

This One Attitude Shift Could Change Your Entire Life

Second only to compassion, gratitude is the most powerful emotional state in which we can live. We see an example of this in the story of Jonah. His experience of being swallowed by a fish and spit back out is incredible! What we may have overlooked, however, is what Jonah did immediately before he was delivered out of the fish's belly. It's actually quite impressive, because with all the things not going right at that moment in Jonah's world, he still found something to be grateful for.

In the second chapter of Jonah he prays, "I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving ... Salvation is of the Lord" (Jon. 2:9).

We see in the very next verse God's response to Jonah's thanksgiving: "Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon dry land" (Jon. 2:10).

God is a gracious God and a generous dad, and we know every good gift is from Him (James 1:17). In the life of Jonah, we see clearly how gratitude moves God's heart, which is why we choose to give thanks in every circumstance, thereby not quenching the flow of His Spirit in our lives (1 Thess. 5:18-19).

More Than Healed

Similarly, in Luke 17 we read the story about 10 lepers who cried out to Jesus. He told them to go show themselves to the priests, and Scripture says they were "cleansed" on the way. One of the men, when he realized that he'd been "healed," returned to thank Jesus. It was only then, after gratitude was expressed, that Jesus declared the man made "whole" (Luke 17:14-19, KJV).

In English, we tend to read right over the meaning, but there are three distinct Greek words used in these verses. While the first two words (*katharizo* in verse 14 and *iaomai* in verse 15, Strong's G2511 and G2390) do speak of the wonderful miracle of physical healing, the word used in verse 19 is even more comprehensive. The word translated "made well" or "whole" is *sozo*, which speaks not only to physical healing but spiritual and emotional healing as well (Strong's G4982). It's an all-inclusive word that is used to indicate radical deliverance, protection, recovery, and restoration, true salvation in every way.

Jesus healed the leper's body, but what released the complete *sozo* healing from a lifetime of psychological trauma living as an outcast of society? What kingdom emotion unleashed heaven's healing power in spirit, soul and body?

Gratefulness. Faith expressed through a thankful heart.

We cannot overestimate the value of living in gratitude. Only one of the lepers received the full manifestation of complete *sozo* healing, and his secret to releasing that blessing was simply that he was found grateful (Luke 17:16).

Surrendering the When and How

While meditating on the importance of thankfulness in releasing God's blessings into our lives, I had a dream. In it, a mailman pulled into our driveway, and I thought he'd left some packages. I went out to meet him, but he was already gone, having driven up the driveway and down the street. I checked the mailbox, but there wasn't anything there. Obviously I'd been expecting something, but I wasn't worried about it. I started back down the hill toward the house, but then the mailman came back, pulled down our driveway again and stopped right behind me.

He got out and gave me more than I was expecting—three different gift packages. One big one on the bottom was shaped

like a huge veggie platter, though that's not what was inside. I received the gifts and joyfully shouted, "Happy Thanksgiving!"

God's principle is: We fully expect great things, but we surrender the when and how. In the dream I didn't know when or how my gifts were being delivered, and it wasn't when or how I expected. However, I was grateful even before I received the blessings.

First, we see that the blessings actually chased me down! I wasn't striving, yelling after the mailman to come back. I just went about my life, living as if my prayers were already answered and the gifts were on their way. I turned my back, and then he came up behind me with the presents. This is a great dream snapshot of Deuteronomy 28:2, how the blessings come upon and overtake us.

The fact that there were three gift packages is like a picture of my mom at Christmas time—giving just one gift is never enough! Father is jealous for our joy and always wants to give us good things. At the same time Jesus also wants to answer our prayers, and Holy Spirit sure doesn't want to be left out of blessing us either. So we get the gifts times three, which is exceedingly and abundantly more than we could ask or imagine. A trinity of blessing.

My enthusiastic proclamation of "Happy Thanksgiving!" shows as I lived in the kingdom emotions of joy and gratitude—unworried and fully surrendered to God's when and how—the blessings were all brought to me. I didn't have to struggle and work for them. Instead, like the platter I mentioned, it's as if everything I wanted was being presented, all "handed to me on a silver platter."

"This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. So if we know that He hears whatever we ask, we know that we have whatever

we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15).

It's easy to be grateful once we have received our blessing, and God is letting us know that we already have. He gave us everything when He gave us Jesus, so it is already ours. We can be thankful and peaceful now and live as if our prayers have already been answered. Because we have asked according to His will, He has heard us, and we know we already possess what we have asked of Him. {eo}

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