

simply grateful



living a
life of
thanksgiving

by matt and
nancy davenport

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“Praise the Lord. Oh give thanks to the Lord,
for He is good; For His mercy endures forever.”

Psalm 106:1

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

“In ordinary life, we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we
give, and that is only with gratitude that life becomes rich.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

simply grateful: living a life of thanksgiving

Simply Grateful

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ISBN: 9798737550820

All Biblical References are from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Holy Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishing, unless otherwise stated.

Cover Images by Jennifer Glover

Imprint:
Published by Servant Publications
Albany, Oregon
servantpubs.com



Second Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

It is recommended that if you print these on your printer, do not print pages 1 (one) and 3 (three), (that is the cover and this page) to avoid wasting you ink.

called to be like Jesus

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” 1 John 2:3-6

From the Authors:

In Matthew 26:27 Jesus, sitting with His disciples at the “Last Supper”, took the cup that held wine representing His soon coming shed blood; and before He passed it about, He gave thanks for it. Knowing what it represented, He still gave thanks. That is the greatest lesson we can gain from this topic. Jesus walked in such thanksgiving that even knowing what the wine represented, He gave thanks.

We are called to be imitators of Jesus. It’s a tall order to see that which we have in our hands represents our own demise and be thankful. But it is what He did.

This small book is not meant to be a day-by-day instruction but more of a way to remind us of the parts of our lives for which we should be grateful and some suggestions as to how we can make that happen. Even when it doesn’t seem to be a positive for us.

It has been said that it takes 21 days to create a habit. And being grateful really does need to become a habit with us. So as we go along, we will discuss 21 different things which will help remind us that we are not just supposed to be grateful but that we can actually make the thanksgiving attitude a daily part of our lives. Which will bring many benefits to our relationship with God. Each of these 21 topics may or may not be a part of your ongoing life. If one or more are not a part of your life but are needed, it is important to remember this verse:

“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you a ruler over many things, Enter into the joy of your Lord.” Matthew 25:21

So, perhaps being thankful for the small parts of your life could lead to increase? Well, it is part of this principle, and we have seen it repeatedly in our own lives (Nancy & Matt).

Recall the story where Jesus fed the 5,000? There’s one verse that sometimes gets overlooked. We can find the passage in Matthew 14:13-21. Specifically verse 19:

“And He directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking to heaven, He gave thanks and broke the loaves, Then He gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the people.” (NIV)

Then we see in the next chapter where the same thing happened to the 4,000 (Matthew 15:32-39). Jesus was in the habit of feeding people through the miraculous!

The point is that we see a Kingdom Principle of multiplication through thanks. “Lack” is a worldly principle. A thought process that is dominated by physics. Kingdom thought processes do not depend upon facts but upon a miraculous God who loves to defy the natural order. And part of that occurs through the giving of thanks.

One of the greatest things to know about God is that He is for us. He intends for great things in our lives. It is His nature to bless us. But His blessings come with benefits. In our lack, He is always there. We may have to endure and remain faithful in the midst of that lack, but He intends much for us.

A struggle we often deal with when our life has lack is remembering to look to Him and walk in the strength of His joy. From personal experience, we have seen a transformation take place in many areas (including lack) of our own lives because we took our focus off of what we did not have and put it instead on what we did have. Constantly telling Him how grateful we were.

In the midst of it, trying and fighting to have that grateful life, you may find yourself in a place where reality is dictating how you respond. Bill Johnson said something about that struggle:

“It’s not that we ignore the difficulties or act like they aren’t there, it’s that we do not allow them a place of influence.”

That is key to dealing with problems as we move further into a place of constant gratefulness.

In the process of changing to look more like Christ, we are presented with many questions on our future. Some individuals who give their life to Jesus will suffer setbacks because of habits that come from their worldly life invading their Christian life. One of the most powerful ways to grow closer to God and prevent a great deal of the setbacks is to learn to have a thankful life. Not just being happy that God has graced us with His love but more than that.

Intentionality

One of the big words that has been traveling around Christendom these last few years has been “Intentional”. Essentially, choosing to do the things of God instead of just stumbling upon an occasional action. Thankfulness is not supposed to be a random act of kindness. It is meant to be a part of who we are as God’s people. It is supposed to be an intentional part of our walk.

