

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE (A WORSHIP SERVICE)

By

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Liberty University

A MASTER'S CURRICULUM PROJECT PRESENTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN WORSHIP AND MUSIC

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## Introduction

*“So then just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness”*.<sup>1</sup> The house of God should be overflowing with thankfulness. This overflow should begin in the parking lot and extend all the way inside the building. With the “Power of Gratitude” service, the plan is to outline a worship event that reminds God’s children of the blessings that He has given through His son, Jesus, and to provide a way for God’s children to worship Him with praise and gratitude. Jesus should be welcomed into the house of worship with the spirit of gratitude.

The methods, structure and outline of the following service are designed to condition the hearts of the worship leaders, build a solid service based on Biblical foundations and use modern media and music as a vehicle to speak to a contemporary generation of believers. The service is centered on thankfulness and gratitude and the service will be done on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This concept will use the calendar holiday as a springboard into worshipping and exploring the concept of gratitude. All worship leaders and tech assistants will participate in a four-week devotional study of thankfulness so that their hearts will be focused on gratitude. This study will extend to parking lot assistants and door greeters as well as to musicians and tech workers. Music, sound, lighting, video and live streaming will help the worship leaders communicate gratitude with proper sound mixing, lighting angles and video production. The

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

goal of the service is for all worshipers to leave the service with a renewed sense of gratitude for everything that God has blessed them with through His son, Jesus.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines worship as “reverence offered a divine being or supernatural power”.<sup>2</sup> In 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) it states that “...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is passed away; behold, the new has come.” Joshua 24:15-16 states that we must choose who to serve. These decisions reflect the spirit and truth of our worship. Worship is more than something we do at a given time and place. It involves our entire life, including our lifestyle. It is intended that every person involved with the preparation of the service to have already made decisions about how they will do their job expressing the overall theme of gratitude. From the parking lot to the auditorium it is intended that the congregation experience a welcome from the church and a spirit of thankfulness in worship.

## **Gratitude as a Part of Biblical History**

Who we are and why we are here in this earth has very little to do with our family, our career and our ambitions. Humans were created for God’s purpose, each one of us is a very important piece of the puzzle that makes up His creation. He has given us specific gifts, talents and perspectives that are different; however, they all work together to accomplish His goals and not necessarily our goals. So, when we make our goals fit His goals, we can move into a successful, fulfilling life. If believers constantly focus inwardly, they can never see what God has for His believers.<sup>3</sup> It is a given that we did not create ourselves, so with that understanding we

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<sup>2</sup> Merriam-Webster, s.v. “Worship”, accessed June 14 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worship>.

<sup>3</sup> Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002, 17.

must seek God so that we can be in His will for our lives.<sup>4</sup> Only the inventor knows what his invention is created to do, not the invention itself.<sup>5</sup> Our plans must be His plans and our goals must be His goals.

Humans are the “crown of God’s creation”.<sup>6</sup> He created Adam and Eve in His image. God instilled into Adam and Eve the desire to worship Him and enjoy His presence in their lives.<sup>7</sup> God was not interested in humans just “going through the motions” of worship, he wanted humans to have a genuine love for Him and want to freely express that love to Him through worship. It is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate how we can condition our hearts to worship out of gratitude, knowing the price He paid to adopt us into His family.

Adam walked with God in the garden and God brought every animal to Adam to name and have dominion over all the animals. None of the animals were suitable for Adam as a helper fit for him, so God made a woman out of Adam and brought her to him. When sin entered in everything changed. The animal skins of the first bloody sacrifice became the clothing that God provided for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness after they rebelled against God and ate the forbidden fruit. (Gen 3:21) The bloody sacrifice of Abel’s lamb was accepted by God as reported in Hebrews 11:4 NKJV “*By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and through it he being dead still speaks.*” The sacrificial lamb commanded to Israelites in Egypt was a picture of Jesus, “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*” (John 1:29 NKJV) Bloody sacrifice was God’s provision of atonement, a covering of man’s sin, and a picture of

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Vernon M. Whaley, & Elmer Towns, *Worship Through The Ages*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2012, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 12.

what God would ultimately do by sending His Son to die on the cross and take our sin and hell for us. Yes, His sacrifice gives us cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving.

It is seen with Cain and Abel that worship is more than just an obligation. Cain made his offering, however it was not acceptable, because he refused to do what God had asked of him. Cain had a chance to bring a bloody sacrifice as God had instructed, but refused and murdered his brother. (1 John 3:12 and Gen 4:6-7) Cain lured Abel to a field and killed him, eliminating the competition, so to speak. Cain's heart was not one of gratitude or true worship, it was full of anger and self-motivations and because of that God cursed him and his family and they wandered throughout the earth like nomads.<sup>8</sup>

Since creation, God has created us to fulfill a much larger eternal purpose, and the way we can begin to realize that purpose is to condition our hearts with thanksgiving and gratitude. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.* (Phil 4:6) Thanksgiving is the foundation of all worship, from the beginning in Genesis to the end written in Revelation.

Noah walked with God, worshipped Him and did everything God had commanded of him.<sup>9</sup> So Noah obeyed God by building an ark that would save him and eight of his family from the flood. One of the first things that Noah and his family did leaving the ark after the flood was to build an altar and offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. In Leviticus 22: 18, 29 this is referred to as a “freewill offering” which is an offering given out of thanksgiving to God voluntarily.<sup>10</sup> This was not a prescribed worship time or specific worship service. This offering

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<sup>8</sup> Vernon M. Whaley, & Elmer Towns, *Worship Through The Ages*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2012, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Gen 6:22(NIV).

<sup>10</sup> Erik Jones, *Noah Gives Thanks*, <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/bible/blog/noah-gives-thanks/>, (accessed May 24, 2020).

was evidence of a thankful heart, a heart that realized the provisions of God, a heart that worshipped God in spirit and in truth. Without a doubt, God had provided a way to save Noah and his family from the Universal Flood. God has also provided a way to save all from Hell who come to His Son Jesus in repentance and faith.

Jehoshaphat and his kingdom in Jerusalem were surrounded by a coalition of nations with the goal of destroying the people of Judah. Jehoshaphat's first reaction was to pray. not to sharpen his weapons, not to organize his leaders, not to develop a method of attack, Jehoshaphat's first reaction was to pray. Prayer put the focus where it should be. They prayed, gave thanks, sang songs of worship and waited on God for His response. 2 Chronicles 20:13 - 17 indicates that Jehoshaphat and his people were silent before the Lord as the Spirit of the Lord spoke through Jahaziel to the assembly.<sup>11</sup> God told them to go out and face their enemies tomorrow and the Lord would be with them.<sup>12</sup> Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing as they went into battle, "*Give thanks to the Lord for His love endures forever*".<sup>13</sup> Jehoshaphat's enemies eventually destroyed each other and the people of Judah walked into a battle that was "already won". They went before the army singing "*Give thanks to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever*" while walking into battle which set the condition of their hearts. Even when facing possible death, the people of Judah were thankful to God who had led them this far, and they knew that His purpose was their purpose, so there was no reason to fear. God won the battle for them and they did not even have to raise a sword. Thanksgiving created a condition of the heart that was pleasing to God.

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<sup>11</sup> Dwayne Moore, Pure Praise, Loveland, Colorado: Group, 2009, 75.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Chron. 20:17 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> 2 Chron. 20:21 (NIV)

David was very popular with the people and that caused King Saul to be very jealous. Saul and his army hunted David everywhere to kill him, eventually God delivered David from his enemies and made him king. Because “*David was a man after God’s own heart,*” (Acts 13:22) all of the surrounding nations claimed David as their king.<sup>14</sup> Upon Saul’s death, David sings a song of praise and thanksgiving in 2 Sam 22: 49-50, “*You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me. Therefore, I will praise you, Lord, among nations*”. The word praise here actually means thanksgiving.<sup>15</sup> David had a lot to be proud of and could have easily been a victim of pride from all that he had accomplished and his overwhelming popularity. Here we see the condition of David’s grateful heart, that he gave thanks to the one who made his success possible and focused the praise on God.

