

**Announcements:**

- 1) This week and next we will meet 25 in each room, so welcome other room
- 2) Leadership retreat
  - 1) great time
  - 2) got a lot done; laughed a lot
  - 3) prayed
  - 4) went through the calendar
  - 5) Men's study by Tony Evans "Kingdom Man"
  - 6) We have a dream, pray with us
  - 7) Start service at 10:30, Sunday School at 9:30 still; think about it and give thoughts
  - 8) Membership class—every 4 months
- 3) Painting of sanctuary and hallway
- 4) Distance Learning
- 5) UVC donation

Have Keith read Psalm 30

## Thankful or Crushed? Proverbs 17:22

We are in a time that I believe is crucial for us to pay attention to this character trait: the character trait of having a thank-filled heart. We are in a day when so much is unsettled, divided, chaotic, untrustworthy, and absolutely frustrating.

- The news doesn't agree on the election
- There is dissension between Biden followers and Trump followers
- The Medical field doesn't agree on Covid. How many deaths are really Covid related? State government is mandating all kinds of regulations... some make sense, others don't. Who do we trust?
- Kids are suffering. Our older generations are at risk. Who do we protect?
- Parts of our community are living in fear, some are reckless
- Depression rates are skyrocketing. Is the economy bad or good?
- It gets real easy to hear of all the bad that is surrounding us and to then focus upon it and all the chaos.

All of this can easily crush the spirit. And it has for many. Is there a response? Is there a way to counter act? Is there anything we can do now that can actually bring strength to the wearied soul? The answer is **ABSOLUTELY!**

There was a study done of students about thankfulness that an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness actually improved life and outlook. The result was:

“Increases in gratitude over a four-year period were significantly related to improvements in life satisfaction, happiness, positive attitudes and hope.”

Researchers asked 700 students ages 10 to 14 to complete questionnaires about gratefulness...Here is what they found in comparing the 20% least grateful to 20% most grateful:

- gained 15 percent more of a sense of meaning in their life;
- become 15 percent more satisfied with their life overall (at home, at school, with their neighborhood, with their friends and with themselves);
- become 17 percent more happy and more hopeful about their lives;
- experienced a 13 percent drop in negative emotions and a 15 percent drop in depressive symptoms.

### **Giving thanks can transform your life.**

According to Psychology Today there are 7 scientifically proven benefits of gratitude:

Here are 7 scientifically proven benefits:

1. Gratitude opens the door to more relationships.
2. Gratitude improves physical health. Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains and report feeling healthier than other people, according to a 2012 study published in Personality and Individual Differences.
3. Gratitude improves psychological health. Robert Emmons, a leading gratitude researcher, has conducted multiple studies on the link between gratitude and well-being. His research confirms that gratitude effectively increases happiness and reduces depression.
4. Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression. Study participants who ranked higher on gratitude scales were less likely to retaliate against others, even when given negative feedback. They experienced more sensitivity and empathy toward other people and a decreased desire to seek revenge.
5. Grateful people sleep better.
6. Gratitude improves self-esteem.
7. Gratitude increases mental strength. For years, research has shown gratitude not only reduces stress, but it may also play a major role in

overcoming trauma. Recognizing all that you have to be thankful for—even during the worst times—fosters resilience.

There was a study done due to the rise in managed health care, they were looking for ways to help clients derive the greatest possible benefit from treatment in the shortest amount of time.

What did they find? Compared with the participants who wrote about negative experiences or only received counseling, those who wrote gratitude letters reported significantly better mental health four weeks and 12 weeks after their writing exercise ended.

And that's not all. When we dug deeper into our results, we found indications of how gratitude might actually work on our minds and bodies. While not definitive, here are four insights from our research suggesting what might be behind gratitude's psychological benefits.

1. Gratitude unshackles us from toxic emotions
  1. it was the lack of negative emotion words—not the abundance of positive words—that explained the mental health gap between the gratitude writing group and the other writing group.
2. Gratitude helps even if you don't share it
3. Gratitude's benefits take time
4. Gratitude has lasting effects on the brain

How we choose to respond in life makes a difference. And we do have a choice.

Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.

Proverbs 15:13

A joyful heart makes a cheerful countenance, but sorrow of the heart crushes the spirit.

Proverbs 16:24

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 16:24

Kind words are like honey— sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.

Proverbs 12:25

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.

Jesus says in Matthew to 'not be anxious or worry'. Why? Because it takes the focus off of what you have to centering it upon what you don't have.

Proverbs 18:14

The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but who can survive a broken spirit?

Psalms 34:18

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

What crushes a persons spirit?

focusing on Sin, unmet desires, loss. As soon as our sin or someone else's sin that affects us happens, a desire is not met, or we suffer loss, we are at a crossroads. One of the roads is Crushed Spirit lane and the other is Healing lane.

There is a prerequisite though in order to go on Healing lane. A heart that moves towards thankfulness. A heart that is willing to look at the blessings that God will bring in the midst of all that is going on. Healing in scripture is never devoid of scars. Healing resides in the midst of scars. Healing begins with seeing what you do have. Christians always have something to be thankful for.

Psalms 69

A psalm of David. It starts out 'save me O God' and verse 29-30 he says, "But as for me, afflicted and in pain— may your salvation, God, protect me." Listen to his intention and decision, what he chooses to do in adversity. "I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving."

We must stop looking at hard times as something bad, and realize they actually are for our good.

Romans 8:28 tells us “And we know that God causes everything to work together[a] for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.”

There is an outcome of trials

Romans 5:3-5

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

We are told that it is God’s will for us in Christ Jesus (1 Thess 5:18-20)

What is our response?  
to give thanks.

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Why give thanks?

1 Chronicles 16:34 - Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Hebrews 12:28

Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakeable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping Him with holy fear and awe.

What is the effect of giving thanks?

Colossians 3:15-17

And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or

say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

What you are thankful for matters. God is unchanging, always faithful, never-ending, doesn't lie. We can put hope in His promises. And because we can put hope in His promises, we can thank Him for what He is going to do. And when we can thank Him for what He is going to do, peace and joy will soon follow.

- Psalm 30:5 "Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning."
- Is there a time for sorrow? For grieving? Yes! But, it needs to be in the midst of, or at the very least shortly followed up with thanksgiving...or a crushing weight will begin to settle in on you.
- 2 Corinthians 4:17 "For our light and momentary affliction is producing for us an eternal glory that is far beyond comparison."
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The Christian always has something they can be thankful for. If you can't rise up and be thankful, then you ought to check what is on the throne of your life.

Not being thankful can move us to a place of idolatry. Either because we covet what we don't have or we are dissatisfied with God.

- In all its forms, coveting is a fruit of ingratitude.
- Complaining is a form of ingratitude. It is a result of a thankless heart. It is a result of being discontented, you feel you don't have something, something is missing. If you want something to complain about, complain about your sin. Be discontented with your unwillingness or weakness towards obeying God.

A thankful heart reveals hope.

A thankful heart is a heart fighting the good fight against pride.

A heart filled with pride can be thankful, but it will be thankful for itself only.

Being thankful points us to hope, it helps us to live with hope, and it brings healing.

And from prison in Rome, Paul encouraged the Philippians:

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. **His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.** And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise." Paul knew that even when our physical circumstances are dire, God is present and God is working for our good and His glory. Purposefully focusing on giving Him thanks opens the door to joy and peace even in the midst of heartache and struggle.