

The  
Power  
*-of-*  
Thank  
You

Discover the Joy of Gratitude

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JOYCE MEYER

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

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Discover the Joy of Gratitude

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NEW YORK • NASHVILLE

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# CONTENTS

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1. Thankfulness Is God's Will](#)

[Chapter 2. Gratitude and Contentment](#)

[Chapter 3. Be Thankful that Roses Have Thorns](#)

[Chapter 4. Be Thankful and Say So](#)

[Chapter 5. Grateful for God-Winks](#)

[Chapter 6. Gratitude and Generosity](#)

[Chapter 7. Never Forget Where You Came From](#)

[Chapter 8. God Doesn't Answer Complaints](#)

[Chapter 9. The Power of Thank You](#)

[Chapter 10. Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!](#)

[Chapter 11. Humility and Gratitude](#)

[Chapter 12. Gratitude Is a Weapon](#)

[Discover More](#)

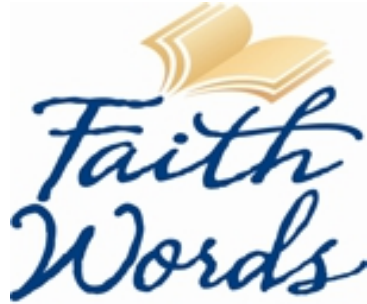
[About the Author](#)

[Conclusion](#)

*Appendix: Thirty Days of Thank You*  
*Endnotes*

**Explore book giveaways, sneak peeks, deals, and more.**

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## INTRODUCTION

I am excited about writing on the subject of thankfulness because I think having a grateful heart has more power than we can imagine. Being thankful is obviously important because God's Word is filled with instructions and reminders to give thanks and be thankful. The words *thanks* and *thanksgiving* appear in approximately one hundred verses in the Bible, and we are told to give thanks seventy-three times. I believe that anything the Holy Spirit repeats that often must be important to my life and yours.

We are to have thankful hearts and express our thankfulness to God and to the people in our lives who help us, encourage us, and do things for us. Psalm 100:4 states that we should "be thankful and say so" (AMPC ). I like this scripture because it reminds me that people can't read my mind. They need me to communicate my gratitude in order to know that I appreciate them and am thankful for them.

As we read the Old Testament, we find that possibly the Israelites' biggest problem may have been that they initially gave thanks for God's goodness to them but quickly forgot Him and went back to complaining and disobedience. Over and over God forgave them when they repented, and then they repeated the same process of being thankful, forgetting God, and going back into bondage. When God did mighty works for the Israelites, Psalm 106:12–13 says, "They believed his promises and sang his praise. But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his plan to unfold."

God brought thousands of people out of bondage in Egypt, and they headed toward the Promised Land. One reason only two men out of that large group—Joshua and Caleb—actually entered the Promised Land was that so many of the others complained instead of being thankful. Some of those born in the wilderness did enter into the Promised Land with Joshua and Caleb, but the rest were destroyed, partially due to a lack of gratitude, which led to disobedience to God. This shows the power of thank you.

The apostle Paul teaches us that God's will for us is to be thankful at all times in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18). I admit that this is a tall order, but God never asks us to do anything we cannot do with His help.

My goal in this book is to birth in you a fresh revelation of the power of being thankful and urge you to make a new and firm commitment to being more thankful than you have ever been. I truly believe that the words *thank you* contain power that will change your life. I have concentrated on being thankful for a long time, and I can testify that thankfulness releases joy in our lives, has a powerful effect on our prayers, and keeps us focused on the positive aspects of our lives.

Our gratitude belongs first to God, because without Him we would have nothing. God is good. Goodness is part of His character and essence, and He is good all the time. He desires our good and wants us to be good to others. Where goodness flows forth, thankfulness should also flow forth. When we stop seeing the good in our lives and start complaining, we cause many problems for ourselves. I like to say, "Why be grumpy when we can be grateful?"

