How Can I Say Thanks



Dag Heward-Mills

Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

H C IS T ?

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CHAPTER 1
Be Ye Thankful

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and BE YE THANKFUL.

Colossians 3:15

There is a list of eighteen moral blemishes that will characterize the last days. You will find "unthankful" in the list of terrible faults of the human race. In the last days, men will be more and more ungrateful. It is the nature of the devil to be ungrateful and forgetful about all the good things that have been done for him.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, UNTHANKFUL, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

Saying, "Thank you" has been taught all over the world, as part of being courteous. Young boys and girls have been taught to say "Thank you" when a hand is stretched out to give them something. "Thank you" is said as the hand is stretched out and even before you receive the gift. Saying, "Thank you" is also a part of the Christian culture. In your Christian culture, you must learn the art of saying, "Thank you" and the art of being thankful.

However, being thankful is much more than being part of a nation's culture. Saying, "Thank you" is to fulfil an important spiritual principle. Being thankful is indeed also a spiritual condition. Saying, "Thank you" is a weapon! Being thankful fights evil spirits. Being thankful creates an atmosphere for the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Power of Being Thankful

1. Saying thanks is a constant part of prayer.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Philippians 4:6

In all your prayers you must always include a part for thanksgiving. It is possible to pray a lot but not say "thank you" for anything. Not saying, "Thank you" for anything is a sign that you are not grateful in your heart.

It is also a sign that you do not recognize the great things that God had done. We see a scripture telling us to note the great things that God has done for us.

Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he* is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. *Who* can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? Who can shew forth all his praise? Blessed *are* they that keep judgment, *and* he that doeth righteousness at all times.

Psalm 106:1-3

It is important to write down and note the mighty acts of God that have taken place in your life.

2. Be thankful as an attitude of your life.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Colossians 3:15

There are people who have learned to say "Thank you" because it is part of their culture. In certain cultures, children are taught to say "Thank you" as soon as a hand is stretched out to give them something. They say "Thank you" before they even know what they have received. Saying, "Thank you" is an automatic thing for many well-mannered people.

There are unthankful and ungrateful people who have learnt how to say "thank you" but are *not* thankful. Being thankful is a spiritual state. It is a state of constant gratefulness. It is a state of singing, praising and thanking God. It is a state of great appreciation. It is important to appreciate all the good things that God has done for us.

Remember that it is possible to say, "Thank you" without being thankful.

3. Give thanks as a weapon that releases the greatest miracles.

(Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

John 6:23

It is interesting to note how Jesus used thankfulness to release one of the greatest miracles ever. Do not forget that Jesus was surrounded by five thousand hungry people, and He was able to feed all of them with some to spare.

The reason why this miracle ranks as one of the greatest ever to be performed by Jesus is because, when the people saw that Jesus had fed five thousand people with His basket of bread, they were so amazed that they came along and tried to make Him a king. I do not know of any other miracle that Jesus performed where they tried to make Him a king afterwards. (John 6:15)

Indeed, the entire crowd was stunned by the amazing miracle that Jesus performed. How did He perform this great miracle? What was the master key that He used?

You will notice in the scripture above that Jesus gave thanks before He broke the bread. He only gave thanks over the bread and few fishes that He had. He did not pour oil on the bread, He did not dip the bread into holy water, he did not fast and pray over the bread. He did not even offer a prayer. All He did was to give thanks. Giving thanks is a mighty key to working great miracles.

Perhaps you will see the greatest miracles of your life when you give thanks. Perhaps you will see the greatest miracles of your life when you stand before an impossible situation and give thanks to God.

Lift up your hands now and give thanks to God. As you stand before the red sea, wondering how it is going to part, lift your hands and give thanks. As you stand before that impossible situation, that sickness, that disease, that horror, that pain, lift up your hands and give thanks to God.

As sure as the word of God is true, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord as you give thanks to God.

4. Avoid unthankfulness since it is a sign of the last day evils.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, UNTHANKFUL, unholy,

2 Timothy 3:2

The scripture above mentions unthankfulness as one of the moral blemishes and catastrophic evils of the last days. The fact that unthankfulness is included in this list is very alarming. For unthankfulness to be listed alongside blasphemy, covetousness and other well-known high-

ranking evils makes unthankfulness a very serious problem indeed.

Unthankfulness must not be trifled with. It is a dangerous evil. I recently met someone who was unthankful for all the things that had been done for him. That spirit of unthankfulness opened up his heart and he was swallowed up by seven other evils mentioned in the scripture above. Before he understood what was happening to him, he had invoked seven curses upon his life.

Dear friend, be careful of unthankfulness. Unthankfulness is one of the high-ranking evils of our generation. It is a high grade evil. Do not think it is just a cultural misstep to not say "thank you". Beware of the terrible evil called unthankfulness.

It is interesting to note how Jesus used thankfulness to release the greatest miracles that He probably ever performed. The miracle of feeding five thousand is one of the greatest miracles ever performed.

5. Avoid bearing grudges against the unthankful.

> But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.
>
> Luke 6:35

Experiencing an unthankful person can be a terrible thing. It is important that you do not allow someone's unthankfulness to create bitterness in you. When you encounter unthankful people, your personality can change.

You will no longer be kind to people. You will no longer be caring. You will no longer try to help anyone. You will always remember the things you did for people and how they did not even seem to notice it. How they even turned around and insulted you after you were so kind, forgiving and gracious to them.

Today God is warning you not to allow the unthankfulness of people to enter your heart. You will become bitter within yourself and it will affect many others. Your ministry will be cut short because you will not be able to care for people and love people as you used to before you encountered unthankfulness and ungratefulness.

