

BECOMING GRATEFUL (Ephesians 5:20)

I. Don't forget.

- A. Psalm 103:2.
 - 1. Forgetfulness is the enemy of gratitude.
 - 2. For all that Joseph did for him, the butler forgot him (Genesis 40:23).
 - 3. Only one of the ten lepers came back to thank Jesus for healing him (Luke 17:11-19).
- B. One write stated, "Blessed are those who give without remembering and those who can receive without forgetting."
- C. We need to remind ourselves and our children to always recognize the one or ones who give us things, especially God.

II. Don't dwell on our troubles.

- A. Too many times we dwell on the negative and not the positive.
 - 1. How many times do people use negative things as a way to remember dates (that happened the year of the tornado...)?
 - 2. Fanny J. Crosby was one of the greatest hymn writers because, though blind, she was thankful for her blessings.
 - 3. In one of her hymns, "A Wonderful Savior," she wrote, "with numberless blessings each moment He crowns."
- B. In reality we should be thankful for the negative things that happen to us because troubles bring strength (James 1:2-3).

III. Remember how we are better off than many.

- A. When you start thinking how bad off you are, go to the nursing home and see some of the people there.
- B. When you start thinking about how you don't like your house, go to downtown Birmingham and see those with no houses.
- C. Could you imagine what it would be like to have our income reduced to the yearly level of many people in our world?
 - 1. You couldn't afford your car, your utilities, your mortgage, your trips to the beauty shop.
 - 2. Your cell phones would be cut-off, no internet, satellite or cable.
 - 3. Your home would go from 1,500-1,800 square feet to 200-400 square feet with one room and numerous people in that one room.
- D. We are so much better off than most.

IV. Count the blessings you have instead of those you don't.

- A. 1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5.
- B. Despite these reminders, how often do we think about what we don't have.
- C. How many times have we sang "Count Your Many Blessings" and then failed to do what we sang to others to do?
 - 1. Just try sometime to count all your spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).
 - 2. Then sit back and attempt to count your physical ones.
 - 3. We will be astounded if we do so.

V. Say thank you.

- A. We should be those that express our thanks verbally (Psalm 107:1-2).
- B. God desires for His children to express their love and gratitude (Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- C. We must express our thanks with our lives as well as our lips.
 - 1. Psalm 116:12.
 - 2. To show our gratitude we will give God our time, our abilities, money - in reality, our all.

VI. Don't take the ordinary for granted.

- A. Did you know think and thank come from the same root word?
- B. Many times we are thankless because we are thoughtless.
- C. In our hurried up lives, the ordinary often is overlooked.
 - 1. If the water didn't run through the tap one morning we would freak out, but what about the days it does?
 - 2. If the sun didn't rise one morning we would be frantic, but what about all the days it does.
 - 3. If our eyes didn't see one morning we would be hysterical, but what about all the days they do see?

VII. Don't overemphasize the luxuries of life.

- A. Luke 12:15.
- B. We have to be thankful for the simple necessities.
- C. Most importantly, we must be thankful for the spiritual over the physical blessings we receive.

VIII. Put away the whining.

- A. Instead of being grateful, the Hebrews soon began whining about what they did not have (Numbers 14:2).
- B. We are warned against having that same spirit (1 Corinthians 10:10).
- C. Paul wrote Ephesians 5:20 and Philippians 2:14 from prison.

IX. Realize we are recipients and never forget the Gift-Giver.

- A. All that we receive that is good is from God (James 1:17).
 - 1. This was something Paul realized (1 Corinthians 15:10).
 - 2. The rich farmer did not (Luke 12:16-21).
- B. Too many times we are more interested in the gifts than in the giver of the gift.

From a sermon by Tom Moore