David made plans to build a great temple in Jerusalem which needed a massive amount of funds to accomplish.<sup>16</sup> When people heard of what David was doing, they gave very generously to the project. Here again, David immersed this success in prayers of thanksgiving. “*Honor and wealth come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.*”<sup>17</sup> In the Psalms, David wrote many songs of thanks to God for salvation and for

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<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Kranz, *Thankfulness in the Bible: the top Scriptures on gratitude*, <https://overviewbible.com/thankfulness/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Chron. 29:12 – 13 (NIV)



his righteous laws. *“I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.”*<sup>18</sup> *“At midnight I raise to give you thanks for your righteous laws”*.<sup>19</sup>

Daniel is a man of royal blood however he resolves to be faithful to God and His laws.<sup>20</sup> When King Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream, Daniel was there to interpret through the wisdom given to him from God. *“I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.”*<sup>21</sup> Daniel is eventually made ruler over all of Babylon’s wise men.<sup>22</sup> Notice how Daniel acknowledged the source of his wisdom, being careful not to assume credit for what God had given to him. Daniel made sure to be thankful for it.

Jesus had ten lepers call out to Him for healing. Lepers were outcasts from the community and had not even the slightest bit of social standing. As they called out for mercy from Jesus, He healed all of them however there was only one former leper who gave thanks to Jesus for the miracle. And to give the story even more spice, that former leper was a Samaritan. The very race of people that Jews were not allowed to associate with were looked upon with hostility and suspicion by Jews.<sup>23</sup> This was especially pointed out in Luke 17:16, where one of the healed lepers *“threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him – and he was a Samaritan”*.

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<sup>18</sup> Ps. 118:21 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> Ps. 119:62 (NIV)

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Kranz, *Thankfulness in the Bible: the top Scriptures on gratitude*, <https://overviewbible.com/thankfulness/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>21</sup> Dan. 2:23 (NIV)

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey Kranz, *Thankfulness in the Bible: the top Scriptures on gratitude*, <https://overviewbible.com/thankfulness/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>23</sup> Jurgen K. Zangenber, *The Samaritans*, <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/samaritans>, (Accessed May 24, 2020)

Having a spirit of thankfulness is not just for the religious class or the privileged race of people in power, it can be accessed by anyone. This is more impressive to God than your Biblical knowledge or your status in life.

Jesus makes a point to give thanks for the bread and fish before He fed the multitude. *“Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.”*<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus gave thanks again before the last supper. *“Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.”*<sup>25</sup> Though Jesus was God and He technically had a right to all of creation, He made a point to give thanks, not because He had to, Jesus wanted to show the condition of His heart and to be an example of worship. Many times, prayer before a meal becomes habit and done without any thought. Maybe it’s not done at all sometimes. Jesus used this “before the meal” prayer to show His heart to draw others to a worshipping spirit.

As Paul was aboard a ship that was about to meet a tragic end, he comforted everyone on board and assured them that no one will die in the events about to happen. Paul invites everyone to eat a meal so that they will have strength to swim ashore, if need be. In breaking the bread, Paul gave thanks. *“(Paul) took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all.”*<sup>26</sup> Again, in the face a danger, people of God give thanks because of their trust in God. Paul also thanked God for Christian friends who traveled to see him. *“At the sight of these people Paul thanked*

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<sup>24</sup> Matt. 15:36 – 37 (NIV)

<sup>25</sup> Mk 14:23 (NIV)

<sup>26</sup> Ac. 27:35 (NIV)

*God and was encouraged.”*<sup>27</sup> Many other times in the New Testament, Paul is thankful for his Christian friends. God has put special people in the path of His believers to help them, encourage them and pray for them, just when they needed it.

Paul shows a heart of great wisdom when he expresses thanks for the gift of tongues. *“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.”*<sup>28</sup> This expression of thanks almost foreshadows the centuries of debate in the church since this time over the gift of tongues. Here again we can see an expression of the heart through gratitude. Paul is thankful for the gift however he puts it in perspective, not to make others without the gift feel left out. It is possible to use gratitude to bring others up around you, instead of being so thankful for your personal blessings. Paul also encourages us to be thankful for our local gathering places of worship.

*“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*<sup>29</sup>

## **Biblical Command for Gratitude**

The Bible commands us to be thankful for God’s goodness. *“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever.”*<sup>30</sup> They sang this song when Asaph and his brothers were

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<sup>27</sup> Ac. 28:15 -16 (NIV)

<sup>28</sup> 1 Co. 14:18 – 19 (NIV)

<sup>29</sup> Col. 3:15 – 17 (NIV)

<sup>30</sup> Ps. 136:1 (NIV)

appointed by David to lead songs of thanksgiving at the tabernacle.<sup>31</sup> Asaph is credited for writing twelve Psalms. He was obviously a gifted musician and a trusted spiritual leader in the temple.

*“Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*<sup>32</sup> The opposite of thankfulness is entitlement. If humans are not thankful for something, they must think they are entitled to it or feel that they deserve it. After a hard week at work one might feel deserving of a paycheck, and that may be true, but does that mean one should not be thankful for it? When a person feels a sense of entitlement, it changes the attitude and it changes the condition of the heart, as well as relationships with others and relationship with God.

The worship of God comes from a grateful heart, so as the scripture says, be thankful for everything..<sup>33</sup> Humans are not created to go their own way and create their own successes, we were created to rejoice with God over the life that has been given. Life is not always wonderful, but God is using every part of life to accomplish His goals, and His goals are good and perfect.

*<sup>6</sup> “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*<sup>7</sup> When we pray with thanksgiving, we are praying in faith for however God answers our situation. God’s peace then is

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<sup>31</sup> Aubrey Buster, *Asaph and the Psalms*, <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/ask-a-scholar/asaph-and-the-psalms> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>32</sup> Eph 5:19 – 20 (NIV)

<sup>33</sup> David Jeremiah, *My Hearts Desire*, Nashville, TN:Thomas Nelson, 2002, 52.

like a garrison of soldiers guarding our hearts and minds. God's understanding is past what we can understand, so we must trust Him, and condition our hearts with thanksgiving for everything.

Being grateful in everything is much easier said than done, especially when things are not going so well. The overwhelming truth is that thankfulness is always in line with God's plan for life. A great example of this is the life of William Cowper, born in 1731. When he was six years old he watched his mother die, and since his father could not take care of him he was sent away to school.<sup>34</sup> William was abused and made fun of his entire life. As he grew up he went through two failed love relationships and tried to take his own life several times. He was eventually admitted to an asylum.<sup>35</sup> One day Cowper was visited by a relative that explained how Jesus had suffered and died for him. William related to Jesus' suffering and persecution. For the first time, he could see a ray of hope and understood that Jesus cared for him. Later, just before Cowper was released from the asylum, he found a pen and wrote these words "there is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains".<sup>36</sup> Through his gratitude to God, from the pain he had experienced his entire life, Cowper wrote words that would later inspire millions of people leading untold numbers to Christ. When we focus in thankfulness and humility before God, the incredible can happen.

## **Global Power of Gratitude**

Gratitude is a global concept that unlocks human responses and behavior that is universal. The attitude of gratefulness is at the core of World Gratitude Day. This day has been adopted by

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<sup>34</sup> David Jeremiah, *My Hearts Desire*, Nashville, TN:Thomas Nelson, 2002, 114.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 115.

the United Nations and its goal is a “celebration of the power of individuals to make a difference in their lives and in the world.”<sup>37</sup> The concepts of World Gratitude Day get to the essence of what gratitude can do to a person and how it can change others. It is recognized by Christians and non-Christians alike that “Living gratefully helps us to know and create peace from the inside out”.<sup>38</sup> Gratefulness further makes us aware that life is a gift and we should protect it.<sup>39</sup> When one realizes that life was not created by humans and therefore it does not belong to humans it is treated gratefully and used for good. When human understand that they are interconnected and dependent on each other, they become more thankful.

When people are grateful for what they have they tend to consume less.<sup>40</sup> It’s almost a paradox, the more a person has, the more thankful they should be, and that spirit of gratitude makes them want to use less. Eventually, if a person uses less and saves more money, it is possible to survive on less, requiring less work, freeing up more time for recreational and spiritual pursuits involving family, friends and church. Gratitude can result in less conflict, more peace and a better world. Studying the results of a truly grateful heart demonstrates what God can accomplish through this one simple concept.

Anne Scheiber lived many years in a rundown apartment in Manhattan. She lived on Social Security and a very small retirement check from the IRS where she worked for many years. She was never promoted and survived on \$3100 a year.<sup>41</sup> She understood the concept of

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<sup>37</sup> Kristi Nelson, *A Gift for World Gratitude Day*, <https://gratefulness.org/blog/gift-world-gratitude-day/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 23.

being thankful and living on much less than she made. She saved and did not spend money on herself. When Anne Scheiber died, she left her estate worth \$22 million to Yeshiva University.<sup>42</sup> This is a remarkable example of allowing the spirit of gratefulness to shape a person's life. Investing in a lifestyle of gratefulness may not show results over night however the long-term returns can be astounding.

