

ALWAYS CHOOSING GRATITUDE IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S MERCY

As He entered a village, **ten leprous men** who stood at a distance met Him, and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" (Luke 17:11-13 NASB)

A. Leprosy

1. A Priest was responsible for examining anyone showing signs of skin disease declaring them "clean" or "unclean."
2. Legal and religious ruling of Lepers outlined in Leviticus 13:46 "He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection, he is unclean. He shall live alone, his dwelling shall be outside the camp."

The first occurrence of leprosy in the Bible is seen in Exodus 4:6.

B. Ingratitude

The Bible warns against ingratitude by showing the negative consequences of a lack of thankfulness and emphasizes the importance of giving thanks to God.

1. **In the Old Testament**, the Israelites faced consequences for complaining in the wilderness.
2. **In the New Testament**, Jesus healed ten lepers, but only one returned to thank Him.
3. The Bible encourages us to live a life of *continual gratitude*, giving thanks in all circumstances.
4. Ultimately, God's mercy, as symbolized in the serpent lifted in the wilderness and Jesus on the cross, shows His grace even in our struggles with gratitude.
5. The Bible addresses **ingratitude** when the Israelites traveled through the wilderness after being released from slavery in Egypt. (Numbers 21:4-5)
6. God responded to the Israelites' ungrateful attitude with severe consequences. Numbers 21:6 says, "Then the LORD sent *fiery serpents among the people*, and they bit the people, *so that many people of Israel died.*"

C. Gratitude

1. We are quick to pray 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people which are **called by My name** will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will *hear from heaven*, will *forgive their sin* and will *heal their land.*"
2. Rather than emphasizing the negative trait of ingratitude, the Bible focuses more on the positive trait of expressing thanks.
3. Psalm 140:13 explains, "Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall dwell in your presence." Giving thanks to God is an act of righteousness and the right response to His presence in our lives.

The Bible calls people to "*give thanks*" multiple times.

4. Paul says to give "thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20).

And lest a reader question Paul's challenge to give thanks "for everything," he elaborated in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."