



ZION

FAITH FELLOWSHIP

THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

O GIVE THANKS!

Psalm 118:1

King James Version

118 O give thanks (yada) unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

King James Version

18 In every thing give thanks (eucharisteo): for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude, thankfulness, or gratefulness, from the Latin word *gratus* 'pleasing, thankful', is a feeling of appreciation felt by and/or similar positive response shown by the recipient of kindness, gifts, help, favors, or other types of generosity, towards the giver of such gifts.

It is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative and is associated with several mental and physical health benefits.

When you experience gratitude, you feel grateful for something or someone in your life and respond with feelings of kindness, warmth, and other forms of generosity.

"In general terms, gratitude stems from the recognition that something good happened to you, accompanied by an appraisal that someone, whether another individual or an impersonal source, such as nature or a divine entity, was responsible for it,"

explain researchers Lúzie Fofonka Cunha, Lucia Campos Pellanda, and Caroline Tozzi Reppold in a 2019 article published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*.¹

Gratitude has been said to mold and shape the entire Christian life. Martin Luther referred to gratitude as "The basic Christian attitude" and today it is still referred to as "the heart of the gospel." Christians are strongly encouraged to praise and give gratitude to their creator.

In Christian gratitude, God is seen as the selfless giver of all good things and because of this, there is a deep sense of gratefulness which enables Christians to share a common bond, shaping all aspects of a follower's life.

Gratitude in Christianity is an acknowledgment of God's generosity that inspires Christians to shape their own thoughts and actions around such ideals. Instead of simply a sentimental feeling, Christian gratitude is regarded as a virtue that shapes not

only emotions and thoughts but also actions and deeds.

History of Gratitude Studies:

The subject is something that has interested religious scholars and philosophers since ancient times. Research on gratitude didn't take off until the 1950s, as psychologists and sociologists began to examine the impact that gratitude could have on individuals and groups. Since then, interest in the topic has grown considerably as the potential health benefits became increasingly apparent.

Signs of Gratitude

So what does gratitude look like? How do you know if you are experiencing a sense of gratitude? For example, it might entail:

- Spending a few moments thinking about the things in your life that you are grateful for
- Stopping to observe and acknowledge the beauty of wonder of something you encounter in your daily life
- Being thankful for your health
- Thanking someone for the positive influence they have in your life
- Doing something kind for another person to show that you are grateful
- Paying attention to the small things in your life that bring you joy and peace
- Meditation or prayer focused on giving thanks

MEASURING GRATITUDE:

Gratitude is often a spontaneous emotion that you feel in the moment.

Some people are naturally prone to experiencing it more often than others, but experts suggest that it is also something that you can cultivate and learn to practice more often.

Measuring Gratitude:

- You can evaluate your tendency to experience gratitude by asking yourself the following questions.
- Do you feel like you have a lot to be thankful for in your life?
- If you made a list of all the things you are grateful for, would that list be very long?
- When you look at the world, can you find many things to be grateful for?
- Do you feel like your appreciation for life and other people has grown stronger as you get older?
- Do you frequently experience moments where you appreciate someone or something?
- Do you appreciate a wide variety of people in your life?

If you answered yes to most of these questions, you probably have a strong sense of gratitude. If you answered no to many or all, you could take steps to bring more gratitude into your life.

Types of Gratitude

At times, we can categorize gratitude in three different ways:

1. As an affective trait, meaning that it is related to a person's general disposition. Some people naturally experience gratitude more frequently than others. However, research has not demonstrated a clear connection to any of the Big Five personality traits such as conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extroversion.

2. As a mood, which means it may fluctuate over time. People might experience periods where they feel more grateful in general, and at other times they may experience this less often.
3. As an emotion, which is a briefer feeling that people experience in the moment. People might have a particular experience that inspires feelings of gratitude.

How to Practice Gratitude:

Developing a sense of gratitude isn't complex or challenging. It doesn't require any special tools or training. And the more you practice it, the better you will become and put yourself into a grateful state of mind. Here's how to do this:

1. Observe the moment:
 - a. Take a second to focus on your experience and how you are feeling.
 - b. Take stock of your senses and think about what is helping you cope.
 - c. Are there people who have done something for you, or are there particular things helping you manage your stress, feel good about your life, or accomplish what you need to do?
2. Write it down:
 - a. start a gratitude journal where you jot down a few things you are thankful for each day.
 - b. Being able to look back on these observations can help when you are struggling to feel grateful.
3. Savor the moment:
 - a. Give yourself time to really enjoy the moment.
 - b. Focus on the experience and allow yourself to absorb those good feelings.
4. Create gratitude rituals: (HABITS)

- a. Pausing for a moment to appreciate something and giving thanks for it can help you feel a greater sense of gratitude.
 - b. A meditation, prayer, or mantra are examples of rituals that can inspire a greater sense of gratitude.
5. Give thanks:
- a. Gratitude is all about recognizing and appreciating those people, things, moments, skills, or gifts that bring joy, peace, or comfort into our lives.
6. Show your appreciation.
- a. You might thank a person to show you are thankful for them, or you might spend a moment simply mentally appreciating what you have.

Research also suggests that people who tend to be more grateful are also more likely to engage in other health-promoting behaviors, including exercising, following their doctor's recommendations, and sticking to a healthier lifestyle.

Expressing your appreciation for others is an important component that can affect your interpersonal relationships, particularly those with your partner.

Showing your gratitude for those around you can help improve the quality and satisfaction of your relationships.

Impact of Gratitude

The practice of gratitude can have a significant positive impact on both physical and psychological health.

Some of the benefits of gratitude that researchers have uncovered include:

- Better sleep
- Better immunity
- Higher self-esteem
- Decreased stress
- Lower blood pressure
- Less anxiety and depression
- Stronger relationships
- Higher levels of optimism