Choosing Gratitude

Chapter 1: The Power of Gratitude

Gratitude has a big job to do in us and in our hearts. It is one of the chief ways that God infuses joy and resilience into the daily struggle of life. Few things are more becoming in a child of God than a grateful spirit. There is nothing that makes a person more unattractive than the absence of a grateful spirit. In every circumstance we can choose to respond in one of two ways: We can whine OR We can worship! Gratitude is a lifestyle. True glory and the transforming power of gratitude are reserved for those who know and acknowledge the Giver of every good gift and who are recipients of His redeeming grace. The starting place for discovering what makes gratitude truly Christian is coming to grips with two realities: human rebellion and the execution of an innocent Man.

Chapter 2: Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude

Why should we abound in gratitude? Guilt and grace are the forerunners to our gratitude. We are guilty!!! We were a fallen humanity: sinful and disgraced. There was no hope for us, but then God sent His Son to die just for us. That is the unmeasurable grace that we have been extended. This grace informs our gratitude. Our gratitude is not just regular gratitude. It is Christian gratitude which involves:

- Recognizing the many benefits we have received from God and others (even those that are disguised as difficulties)
- Acknowledging God as the ultimate Giver of every good gift
- Expressing appreciation to God and others for those gifts

Chapter 3: No Thanks

So why are we so slow to be grateful? There are several instigators of ingratitude.

1. Unrealistic expectations
2. Forgetfulness
3. Entitlement
4. Comparison
5. Blindness to God’s Grace

Chapter 4: Why Choose Gratitude?

There are eight reasons to choose gratitude and make it an intentional part of our lives.

1. Gratitude is a matter of obedience
2. Gratitude draws us close
3. Gratitude is a sure path to peace
4. Gratitude is a gauge of the heart
5. Gratitude is the will of God
6. Gratitude is an evidence of being filled with the spirit
7. Gratitude reflects Jesus’ heart
8. Gratitude gets us ready for heaven

Chapter 6: How can I Say Thanks?

Speak Up, Sing Out, Kneel Down

*For gratitude to become a true joy-maker in our hearts, it must be expressed everywhere, at every opportunity, both privately before God and publicly before others. So the question becomes when and where? Scripture calls us to all day, everyday gratitude: morning and evening, three times a day, the middle of the night, and continually! Gratitude is an every moment, every hour, every day, lifetime event.
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Chapter 5: Of Whiners and Worshippers

Thoughts to Consider and Questions to Ponder

Thought – A grateful person is a humble person, while ingratitude reveals a proud heart.

Question – Do you more often manifest a humble, grateful spirit, or a proud, self-sufficient, ungrateful heart?

Thought – A grateful heart is God-centered and others-conscious, while an ungrateful person is self-centered and self-conscious.

Question – Do you tend to be more focused on your own needs and feelings or on blessing and serving God and meeting the needs of others?

Thought – A grateful heart is a full heart, while an unthankful heart is an empty one.

Question – Are you more prone to focus on what you wish you had (or didn’t have) or on the blessings you do have that are far greater than you deserve? Do you have a full heart, or does your heart “leak out” the blessings God pours in, always needing something more to be satisfied?

Thought – People with grateful hearts are easily contented, while ungrateful people are subject to bitterness and discontent.

Question – As a rule, are you easily contented with what God provides or do you find yourself resenting difficult circumstances or people and becoming demanding or depressed when others fail to meet your expectations?

Thought – A grateful heart will be revealed and expressed by thankful words, while an unthankful heart will manifest itself in murmuring and complaining.

Question – Do you spend more time counting and recounting your blessings or your problems?

Thought – Thankful people are refreshing, life-giving springs, while unthankful people pull others down with them into the stagnant pools of their selfish, demanding, unhappy ways?

Question – What impact does your spirit have on those around you? Are they refreshed and encouraged by your thankful spirit? Or are they weighed down by your negative, ungrateful words and attitude?

So… Where do you fall on the whining to worshipping continuum? Jot some notes and reflections here!

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Chapter 7: Thanks... For Everything

What are we thankful for?

- Visible, Material Blessings
- Spiritual Blessings – God’s nearness, God’s mercy, God’s salvation, God’s calling
- Relational Blessings
- Are there other categories of blessings?

Stop, Drop, and Thank!

Chapter 8: But Not Without Sacrifice

We need to all come to a place where we can say,

“My God, I have never thanked you for my thorn! I have thanked you a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorn. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear; teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed to You by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.”

Question to Ponder – “Can you thank God for trusting you with an experience, even if He never tells you why?”

Chapter 9: Going Gratitudinal

Let’s gratefully trust God with everything! Let’s make a Gratitudinal Change!!!

- Commit to a set season of gratitude
- Take a stock of your gratitude accounts
- Write thank you notes
- The power of a team!
- What else would support a Gratitudinal Change?

Choosing Gratitude Notes