6. Unthankfulness in a person is a door to many evils.

> 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.
>
> Romans 1:21

The scripture above shows us clearly that many of the evils and perversions in this world came through unthankfulness. When men discovered more about the creation and discovered the beautiful earth that God had made, they were not thankful.

When they discovered planets, when they discovered the moon and when they discovered the stars, they were not thankful to God. And because they were unthankful, they became vain in their imaginations. Your imaginations become more vain, the more unthankful you are.

When people are unthankful they become almost mad. Their unthankfulness is a form of insanity. Why would you not be grateful for the oxygen you breathe, the air you breathe, the water you drink, the life that God has given you, when there is so much destruction and carnage all around? Can you not recognize the good things that God has done?

When people fail to be thankful, they are like mad men on the loose. This is what has happened to large sections of the human race. As mankind learned more about the physiology, the

anatomy, biochemistry, psychology and other sciences, they did not give thanks to God. As they failed to glorify God for the human body, which they had discovered so much about, they became mad.

As they studied astronomy and filmed planets at close range, they did not give thanks to God. As they saw what Jupiter was really like, and as they were able to take rockets to fly past Saturn, they did not give thanks to God. As they sent aircrafts all the way to Pluto, they did not give thanks to God. Instead of thanking God, they became vain, mad, and insane.

After this, God gave them up to their vain imaginations and allowed them to turn into an unfortunate version of what a human being is supposed to be. They burned in their passions one towards another and gave up the natural use of the woman and the natural use of the man. (Romans 1:26-28)

Today large sections of the world are dominated by this unbelievable variation and perversion. God is warning you to be thankful. Being unthankful is a dangerous curse. It will open you up to the most unbelievable and wicked spirits that inhabit the dark places of the earth. Be thankful.

7. Saying thanks is a weapon that neutralizes diseases in food.

> Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, IF IT BE RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING: for it is SANCTIFIED by the word of God and prayer.
>
> 1 Timothy 4:3-5

Giving thanks is your master key to disinfecting, sanitizing and sanctifying the food that you eat. Everything that you eat is sanctified as soon as you utter a word of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is your master key to killing germs, viruses and bacteria. In this era of pandemics, you cannot afford to not say "thank you" before you put anything in your mouth.

Every drink you have, every sandwich you eat and every morsel of food you take in must be sanctified, sanitized, and disinfected by thanksgiving. Remember, God has given you something more powerful than ninety-nine percent sanitizer. He has given you something more powerful than Dettol and hydrogen peroxide mouthwash.

The power of thanksgiving will completely filter out every evil thing that wants to enter you through the pork, the beef, the fish, the rice, the eggs, the bread, the salad and the porridge that you eat.

8. Giving thanks is a key to being filled with the Holy Spirit and the anointing.

> And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in Psalm and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
>
> Ephesians 5:18-21

Giving thanks is the master key to being filled with the Holy Spirit and the anointing. People who give thanks are anointed people. I remember a testimony given by a man of God. This man of God constantly preaches about the anointing.

One day, two old ladies were looking for this anointed young man and they were told: "*When you get to the church, you will find a young man who is smiling and always happy. That's the man you're looking for*". And truly, that is the way they identified him.

This greatly anointed young man became a world-famous evangelist. He was identified for

his cheerfulness and his thankfulness. Indeed, he was filled with the Holy Spirit because he was always giving thanks, praising God and being happy in the presence of the Lord.

9. Your flourishing and your abounding is dependent on your level of thankfulness.

> Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.
>
> Colossians 2:7

Your flourishing in the kingdom of God is dependent on your thankfulness. Abounding is possible only with thanksgiving. Do you want to abound and flourish in God's house? Then you must be thankful. You must be thankful for the church. You must be thankful for your pastor.

You must feel that it is a beautiful church. You must think that he is good pastor. You must be appreciative of your shepherds. You must thank God for the music. You must be appreciative of the preaching. You must love the atmosphere. You must be thankful for everything. Those who flourish are always thankful.

You must be thankful that you are in the house of God. You should not desire to get out of church as soon as possible. That is the master key to abounding in the work of God. "Rooted and built up in him, established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" This is a clear scripture teaching us to abound in God with thanksgiving.

10. Use thanksgiving as your key to getting near God's presence.

> Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with Psalm.
>
> Psalm 95:2

> Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
>
> Psalm 100:4

Thanksgiving is the master key to experiencing the presence of God. You will notice how many churches experience the presence of God by singing praises.

Saying, "Thank you", praising God, worshipping Him truly, is a master key to the presence of God. Do you know why demons have filled the atmosphere around you? It is because of your continual discontentedness.

Do you know why demons and evil spirits fill people? It is because they are continually grumbling and complaining. They are angry at everything. They are unhappy with everything. This continual attitude of unthankfulness opens the door for evil spirits.

As the children of Israel walked through the wilderness, they were filled with discontentment and grumbling. This opened the door for evil spirits to come into their lives. All the children of Israel who were twenty years and above were killed because of evil spirits.

Death is an evil thing and all the agents of death were sent to consume the complaining children of Israel in the desert. Make sure you do not fall to evil spirits through your unthankfulness. God wants to change your life. God wants to bless you. God wants to help you but you must be thankful.

11. Be thankful to God's servants who are sent to you.

> But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,
>
> 1 Thessalonians 5:12 (NASB)

It is important to be thankful for the servants of God. It is very easy to become ungrateful and

discontented with the servants that God has sent to you. When Moses was leading the children of Israel, they became discontented and began to speak many evil things about him. Instead of being thankful that God had sent one of the greatest prophets to lead them, they were filled with evil spirits and grumbled continually against the servants of God. As you develop the spirit of thankfulness, learn to be appreciative of God's servants. God's servants are God's gift to you.