Matt & Nancy Davenport
Roaring Hearts Revival Ministries

“The unthankful heart discovers no mercies; but the thankful heart will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings.”

-Henry Ward Beecher

grateful fruit

Fruit is the result of input. A tree might be an apple tree, but the fruit that it will produce will be directly affected by its surroundings and the consumption that is given to it. An orchard might be doing well but have a season where the water is not very plentiful because of a drought, so the fruit may not develop as it should.

What we feed ourselves can affect the way we interact with others. Maybe the words we use are impolite because we tend to think less of ourselves. The actions we take towards others can be negative because we lack in other areas.

Our choices can determine the type and health of the fruit that we put forth. It can be sweet or sour. Sometime under-developed or rotten.

Gratitude develops fruit. It has results. And if we wanted to truly focus on this, we could go on and on about what God will do in us as we seek to be gracious towards Him for His goodness. But we will stick to just three things that come as a direct result of the grateful lifestyle.

Joy

One of the biggest things that has changed in our lives (Matt & Nancy) as we have made thankfulness so important has been the way we think ongoing. We still have difficulties, but we have gotten in the habit of approaching these issues with a different mindset. Yes, the shift of a thankful heart will eventually change not just the heart; but it will deeply affect the way you think. That natural man, the brain, the mind. That part will be transformed.

In our day-to-day life here in America, it can very quickly become complicated and adverse. Trials that hit moment to moment. Existing, in fact, within the grips of multiple trials at once. Especially if you have small kids and more than one job. In the end, it is very easy to have a frustrating day and drift off to sleep still angry at the day.

When you set yourself up to have appointed times each day where your life screeches to a stop in order to focus your attention on God and acknowledge His mercies, the troubles of the day are replaced with conversation about the goodness of God. The wonder of the funny things that made the day bearable. Suddenly, His provision comes to the surface; and life is not so bad. Then, you drift off to sleep with the thoughts of His goodness floating in your mind instead of how terrible the boss was or the crude things people said on Facebook.

These interludes with God will begin to transform your heart and your mind. The results will be that the joy of the Lord will become your norm instead of the anger of the world.

Generosity

Perhaps one of the most difficult parts of our walk with God is being generous with our money.

There is a cause and effect that begins to take place when gratefulness becomes a high priority in your life. For us, it wasn't really evident at first. And then suddenly we saw it.

If you look at a long row of dominoes, you look from one end to the other. You will see the beginning as the game pieces begin to topple. At the other end, it remains undisturbed. But it won't be that way for long.

When you make a thankful heart an intentional part of your life, eventually all the dominoes will fall. Eventually, it will effect everything in your life. And one of the biggies is generosity.

Understanding certain principles in your walk is not a gimme. You won't get it all the day after you give your life to God. The problem isn't just getting it all quickly, though. Many of the understandings of the Kingdom don't come to us even after years of being saved. Generosity is one of these parts that just seems to take us forever to get. But prioritizing gratefulness will change that.

When your life is becoming a walking, living, breathing "THANK YOU, JESUS", generosity becomes a significant part of who you are.

In our experiences, we have met people who have been Christians for 20, 30, even 40 years and are as tight with their money as high-tempered steel molecules. And guess what? They are often so poor, they need a loan to buy bubble gum.

In the end, generosity is an affect that comes not just because you choose to be generous but because something inside changes. A person is not generous to others because they know they should be. It is because that is part of their characteristic. It's not based on how much money they have, either. Many people say, "When I have a lot of money, I will help people." In fact, we (Nancy & Matt) believed that way for most of our lives. That changed when we began thanking God daily for all that was around us. Then as our desire to give grew, God grew our income. We are not rich by any stretch, but our finances are as they have never been.

Then you find it one of the greatest blessings you have ever experienced when you give. Especially when the recipient has no idea who it came from. But that's another story.

Give. Not until it hurts. You will discover that the more you give, the less it hurts. Give because you are thankful that it has been given to you.

It's important that we do not confuse having a giving heart with paying our tithes. It is true that scripture teaches us to give. And tithing is certainly one way to give. But giving in the name of what the Old Testament (the-tenth) taught is not really what we should be doing now. Giving is something that should become a part of who we are. That's where thanksgiving comes in.

We give because it is who we are, not because the Word says we should. Regardless of the truth that we should give.

