

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

“An Attitude Shaped by the Cross”

(I Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 1:3-11)

Three things to be thankful for daily that will not just get you through the day but empower your day! First, I should be ...

Thankful that I don't get what I Deserve

Thankful that I do get what He Preserves (*II Peter 1:3-4*)

Thankful that I also get what He Reserves (*Ephesians 2:5-7*)

I want us to read out loud together I Thessalonians 5:18. It says,

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (I Thessalonians 5:18)

❖ **Job was Thankful Even In Pain**

“The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21b)

There are three levels of thankfulness found in the life of Job.

- Being thankful when you are BLESSED
- Being thankful for blessings YET TO COME
- Being thankful in the midst of DIFFICULTY

Someone has said, *"It is not life's circumstances that determine the quality of our lives but how we respond to them."*

Job had far more impact on people out of his pain than he did in his prosperity!

❖ **Joseph was Thankful Even In the Pit**

- Joseph Embraced Difficulty in God
- Joseph Adapted to the Purpose of God
- Joseph Fulfilled the Intentions of God
 - Sometimes in life, you must first go down before you can rise again.
 - Sometimes you've got to taste fear before you learn what real faith is like.
 - Sometimes you must be stripped of your false identity in order to find your true self.

Remaining thankful for what God is doing even though we do not understand is the key to rising in the midst of difficulty!

❖ **Paul was Thankful In Prison** (*Philippians 1:3-11*)

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense

and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

“Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice.” (Phil. 4:4)

- Paul Looked at the Past with Thanksgiving to God (1:3-5)

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.”

He saw the good that came from ...

- His wrongful imprisonment that resulted in the conversion of the Philippian jailer
- Him being forced to leave town resulted in the preaching of the gospel in other places

Happiness is a choice!

- Paul Looked at the Present with Thanksgiving to God (1:6-8)

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and

confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus."

Thankfulness in difficulty is a tool for praise unto God and a power from God.

- Paul Looked to the Future with Thanksgiving to God

Here are a few suggestions:

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you want. If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something, this gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times. It is during those times that you should grow.

Be thankful for your limitations, because they give you opportunities for improvement.

Be thankful for each new challenge, because it will build strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes. They will teach you valuable lessons for the rest of life.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary, because it means you've made a difference.

In EVERYTHING, be thankful for the cross! Because without it, you would be irrelevant and doomed to darkness and despair!