When God wants to be kind to you, He will send you a man of God. "…And he gave gifts unto men: Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers."(Ephesians 4:11) These men are your gifts. They are an expression of God's love to you. When you are discontented, disgruntled and angry at His gift for you, you can imagine how God feels.

Can you imagine how God feels when you insult Him for the very people that He sends to love you? How would you feel if you bought a very expensive present and sent it to a friend and they insulted you for it? How would you feel if you bought a very expensive present and sent it to a friend and they sent it back to you? Would you not feel that they do not really love you? Would you not feel that they have not been nice to you?

12. Thank God IN every thing.

IN every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Thank God in every circumstance of your life.

Be thankful to God in everything, no matter what is happening in your life. This scripture is more encouraging than the very next one which says we must thank God for everything. Thank God in everything. I always remember when I was in secondary school, we were taught to say, "Thank you" in every circumstance.

To say "Thank you" in everything is easier than to say "Thank you" for everything.

13. Thank God FOR everything in your life.

Giving thanks always FOR all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Ephesians 5:20

Give thanks for everything. This is what the Bible teaches us. Thank God for the good! Thank God for the bad! Thank God for the ugly!

There are many things in our lives that we do not want, we do not like and we wish were otherwise. But the scripture commands us to thank God for everything. As you say "thank you" to God for everything, the power of God will be released in your life. Giving thanks is an open door that brings the power of the Holy Spirit into your life.

Indeed, it is understandable if we have to thank God in some circumstances. But do we have to give thanks *for everything*? That is a big question! Is it God who has allowed all these things to happen? Give thanks for everything.

14. Thank God because it is a message from you to God, saying that He is a good person and not a bad person in your life.

O GIVE THANKS unto the LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 107:1

O GIVE THANKS unto the LORD; FOR HE IS GOOD: because his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 118:1

O GIVE THANKS unto the LORD; FOR HE IS GOOD: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 118:29

It is important to give thanks to the Lord, because we only say “thanks” to a good person. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good and His mercies endure forever.

Perhaps the most important reason for giving thanks is that you send a clear message to God that you think He is good. Thinking that someone is good shows love and appreciation.

God is actually good. Satan is the one who tries to make God out to be an evil person. Satan wants to tarnish the image of God and accuse God of doing bad things. This is why large sections of the human race have turned against God saying that there is no God, and if God was alive, why would He allow certain things to happen. Giving thanks to God is to say that God is actually good!

From today, you will be saying, “Thank you” all the time. From today, you will be saying to God: “You are good”. I believe in you. “You are my good God”. “I like you” “I want to be near you”. When you show appreciation to God, you are revealing a beautiful spirit of appreciation, adoration and love.

15. Giving thanks is the reason for staying alive.

For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

Psalm 6:5

Perhaps, the master key to your staying alive is your thanksgiving. I know that you think that it is the vitamins you have taken. You think that the doctors who have been looking after you are keeping you alive.

However, a master key to staying alive is giving thanks! Why is this? The psalmist reminds God that if he were in the grave, he would not be able to give Him thanks. God will keep you alive so that you can keep giving thanks to Him. God will delay your funeral and delay your burial so that thanksgiving will abound to God. God does many things to allow thanksgiving to abound to Him.

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:15

For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

2 Corinthians 9:12

CHAPTER 2

Those Who Do Not Give Thanks

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, UNTHANKFUL, unholy,

2 Timothy 3:2 (KJV)

1. Those who do not say, "Thank you" for loyalty.

On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, WHAT HONOUR AND DIGNITY HATH BEEN DONE TO MORDECAI FOR THIS? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, THERE IS NOTHING DONE FOR HIM. And the king said, who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him

Esther 6:1-4

Mordecai is a great example of someone who was not thanked for his loyalty. It is important to reward loyalty and to encourage it. It is important to discourage disloyalty.

When people break away from churches and cause trouble for the church, they should not be honoured or encouraged for their rebellious ways. Even when they come and say sorry for their sins, they must not be exalted, promoted or magnified. Exalting breakaway pastors is to encourage treachery and disloyalty.

There are churches who receive breakaway pastors because they come back to present an offering and reconcile with their home church. It is nice for rebellious people to reconcile but treacherous behaviour should not be rewarded. On the other hand, loyalty and faithfulness should be rewarded. We must say, "Thank you" for loyalty and faithfulness.

There are those who do not say, "Thank you" for loyalty. Sometimes it is because they do not appreciate it and they do not understand it. Mordecai had been very loyal to the king. There was a conspiracy to kill the king. The loyalty of Mordecai had saved the king's life. Yet, the king had not even said thank you to Mordecai. Nothing special was done for Mordecai even though he had been so loyal and faithful to the king.

People who are not grateful for loyalty attract disloyal people. When you show gratitude for loyalty, it encourages loyal people to continue in their faithfulness. When the disloyal, the unfaithful and the treacherous ones are promoted, it encourages wickedness to flourish and multiply around you.

I remember a man of God who seemed to be attracted to treacherous people. I noticed that whenever he had a chance to choose someone to do something important, he would choose the person based on how important, pompous and showy the person was. He kept choosing unfaithful but eminent and prominent people to occupy the important positions around him. Over the years, wickedness, treachery, disloyalty, confusion, deception, duplicity and conspiracies multiplied around him. It was difficult to find even one loyal person in this pastor's organisation.

Say, "Thank you" for loyalty and you will encourage it in your life. There are people I have promoted and consecrated just because of their loyalty. Their faithfulness and commitment over the years is a worthy sacrifice that must be appropriately rewarded.

2. Those who do not say, "Thank you" for healing.

> 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

Ten lepers were healed but only one came back to say, "Thank you". It is important to say, "Thank you" for your healing and for health. Over the years, you will discover that health and healing are some of the greatest gifts that we should not take for granted.

