

INGRATITUDE— A DEADLY SIN

Are you guilty of being unthankful—unappreciative of your many blessings? You need to develop the habit of being grateful— for everything!

by Raymond F. McNair

NEVER BEFORE in the long history of mankind have human beings been blessed so bountifully. Never before have so many — especially in America, Britain and the Commonwealth — been able to enjoy so many physical blessings.

But, also, *never before has this earth witnessed such widespread INGRATITUDE!*

Worldwide Ingratitude

This terrible worldwide affliction was prophesied nearly 2,000 years ago to be one of the outstanding sins of this present age!

Why should unthankfulness be so prevalent in this era of unprecedented wealth and prosperity?

And, most important of all, what can you do to make sure that you don't either become (or remain) a helpless victim of this all-too-prevalent sin of ingratitude? How can you prevent the octopus-like clutches of this worldwide sin from strangling much of *your* happiness?

Over 1,900 years ago, the apostle Paul foretold today's world conditions: "This know also, that *in the last days PERILOUS times shall come*. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . UNTHANKFUL, unholy" (II Tim. 3:1, 2).

Ingratitude would be one of the common sins of our age, according to this inspired Apostle!

How many of you are truly grateful to your very Creator for the many blessings which He has permitted you to enjoy? And how many are thankful even to our fellow human beings for

the many blessings, services and benefits which we receive from them?

Chronic Grumblers

Any national opinion poll (taken in the U. S., Britain and the Commonwealth) will reveal that there is precious little gratitude either *felt* or *expressed* in our lands today — whether toward God or toward our fellowman!

Are you one of these *chronic grumblers* — who is never content or satisfied with his blessings — whether it be your salary, the way your government is run, or with the countless other blessings which you are permitted to enjoy in a free country such as the U. S., Canada, Britain or Australia?

The plain truth is that we have become a nation of complainers, of grumblers, of bellyachers! We seem never to be content. Like Israel of old, we soon forget where our blessings really come from, and begin to find fault, to grumble and complain!

Consider a historical example of ingratitude.

God Almighty delivered the infant nation, Israel, from centuries of terrible Egyptian bondage. He miraculously saved them from the slaughter of Pharaoh's terrifying army. Also, He fed them with manna, and in the dry, barren desert, He sustained them with water out of the rock; but they still grumbled and complained continually (Num. 14 through 17). They weren't really thankful for the many blessings which He had so lavishly bestowed upon them.

Because of their unbelievable ingratitude, God finally gave them over

to destruction. They all (except Joshua and Caleb) perished in the barren wilderness of Sinai — without ever reaching the Promised Land — the land of milk and honey.

An Awful Prophecy

One of the most awful prophecies in the entire Bible reveals why God sometimes lets terrible calamities (even national invasion and captivity) come upon ungrateful nations. This horrifying prophecy (which applies to our Anglo-Saxon peoples) is found in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. It was given nearly 4,000 years ago.

God promised countless *blessings* to those who would obey Him — to those who would really follow His ways (Deut. 28:1-14). But He also revealed that terrible *curses* would overtake that nation which turned its back on Him — which flagrantly broke His holy and righteous commandments (verses 15-68).

Why will these curses come upon our people — upon our own friends and relatives (unless they repent)? "*Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with JOYFULNESS, and with GLADNESS of heart, for the ABUNDANCE OF ALL THINGS*. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in *hunger*, and in *thirst*, and in *nakedness*, and in *want* [lack] of all things: and He shall put a *yoke* of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee" (Deut. 28:47, 48).

This terrifying prophecy is directed squarely at the peoples of America, Britain and the Anglo-Saxon members

of the Commonwealth — unless we repent of our present downward moral and spiritual plunge into total depravity.” (If you don’t know where our peoples are mentioned in the Bible, be sure to write for our free book, *The United States and The British Commonwealth in Prophecy.*)

Thanksgiving Day Debaucheries

You may ask: But how could this prophecy in Deuteronomy 28 refer to us? How could it apply to the peoples of the U. S. in particular? Don’t we in the U. S. set aside a day each year in which we give God thanks for our blessings?

