

An Attitude of Gratitude

Have you ever gone out of your way to do something special for someone and never received thanks for your help? Or perhaps you spent a lot of time, effort and money in selecting a special gift and never received a thank you? Somehow the lack of gratitude for your act of kindness or special gift took away some of the joy that you had in helping that one or giving that gift.

Jesus must have felt that same way when in Luke 17:12-19 we read the account of the healing of ten lepers of which only one returned to give thanks. What we may miss as we read the story is that the nine only received healing, but that the one who returned to thank Jesus for his healing received a second blessing. The Samaritan who returned to thank Jesus was not only healed but received salvation as well. The Samaritan was, of course, doubly grateful because he was twice outcast; one for being a Samaritan and once again for being a leper.

Expressing thanks and being grateful to those who have helped or blessed us in some way is a powerful vehicle to enlarge the hearts of both the one who helped and the one who was helped.

Recently I spent several hours making doll clothes for my granddaughter's birthday. It was a joy to do this for her and she amply thanked me when she opened her gift. However, the gratitude did not stop there because a few days later I received a carefully handwritten note from her thanking me again. I was double blessed and she has learned an important lesson, to be grateful to those who have done special things for her.

Now, the special gifts and deeds done may be easy to acknowledge, but what about the ways in which others help us that we have somehow come to expect and seldom feel a need to express gratitude for? Do we think to thank those who have spiritually enriched our lives; our pastor, teacher, counselor? Do we think to thank family members for the many things they do that are just part of the daily routine?

Wives, do you thank your husband for going to work everyday or for stopping at the store for you; or for mowing the lawn or for keeping the car in running condition?

Husbands, do you thank your wives for cooking, cleaning, doing the laundry?

Parents, do you thank your children when they obey, pick up their toys; complete their homework?

Do we remember to thank God everyday for life itself; for salvation (the greatest gift); for the world we live in; for the air we breathe; the clothes we wear; the food we eat and for His everlasting, never-ending love?

Or are we like the nine lepers? God does all these things and more besides and we seldom turn and thank Him. If that is true of you, then you have missed the greater blessing. For the greater blessing comes when we display to both God and others: An Attitude of Gratitude!