

What Does the Bible Say About Gratitude?

An ungrateful heart is one of the most common sins, and one of the least confessed. We take a thousand mercies for granted and then complain about the one thing we lack. The Bible calls for the opposite, a heart full of thanksgiving, and it treats ingratitude not as a small flaw but as a mark of a heart turned away from God. Let us see what the Scriptures say about giving thanks.

Give Thanks in Everything

Thanksgiving is not merely encouraged. It is commanded. *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you"* ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)). Paul wrote elsewhere of *"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"* ([Ephesians 5:20](#)). Notice the scope, in every thing and for all things. Not only when life is easy and the news is good, but always, because there is never a moment when we lack reason to thank God.

Thanklessness Is a Sin

We do not usually think of ingratitude as wickedness, but the Bible does. Describing how men fell away from God, Paul wrote, *"when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful"* ([Romans 1:21](#)). Ingratitude was near the root of their ruin. And among the marks of a corrupt last age, he listed people who would be *"unthankful, unholy"* ([2 Timothy 3:2](#)). A thankless heart is not neutral. It is a heart that has stopped seeing God behind its blessings.

Come Before God With Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is to shape the way we approach God. *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise"* ([Psalm 100:4](#)). Even our asking is to be wrapped in gratitude, for Paul said to make our requests known *"by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving"* ([Philippians 4:6](#)). The person who comes to God always asking and never thanking has forgotten who has been carrying him all along.

Thanks in Word and Song

Gratitude is meant to be spoken, not merely felt. *"O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever"*, the psalmist wrote, and then urged, *"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so"* ([Psalm 107:1-2](#)). Paul told the church, *"whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all*

in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" ([Colossians 3:17](#)). The Hebrew writer called our praise *"the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" ([Hebrews 13:15](#))*. A grateful heart does not stay quiet. It says so, to God in worship and to others in witness.

Where Are the Nine?

Jesus once healed ten lepers, and only one came back to thank Him. *"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God"*, and Jesus asked, *"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" ([Luke 17:15-18](#))*. All ten received the same mercy. Only one had a thankful heart. That is often the proportion, even among the deeply blessed. Gratitude is rare, and the Lord notices both its presence and its absence.

A Thankful Heart Sees Rightly

Gratitude is finally a way of seeing. The thankful person recognizes that *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" ([James 1:17](#))*, and so he counts his blessings instead of nursing his grievances. The unthankful person, surrounded by gifts, sees only what he lacks and is never satisfied. Two people can have the very same life, and one is rich with gratitude while the other is poor with complaint. The difference is not in their circumstances but in their hearts.

Always Something to Be Thankful For

Even when much has been taken away, the Christian still holds the greatest gift of all. *"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" ([2 Corinthians 9:15](#))*, Paul wrote of Christ, and again, *"thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([1 Corinthians 15:57](#))*. Whatever else may be lost, no one can take away the salvation, the hope, and the Lord Himself. So cultivate a thankful heart on purpose. It is commanded, it guards the soul against bitterness, and the Christian, of all people, has the most to be thankful for.

Every Scripture reference in this study links to the King James Version. Open it and read for yourself.