

Be Thankful!

There is much for us to be grateful for, and we need to focus on it every day of the year.

We all know that we should be grateful for our many blessings. God tells us in His Word to be thankful, and we know from our own experience that once we seriously start praising God, our burdens and troubles seem to weigh less heavily on our shoulders. David said: "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. ... Many evils confront the [consistently] righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Ps. 34:1,19, The Amplified Bible).

That's part of the power of being thankful. As we pause to give thanks to God for the blessings we enjoy in our lives, we actually begin to find more blessings—even more to be thankful for!

However, many times the struggle is getting into the habit of being thankful. There are countless ways to practice giving thanks—here are four of them:

When a person does something nice for you, let him know you appreciate it. One day as I was going into an office building, a man standing nearby opened the door for me. I thanked him and smiled.

"You're the fifth person I've held the door for," he said, "and you're the first one to smile and the second to thank me."

I thanked him a second time, with a smile on my face. Afterward, I thought how much we take others for granted, even

in simple things such as opening a door for a stranger.

Instead of accepting that that's the way things are, we can develop an attitude of thankfulness.

Did your bus arrive on time today? If so, did you thank the driver? The last time you ate at a restaurant, did you thank the waiter for filling your coffee cup a second time without being asked? This is the point I want to make: Develop an attitude of gratitude toward the people in your life.

Appreciate your family members, especially your spouse. I appreciate Dave, and even though we've been married a long time, I still tell him that I appreciate him. I thank him for being patient with me and thoughtful. Just those few words of thanks are a great way to develop a thankful mind and heart.

When you express appreciation to those close to you, it's good for them to hear the words, but it's also good for you. Remember, giving thanks releases joy in you. You can enrich your life and theirs just by showing appreciation.

Meditate daily on things for which you can be thankful. I have a friend who absolutely will not get out of bed in the morning until he has thanked God for at least 10 things. He counts them on his fingers, and they're small things really, such as having a good car to drive, being a member of an exciting Sunday school class, enjoying good health.

He says that he goes to sleep at night by focusing on at least three things that went well that day. He relives those three positive things. For him, it can be as simple as his supervisor telling him what a good job he did on a project or

an affirming e-mail from a friend.

Be thankful for the honesty in other people. I once heard someone say, “Only two people will tell you the truth about yourself: someone who is angry at you and someone who loves you very much.” God uses both types in our lives, and their honesty makes us better people.

I urge you to be thankful for people who tell you the truth about yourself, even if it’s not what you want to hear. When you hear the truth—especially something of which you’re not aware—you can change. And after you’ve changed, you have yet another thing for which you can be thankful. It’s a win-win situation.

I encourage you to take time this Thanksgiving to practice being thankful in these four ways. There is so much for us to be grateful for, and we need to focus on it—not just on Thanksgiving Day but every day of the year. Keep in mind the admonition of the psalmist, “Be thankful and say so to Him, bless and affectionately praise His name” (Ps. 100:4).