



volume one

issue six

## Having an Attitude of Gratitude

By: Wendy Gibson

I recently read, "Gratitude turns what we have into enough". Gratitude leads to contentment and serves as an example to the world around us. We must choose to demonstrate gratitude in the best of times and worst of times.

Be grateful in the best of times. When our daily lives go the way we want and our family is healthy, be thankful. Fall asleep counting your blessings instead of sheep. People tend to forget God when circumstances are good. Consider the Israelite nation during the years of the judges. While the judge was alive and their enemies were defeated, the Israelites stayed faithful. After the judge's death, the nation did evil in the sight of the Lord (Judges 2:18-19). Was their unfaithfulness due to their ungratefulness for God's mercy in delivering them from their oppressors? Unthankfulness is listed among unrighteous behaviors such as covetous, blasphemers, and false accusers (2 Timothy 3:1 – 7).

Be grateful in the worst of times. We will experience many difficult times in our lives; for example, loss of loved ones, marriage problems, financial difficulties, etc. How do we continue to have a heart of gratitude during these periods? Remember Job's words following the devastating loss of his worldly goods and his children, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). He acknowledges God as the provider of everything even after losing it all. Job's faith in God was unwavering; is yours?

Consider the people who continued to praise God even at the worst of times. Paul and Silas sang praises after being beaten and shackled in prison. Afterwards, the keeper of the prison and his family

were baptized (Acts 16:25-33). Jonah offered thanksgiving to God from the belly of a fish. After his warning to Nineveh, the entire city repented (Jonah 2:9 – 3:10). People just like us face tremendous challenges and remain faithful to God because they have an attitude of gratitude. Their gratitude led to people becoming followers of God. Can the same be said of us?

A heart of gratitude towards the Lord will carry us through the best of times and worst of times. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 admonishes us to give thanks in everything "for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Remember Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Paul urges us not to worry about our circumstances, but to pray and be thankful to our Creator who continues to take care of us if we remain faithful to Him. Choose to be grateful in every stage of life for "godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6 – 8). Our attitude of gratitude shines as a light to the world even in the darkest of times.

Wendy Gibson has been married to Matthew Gibson (1996 SWSBS Graduate) for 22 years. They have been working with the Riverside congregation in Corpus Christi for 15 years. They have homeschooled four sons, Jacob (20), Luke (17), Seth (15), and Timothy (14). Wendy enjoys reading, playing games with family, crafting, and spoiling her husband.



## **Dangers of an Ungrateful Heart** By: Alana May

The book of Exodus recounts God's chosen people, the Israelites, and their escape from slavery. Throughout the book, we are reminded of God's amazing care for his people: They never went hungry, always had proper clothing, and had the Creator of the Universe as their guide. However, time and time again we read of the people's grumbling and complaining.

It can be easy for us to look at that situation and say, "How can they act like that when God has provided so much for them?" But what if we apply that to our lives? Do we find ourselves as Christians living in the most prosperous nation in history complaining about the long line at the grocery store or having to wait two weeks for the next episode of our favorite show? Do we remain unthankful and exhibit ingratitude? Or do we regularly speak our gratitude to our friends, family, and especially God?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines ingratitude as: "Forgetfulness of or poor return for kindness received." When we do not have a heart of gratitude we:

- Complain. It's such a simple word, but it is packed with emotion. If we are known to complain about everything, we can come across as selfish, disdainful, and thankless. Sometimes, we do need to let off a little steam to a close friend, but God would have us work toward a solution rather than wallow in ingratitude. (1 Thess. 5:18)
- Forget to be thankful for the little things. If we constantly have a heart of gratitude for the bigger things in life (shelter, clothes, food), our gratefulness of the smaller things will be more profound. (1 Cor. 4:8)
- Can lose focus of Who is bestowing the gifts. While the gift may come from a family member or friend, remember that ultimately "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." (James 1:17)

Martha Washington said, "I am determined to be cheerful and happy in whatever situation I may find myself. For I have learned that the greater part of our misery or unhappiness is determined not by our circumstance but by our disposition." Whatever our situation, circumstance, or phase of life, God has given us so much to be thankful for. When we keep our focus on Him and His church, we can only be filled with peace and a heart of gratitude. (Col. 3:15)

## Words of Wisdom

### **Prayer and Thanksgiving** By: Elaine Hopkins

As Christians we have been taught to be thankful to God for our blessings. But why? James 1:17 says that "Every good gift and every perfect give is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." He also provides for us the things that we need. Philippians 4:6 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

So, how do we show our thanksgiving to God? One way is through prayer. Colossians 4:2 tells us to "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving." In the old testament book of Nehemiah, Mattaniah began thanksgiving to God with prayer.

