

OverFlow of Thanksgiving

G.K. Chesterton called gratitude "the mother of all virtues".

One of the most significant changes that Jesus Christ wants to make in our hearts and lives is to transform us into people who are continually grateful.

If you use the Vines NT Dictionary to look up the word Thanksgiving it will say, **"for the meanings of which see GRACE"**

Remember in our sermon on Overflowing Grace I said if you want to step into the overflow make much todo about Grace, brag on God's goodness.

Well, that is exactly what Vines reveals - Thanksgiving is connected to grace

The thankful are grace-full and the grace-full are thankful.

2Co 4:15 (NASB) For all things are for your sakes, **so that grace**, having spread to more and more people, **will cause thanksgiving to overflow** to the glory of God.

You will also discover that Thankful is both a noun and a verb.

Meaning it describes (noun) a group of people and it is what that group of people do (verb).

Luk 17:12-19 (TPT) As he entered one village, ten men approached him, but they kept their distance, for they were lepers. [13] They shouted to him, "Mighty Lord, our wonderful Master! Won't you have mercy on us and heal us?" [14] When Jesus stopped to look at them, he spoke these words: "Go to be examined by the Jewish priests." They set off, and they were healed while walking along the way. [15] One of them, a foreigner from Samaria, when he discovered that he was completely healed, turned back to find Jesus, shouting out joyous praises and glorifying God.

[16] When he found Jesus, he fell down at his feet and thanked him over and over, saying to him, "You are the Messiah." This man was a Samaritan. [17] "So where are the other nine?" Jesus asked. "Weren't there ten who were healed? [18] They all refused to return to give thanks and give glory to God except you, a foreigner from Samaria?" [19] Then Jesus said to the healed man lying at his feet, "Arise and go. It was your faith that brought you salvation and healing."

In the healing of the ten lepers, Jesus does not reach out and touch them. He doesn't say, "Be healed." He tells them to show themselves to the priest. **He was telling them to act as if they were healed**, and they were healed. In faith they started out, and they were healed on the way.

The ten who acted in faith were healed, but just one came back and praised God and was grateful. Jesus asks him, "*Where are the nine?*"

We could assume that He felt hurt because nobody thanked Him. But I think He was disappointed for another reason. He tells the leper who came back, "*Your faith has made you well*"

Ten were healed, but only one was made well, and that's far more important than being healed.

The point made here, I think, is that unless thanksgiving is a part of our nature, we can't be whole people.

The other nine were merely healed.

If ingratitude is more deadly than leprosy, they were in worse shape than before.

Only one came back and was made whole.

there are those people who go through life with a great sense of wonder and gratitude for every circumstance.

I love the story of the immigrant shopkeeper whose son came to see him one day complaining, "Dad, I don't understand how you run this store. You keep your accounts payable in a cigar box. Your accounts receivable are on a spindle. All your cash is in the register. You never know what your profits are."

"Son, let me tell you something," answered his dad. "When I arrived in this land all I owned was the pants I was wearing. Now your sister is an art teacher. Your brother is a doctor. You are a CPA. Your mother and I own a house and a car and this little store. Add that all up and subtract the pants and there is your profit."

A well person has a sense of gratitude for any and all good fortune.

This leper came back praising God and yet he still had enormous problems.

His leprosy was healed, but he had been living as an outcast with no family and no job. He had no home and no village.

Yet he is praising God even in the midst of his unsolved problems.

There is much evidence about why and how we are to praise God in our problems. Eph 5:20 says, **always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father;**

In 1Th 5:16-18 we read, **Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing, [18] in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.**

Each of us has a problem right now. Nobody still living is problem-free. Let's think about how we can praise God in that present problem.

I am a faith man but that doesn't mean I am a denier.

Sin abounds.

We hurt people. We are hurt by people.

There is pain and illness.

We can't pretend it's fun to have a painful problem. That's masochism.

If you enjoy your problem, you're freaky.

Remember that God is not the source of your problem. He doesn't send illness and pain

Focus on the belief that God is bigger than the problem and is present right now in the middle of this painful thing you're caught up in.

Say, "God, I praise you. You are bigger than the mess I am in."

This way of living is new for you, but it is an old spiritual discipline.

William Law, eighteenth-century English theologian and clergyman, said, "If anyone can tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you, for it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing."

Helen Keller, blind and deaf saint, wrote, "I thank God for my handicaps. Through them I have found myself, my work and my God."

John Wesley, the evangelist and founder of the Methodist Church, wrote, "Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer. It is almost essentially connected with it. He that always prays is ever giving praise, whether in ease or pain, both for prosperity and for the greatest adversity."

Paul writes, "For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content" ([Php 4:11](#)).

In whatever state you are, you can learn to praise God.

The point is nobody has it all. If you are single, you have certain privileges. You may doubt that, but it's true. You are in control of your life. You eat and sleep on your timetable. You're free to travel where you like. Being married is a great blessing, but there are problems.

The point is, you can choose to focus on the negative or the positive of every situation. You can say, "Whatever circumstances I am in right now—married, single, married to the wrong person, whatever—I praise You, Lord, because You are bigger than the mess I'm in right now."

It's at the level of praise where I suspect God's power can break through in the most dramatic ways.

Jesus looked for the nine who missed Thanksgiving.

Why? Because He wanted to do more.

One scholar wrote, "the nine went on their way with bodies healed, but with a more loathsome disease still upon them, the leprosy of ingratitude."

In Romans 1 starting at vs 18 we read about God's Wrath on Unrighteousness

Rom 1:18-21 (NASB) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, [19] because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. [20] For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse. [21] For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened.

We classify sins. "We may find by and by that in God's sight ingratitude is the blackest of all."

Gratitude gives continual access to higher and higher blessings. The ungrateful Christian loses spiritual blessings.

Now compare this to the Heavenly Multitude gathered from among the nations

Rev 7:9-12 (NASB) After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all the tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; [10] and they *cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." [11] And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, [12] saying, "Amen, blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might belong to our God forever and ever. Amen."

God takes notes and records the thankful.

Psalm 30:11-12 says: "You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever."

Psa 50:23 (TPT) The life that pleases me is a life lived in the gratitude of grace, always choosing to walk with me in what is right. This is the sacrifice I desire from you. If you do this, more of my salvation will unfold for you.”

Col 1:12 (NASB) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Col 3:15 (NASB) Let the peace of Christ, to which you were indeed called in one body, rule in your hearts; and be thankful.

Col 3:17 (NASB) Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Col 4:2 (NASB) Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

Eph 5:20 (NASB) always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father;

1Th 5:18 (NASB) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

Heb 13:15 (NASB) Through Him then, let’s continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name.

Col 2:7 (NASB) having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.