Saying, "Thank you" completes miracles. When the ten lepers encountered Jesus, He ministered to them and they were cleansed. The miracle they had from Jesus was called "cleansing" or *katharizo*. However, the one leper who came back to say, "Thank you" received something further. Jesus said to him, "Go thy way thy faith has made thee whole." The thankful leper received wholeness or *sozo*. The Greek words *katharizo* and *sozo* have completely different meanings. The nine lepers received the *cleansing,* but the one grateful leper received *sozo* which means salvation, deliverance and complete healing. (Luke 17:19)

Many years ago, I was in Tulsa, Oklahoma enjoying a great conference with the great prophet, Kenneth E. Hagin. I felt convicted at a point to present him with an offering. However, as time went by, I felt my conviction waning.

One night, the Holy Spirit woke me up and ministered to me. I felt the need to give this offering at all costs. I had been so blessed by Kenneth Hagin's ministry and God wanted me to say, "Thank you". There is a sense in which saying, "Thank you" completes a transaction that has taken place. Something is given and something is received. The receiver must of necessity say, "Thank you" in order to complete appropriately the transaction of giving and receiving.

That night, I had one of the strongest rebukes I had ever experienced from the Holy Spirit. I did not understand why the Holy Spirit seemed so upset with me for deciding not to give the offering to Kenneth Hagin. After all, Kenneth Hagin had testified that he had earned millions of dollars in that year alone. What would he need from my small gift?

God wanted me to complete the transaction that had started with Kenneth Hagin.

Years earlier, I had had an experience where I received the power of God through Kenneth Hagin. Through him, I had received an anointing to teach and it was time for me to say, "Thank you" and *honour my prophet*. God did not want me to walk away with an incomplete spiritual transaction. Make sure that you complete every spiritual transaction that has taken place in your life.

It was only one leper who had the full spiritual transaction. Only one leper received cleansing and wholeness. Only one leper received both *katharizo* and *sozo*!

3. Those who do not say, "Thank you" for spiritual help.

> And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into

Pharaoh's hand: but he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.

Genesis 40:21-23

There are those who do not say, "Thank you" for any help they receive. Actually, people do not understand when they are being helped. One day, I listened to someone whom I had helped, giving thanks and acknowledging all the people who had helped him. I had gone to great lengths to help him. He mentioned the names of many people but never mentioned my name.

I realised that he did not know, appreciate or understand what I had done for him and how I had helped him greatly. I had actually introduced him to some of the people he was thanking. Indeed, some of the people he was thanking had prayed against his victory and fought against him secretly. But he was thanking these people and leaving me out.

This is nothing new. When Joseph helped the butler by interpreting his dream, I guess the butler did not value what Joseph had done for him. It was only when Pharaoh had his dream that the butler remembered that he had escaped death and received deliverance through the comfort and prophetic ministry of Joseph. "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:" (Genesis 41:9).

Many people have no sense of value. They do not know what things are worth. That is why people study "Valuation" in the University. People do not realise when someone helps them. The butler had no idea about what Joseph was worth.

He must have known that Joseph was wrongly convicted of raping Potiphar's wife.

Yet, he allowed the injustice to continue. He would not intervene. He did not even attempt to make a difference in Joseph's life. The butler was Joseph's last connection to the outside world. His brothers had given him up as a slave forever. His father had given him up as dead. Potiphar had discarded him as an ungrateful rapist whom he had foolishly trusted. The butler was an ungrateful recipient of Joseph's ministry.

There are people who give their wealth and possessions to political parties. Yet such people will not donate even a small fraction of that amount to the church. The political parties are more valuable to them. They feel that they receive more from these political parties. They ask: "Who is a pastor?" "What is a church?" "What do they do for me?" They say these things to their own confusion.

Do not make a mistake of not helping the house of God when you have the chance. Do not be like the butler. God will raise up help from another place if you do not play your role.

4. Those who do not say, "Thank you" for protection.

And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

AND THUS SHALL YE SAY TO HIM THAT LIVETH IN PROSPERITY, Peace be both

to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.

And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: FOR WE COME IN A GOOD DAY:GIVE, I PRAY THEE, WHATSOEVER COMETH TO THINE HAND UNTO THY SERVANTS, AND TO THY SON DAVID.

And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, WHO IS DAVID? AND WHO IS THE SON OF JESSE? There be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

SHALL I THEN TAKE MY BREAD, AND MY WATER, AND MY FLESH THAT I HAVE KILLED FOR MY SHEARERS, AND GIVE IT UNTO MEN, WHOM I KNOW NOT WHENCE THEY BE.

1 Samuel 25:1-11

In this story, we meet Nabal, the husband of Abigail. David came to him in his day of prosperity. David had provided security for Nabal's flocks. Nabal's shepherds could testify of the great works that David had done for them out in the fields. Nabal's response to David's request for an offering was quite simple: "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? I do not know these guys. They have done nothing for me and I have nothing to give to self-appointed and irresponsible roamers and drifters. If I had needed security guards, I would have provided them myself." Obviously, Nabal had no appreciation, no gratitude and no understanding of David's contribution to his life and ministry.

God uses people to provide protection for your life. Sometimes the protection is spiritual. Sometimes it is physical. Spiritual covering is real. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Psalms 91:4) Obviously, these are not physical feathers. God is not a bird with feathers. The feathers speak of the covering and protection of God over your life.

There is a covering over your life because God has provided this shelter for you. Usually, when nothing goes wrong, you do not understand how you are covered and protected. It is when something goes wrong that you realise all the evils that could have happened to you all along.

