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.
      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.**
    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 want 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).
    B. Too many times we are more interested in the gifts than in the giver of the gift.

From a sermon by Tom Moore