# Gratitude - For better, for worse

***Why should we live lives of gratitude?***

## 1) Gratitude is God’s will for our lives

* ***1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***
* ***Colossians 1:9-12***
* It is the natural response of the believing heart to the benevolence of God.

## 2) Gratitude is a mark of a Spirit-filled and Bible-centred life

* ***Ephesians 5:18-20***
* ***Colossians 3:15-17***
* One of the clear results of a Spirit-filled life will be a life of grateful thanksgiving.

## 3) Gratitude strengthens faith and helps in times of anguish

* ***Psalm 136***
* ***Psalm 118:8-9***
* Looking back at what God has done gives us confidence for the future

## 4) Gratitude is a powerful witness to a self-absorbed world

* ***Romans 1:21***
* ***2 Timothy 3:1-5***
* ***Psalm 105:1***
* When we thank God openly and acknowledge what He’s done for us, we proclaim a personal, caring God to the world around us.

## 5) Gratitude protects us from legalism

* ***Matthew20:1-20***
* ***Luke 18:9-14***
* Gratitude reminds us that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. We need to preach the gospel to our own souls.

## 6) Gratitude is a defence against disappointment

* ***Proverbs 13:12***
* ***Habakkuk 3:17-18***
* Disappointment is a universal human experience and Christians are not immune, so need to guard their hearts against it

## 7) Ingratitude is the root of many other sins

* ***Genesis 3:2-3***
* ***Exod 16:1-8; 17:7***
* When we cease to be grateful, it leads us away from trusting the Lord and his Word. Ingratitude is often the root of division in the church.

## 8) Gratitude is an antidote to bitterness

* ***Ephesians 4:30-31***
* ***Ruth 1:19-21***
* ***Romans 3:14***
* Bitterness and unforgiveness strangles gratitude.

***The reasons for our gratefulness***

## 1) God’s benevolence and abundant goodness

* ***Psalm 103:8-16***
* ***Psalm 100***
* The Lord is good. Not just in theory, but towards me. How should this make us worship Him?Does it fill our hearts with gratefulness?

## 2) All good gifts around us

* ***James 1:17***
* ***Psalm 103:1-5***
* Every good gift comes from His hand.  *How do we not lose sight of this?*

## 3) Salvation

* ***Ephesians 1:3-14***
* ***Psalm 32:1-2***.
* ***Romans 8:1,28,33-36***
* Salvation is the work of the triune God which brings eternal glory and thanksgiving to Him. Does this remain at the forefront of my thinking?

## 4) Adoption and the assurance of God’s unchanging love

* ***Romans 8:15-17***
* ***Ephesians 3:17-19***
* ***Philippians 1:6***
* God loves us more than we can possibly imagine and always finishes what He starts. Do we trust him in this?

## 5) Daily strength for daily needs

* ***Psalm 68:19***
* ***Lamentations 3:22-24***
* ***Psalm 23:6***
* God’s goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives. Do we look for it to give thanks?

## 6) Our brothers and sisters are a reason for gratitude

* ***Philippians 1:3-6***
* ***Ephesians 5:25-27***
* We need the church – our fellow brothers and sisters as gratitude grows in community. Do I encourage others to gratefulness?

## 7) Hope of heaven

* ***Philippians 1:21-23***
* ***2 Corinthians 4:17***
* Death brings us into the presence of Jesus. How do we live a life without fear?

## 8) Christ – God’s ultimate gift

* ***Colossians 2:6-7***
* ***2 Corinthians 8:9; 9:15***
* ***1 Peter 2:7***
* ***Matthew 13:44-46***
* Dou you live as if you have found the hidden treasure and the priceless pearl?

***Summary***

***“Gratitude is a heartfelt and lifelong response to the goodness of God expressed in thankfulness and praise which flows into works of service joyfully undertaken”***

**Questions**

* In what ways is gratitude more than just saying the words, ‘thank you’?
* What do we learn about gratitude from Colossians 1:9-12?
* Gratitude can’t be cultivated in isolation. According to Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:15-17, what other behaviours accompany a life of grateful thanksgiving?
* How can our gratitude be a witness to the world?
* What attitudes cannot co-exist with gratitude?
* Regardless of our circumstances, why can Christians always find a reason be grateful?

**Reflections**

* Why do you find it difficult to live a grateful life?
* Psalm 103 is full of praise. One commentator (Paul Mallard) calls it, ‘a request-free zone.’ For a few days try copying the psalmist and only pray prayers of praise and gratitude. What changes, if any, do you notice in your behaviour, relationship with God, and attitude towards your problems?
* Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise th e Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits’ (Psalm 103:1-2). Pray through this Psalm, personalize each verse as you think of all the benefits that you can be grateful to God for.