

Introduction:

Four Pillars of Grace: Main foundational principles that can attract God's grace into our lives. These pillars oppose worldly wisdom and values and today we focus on Thankfulness as opposed to the world's approach of competition and dissatisfaction.

This Matters because Thankfulness leads to blessing in mental/emotional well-being, relationships, and our relationship with God

Point 1: It's Commanded by God 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- If God commands it, we have the ability to do it
- Practical Example: Christian response to salary increase

Point 2: It's Good for You Philippians 4:6-7

- Modern Scientific Research: Universities worldwide studying gratitude's benefits
- Nervous System Understanding:
 - Sympathetic System: Fight or flight, stress hormones, danger response
 - Parasympathetic System: Rest, well-being, connection, love hormones
 - Key Discovery: These systems don't work together - one activates, the other shuts down in certain circumstances
- Entitlement Effect: Triggers sympathetic (stress) system
- Thankfulness Effect: Activates parasympathetic (well-being) system
- Biblical Confirmation: Philippians 4:6-7 - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"
- Long-term Benefits: Guards against future stress, pain, and trauma

Point 3: It's Necessary for Your Relationship with God Romans 1:20-22, 28

- The Fatal Choice in response to creation: Romans 1:20-21 - "Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful"
- The Consequences of Unthankfulness:
 - Futile thoughts
 - Darkened hearts
 - Becoming fools
 - Debased minds
- Garden of Eden Parallel: Satan's temptation focused on "you could have more" instead of gratitude - Gen 3:1-5
- Holy Spirit Connection: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 warns "do not quench the Holy Spirit"

Point 4: God's Power Flows Through Thankfulness

- Biblical Example: Acts 16 - Paul and Silas' thankfulness in prison - Acts 16:25
 - Circumstances: Beaten, tortured, chained, facing likely death sentence
 - Response: Thanked God with hymns and songs at midnight
 - Result: Earthquake freed all prisoners

- Universal Principle: God's power breaks into both personal life and circumstances through thankfulness
- David's Process: Psalm 103 - Speaking to his own soul
 - Self-Direction: "Bless the Lord, O my soul"
 - Remembrance: "Forget not all His benefits"
 - Benefits Listed: Forgiveness, healing, redemption, loving-kindness, satisfaction
 - Right Perspective: Comparing to what we deserve (nothing) rather than to others
 - Eternal View: Recognizing life's temporary nature and God's everlasting mercy

Point 5: The Contrast Between Thankfulness and Entitlement

- Ten Lepers Story: Luke 17:10-19
 - All ten healed, but only one returned with thanks
 - Jesus' response: "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"
 - Crucial Difference: The thankful one received "sozo" (salvation/eternal healing)
- Universal Blessing vs. Salvation: Everyone receives God's blessings, but only the thankful receive salvation
- Etymology of "Thank You":
 - Spanish "gracias" = grace
 - Italian "grazie" = grace
 - French "merci" = mercy
 - Portuguese "obrigado" = obliged for mercy
 - English "thanks" = related to "think" (change thoughts)
- True Thankfulness Requires:
 - Acknowledgment of receiving something good
 - Recognition of someone who has been good to you
- Enemies of Thankfulness:
 - Entitlement: "I deserve this"
 - Comparison: Measuring against others or expectations

Conclusion & Life Applications

Perspective Adjustment Exercises

- **Uniqueness Test:** "What if you were the only person in the world who had what you have?"
- **Loss Perspective:** "What if you were going to lose it tomorrow?"
- **Value Comparison:** "Would you trade waking up tomorrow for \$10 million?"
- **Conclusion:** Simply waking up is worth more than millions - have you been grateful for it?

Biblical Foundation for All-Circumstance Thankfulness

- **Recognition:** God didn't cause every circumstance but is present in all
- **Trust:** God uses all things to make us more like Him
- **Salvation Reality:** We deserve annihilation but receive love, forgiveness, grace, mercy, peace
- **Divine Promises:** God walks with us, lives in us, never leaves us, works all things for good

The Challenge

- **Implement:** Put this pillar of grace into daily life
- **Practice:** Start being thankful in everything and for everything
- **Promise:** This practice will change your life
- **Counter-Cultural Choice:**
 - World says: Be unhappy, complain, compare, compete, try to get more
 - God says: Be thankful and watch His blessing and presence flood in

Daily Application

- Speak to your soul like David did in Psalm 103

- List God's benefits and blessings regularly
- Thank God for His presence in every circumstance
- Adjust comparisons from others/expectations to what you actually deserve
- Choose gratitude over entitlement in daily situations
- Remember that thankfulness is the pathway to experiencing God's grace and power

Scriptures Used in this talk:

1Th 5:18-19 NKJV - "18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit."

Phi 4:6-7 NKJV - "6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Rom 1:20-22, 28 NKJV - "20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, ... 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;"

Gen 3:1-5 NKJV - "1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'' 2 And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

Act 16:25 NKJV - "25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."

Eph 5:20 NKJV - "20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Psa 103:1-4 NKJV - "1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,"

Psa 103:5-6, 10-14 NKJV - "5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed. ... 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

Psa 103:15-17 NKJV - "15 As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more. 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,"

Luk 17:10-19 NKJV - "10 "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' " 11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then

as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 "Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.""