There are many things that can be said and taught on the principle of being generous, but this is a teaching about thankfulness. In the end, when in doubt, give double!

Growth

simply grateful: living a life of thanksgiving

As we mentioned, many people who call themselves Christians are struggling to be changed many years after they took Christ into their lives. They got saved 20 years ago and are still acting like a 5-year-old in their walk with God.

Growth in the Kingdom of God is not like growth in the flesh. But many, many people think it is. In the human body, like it or not, you will get older. Fifty years after you are born, you will be fifty years old. Regardless of how good you feel or how good your system works. You will age one year more on every single one of your birthdays.

But in the life of a Christian, it simply does not work that way. Our growth in the Kingdom is specifically determined upon how much of God we seek. How often we read and study the Word of God. How willing we are to be taught. How involved we are. How much we seek the Holy Spirit to lead us.

We can explore a dozen different pertinent questions and see our growth movement by how we answer those questions. In addition to those mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are a myriad of things to consider how much we have grown in God. Even Jesus had to grow in wisdom and maturity with God (Luke 2:52).

Of the many, many things we can and will do to grow in the understanding and wisdom of God, one is becoming thankful. Remember all that you do for God and for others will help that growth pattern. But it doesn't flop in your lap. It will require you to be purposeful. And that means CHOOSING to be thankful rather than forgetting the blessing in your life.

thankful habits

A thankful heart does not develop just because we think it should. Or just because Jesus taught us to be that way. All things of God come in different ways.

A gold medal runner will train for years. Until the habits necessary to achieve their goals are in place. Thankful habits are no different. When we are ready to make the grateful life a permanent part of us, we can start by developing elements that will lead to habits.

One word of caution on this. And you may have already thought about it. Do not allow yourself to take this life for granted. We are not trying to do something to just improve ourselves. This is literally an integral part of our relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Our connection to God should never be something we are flippant or superficial about.

Daily -

As you begin to develop your grateful lifestyle, there are actions that not only will help move you towards a habitually thankful existence but will actually become a way that will create joy in the process. Remember that these different actions are tried and true. They are not necessarily a “formula” of sorts but a genuine way to help in your walk with God. In other words, they work. But only when they are pursued with an “intentional” thought process.

1. Pray daily - Our connection with God is ongoing, but seeking Him in the morning and before bed will change you. Our prayers should be filled with telling Him that we are thankful. Using the “21 Thankfuls” later in the book will help bring this into a significant part of your prayer time.
2. On the spot - When something good happens in your moment-to-moment throughout the day, remember to thank Him. Yes, especially for those close-in parking spots.
3. The Big 3 - Each night as you close out your day, select three things from the day and verbalize your thankfulness for those things. If you have more than three, verbalize each one. Example: “I am thankful that I got the grass mowed.” They don’t need to be life-altering ones. But they can be. In truth, they need to be something that you are happy and grateful for that occurred that day. SUPER IMPORTANT: These are not mandates. Do them as the Lord may lead you, but they truly do develop a shift in our thinking about being grateful
4. Tomorrow - Add one thing for which you are grateful that hasn’t happened yet. Literally thanking God for what He will perform in your life before it happens. As we grow, the Holy Spirit guides us to better understanding. In a way, this is prophesying something God will do. It’s not meant to manipulate God into doing something we cannot, it is pointing towards Him to do the impossible. Don’t make this something you have no problem doing. Make it something only God has the ability to do. Take a bigger step in your belief. Declare something only He can do. “I am thankful in advance for a new house to live in.” Go big, it’s God after all!
5. Freedom - I know some may read this and not have the freedom that I enjoy in my country, America. I hope that will change for you. We always finish our thankfuls by telling God we appreciate our military and the freedom we have in our country. And one of the most important reasons is because we are free to worship and be thankful to God.

Weekly -

One of the most important things you can be grateful for on a weekly basis is that we are granted a time to join others in worship, praise, and learning of God. Whether you are in person or online. For many, it is more than once a week. In many countries around the world, it is illegal. And not illegal in such a way that they will fine you or just put you in jail. In some of these countries (especially the Muslim countries) you will pay with your life. Indeed, martyrdom (being killed for your faith) is very active in the world. Thousands every year pay the ultimate price for their commitment to God. We certainly have much to be thankful for as we can come together.

