



The Power of Gratitude – Message 2

Warm-up

What has improved in your life that you can be grateful to God for this year?

Overview

As we approach Thanksgiving, we are reminded to give thanks for all that God has done in our lives. Scripture encourages us to live each day with a continual attitude of gratitude. Today we will discuss the power of our attitude.

Word & Application

Our attitude is the lens through which we see life. It is often the difference between our success and failure. We must allow God to help us change our attitude. *Gratitude* is a positive attitude that can help each of us. Research from *Baylor University* found that by focusing on what we don't have, we are less likely to give thanks for what we do have. The study provided *four ways* gratitude or giving thanks improves your life:

1. **Gratitude reduces our stress.** Thankfulness redirects our attention from our difficulties to the benefits we enjoy.
2. **Gratitude improves our health.** Grateful people visit their doctors less often and live longer than others. Research shows that thankfulness helps us sleep better, control our blood pressure, and reduce physical complaints.
3. **Gratitude protects us from negative emotions.** When we focus on what we don't have or how our decisions could have turned out better, we leave room for resentment, envy, and regret to build. Gratitude can keep these feelings at bay.
4. **Gratitude sustains our relationships.** Gratitude draws people together, builds trust, and strengthens ties.

Which of these four benefits of gratitude do you need most in your life today?

Now let's take a detailed look at one of the greatest examples in God's Word of how gratitude and thankfulness change our lives for the better. **Read Luke 17:11-19.**

- **The cry.** **Read Luke 17:12-13.** Leprosy was a physical issue but with this disease, people were also considered spiritually unclean. As a result, lepers were emotionally isolated from everyone. Think back to a time when you felt isolated or rejected by everyone. How did that make you feel? Did you cry out to Jesus in that time? Did you become closer to the Lord?
- **The command.** **Read Luke 17:14 and Leviticus 14:1-4.** The lepers were hoping for Jesus to heal them immediately. Instead, Jesus told them to go to the priest first so when Jesus healed them, others would believe the miracle had taken place. Trusting God does not equal doing nothing. We act in faith.
 - Share with the group a recent time when you thought God should have answered a prayer a certain way but then you realized His answer was even better than expected. How did God honor your obedience to Him in that situation?
 - The last part of verse 14 states that they were healed as they went—not before or after. Jesus was telling them to act as though they were already healed. Because they responded in faith and not by feelings, God honored their obedience. How does their attitude demonstrate their faith amid their disease?
- **The comeback.** **Read Luke 17:15-19.** Ten of the lepers were healed but *only one*, the Samaritan, gave thanks to the Lord. To say Jews and Samaritans didn't get along in that time is an understatement. The one man who shouldn't have come back did. This is a perfect picture of the abundant grace of God. Jesus is willing and able to do miracles with just a word. The encounter with the ten lepers demonstrated astonishing *ingratitude* and unexpected gratitude.
 - Think back to a time when you went out of your way to do something for someone and they showed no appreciation and maybe even complained? How did that make you feel?
 - This passage also shows us that grateful hearts often pop up where you least expect them. How can you show a loved one of your gratitude for them in an unexpected way?

Life Challenge

Are you living like the nine lepers or the one? Do you live gratefully or entitled? The secret of a grateful heart is a conscious choice to live in the reality of what God has done for you. The Samaritan who returned to give thanks chose not to forget what Jesus did for him. Write on a piece of paper a situation that you will choose to be grateful for even if you don't feel you should be grateful.

Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank You for the abundance and favor You have given me and my family. Show me how to choose gratitude so I can worship You in spirit and in truth for all of the great things You do for me each day. Pray for the specific needs of the group.