KJV) *He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head.* This makes a comparison to when a bird takes a sip of water out of the brook, it lifts its head as if to say thank you. This is a simple but beautiful illustration. Psalms 150:6: (NIV) *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.*



**What to do, *The Science of Gratitude*, tremendo.us**

- *Here are a few simple ways to deliberately cultivate that attitude of gratitude. Celebrate minor accomplishments. Think about what you have rather than dwelling on what you don't. Tell the people in your life something that you appreciate about them. Volunteer. Hold a door for a stranger, simply smile more and you'll probably feel better, as kindness and giving are connected to gratitude. Similar positive brain changes can occur from regular meditation and mindfulness. Keep a daily gratitude journal using an old-fashioned notebook or a high tech app. The science is clear. Give gratitude a go. You'll be thankful you did.*

There are many ways to make gratitude a part of your life. Look for reasons to say a heartfelt thank you.



**Loni:** I certainly try to make gratitude my attitude! It is work though, and it requires effort. Everyone has different life experiences and certainly different personalities, but I do believe gratitude is like a muscle that we can work and condition to be stronger with time and commitment like any other muscle in our body. I think it is a lifelong process very similar to building and maintaining our physical muscles. If you stop the process, the strength of the muscle will decrease with time.

One exercise that helps me to develop gratitude is what I like to call "reframing," which is a way of saying, "look at the big picture." When I find myself grumbling or feeling sorry for myself, I try to take a giant step back and look at the big picture. I usually start with a very narrow focus that magnifies whatever problem is at hand, and if I can expand my field of vision, my problem becomes very small in the bigger scheme of things.

The Scripture that I think of with this is Colossians 3:2: (ASV) *Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.*

Now that does not erase or change difficult experiences; it just shifts the perspective. Things like death, illness, financial struggles and all kinds of tough experiences that we go through are all realities. And the emotions and the pain that come with them are real, and we should never deny those or cast aside things like grief and sorrow. But by reframing our perspective, we can find grace and joy in even the most terrible, painful situations.



**Our greatest need for gratitude is when we have made destructive choices. As soon as we can realize, repent and reframe our issues we will position ourselves to receive the healing balm of gratitude that gushes forth from God's love and forgiveness.**

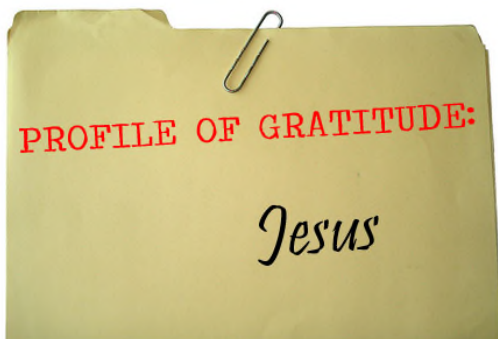
Psalms 106:1: (NASB) *Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.*



**Our next profile is Jesus. We always thank Jesus, but do we ever think about him showing gratitude?**

 **A gift beyond gifts, NBC Nightly News, October 10, 2016**

- *(News reporter) When 34-year old Laura Levis died from a massive asthma attack, husband Peter Demarco could have easily melted into grief. What he did instead is inspiring. A simple act, a thank you letter sent to the doctors, nurses, even the cleaning staff, everyone who helped care for his wife. So extraordinary, it was published in the New York Times. He writes, "How many times did you hug me and console me when I fell to pieces? Or ask about Laura's life and the person she was?" Amanda Moors was their social worker.*
- *(Social worker) Despite such tragedy, I think that there was a lot of beauty in that room.*
- *(News reporter) Like the time hospital staff looked the other way when Peter smuggled in their beloved cat for one final lick.*
- *(Nurse) It's not just about the physical support you give; it's about that emotional support.*
- *(News reporter) Or when nurse Jennifer Pollies helped Peter climb into his wife's bed to spend one last hour at her side. He called it a gift beyond gifts.*



### **Jesus giving thanks for the seemingly small provisions from God:**

**Matthew 15:32-36:** (NASB) <sup>32</sup>And Jesus called his disciples to him, and said, I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way. <sup>33</sup>The disciples said to him, Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd? <sup>34</sup>And Jesus said to them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven, and a few small fish. <sup>35</sup>And he directed the people to sit down on the ground; <sup>36</sup>and he took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, he broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

Jesus was about to perform a major miracle, but the execution of that miracle came through his gratitude to God first. He was going to feed thousands of people with almost nothing. What is small and insufficient in the eyes of men can - by the grace and power of God through Jesus - be made to satisfy the multitudes.



