



Way of the Eagle

by Rhoda Collins

Thanksgiving

GratITUDE impacts every area of our lives.

The key to a grateful heart begins with understanding God's character, because knowing His awesome attributes motivates trust and gratitude. He knows exactly what you are going through, loves you unconditionally, and understands you. When you thank Him in tough times, He gets bigger, and your circumstances get smaller.

Difficulties in life helps bring and keep our will into submission to God and are His way to bring comfort and blessings into our lives when we trust Him by giving Him our thanksgiving in all things. When a certain situation is the last thing we ever wanted or expected and perhaps very challenging, then thanking the Lord is a giant step towards being able to follow Christ's example by thanking Father and saying, **"Not my will but yours be done"** (Luke 22:42).

Gratitude helps us acknowledge that God's will is best, even if it's hard; in that way, we are able to release our hold on what we want which is self-idolization. Although the circumstances may remain, our submission changes our heart.

"O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy and loving-kindness endure forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has delivered from the hand of the adversary, And gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the Red Sea in the south. Some wandered in the wilderness in a solitary desert track; they found no city for habitation. Hungry and thirsty, they fainted; their lives were near to being extinguished. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. He led them forth by the straight and right way, that they might go to a city where they could establish their homes. Oh, that men would praise [and confess to] the Lord for His goodness and loving-kindness and His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with good". Psalm 107:1-9



Thanksgiving motivates us to look for His purpose in our circumstances.

It can be very difficult to have a grateful attitude towards God when life is rough, but we can focus on God's good purposes for our lives and his promises for our destiny which takes the edge off the pain.

Just like Jesus told me one time, "Take your focus off people and off of circumstances and keep your eyes on Me". When we spend time with God soaking in prayer, meditating on the Word and we leave circumstances in God's hand and we fill our minds with thanksgiving, then we can succeed better in life. Even though we don't understand why we are going through suffering, we can thank God because the scripture says that He'll work it out for our good. He is using this hardship to transform us into His image.

"We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:28-29

Thanksgiving helps us to rely totally on the Lord. Pride, adequacy and independence evaporate whenever we're trapped in a situation that leaves us helpless and hopeless. Paul said when he was in prison, **"Rejoice in the Lord always and again I said rejoice"** **Philippians 4:4**.

In **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** Paul address this issue of suffering by us keeping our eyes on everlasting things: **"For our light, momentary affliction (this slight distress of the passing hour) is ever more and more abundantly preparing and producing and achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory [beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!], Since we consider and look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal (brief and fleeting), but the things that are invisible are deathless and everlasting"**.

The Bible says, **"Rejoice always"** (**1 Thessalonians 5:16**). A couple of verses later it says, **". . . in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus"** (v. 18).

Ungrateful people are grumpy and you can't be joyful without giving thanks to the Lord. Joy is an inner sense of contentment, which flows from a deep assurance that all God's purposes are good and that He's in complete control of every situation.

A grateful attitude also strengthens our witness to unbelievers. If an unbeliever sees us worried and full of concern when we go through tough situations in our lives, we aren't displaying God's truth, character and strength. We need to always put on the garment of praise against a spirit of heaviness.

The world is filled with people who are angry, frustrated, and overwhelmed with the difficulties of life, but a believer with a grateful attitude is a like a light shining in a dark place. The people around you will want to know why you don't grumble and complain the way everyone else does.

Most of us can handle short trials, but if they continue for a long period of time, the emotional and physical strain is exhausting. If we have ongoing illnesses, unresolved relational problems, or continued financial pressures it becomes harder to bear. If you haven't already, these are times to turn to and thank God because He promises to give strength to the weary.



"He gives power to the faint and weary, and to him who has no might He increases strength [causing it to multiply and making it to abound]. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and [selected] young men shall feebly stumble and fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] shall change and renew their strength and power; they shall lift their wings and mount up [close to God] as eagles [mount up to the sun]; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint or become tired". Isaiah 40: 29-31

What will you choose?

It can be hard to make good choices, as most of the time we'd rather get out of the difficulties than thank God through them. God may want you to stay in a painful situation for a time. Why? Because His goal is to do what's best for you, which isn't always comfortable, convenient and enjoyable. The Lord's purposes for your life extend beyond your days on earth. He is working for your eternal good. Begin to thank God in all and everything, instead of worrying, murmuring, grumbling and complaining. Have sustained joy in all things knowing that you are eternal and He always has your eternal best interests in His Heart, which is far better!

". . . in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" **1 Thessalonians 5:18**