

If Your Life Lacks Abundance, Try This Surprising Spiritual Key

One day in 2017, we awakened to the news that a massacre was underway in Las Vegas. A deranged monster with an automatic weapon, and 23 other weapons to spare, opened fire on a crowd of country-lovin' music fans, killing 59 and wounding 500. In one senseless, brutal act of violence, mothers, fathers, teachers, law officers, students and masses of other beautiful people were gunned down and lost their lives.

The words of Scripture once again ring true: We are not promised tomorrow.

Every day is a gift. A gift to be opened, enjoyed, experienced, shared and treasured. That's why we must be thankful; giving God praise and thanks every day with an attitude of gratitude, not necessarily for things, but for life itself.

Gratefulness, in fact, is the premier key to living a fulfilled life. By practicing this attitude, you employ one of the most reliable methods for increasing happiness and life satisfaction, generating feelings of optimism, joy, pleasure, enthusiasm and other similar positive emotions.

Since the attitude of gratitude is your ticket to a meaningful and happy life, it's important to cultivate thankfulness. These few tips might help:

1. Determine to practice gratitude every day. Do this by choosing your focus. When you focus on the good and beautiful, the wonder and the excellence of life, you will draw more of the same to yourself. If you look at the ugly, the sin, the negative, the bad, the wrong, that too will be drawn into your

circle of life. Guard your thoughts.

2. Start each day by connecting to God and practicing gratitude. Count and recite your blessings out loud. Let your heart and soul hear your thankfulness. For starters:

–Be thankful for another opportunity to take air into your lungs, to sing, to laugh and to cry.

–Be thankful that you have two eyes that can see. Many are blind.

–Be thankful for the ability and mobility you have. Many are paralyzed and limited.

–Be thankful for another day to make a difference.

3. Learn to be grateful by changing your perspective.

–Be grateful for the chaos of children around you. It means you are not alone. Thank God for the people in your life.

–Be grateful for dishes in your sink and laundry in the pile. They mean you have food and clothing for yourself and family.

–Be grateful for the blessings of supply and protection.

–Be thankful even for the trials, pain and storms. They all can work to make you stronger and better.

In his book, *Why Gratitude Is Good*, Robert Emmons gives us these points:

1. Gratitude allows us to live in the now. The brain is addicted to “new things.” We adapt so quickly to the goodness around us that we constantly need something else to bring the feeling of joy—gratitude delays the adaptation and helps us take in the moments that matter.
2. Gratitude blocks negative toxic emotions. Feelings like resentment, envy, regret and depression can be blocked by adopting an attitude of gratitude, preventing the

episodes of depression. You can't be grateful and bitter at the same time.

3. Gratitude makes people more resilient. People who count their blessings interpret life's events through a filter of thankfulness. They endure through trials, suffering and trauma better. Studies show that these blessing-counters are healthier, less stress-filled and have lower blood pressure. No wonder Proverbs 17:22 (AMP) says, "A happy heart is good medicine and a joyful mind causes healing, but a broken spirit dries up the bones."
4. Gratitude strengthens your relationships and self-worth. When we are grateful, we can fill others up. We're thankful for the contributions others have made in our lives.

To sum it all up, the key to a happy and content life is gratitude.

Soon, we will be celebrating and remembering God's greatest gift of all, His Son Jesus. Some of us will reflect on a year of unexpected pain and losses; others will rejoice at a year filled with many wonderful surprises.

If you're one for whom 2019 has been extremely difficult, know that the Lord has not forgotten you. You are not alone. He has borne your sorrows and is there for you.

As we receive and give gifts this Christmas, let's be thankful not only for Jesus and the gift of eternal life, but for life itself. Today you have life—it's a gift from God. That's why it's called the "present." What will *you* do with your gift?

Prayer Power for the Week Beginning Dec. 8, 2019:

This week, as you work to see the culmination of all your preparations to celebrate Christmas, take some time to get quiet before God and express your gratitude for the blessing of life itself and the gift of His Son. Continue to pray for our military and their families as some will be separated from

loved ones, as well as those who have suffered great losses. Ask the Lord how you can best represent Him in this season. Pray for the safety of those traveling to the Holy Land, as well as the protection of worshippers throughout the world. Pray for our spiritual, civic, local and national leaders. (See 2 Chr. 7:14, John 3:16). {eo}

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