Lastly, another goal of World Gratitude Day is to “engender love, compassion and respect”.<sup>43</sup> Being thankful will shape how humans relate to each other and promote peace. Mother Teresa used her overflow of gratefulness by not being so interested in her own position, she was more interested in having a positive impact on others.<sup>44</sup> She cared for the sick and set up institutions to help people where others could have done the same. Her intention was to add value to life. She assisted people to be what God had called them to be by lifting them up and helping them advance. She was grateful to God and put her goals in line with God's goals. This is the perfect formula for Christian success. To add value to others one must be truly grateful for others and value them.

John Maxwell in the book, “The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership” describes that “the heart comes before the head”.<sup>45</sup> No one wants to be led by someone who only preaches with facts and figures, people want leaders who engage on a human level.<sup>46</sup> During the four days after the attack of the World Trade Center, President Bush went to the site. He spent time listening to

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<sup>42</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 24.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 51.

<sup>45</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 115.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 115.

firefighters, police officers and rescue workers. He examined the devastation then he thanked all of the workers and let them know that the love and compassion of the entire country was with them. It was reported that spirits were lifted from his visit to the site, work continued more passionately as a result.<sup>47</sup> Without picking up one tool or moving one piece of debris, work continued with more vigor and purpose than before. Leading in worship is more about your influence than your abilities, and a person's influence stems from a grateful heart. Abilities and talent are not to be underestimated and they are very important, however people follow leaders with influence. A manager can attempt to keep workers on track and maintain a well-thought-out process, however a true leader will inspire the workers to do their jobs better by influence. Building influence starts with the grateful heart of the leader. It's not about being the smartest one in the room or being first or having the position it is about the lifestyle and heart of the leader. Margaret Thatcher said, "Being in power is like being a lady, if you have to tell people you are, you aren't".<sup>48</sup>

Dan Reiland was an executive in the Maxwell organization for many years. One day he came into work without speaking to anyone and rushed to his desk to begin work. When asked why he did not speak to anyone he stated that he had a lot of work to do.<sup>49</sup> His boss reminded him that leadership is about serving others and being grateful for their contributions more than the work you need to do. This is a great lesson. It is important to always make time to be

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 113

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 53.



grateful, adding value to others. Serve others before being served. *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves”*.<sup>50</sup>

## **Building “Power of Gratitude” Worship Service**

The purpose of a worship service built around the concept of gratitude is to allow a congregation of believers to experience the Biblical, global and relational power of thanksgiving in a unique way. In order to get all of the volunteer teams on board with the concept, a four-week devotional guide will be produced and made available to everyone who has agreed to participate in this project. The Devotional guide entitled “Power of Gratitude” will explore the Biblical aspects of gratitude and encourage the volunteers to truly experience thanksgiving within the service. For easy access, a podcast version of the book will be available.

This will be a contemporary service where many teams will need to be developed. The first team will be the sound team. Within this group, a monitor engineer, a front of house engineer, a second on stage tech and a recording engineer will need to be in place. On stage monitoring will be done by in-ear monitors which will require a separate music mix for each musician. This mix will be accomplished by the monitor engineer. The purpose for in-ear monitors is to have a very low stage volume so that the mix and volume levels can be totally controlled by the front of house engineer. The front of house engineer will be in charge of what the congregation hears as far as volume, clarity and mix. This is a very important element of the service. The front of house engineer needs to be aware of the volume levels that are typical for this particular congregation and to understand how to stay with those levels. The front of house engineer will also need to have a working knowledge of the content so that the spiritual purposes

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<sup>50</sup> Philip. 2:3 (NIV)

of the service are not overshadowed by any other sound or musical element. A second stage tech will be needed for cable checks and other quick fixes that need to happen within rehearsal and in the actual service. Lastly, a recording tech will be needed because a proper mix of music will need to be engineered for the recording of the service and the live stream of the service. The church has an online congregation as well as a live congregation, so the online presence is very important. Well mixed, compressed audio must be delivered to the online feed.

A lighting tech will also be required. There will be an elaborate moving light system in place for this service. The use of lights is crucial in communicating the biblical concepts displayed through the "Power of Gratitude". Though many beautiful lighting effects can be accomplished with such a system, the purpose is to draw the congregation's attention to the Biblical concepts presented within the service. The lighting tech will need to know who is communicating the main Biblical thoughts and what members of the band are subordinate to these concepts and have the lighting design reflect that visually. Lighting will also help the band express the dynamics of the music. The order of entrance may need to be brighter and more lively than the intimacy phase of the service, for example. The lighting tech will need to work in coordination with the flow of the service to accentuate the Biblical concepts that are to be communicated.

The video team will need to have reasonable knowledge of their equipment and be able to deliver broadcast quality video to the online congregation as well as the live congregation. Plans are to use three cameras for front shots, a wide shot, a side shot, and a front of stage shot. Other stationary cameras will be placed on the stage for tight keyboard shots and tight drum shots to add interest to the video. Because our culture is so accustomed to seeing well produced video

with shots from many cameras, a multi camera video mix is important in maintaining the interest of the viewers.

The video team may also be called on to produce a Gratitude Testimony video. This will require much pre-production and post editing. This will require a video producer who understands the concepts that are to be communicated and is capable and willing to use video and lighting techniques to create an emotional piece of video that will inspire and teach the deeper concepts of gratitude through video media.

The band will be made up of a drummer, a bass player, a keyboard player, a piano player, two electric guitarists, an acoustic guitarist and possibly a cello. This contemporary instrumentation will be used to accompany the singers / worship leaders and the congregation in singing praise and thanksgiving to God. Once music selections are made the musical charts/arrangements will be written and placed on an online site called Planning Center Online. This service allows the worship planner to stay in contact with all of the members of the team and provide them with audio files of the music as well as written files for the songs to be played. This is a very convenient service and keeps everyone up to date as to rehearsals, proper keys for songs, song order and accurate charts for the music. Outside of playing the accompaniment for the music used in the service the band must understand the dynamics and overall concept for the service. The band must know and be able to communicate, musically the main points of the song, to intimate sections of the pieces and be able to enhance the worship leaders as important concepts are being communicated. The band must realize that their role is to enhance the Biblical worship of the service not to be the worship of the service. Different from a typical concert, music is not the focus, music is only the vehicle used to get to the focus. In a band situation the proper connection needs to be made between the head and the heart. The head being all of the

technical aspects of playing their instrument and creating a good sound and the heart being the true spiritual purpose of the service and their role in it.<sup>51</sup> In order to have your “heart” in the game for a service like this, every drum fill, guitar interlude, and piano run needs to be tempered with the question “How does this fit the service?”. As the band understands this through the four-week devotional study, the actual playing of the service should be more effective.

Worship Leaders / Singers will need to be carefully selected. These leaders will need to have a heart for worship and an understanding of gratitude. These team members will also be asked to agree to be a part of the four-week devotional study which should be a great help. Worship Leaders will be encouraged to seek God’s leading through the devotionals and be ready to lead the congregation in thanksgiving to God. As God speaks, the worship leaders will need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and to make room for Him to speak to the congregation.

The venue will be an established church, Brookwood Church. In coordination with the “Power of Gratitude” service, proper parking will need to be provided and an inviting atmosphere will need to be created as people enter the service. This will begin by making the four-week devotional available online to everyone. The purpose is to get everyone on the same page as to the purpose of the service and to have the parking attendants, greeters and ushers help accentuate the theme of thanksgiving.

The actual service will be organized based on the five phases for contemporary worship as outlined by Robert Webber, invitation, engagement, exaltation, adoration, intimacy and a proper closing of the service, challenging the congregation to go out into the world a different

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<sup>51</sup> Greg Scheer, *The Art of Worship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006, 50.

way than they came in.<sup>52</sup> The invitation phase will call the congregation to worship and attempt to break the connections with the thoughts concerning the everyday world and begin to change their focus to the worship of God. In a contemporary setting, an up-beat piece that encourages excitement and interest for what is to come is what is needed here. I have selected the song “Great Things” by Jones Myrin and Phil Wicham in order to open the service. This beginning piece is very familiar to the congregation and it foreshadows the events to come later in the service. The lyrics of the piece is as follows.

