

## Rising Above Ingratitude

- What will you be doing six months from now? Maybe it's hard to imagine, given how turbulent life can be, but I'd guess you'll be thinking quite a bit about sitting around the Thanksgiving table eating turkey and cranberry sauce. That's right, six months from now, we'll be giving thanks!
- But it seems like we reserve conversations about what we're grateful for only during that holiday in November. With the pandemic, politics, and the various difficulties we've faced the past few years, gratitude might be furthest from your mind.
- Let's take a few minutes to talk about how our thankfulness is stolen from us and what we can do to keep it alive all year round! We're **Rising Above Ingratitude** today.

### Distraction vs. Alertness

- **Distraction** leaves us too busy to see God's blessings all around us (Luke 17:11-19). We can get so caught up in all of life's chaos that there's little time to stop and consider how your life has changed.
- But **Alertness** causes us to stop and thank God for all we enjoy (Col. 3:17; 4:2). Whatever we do, wherever we go, we give thanks to the Lord along the way. Our eyes are continually open to both the incredible and every day gifts God gives to us.
- **The Challenge:** Go on a "gratitude walk" looking for God's blessings.

### Discouragement vs. Acceptance

- **Discouragement** over life's troubles robs us of our joy (Matt. 13:22). We fill our hearts and words with complaining over all the ways things haven't worked out how we thought they should.
- But **Acceptance** leads us to give thanks in all of life's circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18; Phil. 4:4-8). Though we may not give thanks FOR everything, we give thanks IN everything. We thankfully rejoice in the Lord always, even during times of trouble.
- **The Challenge:** Ask someone, "How does loss open you to gratitude?"

### Deception vs. Acknowledgement

- **Deception** blinds us to God's power in our lives (Rom. 1:21). We forget to show the Lord honor and gratitude when we foolishly act like that there is no God.
- But **Acknowledgement** helps us honor God, seeing his goodness through blessings (James 1:16-18; 1 Tim. 4:4). For every incredible gift we have, we recognize the source. And for those gifts, we continually thank him for providing us what we don't deserve!
- **The Challenge:** Pray, "Let me see your grace all around me, Lord, and overflow with thanksgiving" (cf. Col. 2:7).

## **Disdain vs. Assistance**

- **Disdain** for others leads us to pridefully compare our situation with others' lives (Luke 18:11-12). It's a hidden bear-trap that leads us to think that we're better than others because of what we have that they don't.
- But **Assistance** binds us together in sharing and sacrificial love (2 Cor. 4:15; 9:11-12). As we share the gospel, our collective thankfulness grows as well. And when we share our money, time, and possessions, we honor each other and create more reason to be grateful.
- **The Challenge:** Ask yourself, "What changes in me when I decide to live in gratitude the joy of serving others?"

## **Conclusion**

- If you've lost your joy and are looking to find it again, being grateful for God's incredible blessings may be the ticket to helping pull you out of that terrible rut.
- Stay alert to opportunities to be thankful, accept life's circumstances as opportunities to grow, acknowledge God's blessings toward you, and assist others through your sacrificial service.
- The devil doesn't want you to be content and thankful for life's difficulties. Will you rise above ingratitude to praise God for all he's done?