It is true that the United States observes a national holiday — called Thanksgiving Day. But it is equally true (as those who are honest will admit) that this national Thanksgiving Day has degenerated into an orgy of excesses — drunkenness and gluttony. And both of these are terrible sins in the sight of Almighty God.

Do we really think our Creator is pleased to see countless millions eat and drink (and dissipate) themselves into heart attacks, colds, fevers, excesses — yet all the while observing this Thanksgiving Day — *supposedly* in remembrance of the blessings God has lavished upon us? Do we really suppose God is pleased and impressed by such debaucheries?

When our Pilgrim forefathers had gathered their first bounteous crops of fruits, grains, vegetables and nuts, they really did feel a deep sense of gratitude toward their Maker. They came together to enjoy a feast at which they were careful to let the Almighty Blessor know how grateful they were for their overflowing blessings.

The way we observe this Thanksgiving Day has degenerated terribly!

Very few in Britain or America today are really grateful for the bounties they daily receive from the hand of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! We have grown fat, lazy, complacent, self-satisfied, SELF-INDULGENT and UN-GRATEFUL!

Moses’ Solemn Warning

Shortly before his death, the elderly Moses gave a solemn warning to the

people of Israel — and to their descendants, to our very people — *not to forget their God!*

He assured Israel of old (our very forefathers) that we (their descendants) would inherit “a good land” — a land possessing lots of water, natural resources and abundant crops (Deut. 8:6-9).

Then Moses was inspired to give this sobering warning: “When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt *bless* the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee. BEWARE THAT THOU FORGET NOT THE LORD THY GOD, in *not* keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day: lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou FORGET the Lord thy God . . .”

If our people began to forget God (even proclaiming that “God is Dead”) then terrible calamity was certain to overtake them. World Wars I and II were only a slight foretaste of the terrible things which God Almighty will let befall us — in World War III, with all of its nuclear terrors — unless we quickly reverse our downward plunge!

God Almighty continued His warning through His servant, Moses: “And thou [Israel] say in thine heart, *My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.* But thou shalt *remember the Lord thy God:* for it is He that giveth thee *power to get wealth,* that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day” (Deut. 8:17).

If Israel did forget her God, doom would be certain, warned the grey-haired Moses: “And it shall be, *if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God,* and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that *ye shall surely PERISH!*” (Deut. 8:19)!

Again, let us ask ourselves: Are we really thankful to Almighty God — on Thanksgiving Day, and on *every* day

— for the many blessings which we have received?

Don’t Just “Say Grace”

Do we always give our Creator thanks for the food on our table — *before* we partake of it? How many of those who “say grace” are *really thankful?* How many merely repeat certain words, parrot fashion, while “saying grace”? God’s Word reveals that we should *always pray from the heart* — not just repeat words like a phonograph record (Mat. 6:7).

Yes, how many (or how few!) are really grateful for the priceless gift of their very existence? Also, how many of us give God thanks for our eyesight, our hearing, our sense of taste, smell and feeling? How many of us are truly thankful for our ability to speak, and for the ability to use our various members — like our feet and legs for walking?

We should never take these many blessings for granted. Many have been struck down by a serious stroke (or by some other dreaded affliction) and have been made almost totally helpless. Often, *after* such a calamity, they really learn to appreciate the great blessings of sight, hearing, speech, muscular coordination.

Many who have had a serious stroke have *later* learned to be truly thankful to their Creator for the ability to regain use of their members and bodily functions. It is a shocking experience to find that one is *totally helpless* — can’t even speak, turn his head, raise his little finger or move a muscle in his body.

Don’t Take Blessings for Granted

All too many of us take our blessings too much for granted — until (in a moment) they are taken away from us.

Overnight, you could be struck down with some terrible disease or affliction which could sweep away most, if not all, of your hopes and dreams. In one moment — in a flash — your life could be snuffed out in an accident, or your loved ones could be taken from you. A financial crash or a

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terrible calamity (such as a nuclear war) could instantly turn a normal, pleasant existence into a nightmare.

