

THANKFULNESS

- 1) **A Primary Response:** When receiving something of value, even without knowing anything about the giver [Digging deeper](#), we operate with one of two beliefs:
 - a) We deserved it. To deserve it, we may believe we have given something of equal or greater value. Even if that was true, we should still be thankful because:
 - i) What we give was given to us first. [Dig Deeper I Cor 4:7](#)
 - ii) What we receive was created by the Lord. [Dig Deeper Col 1:16](#)
 - iii) God is behind the person from whom we receive. [Dig Deeper 2 Thes 1:3](#)
 - b) We didn't deserve it. We will have a thankful heart.
- 2) **Creates hierarchy in relationships.** The person giving typically is the one who is in a superior position to the receiver. They have more to give.
 - a) In a job, the owner has more than enough money to pay an employee. The employee is limited in the number of hours they are able to work.
 - b) In a family, a parent is able to give much more to a child than a child can return.
 - c) As God gives, we learn to look to him in reverence similarly but much more meaningfully than to a boss or parent.
- 3) **Roadblocks to being thankful in ALL things** [Dig Deeper](#)
 - a) Having a short term vision.
 - i) Bad right now can be good for your earthly future.
 - ii) Bad right now can be good for your maturity. [James 1:2-4](#)
 - iii) Bad in this world can be good for eternity. [2 Cor 4:17](#) [Col 3:1-3](#)
 - b) Not viewing God as a loving Father. [Matt 7:11](#)
 - c) Not considering that He sent His son to die. What more proof do you want that He desires your best? [Rom 8:32](#)
- 4) **Results of thankfulness**
 - a) **Truthful perspective.** When we are thankful for all we receive, we are living in truth, seeing that all we receive is a gift. [James 1:17](#)
 - b) **Peace.** Thankful hearts knowing they receive much more than they give have a peace in gratitude that they are blessed beyond what they deserve. [Phil 4:6-7](#)
 - c) **Obedience to God** [I Thes 5:18](#)

THINK ABOUT IT

Many people think in terms of trying harder to be thankful for things. Whereas that effort is good and can be successful, seeking truth and meditating on it can reap faster and more lasting results. The truth is that we receive infinitely more than we ever could give; we really don't give much at all. For starters, we've been given life, incredible bodies, superiority over all that's on earth, minds that can think, reason and love. We live on a world that though subject to corruption, is very habitable. Air is plentiful and for most food and water and shelter is not too hard to attain. Spiritually, we've been given Eternal Life when we simply humble ourselves and accept the incredibly sacrificial gift of God, the death of Jesus Christ for our sins. We don't have anything that we haven't received from God. Everything we think we give, we are really just passing on what He has given us.

Thankfulness is an absolutely primary response to truth. Anyone who isn't thankful is deceived into one of many twisted views of life. They may think that they deserve something or give as much or more than they get, that there's something called "my fair share" that doesn't seem to be coming their way. Until we see truth and respond in thankfulness, it's hard to worship God. If we don't see Him as the source of everything, how can we worship Him for his nature?

Most everyone who is feeling down or depressed isn't being thankful. Whereas we can't always be happy, we can be joyful. It's virtually impossible to be joyful without being thankful. Satan wants us to forget God's faithfulness to us. Part of being overcomers is the word of our testimony, the testimony of God's faithfulness in our lives. [Rev 12:11](#) It's good to write down those things we're thankful for so we don't forget. That list is an excellent resource during times of emotional pain or feelings of distance from God.

WORKING IT OUT

- What reasons might you give or have given in the past about why you aren't or weren't thankful?

- Visualize Jesus dying for you and think of what it would be like to try to tell Him why you shouldn't trust Him to make good out of what seems bad. [1 John 3:16](#)

- Spend time thinking about children, their limitations. Write out your limitations to determine what is good and bad for you for eternity. [Isa 55:8-9](#)

- List at least 5 substantial things you've given to others, either material things or time.

- Spend some time thinking about each of them visualizing God as being the source. How does that change your view of what you've given to others?

- Visualize yourself being extremely thankful. Describe both your thoughts and feelings.

- Write down a few things you've received, either time or material things that you thought at the time you deserved.