I look forward to hearing about how this book helps you become a more thankful person. I am thankful that you are reading it and thankful that God has allowed me to write it. I begin it leaning entirely on Him for the words He wants to speak to you through it.

## CHAPTER 1

# **Thankfulness Is God's Will**

*Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus [the Revealer and Mediator of that will].*

1 Thessalonians 5:18 AMPC

Because God does so much for us, we should be thankful in every circumstance, even if everything is not pleasant for us at the moment. No matter what kind of difficulty we may face, our blessings always outweigh our troubles. We create problems for ourselves when we forget our blessings or begin to take them for granted because we have had them for so long. When this happens, we begin to focus only on life's difficulties.

God doesn't need us to thank Him, so I imagine His instructions to do so are repeated frequently because expressing our gratitude is good for us. It keeps us focused on our blessings instead of our problems, which adds joy and contentment to our lives. Studies have shown that thankful people tend to be healthier than those who complain frequently.

The story in Luke 17:11–19 (ESV ) gives us an idea of how few people take time to give thanks:

On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

As you can see, Jesus cleanses ten lepers of the horrible disease of leprosy, but only one returns to say thank you. I can't help but wonder what happened to the other nine lepers Jesus healed. The Bible doesn't tell us, but it is definitely food for thought.

## **Thankfulness Is a Sign of Spiritual Maturity**

Giving thanks in all things at all times shows spiritual maturity, and it is something we grow into little by little. We are not born as thankful people,

but we can cultivate a culture of gratitude in our lives. In the early stages of our relationship with God through Christ, we may not be aware of all the amazing ways He helps and blesses us on a regular basis; we may be more inclined to notice what we don't like about our lives and want God to fix. But as we grow in our knowledge of God and in His blessings, we realize that the list of things we have to be thankful for is endless, even in the midst of our problems. As I often say, our worst day with Jesus is better than our best day ever was without Him. Take a few moments right now and think of all the things God provides, such as:

- peace
- answered prayer
- grace
- forgiveness of sin
- hope
- right relationship with Him through Christ
- provision
- mercy
- help
- wisdom
- strength
- and many other blessings

Even if all your problems vanished right now, if you had none of these blessings I have listed as gifts from God, I am sure you would rather keep your problem with the blessings of God than get rid of the problem and lose the blessings too.

As I have studied the apostle Paul's writings, I have learned that he never prayed for people's problems to go away. This is also a sign of spiritual maturity. He prayed they would bear whatever they had to endure with good attitudes. In his epistles to the churches, he frequently reminded people to be thankful. In his letter to the Colossians alone, instructions to be thankful are plentiful:

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when

we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people.

Colossians 1:3–4

Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:12–14

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6–7

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:15–17

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Colossians 4:2

As you can see, in this one epistle, which consists of only four chapters, Paul encourages the giving of thanks several times. This tells me that we need frequent reminders to be thankful.

In Ephesians 5:20 Paul pens these simple yet powerful words: “Always

giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He urges his readers to be thankful in most of his epistles, and I think reading his letters looking for instructions to be thankful would be enlightening and encouraging for you.

Some scholars and Bible teachers refer to Paul as “the apostle of thanksgiving.” No wonder he was trusted to write two-thirds of the New Testament. Paul had experienced God’s great grace and mercy at his conversion on the Damascus road, and we can tell from his writings that he never stopped being thankful for it (Acts 9:3–5). We should follow his example and never stop being thankful for all that God does in our lives and the blessings He gives to us .

