



# SERMON SINGLES

### Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

#### **Thank You Very Much**

1 Thessalonians 5:18

# **NOTES** INTRODUCTION Being thankful is so important to God that He actually commands us to be thankful. A man in the New Testament by the name of Paul went through a tremendous amount of suffering and heartache that would cause anybody to be bitter and ungrateful and maybe even mad at God. He wrote these words, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (I Thessalonians 5:18) You may not feel very thankful right now because of where you are in your life. Even though you may not feel thankful you can be thankful. This great man tells us how to be thankful and why to be thankful. **KEY POINTS** 1. I Should Be Habitually Thankful Since we are talking about feelings let me give you a word of caution. Nowhere will you find in scripture where we are commanded to "feel" thankful. Feelings come and feelings go. Feelings can be affected by the weather, by the temperature, by the functioning of your liver, by how much rest you got the night before, or by how the stock market is doing. Giving thanks has nothing to do with feelings. You can be thankful even if you don't feel thankful. We are not commanded to "feel grateful." It doesn't matter whether things are good or whether things are bad. We are to give thanks Giving thanks is a big deal to God. Paul says we are to give thanks "in all circumstances" not necessarily for all circumstances. We may not be thankful for trouble, but we are to be thankful in the midst of trouble. 2. I Should Be Happily Thankful I've learned that anything that God commands me to do is always for my best and for my benefit. A grateful person will be a happier person. A grateful person will be a holier person. A grateful person will be a healthier person. You may not always feel thankful, but you should work harder to think about saying "Thank you." It is better to say, "Thank you" and not really mean it, than to mean it and not really say it. Being grateful will have a positive effect on you, because happiness and joy follow gratitude. So we need to be happily thankful.

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#### 3. I Should Be Humbly Thankful

I don't know what you are going through right now or what burdens you may be bearing or what trouble you might be in. If you are completely ungrateful and there is not an ounce of gratitude in your heart even in the midst of your circumstances, you are out of the will of God. Now be encouraged. When Paul says this is the will of God, he is not only saying this is what God desires for you to do, but it is what God enables you to do. God never commands us to do anything He does not give us the power to do. I know I can give thanks in all things, because it is God's will and what God wants me to do and wills me to do, He enables me to do.

Remember, God's will for you is always what is best for you. An attitude of gratitude will change your life. It will shield you from cynicism. It will keep you from criticism. It will protect you from pessimism. It will draw you close to God and will draw God close to you. If you have a heart for God, you will have grateful heart. It will change the way you see things. In fact, one of the greatest ways to change how you feel about things is to change the way you see things.

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#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

<ol> <li>What is something you're thankful for that you have yet to thank</li> </ol>	God for
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- 2. How would you describe the difference between feeling thankful and giving thanks?
- 3. When was a time that joy followed gratitude when you chose to be thankful for something even if you didn't feel grateful at the time?

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