

Many Believers Lack This Biblical Trait—And It's Blocking Their Spiritual Growth

Knowledge of the 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.

If the Creator designed life with a divine purpose, it must be to unlock the secrets of eternity to our hearts. Jesus asked the Father to give eternal life to as many as He had given to the Son (John 17:2). He continued: "This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent" (v. 3). Learning to appreciate the Creator can be a beginning point for us to unlocking the eternal benefits of knowing God; receiving His Son, Jesus Christ; and thereby entering into eternal life.

Yet it has been my observation that even people of faith, born-again believers in Christ who love their Creator-Redeemer, seem to lack appreciation for His creation. They fail to comprehend the wondrous beauty all around them and may also abuse the gift of physical health the Creator has given them. Their lack of knowledge of the Creator's handiwork keeps them from fully appreciating the eternal benefits of life they have been given.

Conversely you may have observed, with me, those people 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, gives 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-Redeemer.

When these two realities—appreciation for creation and surrender to the Creator-Redeemer—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, which Jesus promised: "I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). That new life perspective of 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.

Understanding Appreciation

What does it mean to truly appreciate? To be grateful? Webster's dictionary defines the terms for us. To appreciate is "to grasp the nature, worth, quality, or significance of; to value or admire highly; to judge with heightened perception or understanding: be fully aware of; to recognize with gratitude."

Grateful means "appreciative of benefits received." To be grateful and fully appreciate the gift of 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. It also implies recognition of aesthetic values, which gain our unabashed approval and our expression of generous gratitude. It follows that to truly appreciate the gift of life, we must learn to appreciate the giver of life.

A 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 faulty perspective of life is a sin of omission and 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 all cells, which form over 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 in seeking to know Him, I discovered Him, not only as my Creator but as my Redeemer as well. {eoa}

*This article is adapted from A Journey to Gratitude: 30 Days to Discovering the Life-Changing Dynamic of Appreciation by **James P. Gills, M.D.** Gills is the founder and director of St. Luke's Cataract and Laser Institute in Tarpon Springs, Florida. In addition to earning a reputation as the most experienced cataract surgeon in the world, he has dedicated his life to restoring more than physical vision. Dr. Gills has been an active author about spiritual topics for many years. His books include Love: Fulfilling the Ultimate Quest, Darwinism Under the Microscope, Come Unto Me, and the God's Rx series.*