## **A Story of Heartfelt Thanks**

I recently read an article about a homeless man who was often hungry, cold, tired, and in poor health. He had no family and, apparently, no one to love him. The author of the article had previously read about this homeless person and wrote:

It broke my heart that anyone who is homeless has to go through such circumstances. However, one might think the man would give up hope, become bitter, angry, depressed and lonely because life appears to have dealt him a bad hand, right? Instead, the article went on to say how the man makes a point every day to go feed the birds with crumbs or food that he can find in the trash or if a Good-Samaritan offers him some food, he shares it. He was asked how he felt about being homeless and he replied, “I have the air in my lungs and I’m grateful for everything I have been blessed with but most important I am grateful for three things: that I’m alive, that I have the ability to love,” (*and with tears starting to fill his eyes*) his third gratitude... “that I have my beloved birds.” [1](#)

This story is very touching, and it makes me want to go help someone. Anyone who has such a good attitude while living under such circumstances should inspire each of us. Just think of the small issues we

complain about in relation to the blessings for which this homeless man was thankful. His gratitude gave him the power to be happy in the midst of very difficult situations.

## **The Power of Thank You**

Many people are taught as children to give thanks at mealtime. Although this is good, we should also be taught from an early age to give thanks in all things. The giving of thanks is powerful beyond what we may realize. It brings many benefits to our lives and to the lives of other people. Gratitude to God makes our relationship with Him better, and expressing appreciation and thanks to others certainly improves our relationships with them.

When we do something for someone and they don't even bother to acknowledge it with a thank you, we can feel that the gesture has fallen flat. I don't do things for people in order to get thanks from them, yet it still feels as though something is missing when they do not express appreciation for what I have done. I feel they are missing a blessing by "taking" or receiving something without acknowledging their gratitude. Perhaps they have never been taught regarding the importance of expressing gratitude. If not, it is never too late to learn.

I never want to fail to say thank you, but I am sure that I sometimes neglect to do so; therefore, I am writing this book for myself as well as for you. As I mentioned earlier, Psalm 100:4 says that we are to "be thankful and say so" (AMPC ). This is a simple, yet powerful instruction. It means to have a heart that appreciates everything it is given and a mouth that expresses thanksgiving to God and to people through words.

Nehemiah 8:10 says that the joy of the Lord is our strength. Expressing gratitude through phrases such as *thank you* or *I appreciate you* not only blesses those to whom we speak, but it also releases something powerful in us. It helps us realize how blessed we are, and keeping that in mind gives us joy. I think speaking words of gratitude in person is the best option when possible, but we may also choose to text, email, call, or write a note to people we want to thank. Doing so takes very little time and does us a great deal of good. It is not happy people who are thankful; it is thankful people who are happy.

I have heard that one of the deepest needs in human beings is to be



appreciated. Charles Schwab said, “The way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement.” No one wants to feel taken advantage of or to sense that what they do for others is meaningless. But when people do not express gratitude, it is easy for our enemy, Satan, to whisper in our ears, “You don’t really matter. What you did for them didn’t make any difference.” We have the power to help others avoid such negative feelings by simply saying thank you when it should be said. I suspect we could spare people many of the enemy’s lies by simply being more encouraging and appreciative.

We have the ability to give people value with our words. Isn’t that amazing? Words are containers for power, and we can choose the type of power we will put into them. This power can be positive in its ability to build up and encourage people or negative in its capacity to tear down and discourage them.

Although we should listen more than we talk (James 1:19), there are times we should speak, and one of those times is to say thank you. Silent gratitude doesn’t do much for anyone. When was the last time you said you were thankful for something or someone? If it has been a while, maybe now would be a good time.

Expressing thankfulness can greatly improve your marriage. Just imagine how your life with your spouse might change if you began to appreciate them more than you find fault with them. Great things could happen. Gratitude can melt a hard heart and heal emotional wounds. I recall a time when I was unhappy with Dave and thinking about everything that I thought was wrong with him. I felt the Lord challenge me to write a list of everything I didn’t like about him, along with everything I did like. When I had finished, I realized I liked much more about him than I didn’t like, and it turned my whole attitude around.

Nobody is perfect—not even you and me.

## **Get Your Mind off of Yourself**

Being thankful keeps our focus off ourselves and on what God and other people do for us. As I write this book, my daughter and son-in-law are with me. They are here for one purpose—to help me. They do everything so that I am free to write, and I am thankful. They just told me that they will pay