



Main point: Thankfulness is an important character quality to display. You can move to be a more thankful person regardless of your current situation. You may not always be able to change your circumstances, but you can change your attitude. The more you can pause your life and consider how/why you're thankful, the more you're on your way to being a thankful person. Primary text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18; and, scattered Psalms.

Primary audience: this message was taught to primarily an adult audience. There were some teenagers in the crowd, but it was a weekend church message after Thanksgiving. This doesn't have to be given at Thanksgiving... it could work any time for any audience with adjustments of illustration. Many of my illustrations are for parents.

[Begin here] I've conducted an informal study on good people, healthy people... basically, on people that we'd determine are "together people." As I observe and study these people—ones that are attractive to me and whom I'd most like to resemble, I find that they seem to share something in common. It's simple to spot, but it's tough to put into action... these people are thankful people. They all seem to have this "thankful quality" in common.

Consider for a moment two extremes: on one extreme we have thankful and grateful people, while on the other extreme we have grumblers and complainers. Where would you put yourself? When someone asks you how you're doing, what are the first words that come out of your mouth? Does your heart and mind move you more toward the side of grumbling and complaining or toward thankful and grateful?

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church of Thessalonica he gave them instruction and hope about how to live in a crazy world. These words were written to people he loved:

¹² Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you.

¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in

peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18 (NIV)

If you have your Bible, underline the words: “*give thanks in all circumstances.*” Then, look at the words immediately following: “*for this is God's will for you.*”

There are very few times in Scripture when it says, “This is God's will for you.” Most of us want to know God's will for our lives. Even those who don't have a relationship with God want to know something about their future. They look at astrological charts, palm readings, tarot cards – things that might give them some indication of how they're supposed to live.

If you're a follower of Jesus and you've aligned yourself with the person and teachings of Jesus, thankfulness is God's will for your life. That's how you're supposed to live.

Whether you're a follower of Jesus or you're here investigating let me share with you three results of thankfulness for you to consider more deeply.

RESULTS OF THANKFULNESS

1. Thankfulness refocuses my perspective.

I know that when my life moves to the side of grumbling and complaining I tend to focus on what I don't have instead of what I do have. During times of prosperity, when things are going great, most of us tend to forget about thankfulness. During times of crisis, like we've been experiencing the last couple of weeks with the fires approaching our homes, we put life into perspective and realize what really matters are those things that can't be replaced--valuable photographs, important items that are connected to memories, and to get out of your home safely with your family. Crisis helps you determine what's of real value.