

12. On Being Grateful

Perhaps one of the most frequently asked questions is, "How are you?" Some common responses are: Ok, Pretty good, Fine, Doing all right, Can't complain. Then there are those who, when asked how they are, go on and on telling you more than you expected to hear or really cared to know.

When asked, "How are you?" why not try this answer, "**I'm grateful!**" You may be hurting, you may be troubled, you may be carrying a heavy burden, but there is always something for which to be grateful. There is, for example, the love of Jesus that doesn't change, the forgiveness that He freely offers, and all of His wonderful promises that never fail. Then, of course, there are family, friends, and many other rich blessings. Yes, you can be grateful for what you have, but you can also be very thankful for what you do not have. Let me explain.

A number of years ago a married couple approached their pastor about a special gift of money that they wanted to give to the Lord for some specific project at the church. As they explained, "We want to give this gift to the Lord for what we do NOT have." Not only were they mindful of the manifold blessings that they had received from the hand of the Lord, but they were also very mindful of many things from which they had been spared. They were grateful and wanted to express their gratitude with a gift of love to the Lord Who had kept them from experiencing certain crosses, losses or whatever.

All that we need to do is, like these two, look around us and within ourselves and it soon becomes very apparent that we have been spared from so very much. Let's be thankful also for what we do NOT have. For example, consider the following questions from a General Medical History Form. Let the questions fill your heart with gratitude for things you do not have:

- How is your general health? Good Fair Poor
- Are you diabetic?
- Have you ever had a bleeding problem?
- Have you ever had high blood pressure?
- Have you ever had trouble with: Ears, Nose, Throat, Stomach, Digestive Tract, Heart, Circulation, Kidney or Urinary Tract, Liver, Lungs, Teeth, Gums, etc.
- Are you allergic to any medication or food?
- List any and all previous surgeries and complications
- List all infections you have had.
- Do you use crutches or walker?
- Do you use wheelchair or cane?

The Apostle Paul encourages us in Ephesians 5:20: "Give thanks always for all things..." To which we might add, things that we have and things that we do not have.

It might be an interesting and most profitable experience to thank God for some things you DO NOT HAVE. Make a list. Thank God!

When asked, "How are you?", consider giving the answer: "**I'm grateful!**"

On Being Grateful

We Begin

Leader (L) and Group (G)

- L: O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good;
G: For His mercy endures forever.

We Search Scriptures - Ephesians 5:19-20; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 3:17

Three Readers: (1), (2), (3)

- 1: Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
- 3: 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.

We Meditate

Follow this outline as the meditation is presented

"How are you?" Fine? Okay? Grateful?
A special gift "For what we do NOT have."
From what health problems has God spared you?
Make a list - and be grateful
How are you? Grateful? Yes, grateful!

We Respond

- G: Praise the Lord, O my soul.
L: All my inmost being, praise His holy name.
G: Praise the Lord, O my soul.
L: And forget not all His benefits!
G: Who forgives all your sins,
L: And forget not all His benefits!
G: Who heals all your diseases,
L: And forget not all His benefits!
G: Who redeems your life and crowns you with love and compassion,,
L: And forget not all His benefits!
G: Who satisfies your desires with good things,
L: And forget not all His benefits!

We Pray

Gracious God, it is truly fitting that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You. Thanksgiving is not just a national holiday for us; it is a way of life for us. As we humbly acknowledge the blessings You have showered upon us, we praise You that our "cup runneth over." We also are thankful for the many problems and pains from which You have spared us. We give our gratitude to You, loving Father, for the things we have and the things we do not have. Amen.

PRAISE AND GLORY AND THANKS BE TO OUR GOD FOREVER AND EVER!