One day, a man of God pointed to one of his pastors and said, "I have removed my covering from you." Within a few days this pastor experienced tragedy after tragedy. He recounted numerous evils and ills that he and his entire household fell into. I took note of that because it was an example of spiritual protection that everyone takes for granted. You must not take spiritual protection for granted. Nabal was a fool because he considered the protection provided by David as nothing.

CHAPTER 3

Those Who Repay Good with Evil

He who returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.

Proverbs 17:13 (NASB)

One of the reasons why there is a curse in the earth is because of the way people say, "Thank you". Indeed, one of the commonest ways for people to say, "Thank you" is for them to pay back good with evil. There are three expected responses when good things are done for you:

1. Say, "Thank you" to show that you are thankful.
2. Do something good that shows that you are thankful.
3. Be thankful, maintaining a grateful attitude.

When someone does something for you or gives something to you, the expected response is to say, "Thank you", to do something that shows that you are grateful and to maintain a thankful attitude.

If the reward, response and reaction to the good they receive from you is to do evil, in other words, they say, "Thank you" to you by giving you the opposite of what you deserve; they will attract curses. When a person repays good with evil and says thank you by being negative and hostile, they attract curses upon themselves.

> For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that WHICH BEARETH THORNS AND BRIERS *IS* REJECTED, AND IS NIGH UNTO CURSING; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.
>
> Hebrews 6:7-9

Indeed, playing with God is a dangerous thing. This curse for repaying good with evil plays out in many ways. You do not want to be involved in finding out what happens to those who repay good with evil. I am writing this book to turn you away from being a thorny bush. Instead of being a thorny tree, you will be a fir tree. Instead of being a brier, you will be a myrtle tree. Notice this scripture:

> INSTEAD OF THE THORN SHALL COME UP THE FIR TREE, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
>
> Isaiah 55:13

Why should you bring forth thorns when you can bring forth the beautiful softness of the fir and myrtle trees? From today, you will be a myrtle tree and not a thorny brier. From now onwards, you will say, "Thank you" properly. You will do things that show your thankfulness. You will maintain a thankful attitude. No evil will come out of you in response to the good things that are done for you.

1. The Israelites said "Thank you" for God's deliverance from Egypt by murmuring against God in their tents.

> And YE MURMURED in your tents, and said, because THE LORD HATED US, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

Deuteronomy 1:27

Some people say, “Thank you” by murmuring. All they do is to complain and speak against you in the secret places. You will be surprised to find out that complaining, murmuring and speaking undertone is the standard response of those who are ungrateful.

Rise up today and distance yourself from this evil. Discontentment is a spiritual emergency. There are those who are always unhappy about everything that is going on. Nothing is good enough! You can see it on their faces: Discontentment, dissatisfaction and unhappiness! Such people are not happy even if they have the best husband on earth. They quietly look on with a blank, unimpressed face. It is time to say, “Thank you”. Do not bring forth evil because you have been well treated and favoured.

It is important that you do not return love with constant bickering and discontentment. That is exactly what the children of Israel did. Murmuring, complaining and grumbling was the way they said thank you to God.

I met a lady whose husband had died at the age of forty-two. She told me how irritated she had been with her husband when he was alive.

She told me how she had complained about him touching her constantly. “It irritated me,” she said, “When he kept touching me anywhere whenever he passed by.” Then she told me how he had become paralysed before he died. “As he lay there, I wished he would lift his hand and touch me, but he could not.” Just like the Israelites, she had returned her husband’s love with complaining and murmuring. Complaining, grumbling and criticizing behind the scenes is an amazingly common response to love. Indeed, it explains why curses are that common.

2. The children of Ammon and Moab said “Thank you” to the Israelites by attacking them.

> Now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom YOU DID NOT LET ISRAEL INVADE when they came out of the land of Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them), SEE HOW THEY ARE REWARDING US BY COMING TO DRIVE US OUT from Your possession which You have given us as an inheritance. “O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You.”
>
> 2 Chronicles 20:10-12 (NASB)

The children of Ammon and Moab said thank you to the Israelites by attacking them. Amazingly, some people say, “Thank you” by attacking you. Those who are ungrateful will attack you for your goodness to them. Make sure you never repay someone who has been good to you by attacking him. Before you attack, ensure that the person you are about to attack is not someone who has been good to you before.

3. The Jews said ‘Thank you’ to Jesus for His good works, by hating Him without a cause.

> IF I HAD NOT DONE AMONG THEM THE WORKS which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and HATED BOTH ME AND MY FATHER. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, they hated me without a cause.
>
> John 15:24-25

> Jesus answered them, MANY GOOD WORKS have I shewed you from my Father; FOR WHICH OF THOSE WORKS DO YE STONE ME?
>
> John 10:32

Jesus did many good works for the people of Israel. He trekked up and down the nation, preaching to them the beautiful gospel of the kingdom.

He healed their sick and He opened the eyes of the blind. Jesus touched the little children who were brought to Him. He changed people's lives. He ministered to the multitudes. He healed the blind! He opened the ears of the deaf! He cured the incurable diseases of the day. He raised the dead and turned captivity captive. For all these good works, Jesus Christ was rewarded with hatred and wickedness.

Indeed, when He was being condemned, the people asserted, "We know what is right and we know what we are doing. We are dealing with Jesus Christ ourselves. We are eliminating from our society, those troublemakers that we do not need or want. Let every curse associated with this event come upon us."

Thus, Jesus was murdered by His fellow countrymen. He was killed as though he were a goat! Jesus was slaughtered like a sheep or a cow! This was His reward for his ministry.

How would this not bring about a curse? Indeed, the children of Israel called a curse upon themselves for what they did to Jesus. Forty years later, Jerusalem was wiped out and all the Jews were scattered all over the world.

