



By Dr. Richard Youngblood

Question: There's so much ingratitude in the world. Some people seem to feel the world owes them.

They take but never say thanks. What would Jesus say about this?

We humans have a problem with ingratitude. For some it is a matter of forgetfulness. In pride and selfishness others feel they deserve what they receive as if God owes them. Those of us who have been so richly blessed materially tend to take it all for granted. Unfortunately, we do not appreciate our blessings until they are taken away. We do not appreciate the stars at night until the clouds hide them from our sight. We don't appreciate our health until we spend a few days in the hospital or come near to death.

Sadly, many of us have been so richly blessed that we are more likely to complain about what we do not have than to give thanks for what we receive. A few days of illness remain more vivid in our memories than many days of good health. Consider our prayers. We may begin with a few words of thanks and praise, but most of our prayers consist of requests. God owes us nothing, and we could never be worthy of all he has done in our behalf. But he continues to cause "his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45).

One time Jesus healed ten lepers. They cried out, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us." But Jesus did not reach out and touch them or command, "Be healed." Instead he told them to act as though they had already been healed by telling them, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they went they were healed. Yet only one returned to give thanks. Jesus said, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" (Luke 17:11-19).

Jesus was disappointed that the nine did not return to give thanks, but it was not for himself. He did not demand they offer thanks, and he did not heal them in order to receive personal praise. Jesus was disappointed for them. To the one who did give thanks he said, "Go, your faith has made you well." The word translated "well" is the usual word for salvation or spiritual healing. The Samaritan who returned to give thanks received both physical and spiritual healing. Through his gratitude he received greater blessings.

Although ingratitude disappoints, gratitude opens the door to greater blessings. Gratitude brings us into a deeper relationship with God. When we see every possession as a gift from God and every incident a divine influence at work for our good, we cannot help but love, praise and thank him daily. Gratitude also opens the

door to opportunities for richer relationships with one another. By words of thankfulness we bless, encourage and motivate one another to continue our good deeds and kindnesses. A thankful heart sees the whole world in a different light and experiences a joy that the ungrateful miss.

Gratitude is a gift anyone can give whether poor or rich, young or old. It is a gift we can give to one who has everything. What do you give to a God who owns the cattle on at thousand hills and the wealth in every mine (Psalm 50:10)? Neither a gift of millions, church attendance nor any sacrifice can ever compare to the richness of the gift of gratitude spoken and lived in our everyday lives. A simple “thank you” can transform life. [Send questions or comments to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12th, Murray, KY 42071 or phone 270-753-1881. This article is reproduced on the web: www.nchrist.org] 2012/11/23