“Great Things” by Jones Myrin and Phil Wicham

*VERSE 1:*

*Come let us worship our King  
Come let us bow at His feet  
He has done great things  
See what our Savior has done  
See how His love overcomes  
He has done great things - He has done great things*

*CHORUS 1:*

*O Hero of Heaven, You conquered the grave  
You free every captive and break every chain  
O God, You have done great things  
We dance in Your freedom, awake and a-live  
O Jesus our Savior, Your name lifted high  
O God, You have done great things*

*VERSE 2:*

*You've been faithful through every storm  
You'll be faithful for - ev - er - more  
You have done great things  
And I know You will do it a-gain  
For Your promise is Yes and Amen  
You will do great things - God, You do great things*

*BRIDGE:*

*Hallelujah, God - above it all  
Hallelujah, God - unshakable  
Hallelujah, you have done great things!  
Hallelujah, God - above it all  
Hallelujah, God - unshakable  
Hallelujah, You have done great things!*

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Webber. *Worship Old & New*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994, 159.

*You've done great things!*

This song casts an anticipation for what is to come throughout the rest of the service, and because of its upbeat feel along with the soaring electric guitar motif at the beginning, it serves as a good “ice breaker” to be a bridge between the thoughts of the everyday world and thoughts of worshiping God.

The engagement phase of our service will allow the congregation to be introduced to the topic of gratitude and its power in worship. This may be accompanied by an example of how God has used gratitude to change the hearts of His people and how that change brought about God's mighty power in their lives. A very brief welcome will be extended here and proclamation of being thankful for Christ's sacrifice for us.

Introduction to “The Cross of Christ”

*1 Samuel 12:24 says “Only fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart, for consider what great things he has done for you” Let's sing out and praise the Lord with thanksgiving for what He has done for us.*

“The Cross of Christ”

by Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jason Ingram and Reuben Morgan

*VERSE 1:*

*Son of God, Son of man, His life poured out for all  
See His hands, see His scars, His love can't be denied  
Our God is high and lifted up*

*CHORUS:*

*It is the Cross my only plea  
The blood He shed delivers me  
Our Saviors arms are open wide  
A love so great the cross of Christ*

*VERSE 2:*

*Every debt, all we owe, He bears it as His own.  
Brought to life, we are free to live in Christ alone.  
Our God is high and lifted up.*

*BRIDGE:*

*See the Lamb of God, see the Fathers love.  
All to Jesus we owe, He paid it all.*

The exaltation phase will praise God and continue to give Him thanks. Worship leaders will express that thanksgiving is an attitude that shapes our heart, putting us in a posture of dependence on God and his provision for our lives. Giving thanks is not just being polite. When we truly experience what God has done for us, our grateful hearts put us in a place to receive Him in ways that would otherwise be unavailable to us.

Introduction to “Thank You Jesus”

*“I will praise the name of God with a son; I will magnify Him with Thanksgiving” (Psalm 69:30) Let’s use the next song as a thanksgiving prayer to God and let it develop our heart of gratitude.*

“Thank You Jesus”

by Matt Crocker and Hannah Hobbs

*VERSE 1:*

*Grace that flows like a river, washing over me  
Fount of heaven, love of Christ, o-over-flow in me*

*CHORUS 1:*

*Thank You Jesus, You set me free.  
Christ my Savior, You rescued me.*

*VERSE 2:*

*Take this life delivered, a vessel of Your love.  
Wholly now devoted, to see Your Kingdom come.*

*BRIDGE:*

*You've given me life You've opened my eyes.  
I love You Lord I love You Lord.  
You've entered my heart You've set me apart.  
I love You Lord I love You Lord (repeat & build!)*

The adoration phase will allow the congregation to engage in a more personal time of thanksgiving. This may include a video testimony giving a personal account of the power of gratitude.

“Thank You”

by Ben Fielding and Reuben Morgan

*VERSE 1:*

*Thank You for Your kindness  
Thank You for Your mercy  
Thank You for the cross  
Thank You for the price You paid.*

*VERSE 2:*

*Thank You for salvation  
Thank You for unending grace.  
Thank You for Your hope*

*CHORUS:*

*There is no one like You.  
There is no one like You God.  
All my hope is in You Je-sus      Je-sus.*

*VERSE 3:*

*Thank You for Your promise  
Thank You for Your favor  
Thank You for Your love  
Everything You've done for me.*

*BRIDGE:*

*To Your Name we give all the glory.  
To Your Name we give all the praise.  
You're a-live our God e-ver-la-sting.  
Let Your face shine on us.*

*CHORUS*

*There is no one like You  
There is no one like You God  
All my hope is in You  
Je-sus      Je-sus*

The intimacy phase of the service will make room for the Lord's Supper. Here we want to remember Christ's sacrifice for us and allow that truth to speak to the congregation. Our pastor will administer the Lord's Supper. When a congregation partakes of the Lord's Supper it is proclaiming to the world that Christ is our redeemer and is worthy of our gratitude.<sup>53</sup> After the Lord's Supper, a prayer of thanksgiving will be offered to God, concluding with an invitation to

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<sup>53</sup> Vernon M Whaley. *Called to Worship*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009, 256.



give an offering of thanksgiving. A brief outline of the life of William Cowper will be shared at this point. This testimony will end with relating the trials of life to the trials that William Cowper faced, then it will focus on the incredible things God can do with a grateful heart. As a time of reflection, an instrumental arrangement of “There is a Fount” will be played as the congregation is encouraged to allow gratefulness to change their hearts and their worship.

### William Cowper Story

When we remember what Christ has done for us and give thanks to Him, it can have amazing power in our lives. William Cowper’s mother passed away when he was 6 years old. His father could not take care of him, so he was sent to a home for boys. There he was made fun of and verbally abused by several. As he grew up he had several bouts with depression and had two failed marriages. After an attempt at suicide he was sent to an asylum. One of his relatives came to visit and explained how Jesus suffered and die for his sins. Cowper was overcome with gratefulness to God and was moved to accept Jesus as his savior.

Just before he was released from the asylum William found a pen and wrote “There is a fount filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel’s veins, and sinners plunge beneath the flood lose all their guilty stains”. This hymn went on to influence the lives of untold millions of believers worldwide. Gratefulness can change a heart and the overflow of gratefulness can influence the world. I pray that your gratefulness to God would overflow into this community and lead others to Christ.

The service will close with a challenge to go out into the world with grateful hearts so that the Holy Spirit can move unhindered through us. The congregation will sing a worship song entitled “*Grateful*” by Elevation Worship. After experiencing an hour focused on giving thanks to God, this song will provide an upbeat, positive way to worship together with new hearts of gratefulness.

“Grateful”  
by Elevation Worship

*VERSE 1:*

*This is the day, that You have made  
Whatever comes, I won't complain*

*For all my hope, is in Your name  
And now Your joy, awaits my praise.*

**CHORUS:**

*I give thanks, for all You have done  
And I will sing, of Your mercy and Your love  
Your love is unfailing  
Lord, I am grateful.*

**VERSE 2:**

*When I was down, You brought me out  
You set my feet, on higher ground  
So here I stand, You are my God  
His faithfulness, my Solid Rock.*

**BRIDGE:**

*And as we lift our hands up  
Heavens open, heavens open  
So let our lives declare the love  
Our God has spoken over us.*

Once the song is completed, a final challenge will be given to the congregation to go out into the world and allow the God's spirit of gratefulness to change our homes, our community and our world. The goal is to leave the service in awe that a mighty God would speak to us, that we can be encouraged by His promises, that we can be challenged by His commands, and that we are thankful for His blessings.<sup>54</sup>

## **Conclusion**

God wants His people to worship Him in gratefulness in everything we do. "*But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*".<sup>55</sup> Our actions and every idle word need to reflect our gratefulness and praise of the Almighty. The world has seen too many leaders who have allowed sin to discredit the church and

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<sup>54</sup> Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2008, 63.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew 12:36 (KJV)

Christians as a whole.<sup>56</sup> 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 states that God wants us to be patient, loving, kind, forgiving, hopeful and enduring.<sup>57</sup>

Matthew 18:20 states that God is present when *two or more are gathered in My name* and in Hebrews 4:12 God says that His Word is *active and sharper than any two-edged sword*. This service is designed to present God's Word through scripture and example so that it can have an impact on the world. Singing good Christian songs with a fantastic band is good, however that is not the primary goal. We want to use theatrical devices to maintain the interest of the congregation, however the power and presence of God comes through the Biblical foundations this service is built upon. "*Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ*".<sup>58</sup> God will work through His Word in ways that we will not be able to anticipate. Psalm 147:5 states "*Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; His understanding is beyond measure*". We know that the content of this service should encourage more grateful hearts, however we have no way of knowing the condition of the hearts coming into the service. There could be issues that God will deal with through this service that could be transformational in nature and bring about life commitments that we could never anticipate. It would be impossible to know that William Cowper's life change would ever happen, and even more astounding is that he could write a song that would influence the lives of millions. Noah became the "new Adam" over God's creation based on his obedient and grateful heart. Daniel gained influence with the king through being thankful to God for the gifts that God had given to him. God can do amazing things through His

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<sup>56</sup> Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2008, 46.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>58</sup> Romans 10:17 (ESV)

people when we are obedient and grateful for everything He has done for us through Christ Jesus. “*You are God; and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant*”.<sup>59</sup> We can rest assured that God will keep the promises in His Word.

