

The Power and Liberty of Gratitude (Phil. 4:4-7)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Complaining damages relationships—marriage, family, and friendships. Complaining is not a personality type, but a way of processing information. It is a mindset that anyone can change.
- ¹⁴Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵that you may become blameless and harmless...[and] shine as lights in the world. (Phil. 2:14-15)***
1. Complaining is a mindset that focuses on the short-term negative pressures in our life more than on the long-term positive blessings in our life.
 2. Complaining is based on a feeling that we deserve to be treated better by God or people. It is based on idealism about how good our circumstances or relationships should be.
 3. Complaining gives expression to accusations against God and others (Rev. 12:10). Gratitude gives expression to agreement with God releasing His presence and liberty.
 4. Complaining emphasizes *what we do not have* rather than *what we have*—especially the *wealth that we have in Christ*.
- B. Gratitude is a mindset based on seeing that Jesus has given us much more than what we deserve.
1. We are accepted by God and receive His favor as a gift. We are fully and freely forgiven!
 2. God dwells in us forever—the *indwelling Spirit* enables us to commune with God as honored members of His family. We are sons of God and the Bride of Christ who partner with Him forever. He delights in His people and enjoys His relationship with them.
 3. We are sons of the resurrection (Lk. 20:36). What we do in this life has continuity in the resurrection. When we stand before the Lord, we will see how important we are to the Lord, how we were not forgotten, and how our life impacted others
 4. Jesus' leadership is so wise, generous, kind, and merciful. He evaluates our life, defines our success, and measures our fruitfulness by grace. He values our small deeds and efforts to love, serve, and obey Him.
 5. Our small deeds so move Him that He rewards us for them (Mt. 10:42). He gives far greater rewards than we deserve. He rewards *so well* because He is *so kind*. This makes every day relevant and valuable as we do God's will.
 6. He defines our primary success in life as being ones who are loved by God and who love Him. My confession is "*I am loved by God and I love God; therefore, I am successful.*"

- C. Paul promised peace to any who will cultivate a spirit of gratitude in their life (Phil. 4:4-7).
⁴Rejoice in the Lord always...⁵Let your gentleness [graciousness] be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:4-7)
1. ***Rejoice in the Lord always*** (4:4)—to call to mind or focus on seeing what God sees when He looks at our life. Rejoicing in the Lord, gratitude, and giving thanks to God exhibit the same mindset. Gratitude is foundational to Christian living. It is at the heart of worship.
 2. ***The Lord is at hand*** (4:5)—the Lord’s eyes are on us and He intervenes in our life according to His way and timing. Gratitude releases the Lord’s presence in our life.
 3. ***Be anxious for nothing*** (4:6)—we war against anxiety with gratitude. Satan, the accuser, cannot work effectively in the presence of gratitude.
 4. ***By prayer, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*** (4:6)—those who cultivate a mindset of gratitude will pray with greater faith, consistency, and joy.
 5. ***The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds*** (4:7)—there is a strong link between a mindset of gratitude and peace in our emotions.
 6. ***Let your gentleness be known to all men*** (4:5)—we are called to express the same graciousness to others that we have received freely from the Lord.
- D. Foundational to a strong family is the intentional cultivation of gratitude in the family culture.

II. GROWING IN A SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE

- A. Ingratitude is the result of taking lightly the wealth of God’s goodness given to us.
⁴Or do you despise [take lightly] the riches of His goodness... not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance (Rom. 2:4)
- B. The Lord sees His glory in His people even though much of it is hidden from us in this age.
³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:3-4)
- C. The testimony of the seraphim is that the whole earth is filled with God’s glory (Isa. 6:3).
³And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy...the whole earth is full of His glory!” (Isa. 6:3)
- D. Renewing our mind includes interpreting our life through the “lens of grace”—it is how we evaluate our life, measure our success, see our future, process our failures, and value others.
²...be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Rom. 12:2)