

GIVING THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Paul, an apostle of Jesus, wrote a letter addressing the morality of the Thessalonians he was writing to. He expressed himself in a spirit of thankfulness.

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers.” (1 Thessalonians 1:2)

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

- Are you able to give thanks in all circumstances?

If you look closely you'll see that Paul is not telling you to be thankful for troubling circumstances; rather we are to be thankful in our circumstances. There is a major difference between being thankful for every situation in life and being thankful in those situations.

- Is it possible to be thankful while depressed?
- How can we develop a spirit of thankfulness?

Being thankful in all circumstances requires consistent looking for God’s goodness toward our lives. Maybe our attention is turned inward on ourselves. We grumble and complain.

Lately I’ve been realizing how much I’ve been complaining. But too often I forget about thanking God for the stability I have found lately. Why don’t I focus more on those things I am thankful for? I have so much.

Complaining is a symptom of an unthankful heart. It isn’t the product of a deprived life. Giving children everything they want results in an ungrateful child. They feel they’re entitled to everything and want more. They’re never satisfied – never happy.

Thankfulness isn’t the result of having a lot. People in Uganda are thankful for the smallest kindness, and they sing with a joy that would put our singing to shame. It flows from a heart that sees God’s goodness.

DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN’T BE HONEST ABOUT OUR PROBLEMS?

- Does that mean we should never tell a friend when something is wrong with us or bothering us?

- Does that mean we can't share our problems here at Open Door?

To have close relationships with friends we need to be able to share honestly. If we're not authentic our friendships will be plastic. We shouldn't be afraid to say something about a deep concern or problem. Open Door will only be helpful if we can be honest about what we are going through. We trust in God's presence and bring everything to Him in prayer.

I have a friend who tells me the problems she's having but invariably will end by saying "But God is good." It's a bit like how David wrote his psalms. Look at Psalm 13 for example. He's obviously in a desperate state and complaining to God. And yet he ends with:

*But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,
for he has been good to me.*

Expect the good, expect blessings. Look for what is good and you will find it. There's a huge benefit to having a grateful spirit. It brings joy and helps keep depression at bay.