

# Maturity in our gratitude

Philippians 4:10-20

Larry E. McCrary

*One of the marks of maturity as a Christ follower is having a grateful heart towards God and towards others.*

**Introduction:** Do you have a thankful heart?

Have you ever thought about how many times you say “thank you” each day?

Several years ago I really examined my prayer life. As I reviewed my prayer journal I was actually reminded of the story that Luke writes in his gospel. Luke 17:11-19:

## Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy

*<sup>11</sup> Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” <sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup> One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. <sup>16</sup> He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”*

Only one person came back in praise and thanksgiving for what Jesus did.

When God delivers us, heals us, spares us trouble upon trouble, we will often recognize this movement and say thank you, BUT what I want to get across this morning is about having a spirit of gratitude in our lives.

## 1. Acknowledging your gratefulness to the Lord (Phil. 4:10)

*<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.*

As you spend quiet time, reflection time in God's word and in His presence, do you express thankfulness for his provision to you and / or your family?

## 2. Being content in our life helps us not feel entitled and helps us embrace gratefulness (Phil. 4:11-13)

*<sup>11</sup> I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

Our true contentment comes from Christ and Christ alone.

When we center our lives on being content in Christ and in whatever circumstance we find ourselves, then we become less entitled and more grateful.

## 3. Letting others know your gratefulness makes a significant impact and is a gospel witness (Phil. 4:14-20)

*<sup>14</sup> Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. <sup>15</sup> Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup> for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. <sup>17</sup> Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*

The practical working out of your gratefulness is to demonstrate this as a way of life. People can know if you have a grateful heart or not. Being grateful is a witness.

When we say thanks it does not have to be just a learned behavior, but instead, us truly being thankful. Expressing our gratefulness for the kind gesture, the gift, the words or compliments. It is demonstrating our appreciation towards that person.