In the twinkling of an eye your heart could stop and all that you think is yours could be taken from you and given to someone else. *Rigor mortis* is no respecter of persons! "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith *content*" (I Tim. 6:7, 8).

Material things of themselves do not bring us happiness. "But *godliness with contentment is great gain*" (I Tim. 6:6).

Christ warned: "Take heed and *beware of covetousness*: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

Do you really treasure your health?

We are living in a very degenerate age — in the last de-generation of man's 6,000 years of *misrule*.

Granted, very, very few have perfect health. Almost everyone has some infirmities; but do you at least thank God for the measure of health which He has mercifully granted you?

A few years ago a very well-known multimillionaire in the U. S. reportedly offered a million dollars to anyone who would help him find the answer to his terrible health problem — gnawing ulcers. He would gladly have given one million dollars for a new stomach.

Here was a very wealthy man who could hardly eat anything. He could not enjoy a normal meal — a good steak, or other solid foods — like the average person.

Nearly three millenniums ago, wise old King Solomon wrote of such a man: "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease" (Eccl. 6:1, 2).

Yes, we all need to realize that God

is the One who holds in His hand the power of health, of life, of peace — of everything good!

Thank God — Even for Trials

During the terrible depression days, following World War I, food was often very scarce in some parts of the world — even in the U. S. A certain poor man's money had dwindled to only twenty-five cents. He had eaten very little for several days. Finally, he decided to have one last splurge — spending his twenty-five-cent piece on a nice restaurant meal. On his way to the restaurant he had to cross over a river. As he trudged over the bridge, looking from time to time at the coin in his hand, he stumbled and fell. The shiny coin fell from his hand and rolled quietly between two of the planks in the bridge — and plummeted into the deep river far below!

Now this greatly disappointed man could have got up and used some profanity. He could have become bitter — but he didn't! He slowly got to his feet exclaiming: "Well, I thank you, Lord, that I still have my appetite."

People are often tempted to complain of their lot in life. They should never give in to such a temptation.

I once heard of a woman who became paralyzed from her neck down. She could only move her head. This could have made her turn sour. She could have become bitter and cynical, but she didn't! Rather, she was very thankful that she still had her mental faculties, and was also very grateful to God that she could still speak. By using her head, she was able to build up a very good real estate business — selling property. She did this by taking a pencil between her teeth and dialing phone numbers. She became a very successful and happy person — because she had learned to count her blessings and make the most of what many would have thought to have been a hopeless situation!

Why can't we learn to count our blessings and to thank our Creator for

everything — yes even for the trials and tests, which many times turn out to be blessings in disguise? God often permits trials and calamities to befall us to teach us certain lessons — to help us learn some of the true values of life (II Cor. 12:7-10). Knowing this, we should sincerely thank a merciful Creator — even for our sore trials (James 1:2-4).

And what a pity that people don't really understand this today. Very few (even among professing Christians) seem to really grasp the greatness of the God whom they profess to know and serve: "For He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole" (Job 5:18).

One-in-Ten Thankful

Today's worldwide ingratitude is aptly illustrated in the incident where Christ healed *ten* lepers (Luke 17:12-14).

"And *one* of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God. And fell down on his face at His feet, *giving Him THANKS*: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not *ten* cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" (Luke 17:15-18).

This type of experience is oft repeated even in our time. There is probably not one in ten who will so much as turn back and give God thanks.

You need to realize that one of the worst possible sins you can commit is the terrible sin of ingratitude. All too many have built up an inveterate habit of continually complaining about everything — instead of being thankful.

Whether you realize it or not — you have many, many things to be thankful for. "I once complained because I had *no shoes*, until I met a man who had *no feet*!"

The Almighty Blessor

You need to realize that your very Creator is the One from whom all blessings flow!

When God appeared unto Abraham, intending to bless him and his seed, He revealed to him one of His many names — *El Shaddai*. "The Lord ap-

peared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God [Heb. *El Shaddai*]” (Gen. 17:1). *El Shaddai* means “The Almighty Blessor.”

