

Raising the bar of Thanksgiving

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:20

The levels of a grateful heart

Level 1 – Getting what we want

Often an immediate response that brings feelings and emotions of happiness

Pitfalls of level 1 gratitude

Expecting – developing an entitlement mentality
(Gen 3:4-7)

Forgetting (Deuteronomy 6:10-12, Exodus 32)

A restless or discontented heart (Proverbs 27:20, 1 John 2:15-17)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:15-17

Level 2 – Experiencing grace

Salvation through Christ (James 1:21, Colossians 1:3-6, 1 Peter 1:23-25)

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, Colossians 1:3-6

God's goodness and gifts (James 1:17-18, 1 Corinthians 4:7)

“Everything we are and have, we've received. Thankfulness is the only fitting expression; humility is the only appropriate attitude.” Roy Lessin

Level 3 – Counting it all joy

Giving thanks when we get what we don't want (James 1:2-4, Romans 5:1-5, 1 Peter 1:3-7)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:3-7

Blessed through thanksgiving (James 1:12, Matthew 5:10, 1 Peter 3:13-17)

Level 4 – Experiencing Mercy

Law of Liberty (James 1:25, 2:12, Romans 5:6-11, 8:1-4)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:1-4