



Chaplain's Notes

May 2004

"life is for us"

The Power of Giving Thanks

Let me tell you a story. There was a little boy who was so stubborn & self-centred, that he refused to say thank-you for anything. He felt he deserved everything he got, that it in fact was his right. So much so, that he even began to demand that people treat him with respect, and as he grew older, he began to commandeer people and push them around, as though they only existed to serve him. Sadly, these character traits became so ingrained in him, that no-one was able to change him. He ended up becoming a multi-millionaire in property & oil, but actually came to have no true close friends. Finally, when he died, he died all alone. People were in awe of his wealth, but the whole world knew him to be a pauper in spirit, never being able to show & receive love. His name: _____.

Do you know a person who fits the description above? Or who perhaps is on their way down that path?

This month, I want to share with you just how powerful it is to be able to say 'thank-you' for all that you receive in life, and just what a powerful effect it

can have on your own personality and others' relationship with you. Saying 'thank-you' is such an easy thing to do, but also very life transforming! If you are not in the habit of saying 'thank-you', I hope the following five points will really encourage you to do so!

First, when you give thanks, you are acknowledging that what you are currently enjoying is a **gift!**

You are declaring that it is not your might, or right, or power, or intelligence, that brought this thing into your life, but rather that it came from someone else. Think about it. Is there anything in your life that you did not receive?¹ The Bible says that even your strength and ability to work are gifts from God². Your health is a gift from God. Everything is a gift, ultimately from God.

Second, by giving thanks, you are thereby humbling yourself, and so opening yourself up to more **blessings from God!**



(1) 1Corinthians 7:7b. (2) Deuteronomy 8:17,18.

By declaring that what you have is a gift, you undercut any tendency to pride in your life. And the Bible says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble!"³ That is, God will bless you and be really close to you the more you give thanks for all that you have in life. Think about it. Parents love to bless and provide for their children who are grateful and thankful for what they provide for them, but they find it harder to do so with joy when their child is ungrateful.



It is no different with God! In fact, Jesus said that "whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."⁴ Indeed, God expects us to give thanks in life for the good things that come our way⁵, even in the midst of bad circumstances⁶, and He is well pleased when we do. God is in control and has your best interests at heart no matter what. What greater motivation could there be for giving thanks?!

Third, when you give thanks, you are **acknowledging the giver** of the gift and **elevating** the other person, making them feel special!

We all want to feel special, and saying 'thank-you' is one easy way of helping others to feel good and loved! The

Bible says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."⁷ Saying 'thank-you' is a very practical way of fulfilling this principle, and remember: what you sow you will also reap!⁸ What goes around, comes around - this goodness will start to come back to you, too!

Fourth, when you give thanks, **your character changes** and you yourself become a **grateful** person!

Think about it. Which type of people do you like to keep company with? Surely not the proud and hard-hearted, but those who are humble and grateful people! When giving thanks becomes a habit in you, people will enjoy your company and love to be around you.⁹ Isn't that what we all want? Remember this saying:

Sow a thought, reap an action.
Sow an action, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character, reap a destiny.

Fifth, when you give thanks to God, your **thinking clears up** and you are able to make **right decisions** in life!

Yes, the Bible indicates that if we do not give thanks to God in our life, our

Did you know?

On average, in the city of Darebin around **142 of every 1000 deaths** are due to **tobacco smoking**.

Darebin Health Stories, April 2004

Why not QUIT today?

1 packet every 2 days at \$10 per packet = \$1825 per year!!!!

(3) 1Peter 5:5b. (4) Matthew 23:12. (5) Luke 17:11-19. (6) 1Thessalonians 5:18. (7) Philippians 2:3.

(8) Galatians 6:7. (9) cf Ruth 3:11b.

next page: (10) Romans 1:21. (11) 2Timothy 3:1,2.

“In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18

minds become darkened and we end up making foolish, stupid, and harmful decisions in life. Are you having trouble making good decisions? It is written, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and foolish hearts were darkened"!!¹⁰ The Bible actually goes so far as to say that one of the reasons why the world is in such a mess is because people are ungrateful!¹¹ It describes our age as "terrible times". Amazing - all because we do not truly give thanks to God from our hearts for what we have to eat, to wear, for our families, our health, for ... everything!

Is saying 'thank-you' to people a habit in your life? What about saying 'thank-you' to God? Do you say grace before meals? Do you as a whole family take the time to sit together before you start the meal, bow your heads, and from your heart say 'thank-you' to God for the food before you and for whatever else comes to mind?

There is such **power** in giving thanks. Doing such a simple thing could transform your life, your world. If you are not doing it, will you start today?

Let us pray:

Dear God,

Thank you so much for all the good things you have given us.

Thank you for the food in my fridge,

Thank you for the water in my tap,

Thank you for all the clothes in my wardrobe,

Thank you for all the people who have worked hard to provide all these things for me.

Father in heaven, forgive me for not having given thanks enough in my life.

Please help me to become a much more thankful person.

And right now, I want to say thank you for sending Jesus your Son to forgive me of all my sin!

I praise You for Your great love and grace to me.

I bless you, Lord. Please bless me today.

In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.



Conquering Anger

(A summary from last month's Community Church Service)

1. Trust in the Lord. Hand over all your rights and expectations to God. One of the major causes of anger is when 'your right' to something is transgressed. eg Do you really have a right for all the traffic lights to be green when you are running late for an appointment?

2. Resist the devil. The devil hates you and wants you to lose control, so through prayer and faith in God stand strong against his schemes. The tricky situation you are in could be engineered by the devil.

3. Pray for those people who are opposing you. Turn any hint of negativity for a person into prayers for them, and so bless them. Remember, people aren't the real enemy, the devil is!

4. Gently & humbly teach. Don't yell first, but carefully explain to the person their bad behaviour and why it is wrong.

5. Rebuke with all authority. Lastly, if they still do not respond to your careful instruction, it is appropriate to exercise discipline more forcefully, not to 'destroy' the person, but to help them see the light!

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A ministry supported by Regent Baptist Church and LinC Northern Region

News & Events

You're invited to our next

CELEBRATION SUNDAY

*a Community Church
Service for everyone!!*

Topic:

Building Community



• **Sunday May 16th**
(the 3rd Sunday of the month)

• **5pm - 6.15pm**
(followed by supper!)



• **Preston Nth East
Primary School Hall**

Bring your whole family!