When you express thankfulness in prayer it pleases our Father, reinforces in our minds that all things come from God and how much he blesses us. When we thank God for physical and spiritual blessings that we receive (I Timothy 2:1) it reminds us that He is in control and we need not worry.

We should also be thankful and pray for others (II Timothy 1:3; Philemon 1:4). Being thankful for others in prayer will improve our relationship with them and will teach our children to be thankful and respectful to God and others. What a blessing it is to be able to thank our heavenly Father in prayer!

## Words to Grow By

### Why I'm Thankful to Grow Up in a Christian Home By: Annie Lane

What does it mean to be raised in a Christian home? It means to be raised by Christians. It means to learn about God and the Bible as children. This way, we're being prepared to be good, strong Christians when we are adults and are going out in the real world. It's easier to learn this as kids, so we'll already be prepared with a strong biblical knowledge when we're adults.

We should be grateful for when our parents tell us to do something, because when they tell us to do something, it's usually for a good reason.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it." That's what our parents are trying to do. We should be trying to make life easier for them, not harder.

Colossians 3:20 says, "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." That means to do whatever our parents say because it makes the God happy, which is what we should always want to do, no matter what.

I'm so thankful to the Lord for giving me a good Christian home to grow up in.

## Getting to Know

### Getting To Know... Lisa Reed By: Carol Tisdale



Lisa and Mark attend SW while escaping Winter months in Michigan and they've been a blessing to us since they first stepped foot in our building last year. Faithful in attending services, they also plunged into the works of the congregation. It felt like we had worked and worshipped alongside them for decades. Lisa says when traveling they have noticed a few congregations that genuinely make them feel welcome and SW is one of those. "We feel as though we are one in spirit. SW is involved in many good works which shows us that the members have a love for others. We also have seen the hunger you have for spiritual things." Romans 15:13-14."

Lisa was born in Wharton, Texas and moved to Michigan after graduating from Lubbock Christian College. She and Mark met at worship services and were married in 1995. They have 4 children and 3 grandchildren.

After having taught 30 years, Lisa is now retired and loving it! She takes pleasure in playing tennis, fishing, gardening, canning, riding motorcycles, having young ladies' gatherings and going to the beaches of Saint Joseph. We marvel at her energy level but she says "if you don't use it, you are going to lose it!"

Regarding the UW topic of "gratitude", Lisa appreciates what 2 Peter 3:9 says because "there were times in my life that I did not walk in the light, and I am so grateful that God looked forward and was patient with me. "

Can we persuade the Reeds to become permanent Austinites? Lisa states that honestly the traffic here is a huge negative! And while Michigan may be too cold in the Winter, Austin is too hot in the Summer. What do they enjoy eating while here however? Chuys Tex-Mex and Black's barbecue. They have good taste don't they?!



## A Note from the Editors

Dear Ladies,

We want to thank each one of you that have contributed to the first year of the Upright Woman publication! We have truly been blessed by each of you, whether you were a writer or offered up prayers on our behalf. With this being the first year of compiling articles to create a publication for women we wanted to ask for your input about future topics, design, writers, etc. We welcome your thoughts and comments and look forward to another year of uplifting issues.

Please send all feedback and suggestions to the Upright Woman email at [uprightwoman@gmail.com](mailto:uprightwoman@gmail.com)

Our hope for this coming year is to grow the publication by making it accessible online in order to reach our sisters in other congregations.

Thank you, again, for your continued thoughts and prayers for the success of Upright Woman.

We hope that all glory is given to God always.

In Christian Love,  
Courtney and Gretchen

*Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name;  
make known his deeds among the People!  
Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!  
Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!  
1 Chronicles 16:8-10*

## Upcoming Events

Santa's Day Out - Babysitting and Holiday activities - December 2nd (10am-3pm) - SW Annex  
SWCOC Ladies' Ornament and Cookie Exchange - December 7th - Lauren Harris' House  
SWCOC Ladies' Retreat - February 1-3 - Kerrville, TX

### About *The Upright Woman*

*The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.*

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***"For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face." Psalm 11:7***

*We pray that with every issue and in every article all glory is given to God.*