**BETTER TOGETHER** in 2022

November 6, 2022

Dr. Jerry Edmonson, LeadPastor

**THANKS**&**GIVING**

**Pathway to Gratitude**



**How are you doing when it comes to being grateful?**

*Thou who hast given so much to me, give me one more thing -* ***a grateful heart****!*  George Herbert

**Gratitude** – the practice of noticing and being thankful for what is valuable and meaningful to you.

Noticing is the **beginning** of gratitude.

***Gratitude as a discipline involves a conscious choice.*** *I can choose to be grateful even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped in hurt and resentment. It is amazing how many occasions present themselves in which I can choose gratitude instead of a complaint. I can choose to grateful when I am criticized, even when my heart still responds in bitterness. I can choose to speak about goodness and beauty, even when my inner eye still looks for someone to accuse or something to call ugly.* Henri J. M. Nouwen

Where do I begin my **journey** toward gratitude?

The pathway to **gratitude** starts with your **attitude**.

**Attitude** - a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

Attitude involves their mindset, outlook and feelings. Attitudes are complex and are an acquired state through experience. Attitude is an individual's predisposed state of mind regarding a value, and it is precipitated through a responsive expression towards oneself, a person, place, thing, or event (the attitude object), which in turn influences the individual's thought and action.

The right **attitude** gives your life **altitude**.

Two pitfalls to **avoid**:

**Pride**

***Pride******slays thanksgiving****, but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grow.* ***A proud man is seldom a grateful man,*** *for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves.* Henry Ward Beecher

**Discontentment**

***Gratitude is a handmaiden of contentment****. An ever-growing attitude of gratitude will certainly make us more content since we will be focusing more on what we do have, both spiritually and materially, than on what we do not have. But contentment is more than focusing on what we have.  It is focusing on the fact that all we do have; we have by the grace of God.  We do not deserve anything we have, materially or spiritually.* ***It is all by His grace.***  Jerry Bridges

*… I have learned in* ***whatever situation I am to be content****. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned* ***the secret*** *of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* Philippians 4:11–13

One practice to embrace:

Take **time** to remember all the Lord has done for you.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and* ***forget not all his benefits****, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.* Psalm 103:1–5

*But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.**Indeed,* ***I count everything as loss*** *because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake* ***I have suffered the loss of all things*** *and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that* ***I may know him*** *and* ***the power of his resurrection****, and* ***may share his sufferings****,* ***becoming like him in his death****, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.* Philippians 3:7–11

A grateful heart is one that finds the countless blessings of God in the seemingly mundane everyday life.

*A thankful heart … stands in stark contrast to pride, selfishness, and worry. … No matter how choppy the seas become,* ***a believer’s heart is buoyed by constant praise and gratefulness to the Lord****.* John MacArthur

*Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;* ***let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation****! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For* ***the LORD*** *is a* ***great God****, and a* ***great King*** *above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.* Psalm 95:1–5

**eucharisteo** (pronounced yoo-khar-is-teh'-o) to be grateful, i.e. (actively) to express gratitude (towards); specially, to say grace at a meal, (give) be thankful; to be grateful, feel thankful; give thanks.

Paul is probably one of the best examples of gratitude in scripture. 38 times this word is used in the New Testament; in the Gospels, Jesus gives thanks to the Father. Paul in his writings uses this word 25 times. **You might say that Paul had an …** Attitude of Gratitude!

**It was the way he approached life** … of the 25 times that he used eucharisteo, there is a reoccurring sense of all that Paul was grateful for and **there are some things we can learn about gratitude and thankfulness from Paul** … first.

**First**

I can have a grateful attitude **toward** **others** in my life.

Paul saw the **word of God at work** in and through others. He began most of his letters with a word of thanks and gratitude for others …

*First,* ***I thank my God*** *through Jesus Christ* ***for all of you****, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.* Romans 1:8

*How rich is anyone who can simply see human faces.* Corrie Ten Boom

***I give thanks******to my God*** *always* ***for you*** *because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,* 1 Corinthians 1:4

***I do not cease to give thanks*** *for you,* ***remembering you*** *in my prayers,* Ephesians 1:16

***We give thanks to God*** *always* ***for all of you****, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3

I can have a grateful attitude **in** my **circumstances**.

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,* ***give thanks in all circumstances****; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

*And* ***whatever you do****, in* ***word*** *or* ***deed****, do* ***everything*** *in the name of the Lord Jesus,* ***giving thanks to God*** *the Father through him.* Colossians 3:17

*Five times I received at the hands of the Jews* ***the forty lashes less one****. Three times I was* ***beaten with rods****. Once I was* ***stoned****. Three times I was* ***shipwrecked****; a night and a day I was* ***adrift*** *at sea; on frequent journeys, in* ***danger*** *from* ***rivers****, danger from* ***robbers****, danger from my own* ***people****, danger from* ***Gentiles****, danger in the* ***city****, danger in the* ***wilderness****, danger at* ***sea****, danger from* ***false brothers****; in* ***toil*** *and* ***hardship****, through many a* ***sleepless night****, in* ***hunger and thirst****, often* ***without food****, in* ***cold*** *and* ***exposure****. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.* 2 Corinthians 11:24–28

***Count it all joy****, my brothers, when you meet* ***trials*** *of various kinds, for you know that the* ***testing*** *of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be* ***perfect*** *and* ***complete****,* ***lacking in nothing****.* James 1:2–4

I can have a grateful attitude **for** my **learning**.

*… for I have* ***learned*** *in* ***whatever situation I am to be content****. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing* ***plenty*** *and* ***hunger****,* ***abundance*** *and* ***need****. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* Philippians 4:11–13

*do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication* ***with thanksgiving*** *let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6–7

**It is not what we do; it is who we are.**

The pathway to gratitude starts with your attitude!

Toward people

Toward circumstances

Toward learning

Be **grateful** … give **thanks** … be **content**!

So go home and

* Make a list of the people in your life. Be grateful.
* Make a list of circumstances of your life. Give thanks.
* Make a list of things you have learned or need to learn. Then tell Jesus … He is enough! Tell Him “You are enough.” Be content!