



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XXII

June 2002

Number 11

Gratitude

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

Society and Gratitude

The world recognizes our need to be grateful. Consider the following quotations from Power Bible Program: "Some people complain because God put thorns on roses, while others praise Him for putting roses among thorns. -Anonymous" "He who receives a good turn should never forget it; he who does one should never remember it. -Charron" "A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues. -Cicero" "Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will breed in you temperance and self control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content, and a hundred virtues which the idle never know. -Kingsley" And finally, "Gratitude to God should be as habitual as the reception of mercies is constant, as ardent as the number of them is great, as

devout as the riches of divine grace and goodness is incomprehensible. -Simmons"

Special Days

In America, we set aside a day once a year to focus on appreciation—

Thanksgiving Day. In North America Thanksgiving is a national holiday commemorating a harvest festival celebrated by the Pilgrim Fathers in 1621. It is held in the US on the fourth Thursday in November and in Canada usually on the second Monday in October.

Mother's Day is also an annual day of the year on which children honor their mothers (in Britain Mothering Sunday, and in North America the second Sunday in May).

Father's Day is the third Sunday in June, and it is set aside as a day to honor fatherhood in the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and some other Commonwealth countries.

Secretaries' Day (this year, April 24, 2002) is not a holiday, but it is designed to honor those who serve faithfully in office work, and without whom many (including myself) would be far less effective in the tasks assigned them. The following quote reflects what is often the case, is it not? "*Happy is the man with a wife to tell him what to do and a secretary to do it.*"¹

Many other holidays and special days of recognition could be mentioned, but the reader should see the point we are making—gratitude and thankfulness need to be cultivated.

Biblical Admonitions

God, being our maker, knew we would need to be

¹(Stormont Samuel (1914–1987), British businessman and writer. *The Observe* (London) "Sayings of the Week" (December 18, 1966). *Encarta® Book of Quotations* © & (P) 1999 Microsoft Corporation.

encouraged to express gratitude. The following passages reflect our need: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks to God and the Father by him**" (Col. 3:17). "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf" (2 Cor. 1:11). "**Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Eph. 5:20). "In every thing give thanks: **for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you**" (1 Thess. 5:18).

It is fitting that we express gratitude in our prayers to God. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and **giving of thanks, be made for all men**; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Application

For years the Florida School of Preaching has had an annual **Booster Banquet** to honor supporters. This year it will be October 17, 2002, and we will express appreciation to the **ladies who have served in the office over the years.**

Each year when **Students** receive assistance in order to attend school, they are reminded to write and express appreciation to those who are making their

training possible. When finishing their training they are honored by a fellowship meal, and they are to make their remarks at this occasion and express appreciation for all help given them while attending.

Ingratitude is a most cruel disposition. It is seen far too often among those who should be grateful for blessings received. It is characteristic of the unbelieving world "**Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened**" (Rom. 1:21). A vivid picture of Israel's ungratefulness and departure from God is presented by the Prophet Ezekiel in Chapter 16 of his prophecy.

Yet, this is not an Old Testament problem, it is as true today as then. Could you name individuals who have been recipients of God's blessings and never feel obligated to express gratitude to Him in the way He requests? Do you know of those who have received assistance from others, but find no time to express appreciation or to assist others as they have been assisted? Are you feeling uncomfortable being reminded of these things? If so, let it lead you (us) to amend your (our) ways.

Where Are the Nine?

"And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were

lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. 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. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:11-19, emphasis added, JMS).

It is truly sad that those who should be the most grateful often are not.

Who returned to Jesus to give thanks—a stranger. Where were the NINE Israelites?

Is this why God in the ten commandments demanded that we honor our parents (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3)?

Did Jesus state that we

The Harvesters
Published Monthly
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33803
(863) 683-4043
Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman
Board of Directors

Gordon Methvin, President	Maruice Davis
Paul Thornhill, Vice President	George K. French
J. H. Blackman, Jr., Secretary	E. Robert McAnally
Allen Gardner, Treasurer	Samuel J. Roney
Glenn Burgess	John D. Smitherman
Elmer Burgett	Dale Spung
Jack C. Cronk	Jackie M. Stearsman

TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

fail to serve God as we should when we neglect to be grateful to those who have contributed to our well-being (Matt. 15:3-9)?

Graduates

For years the school has assisted (because of the sacrificial generosity of others) students who attended. It has been one of my greatest disappointments to have men attend school, and be continually blessed by the school, but never find a way of returning to thank the school or offer any assistance to others who are traveling where they once traveled. Where are the NINE?

