

Grateful

What are You Grateful for?

“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.”

-Philippians 4:11-12

Living in western society it can be very easy to take our modern conveniences for granted. We don't often take the time to appreciate all the things we have and are often found complaining about the slightest inconvenience we face. I come from a big city and complaints about everything from a train being a few minutes late to the lack of balance in my coffee to cream ratio were fairly common. Rather than appreciating the incredible resources and inventions we have at our disposal we are constantly looking for the latest and greatest new things or updates to satisfy our interests.

“In life we are made rich not by what we have, but by what we appreciate” – Michael Ramsden

So, what are you grateful for? Do you ever slow down to look at the vast beauty that is all around you? It is easy to point out the things that aren't going right. In our rush to live our lives and get to the things that we have placed a high importance on, we miss extraordinary things all around us. In fact, there are miracles that we sometimes completely miss because we are fixed on temporal things of this world and our own gratification.

What does it mean to be rich? Some think of money and material things; others think of family and friends, special relationships. Attitude matters immensely, and we can properly have gratitude when we learn to appreciate what we have. Richness is more subjective than we often imagine, it isn't quantified by the length of the number in our bank account, but how content we are with what God has given us.

The incredible thing about this life of ours is that we can live it for Christ, with a confidence in Him and in the abundant life that He offers. One of the constituent things about living by faith, is that we need to show that our confidence is in Christ and not put our assurance in ourselves or mere stuff.

It is true that in life we face trials of many kinds, but we should take courage, Jesus stepped into our world, lived a humble life, died a sinner's death and was raised back to life. The abundant life that Jesus offers is far better than the temporal gain that is offered by the world. We sometimes rush ahead and try to gain riches and do what we can to get more and more, but it never enriches us or satisfies the way we think it will.

*“Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me.
Because I live, you also will live.”*

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– John 14:19

When Jesus was talking to His disciples about the way to heaven, He mentions that because He (Jesus) lives, we also shall live. It is a promise to life that allows us to understand that because Jesus was raised to life, we also have new life in Him. This means not only that this isn't all there is but even in this life we can have real hope because Jesus lives.

Young people often hold a vitality that is missing in many adults, they haven't had enough time to be jaded by the world. Looking at the world, and all the amazing things we find in it, for the first time inspires curiosity and joy in a young heart. While many lose this youthful outlook, we see this exemplified in the apostle Paul. He writes about the secret he learned of being content in all things, and while writing this book of Philippians he was in prison!

Thankfulness and gratefulness are qualities we see in the Scripture of some of the heroes of our faith. They trusted God, believed Him and were thankful. It is easy to complain, but when we appreciate the things that we have, the people in our lives, and the circumstances we find ourselves in, that is what makes us rich. That is what gives us joy in Christ, when we count our blessings instead of looking past them.

- 1. What if you could only keep the things in your life that you are grateful for? Would this change your attitude about what you have?**
- 2. Are you more likely to appreciate what you have, or look at what others have and covet that?**
- 3. What steps can you take to foster an attitude of contentment in all circumstances in yourself or in your group as a whole?**



Jeremy Rodriguez was born and raised in New York City and began volunteering at his church when he was 12 years old. He moved to Seattle and served as the Executive Pastor for a church in Seattle where he was introduced to Christian Veterinary Mission. In 2022, he moved to his current home in Central Wisconsin where he serves not only CVM as the Communications Coordinator, but also serves as a lead pastor in a local church. Jeremy enjoys sharing Christ and is an avid aviation enthusiast. Jeremy serves as CVM's Communications Coordinator.

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