Monthly -

One of the acts of a Christian is the taking of Communion. Among the many things we can be thankful for every day or every week, once a month, or more often if you desire, is that we come together to be reminded of what Jesus did and how He specifically taught us to do this in remembrance of His sacrifice. (1 Corinthians 11:24-26, Luke 22:19-20) Many churches will celebrate this moment on the first Sunday of the month (or last). It is a defining moment that Jesus Himself used to help us to be thankful for what He did. It is also why a person is encouraged to pray and give thanks over each meal.

Yearly -

Annually, there are many reasons to be specific with our thanks. Or intentional. Sometimes we forget to be thankful for someone or something. That annual reminder is a wonderful way to not forget the good God has done for us.

- Christmas - We are grateful and thankful for the beginning of Salvation. Regardless of when Jesus was actually born, His birth started the path to wiping away the sin of the world.
- Easter/Resurrection Day - Can you imagine what the life of Christ would have been without the true Salvation? Truly, the Birth of Jesus would have meant very little if He hadn't died on the Cross. And His death on the Cross would have meant nothing if He had stayed dead. The Resurrection was the most important thing Jesus did because it proved that the Man who died on the Cross for us was exactly Who He said He was. That certainly smacks of Thankfulness!
- Thanksgiving - An American holiday that has similar versions all over the world in hundreds of other countries. A day set aside to remember the great blessings that we have throughout the year. And regardless of whether it's turkey or ham, we see the beautiful bounty that God has provided. Even greater is the fact that this day helps millions to see the reasons to be thankful to God for His love and provision to people. Whether they know Him or not. If there is one day a year that should remind us to be grateful, it is the holiday whose name actually points us in the direction to be thankful!
- Anniversaries - These will help us to think of many reasons and things to be thankful for. Whether it is an anniversary for you and your spouse or maybe the day you started your job. It could even be the anniversary of someone's death. Which, as sad as that might be, it's an opportunity to remember and be thankful for that person in your life.

- Birthdays - Birthdays teach us to remember people. And it's perfectly fine to recall your own existence. We will get to that more later. As a day comes along that is filled with festivities over a particular individual, we are reminded that one time a year of the importance of that person who God has put in our life. Whether it is a family member, co-worker, best friend, or the birthday of our nation, it is a moment to stop and thank God for them.

As Christians, it is true we have more to be grateful for. Not that it's some kind of contest, the love of God is in place for all mankind. It's just that those who acknowledge it and strive to honestly return that love live in a moment where they are more aware because they have a relationship with the One who creates and provides the love to begin with.

Also, there is a side effect to having that relationship with Him: Purpose is different. And from that purpose, the reasons to be grateful expand. After all, you can't be thankful for the Word of God if you don't believe in the Word of God. You can't be thankful for Salvation from Jesus if you don't believe in Who He is.

So as we explore these 21 reasons to be thankful, you will find that there are things that non-Christians will be thankful for as well as many that are in place as thankfults exclusive to those who are saved. The only real question will be, "Who are you thankful towards if you don't believe in God?"

These are each in a general placement of importance. The first one is God. And in all honesty, there is probably no explanation needed as to why He is first. But, just so you know, there is no life of thankfulness without God. Even if a person doesn't know Him, if they are grateful, it is an emotion or trait or choice that was first introduced to mankind by his Creator. There is no grateful or thankful apart from Him. It was His idea. And it is His idea to pass it along to the created that He made.

Yeah, He wants us to live in gratefulness...

“i am thankful for...”

The following 21 “things” to be grateful for are just reminders to help us see the daily miracles that God puts in our lives. You will be able to apply most of these items to your own life. Some may not.

Part of the purpose behind this list is to help spur you on to seeking and noticing other parts, actions, moments, incidents, people, graces, giftings, etc., in your own life. You know, thankfals that might not be in this list. In truth, there are so many reasons to be thankful that it would be impossible to list them all. Part of that is because what becomes a great thankful in one person’s life might be a daily occurrence in another person’s life (for which they should still be very grateful). Thus making it imperative that we notice the “thankfals” in each of our lives.

Verbalizing our thankfals have other effects to the world around us. In fact, it is a form of testimony. When we say the reasons we are thankful to God for something, that comes as a testimony that undoes the work of the devil (Revelation 12:11). Combined with the life we have as Christians (covered by the blood of Jesus), the enemy is defeated.

