

IT'S A STRUGGLE TO *BE GRATEFUL*

Acts 20:35, 2 Corinthians 9:6-10

- **Nothing brings us joy and happiness like generosity, and we cannot learn to be generous until we first learn how to be grateful.**
- Paul - *"You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* (Acts 20:35)
- **Grateful people don't struggle with generosity.**
- *"Remember this - a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. 'For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.' And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others."* (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)
- **The Generosity cycle is that grateful people become cheerful givers, and cheerful givers become blessed by the Lord, and those who know they are blessed by the Lord become grateful people.**
- *"Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality."* (2 Corinthians 8:12-13)
- **The 21st century American church is historically stingy because we are historically ungrateful.**
- ***What would change in my life if I learned to become Grateful?***

We Benefit From Gratitude Because:

GRATITUDE GIVES US <u>PEACE</u>

- **Thankfulness and Gratitude are often linked together in Scripture with Peace.**
- *"And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful."* (Colossians 3:15)
- **Gratitude is a replacement for worry and covers us with a supernatural peace that is circumstantially inexplicable.**
- *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:6-7)
- **A Christian's prayer life should be marked by overwhelming gratitude and thankfulness instead of complaining and griping.**

We Benefit From Gratitude Because:

GRATITUDE GIVES US <u>PERSPECTIVE</u>

- **Perception is how we see things, and perspective is how others see things.**
- *"All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory. That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long…So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen…"* (2 Corinthians 4:15-18)
- **We struggle with gratitude when we cannot see our problems from the Lord's perspective.**
- *"'My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,'" says the Lord. 'And My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.'"* (Isaiah 55:8)
- **Gratitude helps us to see things from a different perspective.**

We Benefit From Gratitude Because:

GRATITUDE GIVES US <u>PERSEVERANCE</u>

- **Gratitude puts our heart in a position to keep pushing forward and fighting the good fight of faith.**
- *"Enter His gates with thanksgiving; go into His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and His faithfulness continues to each generation."* (Psalm 100:4-5)
- **When we have gratitude in our hearts it moves us into the courts of the Lord, and His courts remind us the He is forever faithful.**

- *"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow."* (James 1:4-5)
- **Every situation that tests us teaches how to have perseverance, and perseverance is the key to a mature and Godly faith.**

We Benefit From Gratitude Because:

GRATITUDE GIVES US <u>POWER</u>

- *"Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise His holy name. Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things He does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's!"* (Psalm 103:1-5)
- **When we remind ourselves that God has been good and that He has forgiven all our sins, healed our diseases, redeemed us from death, and crowned us with love and mercy; we will have our strength and power renewed for the next battle we must face.**
- *"Just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."* (Colossians 2:6-7)
- **When we overflow with gratitude we also overflow with supernatural strength and power.**

We Benefit From Gratitude Because:

GRATITUDE PRECEDES <u>GENEROSITY</u>

- **Grateful people are Generous people because they want others to know and have the same relationship with the Lord that they have experienced.**
- *"Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving - the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.* (2 Corinthians 9:11-13)
- **The Kingdom of God is able to grow on earth because followers of Jesus prioritize generosity to God's Church which then brings the ministry and message of Jesus around the world.**

- **Gratitude is the key to contentment and contentment can be learned by anyone because of the power of Christ.**
- Paul - *“Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”* (Philippians 4:11-13)
- **When we learn how to be content with what we have it makes it easy to trust that if we give to God’s Kingdom we won’t be taking away from ourselves.**