### **Jesus gave thanks for God's compassionate and listening ear:**

**John 11:39-41:** (NASB) <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, Remove the stone. Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days. <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God? <sup>41</sup>So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes, and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard me.

Lazarus had already begun to decompose - there was no question he was dead. Martha is practical with her admonition to him not to remove the stone. The people around him had to be concerned over what was happening. Jesus then does something he did not have to do. He raised his eyes and thanked God for



hearing him. He makes a public proclamation of gratitude to God. He did not have to say that aloud, but he did it so they would understand his gratitude to the Father for the great power about to be expressed and exposed to everyone watching. Jesus was a template for us in our daily lives - we should always be open to be thankful to God.

**Jesus also shows gratitude that he could clearly represent the Father to all who witnessed this event:**

John 11:42-44: (NASB) <sup>42</sup>I knew that You always hear me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent me. <sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. <sup>44</sup>The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, Unbind him, and let him go.

*Unbind him and let him go* - take the wrappings of death and sin off him. This was a picture of the great resurrection of all mankind coming in the future.

This greatest of all his miracles was born out of the deep connection between Jesus and the Father, a relationship of mutual love, purpose and gratitude. God Himself showed gratitude for Jesus: *This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.*

 **The power of thank you, NBC Nightly News, October 10, 2016**

- (News reporter) *What Peter has now given them is a public expression of his appreciation, so powerful that it hangs in the intensive care unit at CHA Cambridge Hospital.*
- (Nurse) *I think that we all needed to be able to walk by it and look at Laura's picture and remember even in the difficult moments that this is why we do what we do.*
- (News reporter) *The sentiment struck a nerve online. "Stories like this make me remember why I practice intensive care medicine." "Sometimes you need a letter to restore your faith in humanity." Gratitude from a grieving husband now teaching the power of saying "thank you."*

We should be specific in our gratitude to each other.

**Jesus giving thanks for the sacrifice he was about to offer:**

Luke 22:14-20: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>When the hour had come, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. <sup>17</sup>And when he had taken a cup and given thanks, he said, Take this and share it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes. <sup>19</sup>And when he had taken some bread and given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. <sup>20</sup>And in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

Jesus gave an example to remember him in the bread and cup. He gave thanks for the opportunity to be and do God's will in the redemption of the entire race of mankind.

Ultimate gratitude is when we can be truly thankful for the harsh and painful experiences before us.



Gratitude can and should permeate every part of our lives. It should echo through the little and the big providences, the privilege of and answers to prayer, the opportunities to represent the Gospel with our lives, and the hard and costly sacrifices that are required of us.

We have an opportunity for gratitude to not only be present in our lives but to have it permeate our lives. We want to have gratitude when offering prayers, when God answers our prayers - even when the answer is "no." Gratitude changes the way we look at our experiences.

**The last profile is of you and me.  
How can we show and help others to show gratitude?**

 **Thank you, God, *The Skit Guys***

- *(A father) Thank you, God, for trusting me to be his dad.*
- *(Older man) Thank you, Lord, that when a door closes, You're still going to take care of me.*
- *(Child) And thank you for cheetahs, and pickles, and failings, and mommies and Daddy.*
- *(Mother) Thank you, Father, for always giving me perspective.*
- *(Doctor) I'm so sorry.*
- *(Patient) Thank you, God, that you are the Great Physician of both my body and my soul.*



A caller from Connecticut says she is grateful for this program. She suggests that if a person can get to the place where they appreciate the overwhelming fact that God made them and has a magnificent and never-ending plan for all of mankind for which we did nothing to earn, it can help us to also forgive others who injured us. Especially when we realize God offered us forgiveness in Jesus Christ and planned this before we were even born. That is a huge reason to be deeply grateful. It can change your life. For many years her own prayers were grateful prayers, never asking the Lord any questions. Over a long time this improved her life substantially. It does make your blood pressure go down.

A big part of our days is in the pursuit of business to earn a living. A lot of what happens during the workday is negative. You receive phone calls with information you did not plan to hear or an email you need to respond to when things didn't work out well. Our caller always tries to end those difficult phone calls or emails with "thank you," letting them know although the situation did not go the way they wanted, "Let's keep working on it, thank you for trying, we are in this together and I appreciate your effort."

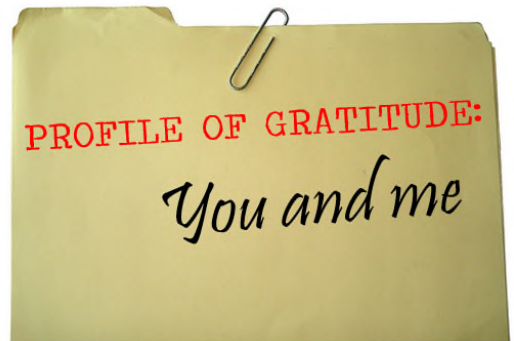
This helps us find gratitude even through the difficulty. You make other peoples' lives better by doing that!



