

A HEART OF GRATITUDE



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Sunday 20th November 2022

Foundation Scripture

Psalm 117:1-2: “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD [endures] forever. Praise the LORD!”

This is a beautiful psalm that encapsulates the heart of God!

Introduction

Today will lay a foundation into the topic: ‘A Heart of Gratitude.’

We live in a **VUCA world** which makes it hard for many Christians to be thankful and express their gratitude to God.

- **Volatility** - Rapid change
- **Uncertainty** - Lack of confidence
- **Complexity** - Not as easy as it looks
- **Ambiguity** - Not straightforward

Effects of a V.U.C.A World

The effects of the VUCA world are felt as:

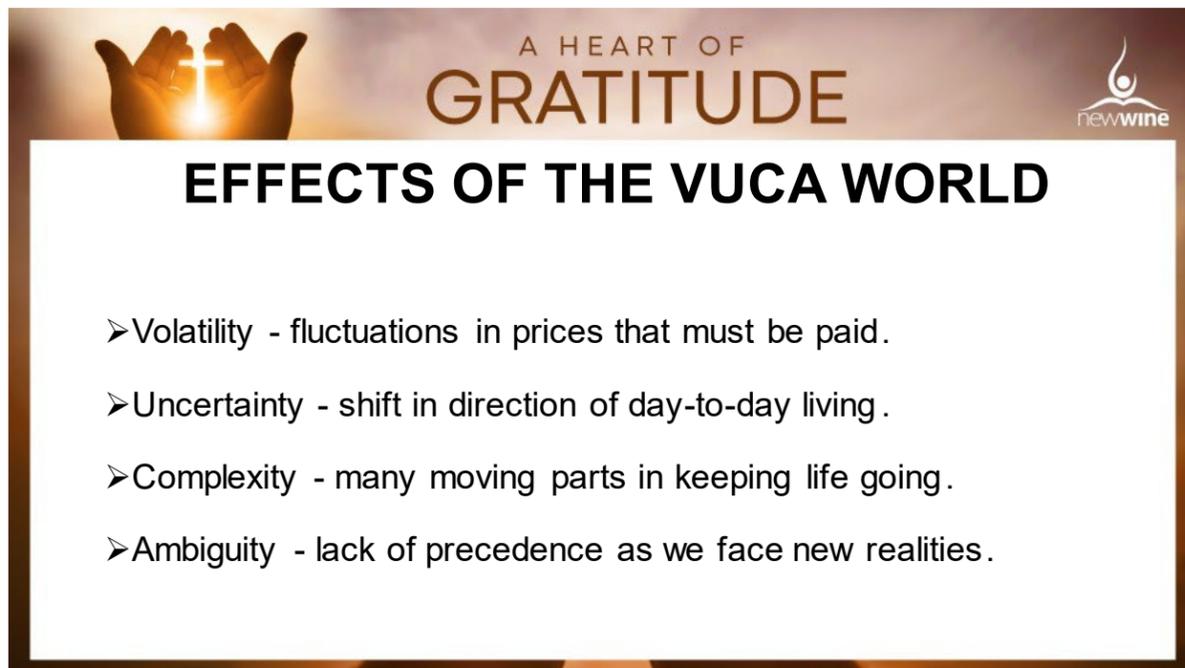


Diagram 1: Effects of the VUCA World

Matthew 24:24 says: “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

The VUCA world has even deceived genuine saints in the body of Christ.

This means that we, the elect, could get caught up by the effects of this VUCA world. Just because one calls themselves a Christian does not mean that they are immune from these effects.

However, this should not be the case.

The expression of gratitude changes everything.

The Importance of Gratitude

Psalm 22:3 says:

“But You are holy, O You that inhabits the praises of Israel.”

Expression of gratitude to God means:

- God takes up residence.
- When God moves in, He moves in with all of Himself: His holiness, righteousness, and glory.
- Our praises changes everything because God has taken up residence.

The question we must ask ourselves is, 'do we praise God intelligently enough in every situation that we find ourselves?'

Why We Should Express Gratitude

We should express gratitude for the following reasons:

1. **God's great merciful kindness** – *mercy is a function of His love expressed as grace* (see **Ephesians 2:4** and **1 Peter 1:3**).
2. **God's faithfulness** – *this is a function of His power that backs up whatever He says and does* (see **Lamentations 3:22-23**).