Unlocking God’s promises begins with receiving Him with a grateful heart. “*But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God*”.<sup>60</sup> This service will encourage Christians and draw non-Christians to Christ. “*So is my word that goes out from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, but accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it*”.<sup>61</sup> My prayer for everyone participating in the preparation of this service is that we will adhere to a Biblical foundation so that God’s presence is evident and that we will allow God to move in the hearts of all who hear and worship.

Using contemporary music and modern sound, light and video, should expand the reach of the service. Expressing the Biblical truths of gratefulness with modern media will allow God to work in places where He may not otherwise be seen or heard, such as Facebook and YouTube. God promises us that His Word will not return empty.<sup>62</sup> That is why presenting God’s Word through modern media is so important in today’s world, especially in the COVID pandemic where public gatherings have been limited.

Even though this service will be carefully planned and rehearsed, proper critique will be put into place after the service. 2 Corinthians 13:5 states “*examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves, or do you not realize this is about yourselves, that Jesus Christ*

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<sup>59</sup> 2 Samuel 7:28 (NIV)

<sup>60</sup> John 1:12 (ESV)

<sup>61</sup> Isaiah 55:11 (NIV)

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

*is in you? – unless indeed you fail to meet the test*". The goal is to do our very best, however we can always learn from our experiences. We will look back over the service and see what could have been done better and what elements were done better than expected. This will make our worship planning better and it will ensure that we have no selfish goals or intents.

I am truly grateful and humbled by the honor of planning this service. I believe that I have been given this task at this point in time for a reason and I plan to allow God to use this for His glory.

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## Appendix A

### Power of Gratitude Devotional

#### Day 1 – Condition of the Heart

*“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”* 2 Chronicles 16:9 gives us a promise from God, to strengthen us when we fully commit to Him. This commitment begins with a heart of thanksgiving to God for making us and creating everything we have. It is not a polite gesture that we do because we have good manners, like when your mom told you to “always say please and thank you”. The worship of God is a grateful condition of the heart, not a statement of obligation.

In Genesis, When God rejected Cain’s offering, Cain was very angry and felt rejected. In verses 5 – 7 of Genesis, God tells Cain that He will accept him if you do things well but if you do not, sin will be ready to attack you. God instructed Cain to present an acceptable offering, however Cain did not respond. This is a condition of the heart. He did not respond to God humbly and ask how to make his offering acceptable, he did not respond with the spirit of thankfulness for all of the mighty ways God had provided for him. Cain got mad and killed his brother Abel who had made an acceptable offering to God. Instead of making an acceptable offering Cain got rid of the competition. God cursed Cain by not allowing his crops to grow well and his family wandered around the earth like nomads. All of this is a direct result of the condition of Cain’s heart.

How can believers condition their hearts so that God is pleased with us, so that God blesses us and so that God accepts our offering of worship? True gratitude is where the heart is shaped into what God wants it to be. Being thankful lets us understand that we are dependent on something bigger, we cannot provide for ourselves independently and we owe God our worship,



our offerings our life and our all. The condition of the heart begins with thankfulness and gratitude.

Being thankful for God's blessings and saying so, out loud to others is one way to let your worship identify you as a Christian. This is a way that private worship can overflow into our daily lives. As this overflow takes place we must not be condemning or condescending to others, we want to be an example of a Christian lifestyle in which everyone should want to be a part. A winsome lifestyle is grateful, kind, encouraging, compassionate, and thankful for everything. This not only influences those around you, however when worship is put into practice, it changes **your** attitude, **your** thoughts and **your** feelings. As we prepare for the "Power of Gratitude" service, think of ways that we can allow our spirit of thankfulness to overflow into our actions, thoughts, work and relationships.

What are you grateful for today?

How can you begin to allow your spirit of gratitude to overflow into the world today?

Today's Prayer:

May I seek Your power through fully committing myself to You. Your strength is made perfect in my weakness. Let me praise you for Your creation and help me to put my confidence in You.

Let my thankfulness be my identity as a Christian. Give me ways to allow my personal thankfulness to overflow to others.

Lord, allow my spirit of gratefulness to be seen and experienced by everyone attending our thanksgiving service.

As I worship You right now, allow me to experience You in new ways. Let me see You in everything I see, touch, feel and taste. Allow me to breathe You into my soul as I yield to You completely.

## Day 2 – Evil Is Displaced by Praise and Thanksgiving

As modern worship leaders, we are on the “front lines” of spiritual battle. Just like Jehoshaphat, Moses and David. Only through the power of God, gained from regular, dedicated private worship, can we have that spirit of boldness.

In 2 Chronicles 20: 1-29 we read that three nations made plans to come together and wipe out the people of Judea. When Jehoshaphat got the news, he organized a worship service. They prayed and sang to God. Jehoshaphat’s prayer ended by saying “*we do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You*”. At that point they waited for the Lord to speak. The Lord spoke through the prophet Jahaziel and said fight without fear, take up your battle positions and watch the Lord fight this battle.

So, they went into battle led by the Temple choir, praising and singing. Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: “*Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever.*” They entered into battle with thanksgiving. This seems like a very odd way to enter battle, it probably even seemed odd to many of the men in Jehoshaphat’s army. Jehoshaphat’s leadership and his personal worship and his faith drew the soldiers in the army to rally around him to be influenced by his worship. We can lead others in worship the same way.

Then the opposing nations heard the singing they were confused and began fighting with each other. By the time Jehoshaphat’s army got to them the three armies had killed each other. There was no sign of a single survivor.

Thankfulness and Praise are God’s instruments of warfare. The people of Judah went into battle praising God, confident in what He had told them and the victory was theirs. We are to go singing into battle, knowing Who has made us and Who is with us. The evil one hates the praise of God. Evil is totally displaced by praise.

The power of a joyful and grateful heart brings victory. Great church programs and meetings can be good, however only when they come from the God who created them. It seems that churches change what they are doing because another church was successful with a certain program without considering what God might want for their church. It must always be remembered that when God gives us direction, victory will be the conclusion.

Offering praise and thanksgiving will enable the believer to fight battles while keeping God in focus. When believers fight adversity with praise, instead of reckless words and

emotions, their witness will be more powerful, friendships more enjoyable, and family stronger, showing Jesus to others by a lifestyle of worship.

Hebrews 13:15 ... *let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

What are you battling right now?

How can Jehoshaphat's example of worship influence your response to your battles today?

Today's Prayer:

Lord, let me begin my battles like Jehoshaphat, with prayer, and let me be thankful for Your provisions in my life, and for the victories that are about to come in my life.

Lord, let my personal worship overflow into our church's thanksgiving service.

### Day 3 – Worship Wars

The Old Testament describes three distinct “worship wars” that outline the conflict between God and sin<sup>63</sup>. The first involves God and Satan. Satan was once called the “morning

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<sup>63</sup> Whaley, *Called to Worship*, 26.

star”, a position of great authority before his fall, Satan **because of his jealousy** declared war against God<sup>64</sup> . Because of Satan’s conceit, God removed him from his position. **This first “worship war” has affected everyone**, Satan positioned himself as ruler of this sinful world, he has tried to hurt God by trying to redirect the attentions of mankind.

The second “worship war” involved Adam and Eve. They were created to be in the presence of God, to have unlimited access to Him however through the deceit of Satan disguised as a serpent, Adam and Eve fell to Satan’s temptation. Satan challenged Adam and Eve to question the Word of God and robbed them of their faith<sup>65</sup>. They “bowed to the idol of self.”<sup>66</sup> The penalty was swift and strong. They were cursed to a life of labor and were cast out of Eden, the perfect place for communion with God. The effects of this punishment are still felt today, we can’t even imagine what it would be like if this sin was not committed.

The third “worship war” was between Cain and Abel, the two sons of Adam and Eve. This war actually involved a conflict over worship. Abel offered an offering to God based on his faith and obedience to God (Hebrews 11:4) and gave the best of his firstborn lambs.-Cain on the other hand, was given a second chance by God to offer a bloody sacrifice for his sins, however in anger he refused to obey God. (Genesis 4:7) God did not accept the offering of Cain, and out of his anger and jealousy he killed his brother. From no fault of his own, Abel lost his life because of Cain’s disobedience. How many times are innocent Christians hurt by the sin of others? Cain was driven away from the Lord because of his sinful actions.