Guess what happens when the enemy is defeated? We see him for who he really is: Finished! Jesus told His disciples in John 16:33 to live in joy for He has overcome the world. Remember we are more than conquerors and can live an abundant life. Seeing the things God does for us on a regular basis will actually foster that thinking (as we mentioned in the chapter called “Grateful Fruit”) So you see how being grateful not only leads us into a joy-filled life, but we then draw into a closer understanding of God and see His work in us at a greater level.

Some of these are in the order of the greatest importance. Some might seem a bit random. You decide what you need to put first. But choose carefully.

1. God

This book is not in place to field questions and concerns about Biblical Theology or Doctrine. But know that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are both separate and a single entity. Many question it, but our main thought on the topic is that when we have all that stuff figured out about God, He is no longer God. His magnificence and personhood will always have mystery. It’s okay. That’s why it is called faith. And that’s why He is called God.

So God’s presence in us and around us and through the entire Universe brings us first into existence; and then by His amazing hand, provides the Way to be with Him when we have fought against Him and rebelled.

We can become so overwhelmed by the presence of someone special or famous. So, the Guy who made the trees, the sky, the stars...and breath, He desires our company. Maybe that should be our first thankful?

2. Jesus

The need to recognize Jesus as not only God (John 10:30) in man, but the whole of Who He is. This is why we say that as Christians we will always have more reasons to be thankful.

Unfortunately, it’s not always that way. In fact, it is quite often that the “religiousness” of Christians lose the understanding of what has been done for them. How many times have we seen the grouchy show up at church on Sunday? Far too often.

We have all sinned and fallen short (cannot add up to) of a place with God (Romans 3:23). It is sin in our lives that has led to that. That sin has spiritual ramifications not just flesh and blood consequences. One of those spiritual ramifications is that we will spend eternity in a place called hell. How does one fix that?

The truth is, we can't. And in that process, will suffer both in the flesh because of separation from God here on Earth and in the afterlife as we will be eternally apart from Him. In hell. The only process by which this could be diverted is for a sacrifice. But not just any sacrifice would work. It would require God Himself. And in the flesh He is known as Jesus.

Jesus died in your place. That, friends, is a very good thankful!

3. The Holy Spirit

Jesus walked in the Holy Spirit. So much so that the moment His ministry began, the Holy Spirit was His Guide. In Matthew 4, the same "Spirit" that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1:2, led Jesus. So it goes without saying that if Christ Himself needed the Holy Spirit, then we need Him.

The Spirit is what whispers to us to help us make good decisions. To love instead of hate. To give when no one else will give. When we become Christians, He fills our heart and becomes the part of us that communicates with God, our Creator. He then whispers those things to our heart. That part of us that is spirit. That part that listens as He leads us into all truth and understanding. That part that sees and feels the love God has poured out upon us.

And that's a great reason to be thankful.

4. Love

The Bible says that God embodies Love (1 John 4:8, 16). No doubt the most important thing that will always affect us in a positive way is the uncompromising love of God. It is the most central foundational part of who we are as people. And, fantastically, His love is extended to all mankind. Whether a person is living in the deepest part of sin or borderline perfection, that love is never compromised or altered.

5. The Cross

It's at odds to think about this instrument of torture and death and be thankful for it. And more remarkable is that the day the cross was used to be the means of Christ's death, we refer to as Good Friday. That might seem like a struggle to accept; but in truth, our Salvation was and is a good thing. We don't see the cross as a couple of pieces of wood that were used for such horror and cruelty, but we see it as the way that our penalty was paid. A penalty that was death. Yes, the penalty for sin is death. The Bible states, plainly, the payment for having sin in our life is to die (Romans 6:23). Not dying is a thankful thing. Right?

6. The Word of God

Can you imagine not having the Bible? Can you imagine not having the real, genuine Word of God to guide us and show us the path we are to take? What a crazy thing that would be. That said, God is big enough to make sure we would hear Him. Which, funny you ask, that is exactly what the Word of God is. Yeah, that's right. It is God's most defined message to us. It explains where we came from, how we got where we are, how to know and talk to God, how to be saved, and hundreds of other things. It teaches us every day how to move forward in our walk with God. But it also teaches us how to make good decisions, who we should trust, how we should treat people, what we should do in relationships, in business, and more and more and more. The Holy Bible is the bestselling book of all time. It is the most important book ever written. It is God's Word. Something we should truly be thankful for!

