

THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

I. FACE THIS QUESTION: DO I POSSESS THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE?

II. GOD WARNS ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF LOSING THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their hearts were darkened." (Romans 1:21)

The Israelites in the wilderness were **severely** punished for not having the attitude of gratitude. Jesus cleansed 10 lepers but only one had the attitude of gratitude.

III. THE EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE CONTINUALLY PRAISING AND BLESSING GOD

"And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God." (Luke 24:53) This is a vital secret of their power with God.

IV. RIGHT NOW, GOD WANTS TO RESTORE TO YOU THE POWER OF PRAISE

Try it.

V. THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE MUST BE CULTIVATED

"Seven times a day do I praise you" (Psalms 119:164). Set aside seven times a day to praise the Lord. *"At midnight I rise to give you thanks"* (Psalms 119:62). During the first week of each month, **rise at midnight** to give thanks unto the Lord.

Hallelujah!



VI. EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO GOD IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OCCUPATIONS OF ANY CHRISTIAN

A. That is why the Psalmist says,

"I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together." (Psalm 34:1-3).

B. God's expectation from his people is,

"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9b)

C. According to Hebrews 13:15, we are to offer the sacrifice of praise continually.

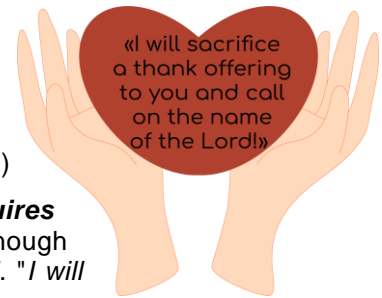
"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name." (Hebrews 13:15)

"Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy." (Psalms 107:22)

VII. DAVID TOOK DETERMINED EFFORT

"I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord." (Psalms 116:17)

Maybe there are times when we do not feel like praising Him. To praise the Lord **requires will power and boldness**. The natural man rebels against praising the Lord. It is not enough to say, "I praise Jesus in my heart." The Bible commands us to **praise Him out loud**. *"I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips." (Psalms 34:1)*



VIII. DO YOU HAVE A DESIRE TO GLORIFY THE LORD?

If you have that desire, hear the Word of God to you,

"He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God." (Psalm 50:23).

Also Psalm 37:4, *"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart."*

Often when we come before the Lord to pray it is difficult. It is difficult to sense His presence. We do not feel Him. We feel our prayers go to the ceiling and then they fall back down. Psalm 100:4 can help us with that, *"Enter His gates with thanksgiving."* How does God want you to come to Him? Skipping and being excited and praising Him. Just like a little boy or a little girl skips home when he has something excited to tell. Life is good, and he is going to meet his mummy and his daddy. *"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name." (Psalm 100:4)*

The best habit you can ever form is to praise the Lord. David set an example for us, Psalm 103:1-3, *"Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."* Beautiful words from the Psalm that David gave to us as an example.

IX. IN THE MIDST OF ANY CONFLICT IN YOUR LIFE, TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP, AND CONFESS YOUR INABILITY

In one country I was once attacked by the Minister of Education and I said "God, now it is Yours. There is no way I can fight this situation, so **You** have to do a miracle or I cannot continue that part of my ministry. I am not able. I worship You and love You, Lord, no matter what comes of it."

If you look in 2 Chronicles 20:12, you will see a similar conflict. A large attack was made against the land of Judah. Several large nations together came against a very small nation. There was no possibility of them having a battle with all these evil people. So what did the king do? He went to the temple to pray. He sent messengers to God's prophets. He admitted, "I as a king can do nothing. God, you are going to have to do something."

And the message came back, "Because you humbled yourself and you called on Me, I will deliver you." And the next morning the king said, "All right, our soldiers will gather together and they will march out of the city." And before the army he installed trumpeters, musicians, and singers to praise, to sing praise to God. Now that is about as stupid as you can get. There is this big army and here comes a very small group of soldiers and they are playing and singing, "If you want to shoot us we are right here."

But when they did that, God gave the enemies, who were not praising Him, a confusion of mind. They started arguments about who should make the first shot. They started arguments about who would get the most booty. And pretty soon they were killing each other. And after they were all dead, the king of Judah and his soldiers for three days gathered all the resources from the enemy: gold, silver, clothing, animals, tents, wagons, everything. And they received all those benefits, because God wanted to give it to the people who were praising Him.

In the book of Acts 16, we find a couple of men, beaten up and bleeding, praising God. I do not know what you would do if you were beaten up, but I would probably say, "Ouch, don't touch me." Or "Can you move my leg over a little bit?" But they were praising God, and not only in their heart either. ***It was a sacrifice of praise, right from their lips.*** *"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose."* (Acts 16:25-26) Everyone in the prison was hearing it, and when the prison door opened all the other criminals said, "I would rather stay and listen to this duet than go and get my freedom." This resulted in many conversions. Why was that? Psalm 40:3 has an answer,

"He put a new song in my mouth; A hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the lord." (Psalm 40:3)

Paul knew his Bible. He knew his Old Testament. He knew that it said, if you praise God, other people will come, and they will be converted.

X. THERE ARE PRISONS NOT MADE WITH BARS

But there are other prisons. Prisons not made by hands. Prisons not made by bars and walls. Sacrificing praise breaks down your own mental and emotional bars, and it unlocks your freedom to a whole new life of gratitude. *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: 'Rejoice.'"* (Philippians 4:4). Paul was saying, "You thick-headed people. Rejoice always. And **again I say it** once more, 'Rejoice.'" There is a whole new life that God has for you.

Do not be a "fair weather" Christian, who is only praising the Lord when he feels like it. Or who praises the Lord only when the circumstances are ideal. God gives us a command in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, *"Give thanks in all circumstances."* Now that is pretty explicit.

And then it goes on to say, *"...for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* It is God's will for you! Many young people have asked me, "How can I know God's will?" "What is God's will for me?" And I turn to 1 Thessalonians 5:18, and I share this verse with them. And it says there that this is something God wants you to do.

XI. IT IS A KNOWN FACT THAT THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF A CHURCH IS GAUGED BY THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS PRAISE

This is true of individual people also. Truly deep Christians live constantly in an attitude of gratitude.

CONCLUSION

Colossians 2:6-7,

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

This is the golden verse from the *Basic Christian Life* course. That is how we began our studies, a year or more ago. But these are some of the basic principles of Scripture.

The Apostle Paul encourages us to not always talk about salvation or baptism or the Lord's Supper, but go on to some of the deeper things of the Word of God. I hope this day you are going to make this decision, "That is going to be my lifestyle. I am going to be a believer who is going to be overflowing with thankfulness." Let us join the heavenly choirs of Revelation 4 and 5 now. Amen!

"Blessings to you, our dear friends!

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