

DEVELOPING A GRATEFUL mindset

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 ...give
thanks in all circumstances; for this
is God's will for you in Christ Jesus...

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Gratitude does not come from our conditions or situation or getting what we want. It comes from the condition and attitude of the heart. There are people who have much and are still entitled and ungrateful, and people who have very little and are grateful for what they *do* have!

Gratitude is more than just saying "thank you," it's a learned mindset or behavior that keeps our hearts in tune with God. In fact, Paul even connects thankfulness to God's plan for our lives in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this (giving thanks) is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Grumbling and complaining seem to be a "national pastime!" Because the world's behavior can easily seep into the church, the church is not without fault.

The result of Israel's constant murmuring.

1. The Old Testament is clear about Israel's constant grumbings and how that ultimately destroyed an entire generation!

- 1 Corinthians 10:6-10 *Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did... And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.* The Greek word for "grumble" is to murmur, complain under one's breath, to express displeasure in a low, muttering way.

2. Here are a few of Israel's main seasons of murmuring and complaining. Although God's response may seem harsh at a casual glance, He had to put up with this at every turn. Although they had seen God's great and mighty power, their hearts were NEVER thankful and they never trusted Him in the difficulties. Here are only a few times...

- Right after the miraculous deliverance from Egypt's slavery, Israel grumbled against God and Moses at Marah because the water was bitter. (Exodus 15:22-25) They then grumbled against Moses because of the lack of food (Exodus 16:1-4), and then again because of thirst at Rephidim. (Exodus 17:1-7)
- Israel repeatedly complained about their hardships and then about the miraculous bread called "Manna." Even Moses grumbled before God over the burden of leading His people. (Numbers 11:1-15)
- Moses' sister and brother (Miriam and Aaron) also grumbled against Moses and his leadership! (Numbers 12:1-9)
- But the reality of Israel's constant behavior (grumbling) is embodied in Deuteronomy 1:26-28 *You grumbled in your tents and said, "The LORD hates us; so He brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us."*

3. **Israel's turning point in Numbers 14:26-35** | When the spies came back and refused to believe God's promise of the land He had sworn to give through Abraham, they stirred up the whole nation against God and Moses. That's when God finally stepped in and brought judgment by sending Israel into their forty years wilderness of wandering until that entire unbelieving generation passed away. Their ungratefulness turned a short journey into four decades of wandering. Then a new generation, led by Joshua, received the promise of Canaan.

*Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts
on evil things as they did... (1 Corinthians 10:6-10)*

*Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure...
shining like stars in the sky. (Philippians 2:14-15)*

The power of thanksgiving.

1. **God responds to a grateful heart!** In Philippians 4:6-7 we read that we can receive the peace of God in every situation when our prayer includes thanksgiving!
2. **Thanksgiving positions our spirit to receive from God.** A grateful heart says, "LORD, I trust You IN the challenge... and before I see the answer!" God moves where there is trust in His character and in His power. When our mindset is stuck in complaining, fear, or anxiety, our eyes stay locked on the problem. But when we pray with gratitude, our focus shifts to the One who is greater than the problem! Thanksgiving becomes a declaration of faith that ushers in the peace of God and creates a victorious mindset in hardships.
 - When Jehoshaphat placed the worshipers in front of the army he was declaring his gratitude for God's power over a very real threat. As they began to thank God, God fought the battle for them, and they experienced a great, miraculous victory! (2 Chronicles 20:12-22)
 - Jesus gave thanks *before* multiplying the small loaves and few fish and 1,000s were fully fed! (Matthew 14:19, 15:35-39)
 - Paul and Silas began to sing and give thanks *in* prison and in stocks. As they worshiped, the prison shook, doors opened, and their chains fell. Gratitude shifted their eyes from the prison to a powerful and compassionate God. (Acts 16:25-26)
3. **But most importantly, God desires that we enter His presence joyfully, with a grateful heart.** This is clear in many different parts of the Bible but none clearer than in Psalm 100 *Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. ...Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*
 - This is also taught in Matthew 6:10 in the disciples prayer pattern, *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...* We enter with praise, fitting for the King of kings!

Making it real | In Luke 10:21, when the disciples returned, Jesus said that He saw Satan fall from heaven as lightening. Because of their victory, Jesus "rejoiced in the Spirit." The word "rejoiced" is extremely visible, meaning to leap or twirl with joy. Jesus' gratitude for the Father's grace produced a visible, powerful response! **Gratefulness isn't just an emotion, it's a lifestyle we develop.** In every emotional, physical, or demonic challenge, we choose either to grumble or to give thanks. When gratitude becomes our mindset, we step into real victory.