

The Encouragement Newsletter

Give Thanks....

With a Grateful Heart!

A singer named Don Moen sings a song called, "Give Thanks With a Grateful Heart". The powerful lyrics are -

**Give Thanks, with a grateful heart
Give Thanks, to the Holy One
Give Thanks, because He's given Jesus Christ His Son
And now, let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich because of what the Lord
has done for us"
Give Thanks**

I have ministered this song both privately and publicly many times, but over the last few days or weeks, I have been really meditating on this song and the things I am thankful for despite the challenges I may be facing. One day, as I was reflecting on this song, some of the lyrics became more pronounced. The portion of the song that says, "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart" caused me to ponder. The question, "Is it possible to Give Thanks, with an Ungrateful Heart?", came to my mind. To answer the question, I needed to dig a little. Although I may know the meaning of a word, I am often intrigued when I search a definition and find the word means much more than I thought. Looking up the words, "Give," "Thanks" and "Grateful", I found the following on Dictionary.com.

Give - To present voluntarily and without expecting compensation; To bestow

Thanks - To express gratitude, appreciation, or acknowledgment to

Grateful - Warmly or deeply appreciative of kindness or benefits received; Thankful; Expressing or actuated by gratitude

So, "Is it possible to Give Thanks, with an Ungrateful Heart?" The heart is the seat of our emotions and our expressions flow from it; with this in mind, I would have to venture to say, "Yes, it is possible to Give Thanks, with an Ungrateful Heart". Imagine a child who is given something like a cupcake and the parent says, "Say Thank You". The child quickly says "Thank You" and runs off. This is what I call mechanics. Or, saying, "Thank You" because you were told to do so. The words, though said voluntarily, do not come with much expression of appreciation. We are, at times, just like this child in our response to our Heavenly Father. We give a mechanical "Thank You" without a deep appreciation and gratitude for His goodness and benefits He has given to us as His sons and daughters. We are often frustrated, mad, and disappointed because things have not go according to our expectations, plans and sometimes our prayers. When we respond with the mechanical, "Thank You", we are responding in an unbiblical way. Check out these three scriptures.

Psalm 103:1-2 says, **Bless** (which is translated ***Barach, which means to salute, congratulate, Thank, praise and to kneel down*) the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O My soul and forget not all His benefits.

Psalm 105:1 says, "Oh Give Thanks unto the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples!

Psalm 106:1 says, "Oh Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His Mercy endures forever".

Actually, you may want to read each chapter to get the full context. For now, these verses tell us a few things— 1) **The action to take** - Give Thanks and to

make known His deeds; 2) **How** – With all that is within me; and 3) **Why** – His mercy endures forever. There are no contingencies like, “If God does this, then Give Thanks”. We are to **Give** Thanks because He is worthy and not because we are expecting anything in return. We just want to simply express gratitude and appreciation from the heart to the Mighty God we serve.

I started writing this a few days before Thanksgiving and did not complete it until today, but I believe it was for this reason. Our family’s Thanksgiving dinner was hosted by my oldest brother and his wife. Everyone was ready to eat, but after blessing the food, we took the time to go around the room and allow everyone (including the children) to expressed their thanks. As everyone shared, it was evident that some had been pressed on every side and we all had experienced life’s challenges in some way over the last 11 months; however, one thing rang true, we were willing to “Give Thanks” to God. As we go into the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season and think about the coming New Year, filled with the unexpected, I want to encourage you to **ALWAYS, Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart** to the Lord. Do not be the one who gives mechanical thanks because you are told, but let it come from an appreciative heart. Do not be like the nine men who were healed of leprosy, but did not give thanks for the miracle. Rather, be like one, who was cleansed and returned to Jesus to give thanks for the great thing He had done. *(Luke 17:11-19)*

Let me close with this, in everything, meaning in every situation of life, “Give Thanks”. Why? Because this is the will of God concerning you. *(1 Thessalonians 5:18)* No matter what, resolve from this moment on to **“Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart”**.

Thankful & Grateful,

Veronica B. McCray

Dear Readers,

I decided to end this newsletter with a note of Thanks to you, the reader, for the encouragement you have given me since I began writing in 2008. While I was on an unintended break, many readers inquired about the Encouragement Newsletter and asked if I was going to begin writing again. The answer was and still is...Yes! I will begin writing again because writing is not only a joy, but a calling from the Lord to encourage the people of God to continue in the faith. The last Encouragement Newsletter was written in 2018 and it was titled, “Focus”. I was definitely focused on completing a degree program and after that, a host of other things entered into my life and took away my time from writing. I am looking forward to sending the newsletter regularly and I plan to add more things to my website, theencouragement-place.com, in the very near future for the sole purpose of encouraging all who come to the Encouragement Place. Please stay tuned for many upgrades and updates.

Thankful & Grateful,

Veronica McCray

I Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.