7. Spouse

You may not be married, so there might not be a spouse in your life. But in case there is, you certainly have someone to be thankful for. Now this is not a marriage counseling book; so if there are struggles, we advise that being genuinely thankful for your “other half” will serve to help resolve things. And if you don’t know how to be thankful because of the struggles, then becoming intentional on the matter would be the absolute best course of action. And regular prayer for them (twice daily at least). Not prayers that say stuff like, “God fix this moron I am married to.” Or “I can’t stand them anymore, Lord. Take them home.” All jesting aside, though, Love is a choice. And sometimes to keep that choice in place, we have to do it on purpose. Be thankful for the one who chose you to spend their life with!

8. Children

Psalm 127:3 says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.” A heritage? The word is most often translated as “gift”. Shouldn’t we be thankful for gifts? Sometimes children can be difficult, but most of the time the difficulties they cause are because of how they were raised. That would make it your fault (Proverbs 22:6). But the list of reasons to be thankful for your children can go on and on. At the top of the list is usually that first moment when they say “I love you,” without being provoked. That’s a real thankful moment!

9. Me

Jesus said something that is vital to understanding who we are and who we are supposed be. And how important we are. It’s not that you should spend time thanking Him for yourself but maybe thanking Him that He made you. Always wanting to try and trip Jesus up, the Pharisees asked Him what the greatest commandment was. Jesus used this opportunity to teach more than just the answer to their question. “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all you heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:37-40. So you see, the second most important thing we must do is to love our neighbor. Which is pretty much everyone. But we are supposed to love them as we love ourselves. So, you see, we really do have to love ourselves. Yeah, we can be thankful about ourselves. Weird, but true!

10. Life

Why do we, as Christians with the Hope that is an eternity with God, fight so hard to remain alive? Think about it, when we get sick with a disease, we don’t just say, “Okay, God. I’m all yours.” No, indeed, we fight to live. We want to survive. And when we do, we are grateful. Life is so very precious, and we aren’t ready to relinquish it. It goes without saying, however, that we need to learn to be thankful for this great gift *before* we are facing the threat of losing it. And not just our life but most certainly the ones of those around us. Even those we do not know. Especially the young and the unborn. We cannot truly be thankful for the life God gave us if we cannot be thankful for the lives God gave all of mankind.

11. Relationships

When God made Adam, the connection was instant. From the beginning of man, relationship was a part of it. Between God and man. Between man and woman. Between parent and child. Of which nothing has changed. Relationship is something that was God’s idea and is integral to every part of who we are. Whether it is in place in our jobs, our families, friendships...even with people we have a momentary phone call with over a tool or product failure. Relationship is something we cannot do without. And it is something we should not fight but learn to step into. Within relationship, we grow and learn and

understand. Relationship is what brings us Salvation. If we need to have this with Jesus to be saved, then in itself, it is the model of what brings Him to a dying world. Which is naturally something to give thanks for.

12. Food

Giving thanks for food is exemplified in the feeding of the thousands (Matthew 14, 15). Around the world, food is expressed in a million ways. In Columbia, they eat a specific ant, known simply as big butt ants. For obvious reasons. They are thankful for live octopus in Korea. Raw horse meat is popular in Japan. Thailand loves a variety of fried insects. “What’s for dinner, mom?”

“Sautéed cockroaches, hon.”

Oh yum! Thank you, Jesus, for bacon!

13. Medical

In the Bible, we learn of the Gifts of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12 has nine and then more are taught about in other areas. But of those nine, one is the Gift of Healings. The word used is translated from the Greek word, “iama” (ee-am-ah). It means more than just supernatural healing. It also refers to “medicine” and “remedy”. Now that does not relegate the supernatural to something it is not. God has and always will perform the miraculous in healing. But all good things come from God (James 1:17). So the medicine and remedies are His blessings. Doctors are given this gift (regardless of their relationship with God - Romans 11:29) and they use it to bring healing. Always seek God for His healing. It should be our first plan to ask for His healing. But never be afraid to seek medical help. And, if there has ever been something we should be thankful for, it is treatment that often saves our life.