The "NINE" will often call and request assistance from the school and expect sacrifices to be made for them, but where are they when we need them to assist others and the school?

Some graduates may say, "Well the congregation where I labor will not support the school." Does this mean that an individual can not find even a small token of appreciation for the ongoing of the school? Where are the NINE?

A recent graduate is seeking to raise funds to carry the gospel to his native country. There are enough graduates from the Florida School of Preaching who have jobs in the US, and are natives of this country, to support his work. Will they? Where are the NINE?

How do we instill in Christian men and women that they have a moral and spiritual obligation to be generous, to give liberally, cheerfully, sacrificially, and not of necessity (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:6-11)? Where are the NINE?

This I know, until we become convinced that we have a duty to cultivate the disposition of the Lord, we will not be concerned as we should with reaching the lost.

This I also know, there are not 10% of those blessed by the school who have returned to help and to express appreciation to those who continue to keep the school going. Where are the NINE?

Beloved reader, are you one of the NINE?

Alumni Banquet Plans

At the May 14, 2002 Board Meeting, the date and circumstances for the Alumni Banquet were decided. **Tuesday evening January 21, 2003**, during the annual lectureship will be the date.

The meeting will be at the school fellowship hall. Food will be catered, and each person in attendance will be asked to pay for his/her meal.

More will be forthcoming. However, we want all to know of the plans in order that arrangements may be made to accommodate those attending.

As we finalize the arrangements, you will be asked to make your plans known to the school.

Class Changes

Please make this adjustment in your calendar for the extension class in the **Jacksonville**, Florida area—the class that meets in the Wesconnett church of Christ building. The schedule reversed

the classes listed in the April Harvesters. The **corrected schedule** should be as follows:

Fall 2002

Life of Christ Colwell
Spring 2003

Hermeneutics I Atnip

Thinking of a Career Change?

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him" (Matt. 4:18-22, emphasis added, JMS).

Why did the Apostles, Luke, Saul of Tarsus and others change careers? Because they saw a need (souls were lost), they were convinced that Jesus was the Christ, and they were challenged by the Lord and his servants to meet the needs, even if a career change was demanded.

Do you see the need? Are you convinced that Jesus is the Christ? Could you be encouraged to serve the Lord, even if career adjustments were necessary?

You May have taken early retirement. What will you do with the time and means that you now have?

You may have finished a tour of military service. What will you do with your talents and time now?

You may be in an occupation that does not bring you the depth of satisfaction of body, soul and spirit that you long for and know is possible.

Could **YOU** change occupations to serve the Lord full-time? Many of us, including this writer, have made career changes.

If any of the things mentioned interest you, contact the Florida School of Preaching, we will help you become an effective servant of the Lord.

Introducing The Book Of Our Twenty-Eighth Annual Lectureship “DO YOU UNDERSTAND FELLOWSHIP?”

Our tenth hard cover volume will be dedicated to **G. K. and Lillian Wallace**. Approximately thirty writers will contribute forty or more articles dealing with the crucial topic of fellowship. These articles will include the lessons presented January 20-23, 2003, as well as an appendix which will include additional topics involved with fellowship and book reviews on brotherhood classics dealing with the issue. Several of our books have sold well, including our 2002 book, with only a fraction of the original publications remaining. Hurry and reserve your copy early! The price is **\$16⁰⁰** including postage. The books should be here by mid December!

Other Books Available

Do You Understand Worship? (2002)	\$16 ⁰⁰
Do You Understand Leadership? (2001)	\$16 ⁰⁰
Do You Understand Preaching? (2000)	\$16 ⁰⁰
What Does It Mean To Be A Christian Like Paul (1999)	\$15 ⁰⁰
Meeting The Challenging Texts Of Life (1998)	\$14 ⁰⁰
If The Foundations Be Destroyed, What Can The Righteous Do (1997)	\$14 ⁰⁰
You Have Heard It Said, But The Bible Says...(1996)	\$14 ⁰⁰
Good News That Troubles The World (1995)	\$14 ⁰⁰
The Doctrine Of Christ (1994)	SOLD OUT!

Return Service Requested

WEB SITE: www.fsop.net/

E-MAIL: fsop@gte.net

FAX: 863-683-0750

PHONE (863) 683-4043 (800) 320-9780

LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Nonprofit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Lakeland, FL PERMIT #235
