

# Life Lessons

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## Unleash the Power - Be Thankful

"Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some." - Charles Dickens

Gratitude is the most passionate transformative force in the universe. When we offer thanks to God or to another human being, gratitude gifts us with renewal, reflection and reconnection. Every time we remember to say "thank you" we experience nothing less than heaven on earth.

The Bible says, *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Colosians 3:15*

Researchers have found positive differences in grateful people. The people who focused on gratitude were just flat-out happier. They saw their lives in favorable terms. They felt better about their lives. They were more optimistic. They were more energetic, enthusiastic and determined to make the best of life. People who were thankful were fun to hang around with. They were interested and more likely to help others. They also had fewer illnesses.

If you're going through a midnight hour of trials and can't think of anything good to be thankful for, consider Paul and Silas. The Bible describes them (Acts 16:25-26) sitting in a prison thanking and praising God (after being beaten and tortured severely). Their thankful attitude created such a massive earthquake that "everyone's chains were loosed." Friend, no matter how dark your situation may look, there's freedom in thanksgiving. This I must admit is extremely hard to do when you're going through a dark period in your life. But you CAN do it.

Practical ways you can develop a thankful lifestyle:

**Just say Thank You!** Pick up the phone and make that call God placed in your heart. Send a thank you card. Express your gratitude for special favor received. Go visit someone you've not seen in a while. Give a token of appreciation.

**Record your thanks.** Too many people do the opposite. They journal the bitterness of life. But it glorifies God when we focus on being grateful – anything that make you feel uplifted, that brought a smile on your face or contributed to the future of your happiness.

**Don't forget God.** Take the time to thank God. It is amazing how generous we're to shoot out a prayer for help but not as grateful to come back and thank God for it. Remember the ten lepers Jesus healed. Only one had a grateful heart.

Your sincere expressions of appreciation will brighten the lives of others but most importantly – yours! Practice the art of gratitude and look for opportunities to thank and acknowledge the special people in your life. Keep a few small gifts to express your thanks in a tangible way when they bring a special blessing to your life. Remember that a life overflowing with gratitude and thanksgiving will touch others more deeply and produce more long lasting relationships.