



"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

—William Arthur Ward

20-Nov-20

## The Importance of Appreciation

Driving down the street near work several years ago, I saw something that really made an impression on me. Three bicyclists stood near the crosswalk, so I stopped and let them cross in front of my car. As they walked their bikes across the street, the father waved his hand in thanks. The teenager with him imitated his action, and his younger son also politely waved to add his appreciation.

The man set a good example for his sons, and his action also inspired me. For us as part of the Body of [Christ](#), in addition to thanking [God](#) for all He does, it is a godly principle to take time to consider the kind acts of others and let them know we appreciate them.

Acronyms can be a great teaching tool, so we will use the phrase "thank you" to reflect on a few principles regarding our Christian responsibilities and conduct in terms of expressing gratitude.

*T* stands for **Think**. The English word "thank" is from the Latin word *tongre*, and its root, *tong-*, means "think." With this in mind, we can consider that our expression of gratitude to another says to them, "I will think about and

remember what you have done for me." So, we need to think about what and why someone has done something for us and then offer them sincere gratitude.

*H* is for **Humility**. In her article, "[Gratitude and Humility](#)," Leigh DeMoss writes, "One of the fundamental qualities invariably found in a grateful person is humility. Gratitude is the overflow of a humble heart, just as surely as an ungrateful, complaining spirit flows out of a proud heart."

She observes that proud people tend to be the center of their own universe: "They think much of themselves and little of others." God opposes the proud and sets Himself against them, but He favors the humble ([James 4:6](#)). Verse 10 calls on us to "humble [ourselves] in the sight of the Lord, He will lift [us] up." A humble heart enables us to realize that we are not self-made and that we owe whatever successes we have achieved, not only to God, but also to the work and efforts of many others.

Humility reminds us that no one lives his or her life in a vacuum, and that life is more than just about us.

*A* signifies **Appreciation**. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines *appreciation* as "the recognition and enjoyment of the good qualities of someone or something." Its root indicates setting a price or value on a thing as an appraiser does. Its synonyms are "admiration," "regard," and "esteem."

[Philippians 2:3](#) instructs, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself." If we learn to appreciate others, we place a high value on others and acknowledge their effort, sacrifice, and service toward us.

*N* reminds us of **Need**. Yes, expressing gratitude is important for others' emotional well-being, but it is also important to us and our *spiritual* well-being. Dennis Prager, a conservative radio talk show host, said in one of his fireside chats, "The need for gratitude . . . is so powerful, that it is not possible to be happy if we are not grateful." He asserts, "It is not possible to be a good person, if we are not grateful." In this vein, clergyman Kenneth Myer writes:

What would happen to our demeanor if we followed Paul's example—being consciously and intentionally thankful, telling God, and telling others? It couldn't help but make us better people; turn us from grumbling into grateful, shift our eyes from things that are bad to things and people that are very good.

Also, it is a proven fact that having a grateful attitude can help us live a healthier life! Offering thanks is something we *need* to do, beneficial to us both physically and spiritually.

*K* stands for **Kindness**, a virtue we should never neglect or take for granted. Two verses highlight that we should thank someone for their kind acts. In [Ruth 1:18](#), Naomi says to Ruth, "And may the LORD reward you for your **kindness**," when the latter pledged to return with her to the land of Israel. David says something similar to the men who buried Saul and Jonathan:

You are blessed of the LORD, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him. And now may the LORD show kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing. ([II Samuel 2:5-6](#))

We need to reflect on and acknowledge the kindness that others have done on our behalf.

*Y* reminds us that appreciation for others takes the focus off **You**. Dr. Richard J. Krejcir writes in "[The Character of Appreciation](#)":

**Appreciation . . .** is a form of valuing others; this takes the focus off you and places it on God's purpose and direction. It is fueled from our heartfelt thanks to God for what we have, for what He has done, and is a lifestyle of worship and adoration. This allows us to give to, and value others with respect and honor. . . . Pride will not allow you to be appreciative of others, because all you will think of is yourself. You will not be concerned with how others have contributed or supported, or their value and significance. [Pride] is

thinking *I achieved something totally on my own*, when it was actually God, along with others working in and with you.  
(Emphasis his.)

We must acknowledge the help and input of others, taking the spotlight off ourselves.

*O* signifies our **Obligation**. We are obliged to praise, thank, and glorify God in everything, and we are generally willing to do so. Yet, we often fail to recognize giving thanks to others as an obligation, but we need to honor them for their help, however small or large it may have been. We need to develop a mindset of gratitude and thankfulness.

U is for **Unity**. Gratitude promotes unity. In [I Corinthians 12:12-20](#), Paul writes that every person God calls has a purpose, and all are needed. When we remember that we are all of one Body, we realize that we all need one another for success. This is true in other areas of our lives too. Appreciation given and received creates a bond that can be effective in helping any group to accomplish its goals because everyone works together in mutual esteem.

Before his premature death, thirteen-year-old Matthew "Mattie" Stepanek wrote, "Unity is strength. When there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved." When we put others before ourselves in gratitude and humility, the fruit is [peace](#) and unity. It promotes oneness with God and with others.

As Thanksgiving approaches, please reflect on the principles found in this "T-H-A-N-K Y-O-U" acronym. Expressing sincere appreciation for one another will please God and produce good fruit for the church and for each of us.

- John Reiss

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**From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

## **The Spirit of Gratitude**

by Charles Whitaker (1944-2021)

Ingratitude is one of the most common as well as one of the most egregious sins. Proper thanksgiving and the spirit of gratitude are necessities of life. Pride, the kind demonstrated by Nebuchadnezzar when he boasted about what he had accomplished, militates against any feelings of gratitude. Thanksgiving begins with a mindset to see, appreciate, and recognize God. To not recognize God is tantamount to idolizing the self. The spirit of thanksgiving involves a spirit of sacrifice, sacrificing our ego, sacrificing our own lives, and our prideful self-sufficiency, yielding to God's calling out into the body of Christ. The apostle Paul admonishes us repeatedly to be thankful for our shelter in Christ's spiritual body.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **Ingratitude**

by Mark Schindler

Why do some people gripe, complain, and feel slighted even when others have jumped through hoops to smooth their way? The answer may be ingratitude. A reluctance to thank others - particularly God - for their help reveals a self-centered and inconsiderate attitude. In recounting a personal story, Mark Schindler shows how ingratitude can stifle and eventually derail our relationship with God if we let it.

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