



## The Thanksgiving Attitude of Gratitude

The attitude of gratitude is a foundational aspect of our relationship with God. Gratitude is an attitude of the heart that recognizes the goodness of God and the blessings that the Lord grants us. Gratitude is an essential component of a healthy spiritual life, as it keeps us grounded in the reality of God's love and provision in good times and bad.

An attitude of gratitude has the ability to shift our focus from ourselves and our immediate circumstances to God and God's goodness. This shift in focus helps us to maintain a proper perspective on our lives as we recognize that all we have and all we are is a result of God's grace and mercy.

When we purposely practice gratitude it becomes a habit that shapes our thoughts and actions. And, this attitude of gratitude not only enhances our spiritual lives but our physical health as well. As we begin to see the world through the lens of gratitude, most will find that this thankful perspective will impact their overall well-being. Research has shown (For more on this refer to *Gratitude* by Diana Butler Bass.) that individuals who regularly practice gratitude experience increased happiness, improved mental and physical health, and stronger and more stable relationships.

Gratitude also plays a crucial role in our spiritual growth and development. As we express gratitude to God for the Lord's goodness and blessings, we deepen our relationship with God. As gratitude fosters a sense of humility, we begin to realize our dependence on God and God's provisions for our lives.

Furthermore, gratitude is an essential component in our worship. When we gather together as a community of faith to worship we are expressing our gratitude for who God is and for the things God has done for us through Christ. Our songs of praise, prayers of thanksgiving, and acts of service are all expressions of our gratitude for God's love, mercy, and grace.

Gratitude also serves as a powerful witness to the people around us. As Christians we are called to be salt and light in the world and one of the ways we do this is through our expressions of gratitude. When we live our lives marked by gratitude we demonstrate to others the reality of God's love and the transformative power of the gospel message. Our gratitude serves as a testimony to the goodness of God and invites others to experience God's love and grace for themselves.

Gratitude also has the power to strengthen our relationship with others. When we express gratitude to those around us we are acknowledging their value and worth and demonstrating our appreciation of their presence in our lives. This can foster deeper connections and create a sense of community and belonging. As we practice gratitude in our relationships we are modeling the love and grace of God which can have a profound impact on the lives of those around us.

One practical way to cultivate an attitude of gratitude is through the discipline of daily gratitude journaling. Take a few moments each day to write down the blessings for which you are grateful to God. Another way to foster gratitude in your life is to make a point to intentionally express our thanks to those around us...a simple word of appreciation, a handwritten note, or a small act of kindness. These expressions of gratitude can have a profound impact on our overall well-being, our spiritual growth, and serve as a witness to others of the love and grace of God.

Finally, with our national day of thanksgiving on the horizon, how will you, your family, and your church family choose to practice gratitude this year? Let me make a suggestion. Let's express our gratitude to God by attending the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. Our church has been one of the participants in this service for many years and it is certainly one of the most hope-filled and inspiring services of the church year. This year in the wake of the hostilities between Israel and Palestine it seems that multiple faiths coming together to give thanks to God in worship is of even greater importance than on most Thanksgivings.

This year's Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held at the Sandhills Jewish Congregation/Beth Shalom in Foxfire on Sunday, November 19, at 4:00 pm. You are asked to bring a donation of non-perishable food items that will be given to the Sandhills Coalition for Human Care to provide for those in need during the upcoming holiday season.

