

A Heart Of Gratitude

Romans 1:21-25 (ESV)

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

The opposite of ingratitude is gratitude/thankfulness

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)

...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Colossians 1:12 (ESV)

...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

2 Samuel 7:18-29 (ESV)

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD! And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord GOD! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O LORD, became their God. And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you

have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord GOD, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever."

David's focus was upon God, His purpose, and His sovereign grace

3 Characteristics And Fruit Of A Thankful Heart

A Thankful Heart Is Focused On God, Not On Self

One of the main reasons we wrestle with ungratefulness is that we are self-focused

Mark 8:34-35 (ESV)

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

When we focus on God, we become great neighbors

Matthew 5:16 (ESV)

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

A Thankful Heart Listens To And Follows God's Sovereign Purpose

The key to David's response is seen in the way David viewed God and how he viewed himself in God's sight

8 times in this short prayer David calls God "O Lord God"

David repeatedly declares God's greatness and His sovereign choice of Israel as His people

10 times David refers to himself, not as "the King" but as "Your servant"

Because he saw God as the Sovereign of the universe and himself simply as God's servant, he could submit and be thankful when God's plans were contrary to David's plans

When we listen and follow God's purpose it produces calm, peace, and joy even in a storm

A Thankful Heart Is Overwhelmed By God's Sovereign Grace

David's response was, "Who am I?"

Grace means God's unmerited favor

Unmerited = I do not deserve it. I am totally unworthy to receive it

Grace is a sovereign act of God, totally apart from human effort or human will

You cannot understand or appreciate God's grace until you are overwhelmed with a sense of your own unworthiness to approach God in any way

Grace is favor

Grace reflects God's abundant goodness. God, who is infinitely wealthy, has opened the treasures of heaven and poured out heaps of blessings upon us

Ephesians 2:4-8 (ESV)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

God's favor in the past: we were dead in trespasses and sins

God's favor in the present: He continues to show us favor daily

God's favor in the future: the promises we now have as co-heirs with Christ

Grace rescued us from a sinful past; grace sustains us in an exalted calling in the present; and grace will preserve us for a glorious future!

A thankful heart overwhelmed by God's grace produces a desire to give the Good News of the Gospel

1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

Acts 4:20 (ESV)

...for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

The greatest gift we can give is the Gospel

The thankful heart focuses on God, submits to His purpose, and revels in His grace