

Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



November 19, 2017

Giving of Thanks

Thankfulness is a good thing, but it isn't worth much if we keep it locked up inside. We must learn how to express it to others, often and with sincerity.

*"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and **giving of thanks** be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1).*

*". . . Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather **giving of thanks**" (Eph. 5:4).*

*"In everything **give thanks**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18).*



Thankfulness is often defined as an *attitude* that we nurture our hearts. That's true, but thankfulness doesn't stop there. It's also a *gift* that we must consciously extend to others. We express thanks to God in our prayers for all He has done for us; we offer thanks to other people for what they have contributed to our lives; we acknowledge the good work that others do as in inspiration to the rest of us. Without these outward expressions of gratitude, we are not thankful at all.

Let's consider how a habit of verbally giving thanks improves our quality of life.

First, when we train ourselves to give thanks regularly, *we reinforce a spirit of humility in our hearts*. Whatever we have or accomplish in life is not solely the work of our own hands. Others have contributed much to our success, and when we verbally acknowledge those gifts, we remind ourselves of the debt we owe them. Giving thanks for all the big and little favors that come our way is essential to keeping us humble and grounded.

Second, *it turns our attention away from ourselves and toward others*. It's no secret that people who are in the habit of acknowledging the good that others do are the same people who are in the habit of doing good to others. They are sensitive to the role of mutual benevolence in building healthy relations among people, and are active in that work. Their habitual expression of thanks for the positive contributions of others is part of that unselfish lifestyle.

Third, the giving of thanks *restores a spirit of joy in our lives*. It's no coincidence that ungrateful people are usually unhappy people. The Israelites in the

wilderness were a miserable and unthankful group—and those two qualities were not coincidental. They are usually found together. "Thankfulness is the soil in which joy thrives," and that soil of gratitude has to be worked regularly to produce the happy crop. The book of Psalms, often consulted as a source of encouragement, is loaded with the language of thanksgiving. Use it!

Finally, the giving of thanks is *a major contributor to success in life*. Paul spoke of past generations who knew God, but did not glorify Him, "nor were thankful" (Rom. 1:21). In the verses that follow, he describes their lives as descending downward into a pattern of destructive behaviors that ruined their lives and the lives of those around them. Much of the social chaos that plagues our nation today can be attributed to one simple problem: our citizens have forgotten how to say "thank you."

As our society spirals deeper into a maelstrom of envy and negativity, everyone needs to relearn the value of giving thanks to God and others. Let it begin with us!

— David King



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