14. Home

Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home. Such an old saying, but also very true. In our understanding of the things we should be thankful for, the building we call our castle, our sanctuary, our safe place, our whatever, is a source of comfort and peace. Even when it’s filled with young, rambunctious kids, it’s still home. The place we come to after work and school, to rest and relax. To kick off our shoes and remember again the joy of our own space. Regardless of the difficulties that we might encounter in our home, we can look out the window and see many who struggle to simply have something that resembles a roof over their heads. If you have a home that is in any way close to this description, you have something to be truly thankful for.

15. Vehicle

Looking back in the scriptures (and history as a whole), we find the different forms of transportation often relied on things that required much commitment from the user. So if you didn’t own or know how to use a horse, you walked. Or a camel. Or a donkey. Or being able to control them as they pulled a wagon. Now, we use something that is quite amazing. The automobile becomes more and more advanced all the time. What a blessing to have this invention in our lives. The simple act of going to the store was often limited to a monthly occurrence because of the process involved. Can you imagine that in this day and age? Well, other than the Amish lifestyle. Who are generally very thankful people!

16. Entertainment

We often forget that God does, indeed, wish the best for us. And part of that is the spurring and the

working of our imagination. Is it part of His plan for us to be entertained? Certainly. He knows how we are made and that our brains need interaction with things that are a part of the world He created around us. Does that include TV and movies? Why wouldn't it? It is true that it would make no sense that He would advocate any form of entertainment that violates Who He is. Things that are sinful or promote anything sinful is probably not what He intends for us. But to be entertained by the funny or the dramatic, or by plays, movies, games, etc., certainly God intend for us to find satisfaction and rest through them. There are many stories that we can be thankful for. Especially ones that grow us a little.

17. Hobbies

Like entertainment, hobbies can often be the wrong thing for us if that sideline is the opposite of what God has taught or is leading in. But hobbies tend to be things that take our attention off the stresses of life and put them onto things that cause us enjoyment instead of struggles. Many people will find satisfaction in a hobby as it relieves their anxieties and angers. And it often turns a profit as many find ways to make money in the process. It also gives us an opportunity, sometimes, to benefit the lives of others. Projects and plans can help us in our own personal growth as well. It's knowledge and skill building. Thankfulness at a project/hobby well done brings a sense of pride and accomplishment. Particulars that we can thank a very talented God for putting in our lives.

18. Job

It's very true that it is sometimes a great struggle to be thankful for a job, but sometimes we have to look at the results of the job to see how thankful we can be for having such a thing. Getting up every morning and trudging off through heavy traffic and insane people can be a real pain. Only to arrive at work to find the boss mad and your fellow employees blaming you for it. But not every job is like that. In fact many, very hard working people love their jobs. The job could still be just as hard, but they have found joy in the midst of it. The fact that they enjoy it so much could have a myriad of reasons, but one could be the fact that they have come to be thankful for that job.

19. Coffee

Strangely enough, there are people on the planet who do not like coffee. That's okay. More for those of us who cherish it. Being thankful for coffee may not apply to you, but the point isn't just coffee (or one of its thousands of derivatives). Replace the word "coffee" with the word "water". Maybe tea? Cocoa? The list goes on and on. We talked about food, but we all need something to wash it down. Maybe your preference is soda pop or milk. Whatever it is, we can be thankful for having that in our lives. In many countries around the world, they struggle just to get a drink of water. It will certainly do us good to humble down and thank God for a hot cup of coffee, tea, cocoa, soda, or water.

20. Music

Sound comes in every form we can imagine. Words and poetry can be beautiful but never so much as when put to melody. Of all the parts and pieces of our past, no moment affects us more than hearing a song we loved as a kid. We can be 50 or 60 years old. Even older. Suddenly a song comes on the radio, and we are instantly transported back in time to some place or some specific time that is filled with that sound. Even more, we find one of the greatest ways to worship God is through music. It will calm us, excite us, lead us, move us, encourage us. No sound affects us as music does. Whether it is a hard rock, heavy metal style, or an unfathomable passion for Lawrence Welk (or somewhere in between), music is one of the greatest "things" that we have in our lives that we should be thankful for.