The Experience of Mary:

1. She received the visitation of Angel Gabriel.
2. She finally accepts the message even though she hardly understands it - praise God even when you don't understand it!
3. She visits Elizabeth at home at which the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy.
4. Elizabeth then sings a prophetic song that resonates with Mary.
5. **Verses 46 -55 of Luke chapter 1** are expressions of gratitude to God as she now understand God's plan for her life.

This is a classic VUCA example, but Mary reacts in gratitude by rejoicing, boasting, and glorying in the Lord (see **Luke 1:46-55**).

For more context, see **Psalm 117:1-2**.

A Framework for Gratitude

We have, in Jesus' prayer model in **Matthew 6:9-13** popularly known as The Lord's Prayer, a framework (see graphic below) for not just praying but practically ensuring that we live a life of gratitude towards God:

1. God's name and our relationship with God.
2. God's kingdom and our participation in the rights and responsibilities.
3. God's desire and our election to satisfy God.
4. God's provision and a sustenance for life and living.
5. God's grace and our empowerment to offer others forgiveness.
6. God's covering and our preservation from all evil.
7. Our enjoyment of an unshakable kingdom, never-failing power and His glorious presence.

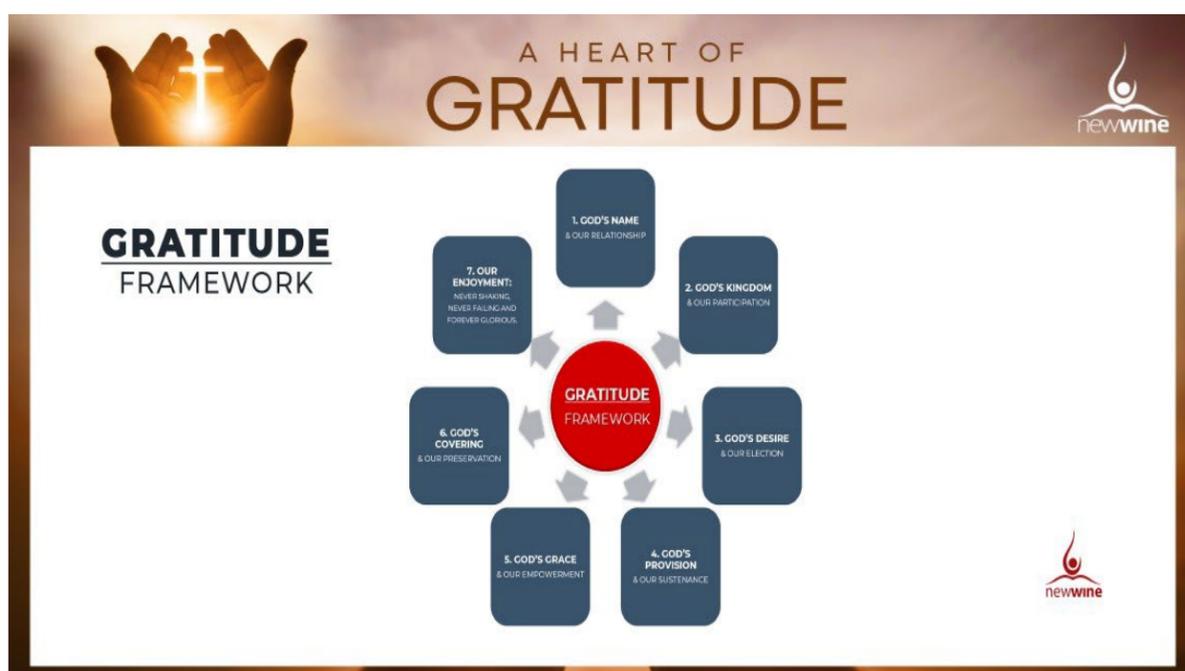


Diagram 2: Gratitude Framework

Expressing gratitude by employing the above framework radically changes our responses to the effects of the **VUCA** world.

Lastly...

In this week and beyond, be encouraged to dedicate more of your quiet time with God to thanking Him, with a heart of gratitude.