

Perpetual Gratitude

Some years ago I was counseling a teenager who had been raised from infancy by his grandparents. The boy's father had been killed in an automobile accident, and subsequently his mother disappeared. The grandparents had been doing all they could for him at great expense to themselves. It is difficult for anyone to raise a teenager, and people in their 60s and 70s ought not to have to go through it a second time around.

For several years he rewarded them with unfathomable rebellion, anger and sin until he made his grandparents miserable. I told him, "They did not have to take you in. You could have gone to an orphanage. You could have been a ward of the court. They got up with you in the middle of the night. They changed your diapers and fed you and clothed you. They raised you at great sacrifice to themselves. Nobody would have blamed them if they had said, "We just can't handle it at our age."

He replied bitterly, "Do you think this is the first time I've ever thought of all that? I know what they've done. What am I supposed to do, spend the rest of my life saying 'thank you'?"

Well, yes! Yes! A thousand times yes! You're supposed to spend the rest of your life saying "thank you." Everyone is. That is what real life is, an expression of gratitude to God. Yes, we are supposed to spend the rest of our lives, every waking moment, saying "thank you."

The apostle Paul said, "I consider myself to be in debt, both to the Greek and to the non-Greek; I am indebted to the whole world. I am in debt to God!" (See Rom. 1:14).

The reason we resist the life of unending gratitude is fear that "thank you" implies responsibility. What we want is to be free from the responsibility to, in any way, "pay some of it back."

All ingratitude is basically ingratitude to God. God blesses us with health, happiness and the joy of children, but we sulk because we are not the president of the United States. We pray for a job, and when we get one, we whine about the pay. A woman prays for a new house and resents having to clean it. A single woman prays to get married and then lives in sullen depression because her long-awaited husband is not perfect.

We are seldom just plain, bottom-line grateful to God. God gives us the strawberry sundae, and we complain because it does not have whipped cream. He gives us the whipped cream, and we moan for a cherry on top. At some point we must dare to defeat the spirit of "not enough" (see Prov. 30:15-16) and say, "It IS enough. I am content with this. It is more than I deserve."

Gratitude as well as ingratitude can become a habit of life. We can begin to see everything that happens to us as an opportunity to praise God.

Leonard Ravenhill told of a minister visiting a horrible insane asylum in the United Kingdom sometime in the latter part of the 19th century. As the minister walked in the front door, a man in a second-story window pressed his head through the bars and shouted down to the visitor below, "Have you thanked God today?"

"I have," the pastor answered.

"Aye," the inmate said, "but have you thanked Him for your sanity?"

We must get specific with God. Instead of complaining about the rain, thank God that you are alive. Instead of complaining about your husband, thank God you are not lonely. Instead of complaining about having to wear this or that kind of shirt, thank God you have a shirt.

Gratitude is a learned way of life. It is the open hand instead of the clenched fist. It is saying, "yours" and not, "mine." It is the Spirit of Jesus and not the spirit of the world.

There is joy and meaning to be found in serving God, who has given us more than we could ever pay back. Learning to live in celebrational gratitude is the key to happy significance.

Adapted from *Character Matters* by Mark Rutland, copyright 2003. Published by Charisma House. In this book, the author discusses nine essential traits you need to succeed. He tells what they are, why they are important and how they can be seen as evidence that God is at work in your life. To order a copy, click here:



PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 4-9-2012

This week take note of every blessing you have and express your gratitude to God each day. Ask Him for opportunities to share your faith with others and be a blessing to those around you. Continue to pray for revival in our churches and transformation for our cities, counties, states and the entire nation. Pray for the upcoming elections. Remember those suffering for the cause of Christ as you pray for Israel, the Middle East and a world harvest. I Thes. 5:17-18

To enrich your prayer life and learn how to strategically pray with power by using appropriate scriptures, we recommend the following sources by Apostle John Eckhardt: Prayers that Rout Demons, Prayers that Bring Healing, Prayers that Release Heaven on Earth and Prayers that Break Curses. To order any or all of these [click here](#).