4. The Israelites said 'Thank you' to Jeremiah by digging a pit for him.

> Do give heed to me, O Lord, and listen to what my opponents are saying! Should good be repaid with evil? For THEY HAVE DUG A PIT FOR ME. REMEMBER HOW I STOOD BEFORE YOU TO SPEAK GOOD on their behalf, so as to turn away Your wrath from them.
>
> Jeremiah 18:19-20

Jeremiah was rewarded with evil for the good works that he did. He loved the children of Israel. He loved the people that he had been sent to. He stood before God and spoke good things on their behalf. How did they reward him? By digging a pit! Some people actually set traps for you.

Be careful that you do not reward someone who has spoken on your behalf by setting a trap for him.

I once had a friend who dug a pit for me. I had shown him kindness for many years. In response to my love for him, he hoped and wished for my downfall. He kept checking to see whether his expectations of my destruction had come to pass.

He had dug a pit for me and together with his friends was hoping to hear the news that I had fallen into it. At one point when he was not hearing the news, he told someone that I had already fallen into the pit but came out quickly. He just could not wait to hear of my downfall.

Indeed, it is painful to hear that someone, for whom you have spoken good, has actually dug a pit and is waiting in the shadows to hear that you have dropped in to the pit. What do you expect a friend to do? A real friend would rather put a sign out there to warn you of the dangerous hole in your path.

A real friend would rather call you and tell you that there is a dangerous pit on your path so you must be very careful. It is quite disheartening to hear that your friend was standing by with his radio, constantly checking to see whether you had fallen into the pit and broken your neck yet. What does the Bible say to those who dig pits and hope for someone to fall into it?

> Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.
>
> Proverbs 26:27

Indeed, there is a curse for those who repay good with evil. As the scripture says, he that digs a pit will fall into it himself.

5. False witnesses say 'Thank you' by accusing the one who cared for them.

FALSE WITNESSES DID RISE UP; THEY LAID TO MY CHARGE THINGS THAT I KNEW NOT. THEY REWARDED ME EVIL FOR GOOD to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

Psalms 35:11-14

Some people say, "Thank you" by accusing you falsely and laying things to your charge. You can be accused about things you have no idea about. You may be accused of handling cocaine when you have never seen cocaine before. It is important that you do not repay good with evil. I remember some people whom I loved greatly. I defended them when they got into difficulty and fought for them when I needed to. But that was not how they repaid me for my good to them. They laid to my charge things that I knew not. They received charges against me and accepted them. My goodness to them was paid back by charges being laid to my account in their heads. Indeed, there is a curse for those who repay good with evil.

Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *it*. *This* thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.

Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me. Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Let THEM BE ASHAMED AND BROUGHT TO CONFUSION TOGETHER THAT REJOICE AT MINE HURT: LET THEM BE CLOTHED WITH SHAME AND DISHONOUR THAT MAGNIFY *THEMSELVES* AGAINST ME.

Psalms 35:21-26

David's response to these people who accused him falsely was to pray for the judgment of God. He asked God that these people should be ashamed and brought to confusion. David prayed that those who repaid his good with evil should be clothed with shame and dishonour.

When God clothes you with shame and dishonour, you are unable to shake it off. The shame and the dishonour has become your clothing. No one goes without his clothing. You will have to wear the clothes of shame and dishonour everywhere you go because you repaid good with evil.

Never reward someone's love for you by accusing him of things he has not done. Indeed, some people respond to love by accusing you falsely. That is the way they love.

Some marriages have a two-way road. On the right side of the road, love is going north and on the left side of the road accusations are going south. The whole relationship is made up of love, followed by accusations, questions and suspicions. Such relationships are cursed and can never bring forth the fruits of real joy and happiness.

6. Wicked men say "Thank you" for your love by becoming your adversaries.

For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. FOR MY LOVE THEY ARE MY ADVERSARIES: BUT I *GIVE MYSELF UNTO* PRAYER. AND THEY HAVE REWARDED ME EVIL FOR GOOD, AND HATRED FOR MY LOVE.

Psalms 109:1-5

There are those who repay your love by becoming enemies. I have appointed many pastors and bishops. I have appointed, ordained and consecrated several people into the ministry. That was an act of love. It was an act where I demonstrated confidence in these people. I told the world that I believed in them and that they were good people.

Some of these people whom I loved became my adversaries. On one occasion, one of my pastors told his friends that he was now my sworn enemy and he would live and work to destroy me.

I also had a pastor who told his friend about some anonymous accusations that everyone was wondering about. He told him, "I am the secret enemy of the Bishop and I am the anonymous caller."

I was amazed that people that I had loved would be happy to repay my love by becoming my enemies. I wondered why they were happy about being called enemies and adversaries. I wondered, "Did they not learn anything whilst they were with me?"

It is important to have the fear of the Lord and a proper respect for the word of God. Curses abound for those who repay good with evil.

King David, the anointed psalmist, prayed down curses on those who had repaid his good with evil. David was incensed by those who had responded to his goodness by doing him harm. Read his prayers and learn to fear the sin of being ungrateful. You must never become one of those who are unthankful.

AND THEY HAVE REWARDED ME EVIL FOR GOOD, AND HATRED FOR MY LOVE. SET THOU A WICKED MAN OVER HIM: AND LET SATAN STAND AT HIS RIGHT HAND. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; *and* let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. (Psalms 109:5-13).

7. Joash said "Thank you" to his father Jehoiada by killing his son.

And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord.

THUS JOASH THE KING REMEMBERED NOT THE KINDNESS WHICH JEHOIADA HIS FATHER HAD DONE TO HIM, BUT SLEW HIS SON. And when he died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it.