- Consider each item and write out what specifically was your wrong thinking at the time.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

¹⁷You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

1 Corinthians 15:19 ¹⁹If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Romans 8:28 ²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who ²⁹have been called according to his purpose.

Jeremiah 29:11 ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

1 Corinthians 4:7 ⁷For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

Colossians 1:16 ¹⁶For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, ⁴and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.

2 Corinthians 4:17 ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Colossians 3:1-3 **3** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Matthew 7:11 ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Romans 8:32 ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

James 1:17 ¹⁷Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Philippians 4:6-7 ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

DIGGING DEEPER

1 When we receive something, even before we know anything about the giver, our response should be thankfulness. Our life, either on this earth or for eternity has been enhanced by what we just received. If we can be “made better” and have no positive response, something serious is wrong. Thankfulness isn't just something we need to have on our list, it is foundational to everything else. We don't need to just work on it, we need to go back to the beginning and meditate on the truth of the source of all we have (It's from God) and deeply look at our hearts and our thinking to see what's awry. We need to confess and repent from that wrong thinking and attitude.

1ai **What we give was given to us first.** Satan, the deceiver, works hard to get us to forget this truth. We get invested in the things we “own” and have worked for. Paul is very straightforward in asking, “What makes you different than anyone else?” He is communicating that nothing makes us different. Why not? Because all that we have, we've been given by God. We may say we've worked hard for what we have. See [Deut 8:17-18](#). This can be a hard pill to swallow. We may work harder than most. We may have been wiser in the use of our material goods. That ability and even drive to be responsible is a gift from God. At times, God prompts us to share something that we have with others, perhaps money, a material item, or time. If we trace that which we give, it will be clear it was a gift from God that we aren't giving at all but passing on to others in obedience. So, when we receive something, we can never look back and say, “I gave so much. I deserve this.”

1aii **What we receive was created by the Lord.** At times, we may see what we receive as fair trade for what we “paid” for it. We exchange money for a material item or work for money. So, why be thankful? If we lived 200 years ago, most anything we purchase today wouldn't even be available. Neither would our jobs. God “planted” us on the earth during this time, in this country. Most of the time, we take for granted all that we “receive” in trade. It's a gift of God. Why? It's not primarily to meet our fleshly needs. It's to show us what kind of extravagant God we have. It's to REMIND us of his love and care because we forget so easily His unending love. If we could only have the truth deep in our minds and hearts that everything is a gift to us and being held together by Christ [Col 1:17](#), we'd appreciate every moment and the concept of trade would not even be in our thoughts, only thankfulness.

1aiii **God is behind the person from whom we receive.** People share with us because of love in their hearts. If we've received something good from anyone, it is God who put that person in our life and prompted them to share with us. The God who promised to meet all our needs typically does so through others. So, when we receive from someone, of course we should be thankful to the person, even if we (falsely) think we deserve it from them. Since God is the one who provided and prompted the person, we need to thank God. It isn't unusual for us to lean on people who give us love. Because we lean, when they fail us, we protest either outwardly or inwardly. And we are leaning too hard, we can fall hard. God wants us to know He is the source. When we realize this and people "fail" us, we can rest that God is able to provide us what we need in some other manner. Rather than walk through life leaning on others, We stand tall with arms raised in Thanksgiving and praise to God

3. We look at many events with short term vision. If we only look at our lives on this earth, how could financial losses, health issues, or the death of those close to us be something to be thankful about? We tend to define good as what we see as positive for us in this life. And even if we're thankful people for the good we receive, why be thankful for the bad? Without an eternal view, God's view, there is no reason. [1 Cor 15:19](#) God gives us a parallel in this world, children. All of us used to be one. Young children are completely unable to comprehend the value of eating right, brushing their teeth, learning to be disciplined, going to school, etc. There are many things that seem bad to a child that are actually very good for them. God is good. We are His Children. [Matt 7:11](#) Although we don't understand it, even what we see as bad is for our eternal good, hence we should be thankful. [Rom 8:28 Jer 29:11](#) It's virtually impossible for someone to see the death of Christ as something to be thankful for. And yet God used what was horrible in the short term to be salvation for all mankind for eternity. Our God is a God of transforming Earthly bad into Eternal good.