

The Pillar of Thankfulness

Introduction:

Pillars of Grace are foundational principles that can attract God's grace into our lives and that we can build our lives around. These pillars often oppose worldly wisdom and values.

Thankfulness leads to blessing, mental/emotional well-being, better relationships, and benefits our relationship with God.

Point 1: Thankfulness is God's Command and Design 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- If God commands it, we can do it
- Research proves gratitude activates well-being systems and reduces stress:
 - Entitlement triggers fight-or-flight (stress hormones)
 - Gratitude activates rest-and-connect (well-being hormones)
- Biblical Confirmation: Philippians 4:6-7 - Thanksgiving brings God's peace that "passes understanding" and "guards" our hearts and minds.

Point 2: Thankfulness Brings God's Power & Presence Romans 1:20-22, 28

- Romans 1:21 - Those who "knew God" but "were not thankful" had darkened hearts
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 warns unthankfulness "quenches the Holy Spirit"
- Acts 16 - Paul and Silas thanked God in prison, earthquake freed all prisoners
- Luke 17 - Only the one healed leper who returned with thanks received "sozo" (salvation)

Point 3: Practical Gratitude Transforms Perspective

- Etymology of Thanks: All languages connect gratitude to grace, mercy, and changed thinking
- Enemies of Thankfulness:
 - Entitlement: "I deserve this"
 - Comparison
- Right Comparison: What we deserve (nothing) vs. what we've received (everything)
- Perspective Exercises: "What if you were the only person with what you have?" "What if you lost it tomorrow?" Simple fact: Waking up tomorrow is worth more than millions
- David's Example: Psalm 103 - Speaking to his soul, listing God's benefits, adjusting perspective

Conclusion & Life Applications

- All-Circumstance Gratitude: Thank God for His presence in every situation, even if He didn't cause it - Eph 5:20
- The Choice: World's way (complain, compare, compete) vs. God's way (be thankful and watch His blessing flood in)

Questions

1. What's one thing you have right now that you'd be devastated to lose tomorrow? Have you thanked God for it recently?
2. Think of a recent frustrating situation - how might your response have been different if you had focused on thanking God for being present in it rather than complaining about it?
3. The sermon mentions we often compare ourselves to others or to what we think we deserve. What would change in your daily attitude if you compared your life to what you actually deserve (nothing) versus what God has given you?