First, a three-step recipe for creating "Personal Gratitude Momentum:"

**1. Be aware of your surroundings - choose the environment in which you want your mind to flourish:**

Psalms 1:1-3: (NKJV) *<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; <sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup>He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*



Blessed is the man who takes his every day and makes a choice. Will we get drawn into the pitfalls or rise up to the opportunities? Know what you really want and you will know what to **choose**.

**2. Make a conscious effort to focus on those things that naturally deliver gratitude:**

Philippians 4:4,7-8: (NASB) *<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!... <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

These things mentioned - *true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute* - naturally deliver gratitude. If we are going to wallow in self-pity, we will end up grumbling in misery. Make a conscious effort to focus on things that naturally bring us gratitude.

Distractions abound while goodness and righteousness seem to hide. Observe and **choose** carefully.

**3. Live firmly in the present, not with one foot in the past or the future:**

Exodus 16:1-3: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Then they set out from Elim...after their departure from the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>The sons of Israel said to them, Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

How small did they think God was? Did they think He would miraculously deliver them only to starve them later? Israel chose to look backward selectively. Where do YOU **choose** to look and live?



Gratitude is a choice!



 **Thank you, God, *The Skit Guys***

- *(A dad) Father, thank you for knowing my family's needs even before I do.*
- *(Child) ...and for ladybugs, and old people, and Disney movies, and Ms. Walker and donuts!*
- *(Woman) Thank you, thank you for reminding me that I'm never alone.*
- *(Man) Thank you, God, for what I have. And also I wouldn't mind an upgrade soon. (His car just broke down.)*
- *(Woman) Thank you, Father God, for love, joy, peace and patience. Lord, especially patience.*
- *(Child) And thank you for Jesse, even though he's mean during recess. Help him find a good friend; that's what he needs. I love you, Jesus. Amen.*
- *(Man) Amen. Thank you God, for child-like faith.*

Jonathan has a client who is always down on herself. At last year's CQ program on Thanksgiving, he gave her a challenge: Every month when they get together, he wanted to hear she wrote a letter to someone to thank them for being special, or caring. Each month she told Jonathan who she contacted and what a blessing this was to her. It really helps those who are depressed and down.

**We promote gratitude in others when we **choose** to live our own gratitude:**

**Hebrews 13:15-16:** (NASB) <sup>15</sup>Through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. <sup>16</sup>And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

**Live your gratitude out loud! Sometimes the most impactful gratitude (which usually happens in a time of private pain) finds its way to the ears and hearts of others to spur them on as well:**

**Psalms 100:1-5:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. <sup>2</sup>Serve the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. <sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. <sup>4</sup>Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.



**Gratitude, if chosen, will lift your heart and mind so that you can better contribute to others. They in turn can experience gratitude that will lift their hearts and minds.**

The choice of gratitude is yours. It is with you every day in every experience. Choose to try it on and see how it fits. Choose to look into Scripture instead of the nasty news of the day and see if you can find the gratitude necessary to lift you to a different place. Then choose to pass it on to others. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving! Make gratitude your attitude.



**So, is gratitude your attitude?  
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!****



**Causes for gratitude:**

**Jesus did what needed to be done and then paved the road for us to do what needs to be done:**

**Hebrews 12:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

**God does what needs to be done in overruling our lives so that we can do what needs to be done to be faithful:**

**Hebrews 12:4-11:** (NASB) <sup>4</sup>You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; <sup>5</sup>and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, my son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; <sup>6</sup>for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom he receives. <sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. <sup>11</sup>All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

**How do we produce thanksgiving to God in others?**

**2 Corinthians 9:10-15:** (NASB) <sup>10</sup>Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; <sup>11</sup>you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup>For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. <sup>13</sup>Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, <sup>14</sup>while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. <sup>15</sup>Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!





### We owe God:

**Psalms 116:12-19:** (KJV) <sup>12</sup>What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? <sup>13</sup>I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. <sup>14</sup>I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. <sup>15</sup>Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. <sup>16</sup>O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. <sup>17</sup>I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. <sup>18</sup>I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people, <sup>19</sup>In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

We ought to be willing to live our thankfulness outwardly and consistently.

Now let us look at the original Thanksgiving Day Presidential Proclamation given by George Washington. Technically, this was not the very first proclamation that was given by the Continental Congress in 1777. Notice where the focus for thankfulness is...

#### 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.