2 Chronicles 24:22

Joash, the king, slew Jehoiada's son. God judges the world today based on the world's reaction to His Son. How do you treat God's Son? Are you kind to God's Son? Are you loving to God's Son? Do you remember that Jesus is God's Son? How did human beings behave when God sent His Son into the world? They attacked him! They murdered him! That was not a nice thing to do. Killing God's Son is to show ungratefulness to God for His love.

Men to whom great kindness has been shown should say 'thank you' by showing kindness to the children of the men who have done them good. Always remember that God will judge you for your reaction to His Son. Be careful with the sons and daughters of people who have been good to you.

8. The children of Israel said "Thank you" to Gideon for delivering them by killing seventy of his children.

And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god. And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God,

who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: NEITHER SHEWED THEY KINDNESS TO THE HOUSE OF JERUBBAAL, *NAMELY*, GIDEON, ACCORDING TO ALL THE GOODNESS WHICH HE HAD SHEWED UNTO ISRAEL.

Judges 8:32-35

Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, *which* are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? Remember also that I *am* your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him threescore and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baalberith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him. AND HE WENT UNTO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE AT OPHRAH, AND SLEW HIS BRETHREN THE SONS OF JERUBBAAL, BEING THREESCORE AND TEN PERSONS, UPON ONE STONE: NOTWITHSTANDING YET JOTHAM THE YOUNGEST SON OF JERUBBAAL WAS LEFT; FOR HE HID HIMSELF.

Judges 9:2-5

And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; (FOR MY FATHER FOUGHT FOR YOU, AND ADVENTURED HIS LIFE FAR, AND DELIVERED YOU OUT OF THE HAND OF MIDIAN: AND YE ARE RISEN UP AGAINST MY FATHER'S HOUSE THIS DAY, AND HAVE SLAIN HIS SONS, THREESCORE AND TEN PERSONS, UPON ONE STONE, AND HAVE MADE ABIMELECH, THE SON OF HIS MAIDSERVANT, KING OVER THE MEN OF SHECHEM, BECAUSE HE *IS* YOUR BROTHER;)

Judges 9:7-18

Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower. And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. AND A CERTAIN WOMAN CAST A PIECE OF A MILLSTONE UPON ABIMELECH'S HEAD, AND ALL TO BRAKE HIS SKULL. Then he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died.

And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place. THUS GOD RENDERED THE WICKEDNESS OF ABIMELECH, WHICH

HE DID UNTO HIS FATHER, IN SLAYING HIS SEVENTY BRETHREN: AND ALL THE EVIL OF THE MEN OF SHECHEM DID GOD RENDER UPON THEIR HEADS: AND UPON THEM CAME THE CURSE OF JOTHAM THE SON OF JERUBBAAL.

Judges 9:50-57

In this amazing story, Gideon was rewarded for his hard work by the killing of his seventy children. This was the way the nation of Israel thanked Gideon for all his adventurous missions where he risked his life for the nation. That is not a nice way to say, "Thank you".

These things bring curses to people's lives years after they have departed from the earth. Abimelech's skull was broken when a lady threw a big stone out of the tower. Abimelech must have had a big headache and knew he would not survive.

All the people who were involved in killing Gideon's sons were destroyed in the wars that followed. They were all cursed because they had repaid Gideon's efforts by killing his children. He that repays good with evil will always have evil in his house.

Many years ago in Italy, there were these leaders/champions (called the Condottieri) that would fight on behalf of the cities and deliver them from invading armies. One of these leaders saved them so many times that they felt specially indebted to him. However, the people of the city did not know how to reward him for risking his life to save the entire city.

One day, at a meeting, as they deliberated on how to reward him, someone stood up and said, "Let us kill him and then worship him as our patron saint."

Indeed, that is exactly what they did. One day, one of this leader was recalled to the capital city. He thought he was to receive great honours. That night, he was given the impression that he would dine with the king himself. In the evening, he was led to the king's palace for the dinner. On the way to the dinner, he noticed that the guards were taking him in a different direction. To his surprise, he was suddenly arrested and put in a dungeon. The next day he was convicted on a trumped-up charge and sent to St. Mark's Square in the centre of Venice where he was beheaded. This great Condottieri was repaid evil for all the good he had done to the city. He thought he was going for a dinner but he was actually going to have his head cut off.

All the bloodshed of innocent people who have been repaid with evil can explain the presence of curses in many families today. Many families are the descendants of people who have repaid good with evil. We should expect many curses to be active and effective today because our ancestors may have repaid good with evil.

Have you wondered why there are so many diseases that are only explained by the fact that you belong to certain families? Asthma, hypertension, diabetes, sickle-cell disease, mental illness and even cancer can be largely explained by the family you belong to.

Do not repay good with evil otherwise evil will never depart from your house. That is not how to say thanks. Set your heart to do what is right and to be grateful and thankful for the good things that you have received. Do not only say, "Thank you" for big things but also for little things. Indeed, it is the little things that make the biggest difference in your life.

9. People say 'Thank you' to God by not being happy.

Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

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 of all *things*: and he

shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

Deuteronomy 28:45-48

People say, "Thank you" by not being happy. Not being happy, not being joyful and not being glad are things that God takes note of. When you give something to someone, you look at his face to see his reaction. Are they happy? Are they excited? Are they genuinely joyful? Are they impressed? Were they easily impressed?

All these thoughts go through the giver's mind. As you know, some people are more reflective and perspicacious and they will notice little flickers in your attitude towards your gift.

God is equally looking at your responses to His goodness. Since you did not feel so happy about serving Him with joy, He is going to transfer you so that you serve the enemy in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness and in the want of all things.

Curses pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed because you did not serve the Lord with joyfulness and with gladness.

