

How Loving Creation Helps You Fall Deeper in Love With God

The cause of many of life's failures is that we, as human beings, lack exceeding gratitude for our Creator. Because we take His divine gift of life for granted, we live in discontent and misery, complaining about what we don't have and failing to express genuine appreciation for what we do have.

I am convinced that by simply stopping to appreciate the world around us, our perspective of life can be transformed. This new perspective will reveal the Creator's redemptive plan and fill our hearts with exceeding gratitude for our Creator-Redeemer. This divine relationship will transform us into joyful, ennobled, Christian steward-servants.

Our capacity for knowledge, without which we cannot appreciate life or the giver of life, must be understood as a special gift from our Creator. His grace bestowed upon mankind gives us the intelligence to pursue knowledge. Each individual must choose the source of knowledge to rely on for meaning in life. Your choice of worldview, philosophy, religion or lack of religion will ultimately determine your level of appreciation for life as well as your destiny.

Appreciation means to grasp the worth and value of something or someone; to esteem and properly revere them. God is Creator of the laws of nature; therefore, all of nature reveals God to us. Appreciation for the Creator's intelligent design deepens as we gain knowledge of the unfathomable generosity of our Creator-God.

If you want to live a joy-filled life, you will need to develop a profound appreciation for your Creator, who designed you before time began. As you develop an attitude of exceeding

gratitude for God and His awesome gift of life, you will learn to live in satisfying, intimate relationship with Him.

Understanding Appreciation

Creation reveals to us the nature of our Creator. As we behold the Creator's infinite hand in our universe, we begin to understand that He is outside of time or any other finite, limiting force.

Yet I have noticed that even people of faith—born-again believers in Christ who love their Creator-Redeemer—often lack appreciation for His creation. They fail to comprehend the wondrous beauty all around them and often abuse the gift of physical health the Creator has given them.

At the same time, I have observed unbelievers who have not surrendered to Christ as their Savior, who nevertheless enjoy a deep appreciation for the wonders of creation. Their scientific knowledge of the mysterious workings of life and the beauty of the laws of physics, for example, give them a wondrous perspective of life that evokes deep appreciation for the gift of life. It often sets them on a journey, as it did me, to surrender to the love of their Creator.

When these two realities—appreciation for creation and surrender to the Creator—unite in a person's heart, there is an explosion of hope, love, joy, purpose and destiny. Only believers who learn to appreciate their Creator can truly enjoy the eternal benefits of the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10).

That deep appreciation in a believer's heart evokes adoration and worship of God. And this divine relationship in turn manifests the power of God's anointing in a life of worship, fulfilling our eternal destiny. It is this anointed life, restored to relationship with the Creator-Redeemer, that brings the deepest satisfaction to the human heart. We never tire of reflecting on the wisdom of John Piper's maxim: "God

is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him.”

To be grateful means being appreciative of the benefits we have received. But to fully appreciate anything in life, we must acquire an increased awareness of its worth and a heightened perception of its significance. Appreciation involves placing such high value on something that it evokes our deep admiration. To truly appreciate the gift of life, we must learn to appreciate the giver of life.

Lack of appreciation will inevitably cause us to take all of life for granted—not only ours, but also the precious lives of those around us. I believe this sin of omission is one of the greatest failures of mankind. When we truly appreciate our Creator, we will not take for granted the awesome gift of life He has given to us.

For me, the personal discoveries of the gift of life as seen through the microscope caused an explosion of appreciation within my heart and mind for the Creator. Out of sheer gratitude for the unimaginable complexities of every cell, which form more than 200 different kinds of tissues in our body, my heart reached out to thank the one who made it all possible. In my humble acknowledgment of a Creator, I desired to know Him. And as I sought to know Him, I discovered Him—not only as my Creator, but as my Redeemer as well.

Radical Gratitude

The apostle Paul confirmed the impact that expressing gratitude has on our lives in Philippians 4:4-7: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! ... Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus.”

A personal relationship with God counteracts the destructive power of anxiety from our lives. Paul had his share of

troubles, yet he declared confidently: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:35, 37).

Often our lack of appreciation can be heard in our whining complaints: "If only I had this" or "If only I could do that." These and similar statements reveal our selfish nature that lacks appreciation for God's divine gift of life to us. Instead of expressing gratitude daily for what we have, we focus on what we do not have. As a result, we are blinded to all of life's good things we could be enjoying.

There are internal obstacles to seeing the beauty of life clearly. Our degree of spiritual sight hinges on the honesty and sincerity with which we appreciate our Lord. Many people do not appreciate the Lord and His gifts because they are content with the attractions of superficial observations and desires, and they are selfish and proud. The following question may be the beginning of a new vision of life: How can we remain indifferent to the marvelous design of our bodies and the Creator's eternal plans written within them?

Of course, in acknowledging that we owe our lives to the Creator of life, we are expressing dependence on another, which is uncomfortable to our independent minds. However, if we admit the fact that we did not create ourselves, it follows that we cannot know the purpose for which we exist without consulting with the Creator. If we choose to go blindly through life without acknowledging our dependence on our Maker, we are doomed to live in the misery of ingratitude.

Recognizing the Creator

Do you rush madly through the day, the month, the seasons of the year, scarcely noticing anything? Gratitude is the proper response to a God who has so abundantly blessed us with the

multitudinous facets of nature. Our Creator not only made life possible, but intended it to be enjoyable as well.

If you have not expressed appreciation for the creation of God that is all around you, why not start today? Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to its wonders, its beauties and the refreshing relaxation it holds for you. Begin to focus your senses on the natural phenomena you encounter every day. Touch the bark of a tree or the petals of a delicate flower and allow yourself to marvel in the feeling. When you eat fresh fruit or vegetables, imagine them growing in their natural habitat, and be thankful. Behold the stars and planets in the night sky, and be thankful you have the ability to do so.

In Romans 1:20-21, Paul explains that it is possible to know God's eternal power and His person by acknowledging the wonder of the creation around us and being thankful to Him for it. According to Scripture, the human spirit can grasp the invisible attributes of God through the visible creation He has made.

Of course, we can and must get to know God more perfectly through relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ, who came to the earth to become our Savior. Yet we dare not ignore the wonderful opportunity He has given us to revel in the genius of the Creator—the maker of heaven and earth. {eoat}

James P. Gills, M.D., *is an author and the founder and director of St. Luke's Cataract and Laser Institute in Tarpon Springs, Florida.*

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