
THANKFUL

Thanks and Giving

What's the key to experiencing God's perspective on giving? What do we need to practice in order to be able to experience the blessing of giving cheerfully and enjoy giving more than receiving?

Thankful People Thank God

Thankful people seem to have a basic understanding that everything they have isn't theirs but comes from God and they are thankful to Him for that.

Every good thing comes from God (James 1:17). Thankful people believe that not only everything they have comes from God but also belongs to God, they don't own it. It's all under management. The master owns it all. God is the owner.

A grateful heart returns praise to God during both times of trial and blessing. When we fail to praise God for His blessings, we make fertile soil for poisonous seeds of pride in our hearts. When we instead return God's blessings as praise, we make fertile soil for God to do abundantly more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Realising God is the source of our good comes with many benefits. In Romans, it tells us, *everything comes from God and exists by His power and is intended for His glory* (Romans 11:36). When we recognise that God is at the source of everything, we cannot help but be thankful to Him, and it shows in how we then live towards others so that God would receive the glory.

Not only do we become more thankful when we realise we're not spinning up the good in our lives, but we become:

- + less anxious about loss
- + better at caretaking what we have been given
- + more generous in giving and
- + less susceptible to pride

What kind of difference would it make if we all stopped every day to be thankful to God, to simply say thanks to God for His goodness. Not just for the good things, experiences, and people, but just for who He is. Asking Him to fill our hearts and minds with thankfulness for our relationship with Him and all that comes from Him.

Thankful People are Content

"I Won't Let What I Want Rob Me of What I Have."

You see, contentment and gratitude aren't identical, but they are related. Contentment lives somewhere near the beginning of the path toward a more grateful perspective (Ecclesiastes 6:9).

A grateful perspective realises God gave us the good we have, responds with praise, and then believes God's good is enough (Philippians 4:11-13).

Thankful People are Transformed People

There are a lot of very generous people in the world, but nothing compares to the generosity of Jesus. Jesus is the most generous person who ever lived. He left the comforts of heaven, took on human flesh, and gave His life on the cross so that we might live in Him.

In response to Jesus' generosity, we are called to be generous. But that requires some transformation to go on in our hearts and minds (Luke 19:1-10).

There's only one way we can be generous like Jesus: pursue Jesus.

When we stop and ponder what we have been saved from and we grow in our understanding of how He has radically saved us, it's then we experience a transformation that brings about a thankfulness and a newfound generosity.

Thankful People are Cheerful Givers

We give to bless others out of the overflow of a thankful heart to God. Thankful people experience great joy in their giving (2 Corinthians 9:7) and do so out of love for God and a desire to help those in need.

Cheerful giving is about a heart attitude that flows from thankfulness, not the amount which you give. Cheerfulness is that inner desire to bless another as you give, to willingly release something that you are a steward of in order to bless another.

Wouldn't it be great if Riverlife was increasingly known within our community as a generous church. Where our community would observe us as a church family who are:

- + Thankful to God in all circumstances
- + Content with what we have
- + Who have experienced a transforming work of Jesus that results in generosity
- + And who are known for giving cheerfully.

Discussion Questions

1. James 1:17 says every good gift comes from God. Do our words and attitudes agree with it? One way to find out is to ask, "Is it obvious to others that I believe God is the provider of everything good in my life?"

2. Try this exercise whenever you need to strengthen your thankfulness. Think of something or someone good you have. Now, work backwards until you find God as the source of that good thing. Give Him thanks.

3. How do we keep discontentment from robbing us of the realisation of God's all-sufficient provision?

4. What habits can you implement to build a lifestyle of thankfulness towards God?

5. Read through Luke 19:1-10. What stands out to you about Zacchaeus' meeting with Jesus. Discuss how transformation of the heart leads to transformed actions. How might this relate to you and thanksgiving?

6. It's not too late as an individual or as a Life Group to show God's love this Christmas by donating items and building hampers for those in our community. What can you do to contribute?