Psalms 69:30

21. Communication

As we mentioned when we discussed automobiles, looking back at history, communication has become improved tremendously over the last 100 years. From the moment that the radio became a thing and Morse Code began flying along telegraph wires, crossing the country, until today where we have a device that easily fits in our pocket and allows us to have a visual conversation with someone on the other side of the planet, thousands of mile away. We've come a long way from the Pony Express and smoke signals to where we are now. The true impact of being able to converse with loved ones instantly rather than the three- to six-day letters, might never be fully realized. Especially grandmas and grandpas being able to see their grandbabies moments after they are born without having to be there. In truth, long distance communications will never be as good as "in-person" experiences, but we can truly be grateful for connecting instantly.

other reminders

These 21 Reminders are just a beginning. When we stop and look at the myriad of things we can be thankful for as God's Kids, the amount can be truly endless as we see new things every day.

There is no requirement to be thankful. You don't have to use any of these 21 options. They are meant to cover the basics and help you to learn the processes and the need to be grateful to a very gracious and giving God (although the first nine should most certainly be your highest priorities).

The Bible is packed full of many examples of gratefulness. The word "thanks" in some format is everywhere.

This is not the first word written about thanksgiving, and it certainly will not be the last. But the purpose is to show how a thankful lifestyle will change a person and give them the heart that God will use and bless.

Commitment to being thankful is one of the most important things you will ever do as a Christian. it will, literally, transform the way you think about your own life, the lives around you, and most importantly, the way you think about God. And the way you think about Him determines how strong your relationship with Him will become.

After all we have discussed, we want to leave you with a number of direct Bible verses that discuss gratitude and what it can do to and for us according to God's Word. We have put the Bible reference only to help lead you into reading God's Word for yourself. Reading His Word for yourself is more important than even going to church. Yeah, true story!

- You have been given Salvation - Romans 5:8
- God's love for you will never end - Psalm 136
- Heaven awaits those who are God's children - 1 Corinthians 2:9
- You don't have to live in fear - 1 John 4:18
- Because God is always there - Psalm 28:12
- Because it is a good thing to do - Psalm 92:1-2
- In all circumstances - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Because He works it all out - Romans 8:28
- Because you never walk alone - Hebrews 13:5
- For the inheritance of the Saints - Colossians 1:12
- For a hope of something greater - 2 Corinthians 3:11-13
- For joy that leads to laughter - Proverbs 17:22
- Wisdom and understanding - James 1:5
- Spiritual insight - Ephesians 1:17-18

simply grateful: living a life of thanksgiving

we so declare it

I will praise *You*, O Lord, with my whole heart;
I will tell of all Your marvelous works.
I will be glad and rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.
Psalm 9:1-2

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;
Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
Psalm 95:2

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”
Colossians 3:15

But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:57

“I never met a bitter person who was thankful. Or a thankful person who was bitter.”
-Nick Vujicic

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.” Colossians 4:2

“Therefore, since we are receiving a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace (be thankful), by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” Hebrews 12:28

“There’s no happier person than a truly thankful, content person.”
-Joyce Meyer

“I will praise the name of God with a song, and I will magnify Him with thanksgiving.”
Psalm 69:30

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” 2 Chronicles 16:34

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplications, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6

simply grateful: living a life of thanksgiving

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.”

1 Timothy 2:1

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.”

Philippians 1:3

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name”

Psalms 100:4

“There is no better way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark.”

Helen Keller

a final note:

Bill Johnson, Lead pastor at Bethel, Redding, California, said this:

“Complaining proves nothing but that you can hear the voice of the devil.”

It's important to know that part of a thanksgiving lifestyle will help to eliminate speaking negative and complaining. In the process, you might truly upset the demonic, but you will be safe in knowing that you are too busy with a grateful heart to hear it.

Your children will do as you do. Your friends might do as you do. Anyone who looks up to you will see and, maybe, do as you do. Yes, remember you are affecting the world.

When you become serious about your relationship with God, there are Kingdom Principles that will become a part of your life. Thankfulness will be one of those Principles. These values have great repercussions in our lives. They are not just something we add to a vague list of guidelines, they are actions, thinking, and processes that have a significant “cause and effect” in our walk. Both spiritual and physical. You will never commit something in the Name of God that He does not take notice of. He loves a thankful heart.

So, when you are struggling, take your Bible and search for the word Thanks. Use a topical dictionary. If you have access to the internet, go to biblegateway.com and search for “thanks”. From there you will find the word around 100 times depending on the version you search.

There will be scriptures that are written to thank God and ones that instruct the reader *to* thank God. The one that we must know best is 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18.

“Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

For you!