

Thanksgiving & Gratitude

Nov 27, 2022

Gratitude Definitions

English - Gratefulness = Appreciative of benefits received;

Hebrew =Yadah - Literally - to hold out (throw out) the hand;
figuratively - to worship with extended hands;

Greek = "eucharisteo" = it is usually translated to give thanks.

Give thanks in everything (1Thes 5:18; Phil 4:6)

Give thanks for all things. (Eph 5:18-20)

Give thanks in whatever you do. (Col 3:15-17)

From these two Biblical words we find important aspects of thankfulness or gratitude.

1. Thankfulness is not a mere emotional experience or attitude.
Yadah" emphasizes confessional thanks to God. It is a public announcement of thanksgiving to God for what we do not deserve, expressed in a community of people.
2. From "charizomai," - the nature of thanksgiving - gratefulness for what we have received.
What we receive is not earned or deserved but comes as pure grace and goodness of others.
3. At the cornerstone of gratitude is the notion of undeserved merit.
The grateful person recognizes that he or she did nothing to deserve the gift or benefit; it was freely bestowed.

The sinful nature and gratitude

Our sinful natures recoil at the thought of grace or dependency.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle - thought of gratitude as a humbling experience to be avoided.

There are ways that we protect ourselves emotionally from the humility of thankfulness.

The reason God chose Israel as recipients of promises – God's unmerited blessing.

Entitlement thinking weaves its way into family relationships

Children

Marriage

A sense of entitlement destroys thankfulness!

Gratitude is a virtue:

A core belief in Christianity is our unworthiness before God.

There are at least 4 common elements of gratitude.

- 1) I received something I value.
- 2) What I received came from the good intentions of others.
- 3) What I received was not owed me, I didn't earn it, but it was totally undeserved.
- 4) I want to celebrate what I have received with others, including the one giving a gift.

Resentment inverts all these elements.

- 1) Someone else has what I value.
- 2) I don't possess what I value due to the bad intentions of others.
- 3) I am owed or deserve what is possessed by others.
- 4) I am angry, though I may not openly express this fearing the reactions of others.

Adam and Eve

Before the fall Adam and Eve lived a thankful life with God. However, as Satan approaches Adam and Eve his goal is not to make them merely ungrateful. but to make them resent God, believing that they have a right to claim for themselves what He possesses.

- 1) Some one else has what I value.
Gen 3:5 "you will be like God, knowing good and evil"
- 2) I don't possess what I value due to the bad intentions of others. God lied
(Gen 3:4-5) "You will not surely die. God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,"
- 3) I am owed or deserve what is possessed by others.
(Gen 3:6) "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate."
- 4) I am angry about that which I don't have, though I may not openly express it fearing the reaction of others.
(Gen 3:8-12) Adam and Eve hide from God and blame God and each other for their sin.

Gratitude is the focus of the human heart.

- 1) Are you focused on what you have, or don't have?
- 2) Do you compare what you have to what others have?
- 3) Do you compare your looks or abilities with others?
- 4) While life is full of positives and negatives, do you dwell on the negative?

Gratitude is a choice

You have the choice between gratitude and resentment. If you chose resentment, you drive out gratitude. If you choose gratitude you drive out resentment, For the benefit of your body, your brain, your family and everything else in your life, choose gratitude - and be grateful for the choice.