The apostle James was inspired to write: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights...” (James 1:17).

David reveals throughout the book of Psalms the mercy, goodness and the boundless blessings of God — blessings which He bestows upon all mankind.

The entire 103rd Psalm expresses very eloquently David’s thanks and praise for the many blessings he had received from God.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Ps. 103:1-5).

How to Glorify God

Our Maker likes to see us overflowing with gratitude — just like we rejoice to see anyone whom we have helped show appreciation. “Whoso offers praise glorifies me,” declares Almighty God (Ps. 50:23).

The prophets, patriarchs, Apostles and Jesus Christ were men who were thankful for their blessings. Christ’s Apostles rejoiced and praised God — thanking Him that they were even accounted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of the very name of Jesus Christ (Acts 5:41).

Let us always remember that our God is “the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” (II Cor. 1:3).

He loves us and has designed His whole creation for the benefit of man. “And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31).

God inspired His servant, John, to write: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health...” (III John 2).

Yes, God wants us to prosper and be in health, but He does not want us

to ever set our hearts on riches or trust in them (I Tim. 6:9-11). We are, however, commanded to trust “in the living God, who giveth us RICHLY all things to enjoy” (I Tim. 6:17).

Why can’t people realize that it is the Creator God who gives us every blessing? He made the wonderful things to eat, to drink and the many other things for the service and pleasure of man. What a loving God we have!

But God detests ingratitude!

Esau didn’t really appreciate the blessings which were to have been his. Rather, he despised them (Gen. 25:29-34). So God let his blessings go to his younger brother, Jacob, who did appreciate them — who was very thankful to receive these blessings for himself and his children.

King Saul, the first king of Israel, didn’t really appreciate the great office into which God Almighty had placed him. He wasn’t thankful to God for this kingship over Israel, and he wouldn’t obey Him (I Sam. 15:22, 23); therefore God removed him from that office and installed David, a shepherd boy, who was filled with supreme gratitude for the blessings God bestowed upon him.

If we don’t learn to appreciate our blessings, God will take them from us — and give them to someone else!

“The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving”

God does not require us to offer animal sacrifices as of old (Jer. 7:22, 23); but He is well pleased when we “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). We are commanded to offer “the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing” (Ps. 107:22).

One reason why many find prayer so difficult is that they have never learned to mix praise and THANKSGIVING with their prayers! “But in everything by prayer and supplication with THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6) — “giving thanks always for all things” (Eph. 5:20).

Be Thankful for Everything

What should we be thankful for?

For food, clothing, shelter; for the blessings of living in a free land; for rapid transportation and communication.

We should be thankful also for the beauty which we see everywhere around us; for the gift of life itself, and for continued health and strength with which we can exercise our mental and physical faculties so as to accomplish many things; for the Bible by which we can know His will; for God’s love, mercy and protection from harm; for the sacrifice of Christ — making possible the forgiveness of our sins, and for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and for the assurance of eternal life in the endless Kingdom of God! We should, in fact, be thankful for everything!

Truly, these are only a few of the many blessings which we have received from a loving, all-wise, ever-merciful Creator who wants us to have an abundant life (John 10:10).

We should also be very thankful for *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine and *The WORLD TOMORROW* broadcast. If we don’t appreciate receiving God’s precious Word through these media, then the time will come when we will no longer have these blessings.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but [a famine] of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11).

Yes, God’s Word solemnly declares that, in the dark days immediately ahead of us, the public preaching of God’s Word will be cut off! The true Gospel will not have free course to go out unhindered as today. Appreciate this blessing while you have it — before it is too late!

God will take away our blessings if we don’t really appreciate them and give Him thanks — if we don’t learn to serve Him joyfully for all the great abundance of the many blessings which He has so lavishly bestowed upon us (Deut. 28:47, 48).

Don’t be guilty of committing the terrible sin of ingratitude! (II Tim. 3:2). Learn to be thankful to God and to your fellowman for everything!