The Holocaust, terrorism, and robberies negatively affect innocent Christians every day because Satan is alive and well and is eager to destroy us. It is important to notice that all of these sinful acts begin in the heart<sup>67</sup>. This is why we must defeat anxiety in faith, with thanksgiving in our hearts, and make our requests to God. He promises to guard or garrison our hearts and minds with His peace.

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<sup>64</sup> Isaiah 14:12 NIV

<sup>65</sup> Whaley, *Called to Worship*, 31

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 31

<sup>67</sup> Whaley, *Called to Worship*, 39

Philippians 4:6-7 *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

Let prayer and thanksgiving begin to shape you heart.

How many times have your actions caused harm to others?

Have the actions of others ever effected or harmed you or your family?

What are 3 intentional ways you can use gratitude to maintain a heart of worship through difficult times?

Today’s Prayer: Lord, help me to keep a heart of worship. Let me guard my reactions and temper them by Your Spirit. Guide me, direct me and let my words be your words, let my thoughts be your thoughts, and let my reactions reflect the Christ that is in me and not my unpredictable human emotions.

#### Day 4 - Knowing Our Character

Gratitude is the mark of a worshiper.<sup>68</sup> Our character must be one of thanksgiving, being grateful for what God has done for us. The opposite of being thankful is feeling entitled. If we

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<sup>68</sup> Rory Noland, *The Worshiping Artist*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007, 64.

are entitled to have something, we deserve it and there is no reason to be thankful because it belongs to us. So, what do we really deserve? Nothing. Our health, wealth, relationships, talents and everything else is a gift from God. If we do not have a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving we cannot begin to worship our Creator, the source of everything we have or ever will have.

In developing character, believers must give thanks as the blessings of God are remembered, which should be truly be humbling. “Only he who gives thanks for the little things receives big things”.<sup>69</sup> Worship is a verb and a noun. One’s character must express praise and thanksgiving to God through our songs our actions and our relationships. Believers should be intent on sharing what God has done for us through our regular conversation. Believers should adore Him by expressing it to others. And of course, praises sung to God should be expressed passionately, expressing ourselves honestly before our Creator.

#### Today’s Prayer

Express yourself honestly before your creator now, sing, dance, cry, laugh .... Have an open conversation with God today thanking Him for His creation and the blessings He has given you.

#### Day – 5 Do the Right Thing

In a culture of polytheistic worship, Abram was a follower of the only true God and because of his faithfulness and the faith of his wife, Sarai. God told them to leave their land and go to new place to build a great nation. God said He would “bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him”<sup>70</sup>. When Abram reached the new land, he built an altar and worshiped God. Even at the age of seventy-five, Abram honored God. And though Abram made

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>70</sup> Genesis 12:1-3, NIV

mistakes throughout his journey, God never lost interest in him. Abram continued to build altars and worship God with the tithe, giving a tenth of everything he acquired to God. God promised to bless Abram's descendants, however Sarai was without child. So, in order to "speed up" the process, she encouraged Abram to have relations with her servant Hagar. Here again, this might have looked like a good idea, however it was not God's plan and it caused a host of problems. The son Ishmael was a "wild child", produced from Sarai's absence of faith. He was against everyone and everyone was against him<sup>71</sup>. Sarai became jealous of Hagar and this sin still causes repercussions today with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Here again it can be seen that a lack of faith can cause more problems than we can ever imagine. God wants His people to faithfully serve and worship Him because He wants the best for them and that is only found in obedience, and worship of Him. Charles Spurgeon once said "Faith is hard because it is easy. It is difficult because there is no difficulty in it. And it seems obscure simply because it is so clear"<sup>72</sup>. Knowing the "right thing" is easy. Doing it seems to be the hard part.

Have you ever known the right thing to do and did not do it?

Today's Prayer – Lord, let me act with your intentions in mind. Let me speak the words You would have me speak. Let me go where you want me to go. Lord, let me get out of Your way and don't let me assume that I know what You want to do in every situation.

## Day 6 – Servant Leadership

Leading worship is not an event that happens once a week, actually it is a daily event that builds a life of worship over time, the overflow of that time is what our congregations will see. Our lifestyle of worship is just as important as the songs we sing. The relationships that we build

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<sup>71</sup> Whaley, *Called to Worship*, 47

<sup>72</sup> Carter, *2200 Quotations from the Writings of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 430

are part of leading worship. Make time for relationships, make a point to meet new people, and maintain the relationships that we already have.

Being a leader and building relationships requires us to serve each other. If a leader is always trying to advance self, the environment created is rarely a happy one. When one is a servant leader, others will gladly follow. This takes more time and effort; however, it is worth it. Jesus said in Matthew 20:28 that He came “*not to be served but to serve and to give His life*”. John 13:4 tells us how Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. Serving each other develops a deeper level of relationship and gives us the opportunity to speak God’s truth to others.

This requires believers to be concerned about the people we lead, know their weaknesses and their strengths, encouraging them, being happy with them as well as being sad with them. This kind of leadership makes the “ride” much more enjoyable.

What are some ways you can better serve the people you lead?

What are some ways you can serve those who lead you better?

Do you have a relationship you need to restore?

Today’s Prayer:

Lord, let me see potential relationships in all people, and do not let the tasks at hand impede cultivating new bonds with people.

## Day 7 - God’s Presence

Being in the presence of God is more than just praying for our needs to be met. For example, Moses did not pray for his daily needs to be met, he prayed for a glimpse of God. Moses wanted to know God and find favor in His sight.

Knowing God can be compared to the way a professional person knows their profession, how a doctor knows medicine. This kind of study becomes a lifetime learning experience. Believers know God’s personality when there is an interaction with Him. When people draw near to God, He draws near to them. Knowing Christ is our biggest gain in life. God’s presence



keeps His people from harm, shields them from potential problems, warms their spirit and keeps them from sin.

When we know God, we desire to walk in favor with Him by His grace. To walk in favor with God requires more than just attending church, we must meet Him in conversation daily. When believers truly desire His presence, He meets them and shows His glory. God's glory is so vast that just a glimpse of it can change our lives, move mountains and create a universe. Exodus 33:14 *"The Lord replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* The word "presence" in Hebrew means "face", to see the face of God. As we walk with God "face to face" sin will not have a place in the believer, as the believer's desires are changed.

What can you do to interact with God more?

Today's Prayer:

Lord, I want to know You better and to study Your ways and understand You more. I want to be in Your presence throughout my day.

## Day 8 – The Praise Protocol for Worship

Praise is the way to prepare the heart for worship. Psalm 100:4 reminds us to "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise: be thankful into Him and bless His name". It's the way to get into God's presence. Praise can break down walls and rock the world in a powerful way. This is why we like to open our services with an upbeat praise song. This kind of praise is worth driving across town to be a part of, just like we wait for a concert to start or anticipate our favorite team to play the playoff game. Praise is the way believers can open the door to worship letting us experience the presence of God.

Mark 14:3-9 ... a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. <sup>4</sup>Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? <sup>5</sup>It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. <sup>6</sup>"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>7</sup>The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But

you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup>She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. <sup>9</sup>*Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.*"

When Mary poured out the alabaster box on Jesus' feet as an offering of worship, some said that the offering was too expensive and questioned her actions. Mary took the opportunity to worship no matter what the cost and without caring what others thought. How many times have we missed a chance to worship God because we were worried about what others might say or think?

Praise and thankfulness are a reaction to the greatness of the almighty God and everything that He has done for His people, not just the songs before the sermon. When believers truly realize who God is and what He has done for them, our response is praise. Be free with praise, find ways to praise Him in everything, no matter what the cost.

Today's Prayer:

Let me be free with my praise, let me praise you more often, no matter what others may think. Lord, forgive me for the times I have neglected praising you. You are my Savior and Lord and I thank You and praise You for who You are.

