

## Genuinely Thankful

1 Timothy 6:17-19

### Introduction

Last week I gave my testimony as the message and I expressed all of the things for which I am so grateful. I failed to explain two things. First, when I spoke about meeting my wife at college, I wanted to emphasize the importance of waiting on God and finding the person God has for your life. Too many marriages fail because God is not a part of the relationship.

Secondly, I mentioned my best friend in college was Renaldo Garcia from Venezuela. I mentioned that he called me Tooker and I often called him "spic." Please do not think I was being disrespectful to anyone. This was a very close college buddy and no disrespect was ever intended or taken. I don't think anyone took offense to that last week but if so, none was intended for sure. Renaldo was actually the best man in my wedding.

The whole point of the message last week was to give God the glory for the wondrous things he has done in my life. We need to be thankful.

I am convinced that prayer and thankfulness go hand in hand. How can we expect God to answer our prayers if we are not obedient in being thankful for his blessings?

### Scripture

<sup>17</sup> Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup> Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup> In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 NIV

### Preface

Illus: Dr. Dale Robbins writes, "**I used to think people complained because they had a lot of problems. But I have come to realize that people have problems because they complain.**"

Complaining doesn't change anything or make situations better. It amplifies frustration, spreads discontent and invites the devil to come in and cause havoc in our lives.

Complaining makes us and the people around us miserable.

Psalm 77:3 says, "I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed."

Philippians 2:13 "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God..."

A positive, thankful person is a great witness in this world. **We shine the most when we are thankful.** Instead of looking at the negatives in our lives and complaining, we must look for the positives and give thanks.

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

So we must be mindful that Thanksgiving doesn't end this week. We must be thankful throughout the year. And we must be thankful in all circumstances.

There is a difference between being thankful for something and being thankful in all circumstances. It is easy to be thankful for something. In fact, being thankful for something just comes natural. This Christmas when your wife gives you that new Dremel Tool you have been wanting, you will automatically be thankful. If she gives you a little hand saw, you won't be thankful. Being thankful for something is as simple as that; you like it.

But being thankful in all circumstances involves faith and it involves recognizing God is in control. Being thankful in all circumstances means you are trusting that God is working in your life even if you are in the midst of struggles.

## 1. We have it so good

We sometimes like to complain about how difficult we have it and how unblessed we are. But if we will look around, we will see we really have it good.

Illus: Tannehill Trade Days – so much stuff for sale you can't see it all in a day. Flea markets confirm we all have a lot of junk.

Illus: In Honduras those lucky enough to have indoor plumbing have to save and burn their used toilet paper. In Honduras, the average annual income is \$1,549. In all of Central America, the average annual income is only \$6,736. In Poland it is \$17,812. The United States tops out the list at \$51,493.

Most of us have more than our parents ever dreamed of having when they were our age. We are greatly blessed.

Illus: How many of you in this room right now would raise your hand and say God has blessed me richly. Don't raise your hand unless you mean it; God has richly blessed you.

Most families in the US and probably in our church have one vehicle for every licensed driver. Even in a recession and with times more difficult than in the past, we are not remotely suffering like people in other countries.

As Christians, we need to recognize that we already have it so good.

## 2. We enjoy so much

We live in a day when we suffer from entertainment overload. We work hard at having fun. We will do anything to have fun.

Illus: Have you ever been on vacation and thought to yourself, "I'll be glad to get home so I can rest."

In this day of smart phones, iphones, ipods and ipads we are constantly being entertained. I recently visited someone in the

hospital. The patient was sitting in the bed playing with her smart phone. A relative was sitting in a chair playing a game on her smart phone. Another relative was sitting on the couch with a notebook computer and headsets on. This was all going on in the hospital room while I was trying to visit the patient.

We have become a society who expects to be entertained constantly. No one enjoys peace and quiet anymore.

Illus: All we hear about these days is the world wide web. Yes the internet is a powerful tool that has changed the way we live for the good and bad. But I'll take "world wide" over the "world wide web" any day. Let me get out in the country or up in the mountains and I can find more entertainment in nature than any i-gadget will ever provide.

But we live in a society of entertainment overload. Our children expect to be having fun; constantly.

Illus: Have you ever been to the Fairhope Arts & Craft show and had to prop your feet up when you got home because you were exhausted from so much walking and shopping? Sometimes I want to ask Pam, "Are we having fun yet?"

Today many Christians are so busy having fun that they complain and can't get out of bed to go to church on Sunday.

It is good to have much but we must not forget that God has blessed us and expects us to be thankful.

We often get caught up in the cycle of wanting more and more without ever taking the time to be thankful for what we do have.

It's great to enjoy life but we must not allow it to become the main focus and overlook thanking and worshiping God.

### 3. We express it too rarely

Whenever we think life has been unfair to us, we better think again. Just being born in this country is a huge blessing in itself.

Illus: As most of you know, I like to collect old tools and farm stuff. Most of what I have has been given to me by friends and church members. This week someone brought me this old nose clamp. It is for restraining a cow. It opens up and then closes on the cow's nose allowing you to lead it around. Now, you can at least be thankful you are not a cow. Although some people today voluntarily put such nonsense in their nose attention.

Instead of dwelling on what we don't have, we should be grateful for what we do have. We need to express our gratitude daily to God and to others.

Illus: There was a young man feeling very proud of himself. As a brand new college graduate he had taken the C.P.A. Exams and passed with flying colors. Now he was a full-fledged CPA.

His father had been an immigrant to the U.S., and now owned his own little business. Filled with self-importance, the young man began to criticize his father's way of keeping books. He said, "Dad, you don't even know how much profit you've made. Over here in this drawer is your accounts receivable. Over there are your receipts and you keep all your money in the cash register. You don't have any idea how much money you've made."

The father answered, "Son, when I came to this country the only thing I owned was a pair of pants. Now, your brother is a doctor, your sister is an art teacher, and you are a C.P.A. Your mother and I own our home. We have a car and we own this little business. Now add all that up, subtract the pants and all the rest is profit."

Some of us need to figure our gain and we will see we have been blessed. Thank God for your blessings and tell others how God has blessed you.

### Conclusion

<sup>18</sup> *Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*

We have several ways you can give during this Christmas season. Look in the newsletter and you will see different offerings as well as the angel tree. Will you show your thankfulness by being generous and willing to share?

Earlier I asked you to indicate if God has richly blessed you. All over the room you raised your hand. I have another question for you. Do you tithe? You say God has blessed you but now the question is do you give back to him obediently? Do you return those blessings by given back according to the Bible?

**What we say on Thanksgiving Day will not be the measure of our appreciation. What we do and say the remainder of the year will reveal the truth if we are genuinely thankful.**