

## DEVELOPING A THANKFUL HEART - "Lesson 2"

*"My heart trusts in Him...so I will give thanks."*

Today, we continue in our series about "developing a thankful heart." Last week, we saw that discontent and anxiety can rob our hearts of the gratitude that God wants to dwell within our hearts. Today, let's acknowledge that insecurity and confusion can also dilute, if not totally wash away a spirit of thankfulness. I call your attention to **Psalm 28:7**. If you would, read along with me. **"The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will GIVE THANKS to Him in song."**

The main idea here is that **trust in God can fill our heart with gratitude**. And once that reservoir is filled, it will overflow in thanksgiving. David says his heart leaped for joy because it trusted God. And his great trust poured out in song, as he gave thanks to the Lord. Would you like to have a heart like that today?

**By way of illustration (5 minutes), I'll need a volunteer. Once on stage, I ask them: "Do you trust me? Can you follow instructions?" / I will blindfold the volunteer, spin him/her around, and tell them that it's okay to ask questions from time to time, but they must follow my directions to the letter. I'll be giving them specific step by step cues to move off the stage and sit in the front pew. Periodically I'll place my hand on their shoulder or take them by the hand. After they are safely seated, I will have them remove the blindfold and I'll ask if they are grateful to have safely reached their destination. I will also ask if they appreciated clear directions\_ and if they were thankful for any comforting assurances. Then I'll ask how this might relate to their walk with Christ.**

This is huge. As we are urged to do in **Proverbs 3:5**: **"Trust the Lord with all your heart\_ and lean not on your own understanding... in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."** The more aware we are of Lord's presence\_ that He is here even if we can't see Him\_ and remember that He will be with us every step of the way, the more our fear and worry dissipate and real peace pours over us. We know in the scariest times that we can ask Him for comfort and assurance and He will give it. In the process, *our hearts can truly become thrones of thanksgiving*.

Now listen to **Philippians 4:6-7**: **"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, 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."** As we saw last week in our theme verse from **Colossians 3:15** peace and thanksgiving are often connected. Hopefully you recall the verse: **"Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart and be thankful..."** Why might these two attributes (*peace and gratitude*) be so closely linked?

In his book *"Facing the Future without Fear"* author Lloyd Ogilvie claimed there are **366 "Fear nots"** in the Bible, one for every day of the year, including Leap Year! Now, I know of no single version of Scripture that contains that exact phrase that many times\_ but the urging for us to not worry, be anxious, or fear anyone or anything but the Lord is certainly there that many times and more. God doesn't want us to go a single day without trusting Him. He doesn't want us to ever have gratitude evicted from our hearts by fear and doubt. Yet, it is so hard to be thankful\_ perhaps even impossible\_ if we don't trust the Lord.

Let's allow for **ONE-TIME BLIND** to illustrate this for us. (*Trust Fall video*)

Few Christians would admit they don't trust Jesus. Yet, when trouble comes, what does our demeanor confess? Do we wring our hands, wallowing in worry? Do we wear out the carpet pacing the floor? Toss and turn through the night\_ allowing Satan to rob of us of the peace God wants us to have? Or do we start thanking God for His faithfulness in the past\_ and thank Him in advance for what we trust He will do in our future?

So what is your level of anxiety right now? How about your level of trust? Are you concerned that any trouble or difficulty you're now having is beyond God's ability to control? Are you finding it hard to believe that He can deliver you out of this dark valley you're in? If so, when worry next begins to overtake you, I want you to try something.

**Lift your eyes to heaven and express your gratitude.** Thank God for His love. Thank Jesus for saving you from your sins. Thank God for placing His Spirit within you. Thank your Heavenly Father for His provision and protection up to now. Then ask Him to help you to rest in His arms, to increase your faith and **to fill your heart "leaps with joy" with gratitude** in the knowledge that God is with you and will never forsake you.

We were introduced to a new song this morning called "Everything." The lyrics are simple, but the message is powerful. It isn't declaring so much that God is in our EVERYTHING, as it is expressing the desire that He would be in our every-thing because He is our every-thing. That His presence and His peace would be such an anchor for our soul that nothing would be have the ability to disable our gratefulness in this world. That He would develop within us thankful hearts.

May that be our prayer today....