## Day 9 –The Sons of Korah

The book of Psalms is divided into 5 books and book II refers to the Exodus and refers to the redemption and contains verses 42 through 72. In this book the Psalmist focuses on God coming to earth to show us His character and to teach us how to walk in His likeness <sup>73</sup>. Most people think that David wrote all of the Psalms however here in book II there are several songs written by the Sons of Korah<sup>74</sup>. Ashamed of their forefather's rebellion against Moses, the Sons of Korah were meek and obedient to God and they sought no individual credit for their writings<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> Dr. Stephen Jones, *God's Kingdom Ministries*, accessed March 13<sup>th</sup> 2018, <https://www.gods-kingdom-ministries.net/daily-weblogs/2010/03-2010/the-exodus-book-of-psalms-part-2/>

<sup>74</sup> *Bible Gateway*, accessed March 13 2018, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42-72&version=VOICE>

<sup>75</sup> Whaley, *Called to Worship*, 156

## Story of Korah

*In Numbers 16, Korah had a disagreement with Moses over a minor theological issue. Korah became angry and led a revolt gathering 249 co-conspirators.*

*Moses said, 'This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: If these men die a natural death and suffer the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the realm of the dead, then you will know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt.'*

*As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community.*

*At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, 'The earth is going to swallow us too!' And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense" (Numbers 16:28–35).*

The sons of Korah later became great leaders in choral and instrumental music in the tabernacle. Of all of the psalms in the Bible, eleven are attributed to the sons of Korah. These beautiful Psalms express a spirit of great gratitude and humility to an awesome, mighty God. They express a longing for God and deep devotion. These poetic songs include Psalms 42, 44–49, 84—85, and 87—88. Psalm 42:1 contains the beautiful line, *“As the deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.”*

Imagine being a part of a family with such a bad public reputation, how would you react? Would you rebel against church or God altogether? Would you be too embarrassed to be seen in public? I probably would have moved away to a place far away from where this happened. The reaction of the sons of Korah was stay where they were and to praise God with everything they had, and to go to great lengths to give all of the glory to God and serve Him humbly. The sons of Korah were the first to volunteer for battle when David needed them and had a servant's humble and thankful heart. Surely, people remembered what happen to Korah, however his descendants reacted in a way that created worship that has lasted for centuries.

The sons of Korah are a perfect example of being grateful and humble.

How do you react to your sins from the past?

Do your past actions disable you?

Today's Prayer – Lord, I am thankful for everything You have done for me. I know that I don't express that enough and for that please forgive me. I am thankful for Your kindness, Your grace, Your provisions and Your Son and most of all I am thankful for who You are and Your interest in me. I am thankful not out of obligation or tradition, I am thankful as an act of love for You.

## Day 10 – David

David was very popular with the people and that caused King Saul to be very jealous. Saul and his army hunted David everywhere to kill him however eventually God delivered David from his enemies and made him king. Because of David's godly rule, all of the surrounding nations claimed David as their king.<sup>76</sup> Upon Saul's death, David sings a song of praise and thanksgiving in 2 Sam 22: 49-50, "*You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me. Therefore, I will praise you, Lord, among nations*". The word praise here actually means thanksgiving.<sup>77</sup> David had a lot to be proud of and could have easily fallen into pride from all that he had accomplished and his overwhelming popularity. Here we see the condition of David's grateful heart. He gave thanks to the one who made his success possible and focused the praise on God.

David made plans to build a great temple in Jerusalem which needed a massive amount of funds to accomplish.<sup>78</sup> When people heard of what David was doing, they gave very generously to the project. Here again, David immersed this success with a prayer of thanksgiving. "*Honor and wealth come from you; you are the ruler of all things, in your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all, Now, our God we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.*"<sup>79</sup> In the Psalms, David wrote many songs of thanks to God for

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<sup>76</sup> Jeffrey Kranz, *Thankfulness in the Bible: the top Scriptures on gratitude*, <https://overviewbible.com/thankfulness/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> 1 Chron. 29:12 – 13 (NIV)

salvation and for his righteous laws. *“I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.”*<sup>80</sup> *“At midnight I raise to give you thanks for your righteous laws”*.<sup>81</sup>

How do you react when God blesses you?

Was thanksgiving your first reaction and if so, did you share it with those around you?

Has your reaction to God’s blessings ever been followed by more blessing?

Today’s Prayer – Lord, I am thankful for every blessing you have given me. Anything You give me is more than I deserve. I want my heart to be shaped to receive what You have for me with a spirit of thanksgiving and gratitude. I thank you for David’s example and I pray that you will allow it to influence me.

## Day 11 – Daniel

Daniel is a man of royal blood who resolves to be faithful to God and His laws.<sup>82</sup> When King Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream, Daniel was there to interpret through the wisdom give to him from God. *“I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.”*<sup>83</sup> Daniel is eventually made ruler over all of Babylon’s wise men.<sup>84</sup> Notice

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<sup>80</sup> Ps. 118:21 (NIV)

<sup>81</sup> Ps. 119:62 (NIV)

<sup>82</sup> Jeffrey Kranz, *Thankfulness in the Bible: the top Scriptures on gratitude*, <https://overviewbible.com/thankfulness/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>83</sup> Dan. 2:23 (NIV)

<sup>84</sup> Jeffrey Kranz, *Thankfulness in the Bible: the top Scriptures on gratitude*, <https://overviewbible.com/thankfulness/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

how Daniel acknowledged the source of his wisdom, careful not to assume credit for what God had given to him, Daniel was thankful for it.

Have you ever been acknowledged by your superiors for your gifts, skills and talents?

What are some good ways to receive a compliment gracefully and give God the credit?

Today's Prayer - Lord, I am so grateful for the gifts you have given to me. Please allow me to accomplish my tasks well so that I can use my good work to give You the glory.

## Day 12 – Ten Lepers

Jesus had ten lepers call out to Him for healing. Lepers were outcasts from the community and had not even the slightest bit of social standing. As they called out for mercy from Jesus, He healed all of them however only one former leper gave thanks to Jesus for the miracle. And to give the story even more spice, that former leper was a Samaritan. The very race of people that Jews hated were looked upon with hostility and suspicion.<sup>85</sup> The one healed leper who gave thanks was especially pointed out in Luke 17:16 as a Samaritan, “*he threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him – and he was a Samaritan*”. Having a spirit of thankfulness is not just for the religious class or the privileged race of people in power; it can be experienced by anyone. This is more impressive to God than your Biblical knowledge or your status in life.

Today's Prayer - Lord, never let me accept Your blessings and miracles without being thankful. You are working in my life every day and You are blessing me all the time. Do not let me miss an opportunity to be thankful.

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<sup>85</sup> Jurgen K. Zangenberg, *The Samaritans*, <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/samaritans>, (Accessed May 24, 2020)

## Day 13 – Paul

As Paul was aboard a ship that was about to meet a tragic end, he comforted everyone on board and assures them that no one will die in the events about to happen. Paul invited everyone to eat a meal so that they will have strength to swim ashore, if need be. In breaking the bread, Paul publicly gave thanks. “[Paul] took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all.”<sup>86</sup> Again, in the face of danger, people of God give thanks because of their trust in God. Paul also thanked God for Christian friends who traveled to see him. “At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged.”<sup>87</sup>

Many other times in the New Testament, Paul was thankful for his Christian friends. God has put special people in the path of believers that help them, encouraged them and pray for them just when it was needed. This is not an accident or a coincidence. God has pre-appointed times and places for His people to serve and be served.

Have you ever had an opportunity to serve and did not act on it?

Have you ever felt that you were put into a situation to serve and/or use your gifts in a unique way?

Today’s Prayer - Lord, never let me miss the opportunities that you have given me to serve You and be a blessing to others. I know that I am here for a reason and sometimes tasks of life can cause me to miss what you have for me to do. Let me always be seeking You and Your will for my life.

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<sup>86</sup> Ac. 27:35 (NIV)

<sup>87</sup> Ac. 28:15 -16 (NIV)

## Day 14 – Paul 2

Paul shows a heart of great wisdom when he expresses thanks for the gift of tongues. *“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.”*<sup>88</sup> This expression of thanks almost foreshadows the centuries of debate in the church since this time over the gift of tongues. Here again we can see an expression of the heart through gratitude. Paul is thankful for the gift, and Paul puts it in perspective to not make others without the gift feel left out. It is possible to use gratitude to bring others up around you when you are publicly ~~instead of being so~~ thankful for your personal blessings. Paul encourages us to be thankful for our local gathering places of worship. *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*<sup>89</sup>

Has God given you a rare gift, or put you in a position where you were the only one who could accomplish a certain task?

Did you see your gift as an opportunity to get ahead, or did you find a way to give God glory through your gift?

Today’s Prayer - Lord, You are the source of all of my gifts and talents. Give me opportunities to use them for You. I am thankful for the gifts you have given to me and I want to use them for You.

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<sup>88</sup> 1 Co. 14:18 – 19 (NIV)

<sup>89</sup> Col. 3:15 – 17 (NIV)



## Day 15 – Biblical Commands for Gratefulness

The Bible commands us to be thankful for God’s goodness. “*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever.*”<sup>90</sup> They sang this song when Asaph and his brothers were appointed by David to lead songs of thanksgiving at the tabernacle.<sup>91</sup> Asaph is credited for writing twelve Psalms. He was obviously a gifted musician and a trusted spiritual leader in the temple.

“*Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”<sup>92</sup> The opposite of thankfulness is entitlement. If we are not thankful for something, we must be entitled to it, or we feel that we deserve it. After a hard week of work, one might feel deserving of a paycheck, and that may be true, however does that mean one should not be thankful for it? When a person feels a sense of entitlement it changes the attitude and it changes the condition of the heart, relationships with others and relationship with God. The worship of God comes from a grateful heart so as the scripture says: be thankful for everything.<sup>93</sup> Humans are created to worship not to go their own way and create their own successes, we were created to rejoice with God over the life that has been given. Though life is always wonderful, we can know that God is using every part of life to accomplish His goals and His goals have every good and perfect gift in mind. “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*”<sup>94</sup> God’s understanding is past what we can understand, one must trust Him, conditioning the heart with thanksgiving for everything. “*In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*” Ephesians 5:18 KJV

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<sup>90</sup> Ps. 136:1 (NIV)

<sup>91</sup> Aubrey Buster, *Asaph and the Psalms*, <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/ask-a-scholar/asaph-and-the-psalms> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>92</sup> Eph 5:19 – 20 (NIV)

<sup>93</sup> David Jeremiah, *My Hearts Desire*, Nashville, TN:Thomas Nelson, 2002, 52.

<sup>94</sup> Philip. 4:6-7 (NIV)

Today's Prayer - Lord, never allow me to feel entitled for the talents you have given to me. Please help me remember to always be thankful.

## Day 16 – William Cowper

Being grateful in everything is much easier said than done, especially when things are not going so well. The overwhelming truth is that thankfulness is always in line with God's plan for life. A great example of this is the life of William Cowper, born in 1731. When he was six years old he watched his mother die, and since his father could not take care of him, he was sent away to school.<sup>95</sup> William was abused and made fun of his entire life. As he grew up, he went through two failed love relationships and tried to take his own life several times. He was eventually admitted to an asylum.<sup>96</sup> One day Cowper was visited by a relative that shared God's plan of salvation with him. William related the concept of Jesus' suffering and persecution. For the first time, he could see a ray of hope and understood that Jesus cared for him. Later, just before Cowper was released from the asylum, he found a pen and wrote these words: "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains".<sup>97</sup> Through his gratitude to God, from the pain he had experienced his entire life, Cowper wrote words that would later inspire millions of people leading untold numbers to Christ. When we focus in thankfulness and humility before God, the incredible can happen.

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<sup>95</sup> David Jeremiah, *My Hearts Desire*, Nashville, TN:Thomas Nelson, 2002, 114.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

Have you ever thought that a heart of thankfulness could condition your life for great things?

Gratitude is not just being polite; it can shape you to do great things for the Kingdom.

Today's Prayer - Lord, shape my heart to do great things for You.

## Day 17 – Global Power of Gratefulness

Gratitude is global concept that unlocks human responses and behavior that are universal. The attitude of gratefulness is at the core of World Gratitude Day. This day has been adopted by the United Nations and its goal is a “*celebration of the power of individuals to make a difference in their lives and in the world.*”<sup>98</sup> The concepts of World Gratitude Day get to the essence of what gratitude can do to a person and how it can change others. It is recognized by Christians and non-Christians alike that “*Living gratefully helps us to know and create peace from the inside out.*”<sup>99</sup> Gratefulness further makes us aware that life is a gift and we should protect it.<sup>100</sup> When one realizes that life was not created by humans and therefore it does not belong to humans it is treated gratefully and used for good. When people are thankful they understand that they are interconnected and dependent on each other.

When people are grateful for what they have they tend to consume less.<sup>101</sup> It's almost a paradox, the more a person has the more thankful they should be, and that spirit of gratitude

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<sup>98</sup> Kristi Nelson, *A Gift for World Gratitude Day*, <https://gratefulness.org/blog/gift-world-gratitude-day/> (Accessed May 21, 2020)

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

makes a person want to consume less. Eventually, if a person uses less and saves more, it is possible to survive on less, requiring less work, freeing up more time for recreational and spiritual pursuits involving family, friends and church, resulting in less conflict, more peace and a better world. It is staggering to see what God can accomplish through this one simple concept: a truly grateful heart

Anne Scheiber lived many years in a rundown apartment in Manhattan. She lived on Social Security and a very small retirement check from the IRS where she worked for many years. She was never promoted and survived on \$3100 a year.<sup>102</sup> She understood the concept of being thankful and living on much less than she made. She saved and did not spend money on herself. When Anne Scheiber died, she left her estate worth \$22 million to Yeshiva University.<sup>103</sup> This is a remarkable example of allowing the spirit of gratefulness to shape a person's life. Investing in a lifestyle of gratefulness may not show results over night, however the long-term returns can be astounding.

Through these weeks of study are you allowing thankfulness to shape your life?

Did you ever think that a spirit of thankfulness could make your life more economical and more efficient?

Today's Prayer - Lord, allow my thankful heart to shape the way I spend my time, the way I spend my money and the way I associate with others. Let me with gratefulness make this world a better place.

## Day 18 – What You Do and What You Say

John Maxwell in the book, “The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership” describes that “the heart comes before the head”.<sup>104</sup> No one wants to be led by someone who only preaches

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<sup>102</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 23.

<sup>103</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 24.

<sup>104</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 115.

with facts and figures, people want leaders who engage on a human level.<sup>105</sup> During the four days after the attack of the World Trade Center, President Bush went to the site. He spent time listening to the firefighters, police officers and rescue workers, he examined the devastation then he thanked all of the workers and let them know that the love and compassion of the entire country was with them. It was reported that spirits were lifted for his visit to the site, work continued more passionately as a result.<sup>106</sup> Without picking up one tool or moving one piece of debris, work continued with more vigor and purpose than before. Leading in worship is more about your influence that your abilities and a person's influence stems from a grateful heart. Abilities and talent are not to be underestimated and they are very important, however people follow leaders with influence. A manager can attempt to keep workers on track and maintain a well-thought-out process, however a true leader will inspire the workers to do their jobs better by influence. Building influence starts with the grateful heart of the leader. It's not about being the smartest one in the room or being first or having the position, it is about the lifestyle and heart of the leader. Margaret Thatcher said, "Being in power is like being a lady, if you have to tell people you are, you aren't".<sup>107</sup>

Do you inspire others with your actions, or do you tend to tell people what to do?

What are some ways you can get things done by your actions rather than your commands?

Today's Prayer - Lord, let my example go before me. Let my faith in You be known by what I do and not so much by what I say.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>106</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 113.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 16.

## Day 19 – Being grateful for others

Dan Reiland was an executive in the Maxwell organization for many years. One day he came into work without speaking to anyone and rushed to his desk to begin work. When asked why he did not speak to anyone he stated that he had a lot of work to do.<sup>108</sup> His boss reminded him that leadership is about serving others and being grateful for their contributions more than the work you need to do. This is a great lesson. We must always make time to be grateful, adding value to others. Serve others before being served. *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves”*.<sup>109</sup>

How can you add value to others by your actions?

Do the people you are responsible for do more when you appreciate them?

How can you be more deliberate when valuing others?

Today’s Prayer - Lord, You have given me people in my network to care for and influence. Show me ways to make them feel valued.

## Day 20 – The Power of Gratitude

God wants His people to worship Him in gratefulness in everything we do. *“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of*

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>109</sup> Philip. 2:3 (NIV)

*judgment*".<sup>110</sup> All actions and every idle word needs to reflect our gratefulness and praise of the Almighty. The world has seen too many leaders who have allowed sin to discredit the church and Christian as a whole.<sup>111</sup> 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 states that God wants us to be patient, loving, kind, forgiving, hopeful and enduring.<sup>112</sup> All of these elements of Christian can begin with a heart of gratefulness for what God has done for us through His son, Jesus

If a person is parking cars, running video, playing an instrument, leading a song, welcoming people, running sound or lighting, allow the spirit of thankfulness to overflow to everyone around you. Worship will be demonstrated in our service to others.

Through these weeks of study, list how you can use gratitude to change the following:

Your personal life –

The life of your family –

The life and lives of your church –

The people in your workplace –

The world -

How can the task that you have to accomplish at this Power of Gratitude service be enhanced by your Thankfulness?

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<sup>110</sup> Matthew 12:36 (KJV)

<sup>111</sup> Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2008, 46.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 46.

Today's Prayer - Lord, let everyone who attends this service be moved to be more grateful to You for everything You have done for us. And Let that gratefulness shape our hearts to become more like what You would have us to be.