Your attitude matters! Do not think that it is just your words that matter. God is equally interested in your attitude.

Don't be flat! Don't be unsmiling! Don't be plain-faced! We need to see that you are excited and joyful. God needs to see that you are excited and joyful. He is watching your face very closely. That faint smile on your face is not good enough. God wants to see your teeth and wants to feel that you are excited about what he has done for you. God wants to see you jumping happily and excitedly.

10. The people of the Gadarenes said "Thank you" to Jesus for the great deliverance by rejecting His presence.

And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

Mark 5:15-17

The people of Gadara were not impressed with Jesus' miracles. As far as they were concerned they had lost two thousand pigs in one day. They were not excited about the deliverance of the mad man of Gadara. As far as they were concerned, the mad man's problem was not a big problem. They were used to having a mad man in the tombs. It was only when they came to bury someone that they would notice the mad man in the tombs.

As far as they were concerned, the mad man could continue living in the cemetery till eternity. Their response to Jesus was to ask Him to leave town.

Instead of them sending delegations to honour Jesus and to thank Him, they gathered together and asked Him to leave their shores. They never wanted to see Him again. This is how some people say, "Thank you". Many great leaders are rejected by the people they are sent to.

It is only after thousands of years that people realise that a great miracle had occurred. The presence of Jesus changed everything for the city of Gadara. Six thousand devils were thrown out of their ancient hiding place because of the presence of Jesus.

There are certain visits that change your life. You must be grateful for these momentous visits. The presence of Jesus will always change your life. Jesus did not preach for even five minutes. The presence of Jesus alone in the town of Gadara wrought a mighty work.

You must be grateful to the ministers of the gospel who are sent to you. You must recognize

what their presence in your church has accomplished. You must recognize that a short visit can change the direction and the outcome of your life.

Sometimes when ministers of the gospel visit us, we do not honour them enough. We do not value their presence and their gift. This is why some have resorted to charging fees for coming to minister. Since you do not appreciate their presence, they send out a nightly charge for preaching.

The time has come to appreciate the presence of Jesus. The people of Gadara would have had many other great miracles if they had appreciated Jesus Christ and welcomed Him even more into their town.

11. People say "Thank you" by giving a proud response to their lover.

> In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. BUT HEZEKIAH'S HEART WAS PROUD AND HE DID NOT RESPOND TO THE KINDNESS SHOWN HIM; THEREFORE THE LORD'S WRATH WAS ON HIM AND ON JUDAH AND JERUSALEM.
>
> 2 Chronicles 32:24-25 (NIV)

There are proud responses to good things. God has given you His good things and He expects you to respond like a child. What is the response of a child? A child's response is a humble response. It is an excited, overjoyed, emotional and ecstatic response to the smallest good thing that is done to you.

Unfortunately, Hezekiah's response was a proud response and it brought the wrath of God upon him.

What is a proud response? A proud response is when you do not lift your head up to speak. You cannot even turn your neck because it is as though your head and neck are merged together.

A proud response is when there are no smiles, there is no laughter, there is no jumping and there is no excitement.

Are you a proud responder? Are you like Hezekiah? Are you going to be rebuked because you responded proudly to love?

12. God's creation said "Thank you" by not honouring him.

> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. FOR ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW GOD, THEY DID NOT HONOR HIM AS GOD OR GIVE THANKS TO HIM, BUT THEY BECAME FUTILE IN THEIR THINKING, AND THEIR FOOLISH HEARTS WERE DARKENED.
>
> Romans 1:20-21(ESV)

You must say, "Thank you" to God for His greatness and His goodness. The world today has turned away from the living God. Instead of honouring Him and giving Him thanks for His greatness, they have turned away and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator.

Many people show ingratitude by not acknowledging the greatness of someone who has done great things.

Many fathers who are providers are taken for granted. They do not receive honour or thanks. In the day that these fathers are gone, the whole family will become acutely aware of how great a provision had been made for them.

> As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, SAYING TO A STOCK, THOU

ART MY FATHER; AND TO A STONE, THOU HAST BROUGHT ME FORTH: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.

But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

Jeremiah 2:26-28

Perhaps the greatest shame to the human race is when we turn to an idol or to something that is not God and honour it. How can you say to a river, “You are my lord!” How can you say to a stone, “You are my god.” Is that the way to say “thank you” to Almighty God for creating the world?

It is time to say thanks properly for the air we breathe, the food we eat and the life we have. Every time you turn towards an idol and show gratitude to something that does not contribute to your life, you are insulting God rather than thanking Him.

CHAPTER 4

Those Who Are Thankful

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And I said, who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Acts 26:12-18

AND I THANK CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a BLASPHEMER, and a PERSECUTOR, and INJURIOUS: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

1Timothy 1:12-14

In the scriptures above, we see how Paul was a blasphemer and a persecutor of the church. Jesus Christ Himself asked Paul why he was persecuting Him. Paul was an established persecutor of the church. Yet Christ saved him and forgave him. Indeed, what was Paul's response to this great mercy?

Paul's response to God was to say "Thank you" to Jesus Christ. Read his words, "And *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord*, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a *blasphemer*, and a *persecutor*, and *injurious*: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

Your only response to God for His great mercy must be to say "Thank you." Let us look at Paul's life of giving thanks as he described it to king Agrippa.

1. Say, "Thank you" to God by being obedient to your heavenly visions.

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

Acts 26:19

It is important that you follow the visions of God for your life. What heavenly vision has God given you? Apostle Paul received a vision at the very beginning of his Christian life. He followed that vision to the end. You must be obedient to the visions that God has given to you. This will be your way of saying, "Thank you" to Him. God has forgiven you for all your wickedness and perversions.

How can you say thanks to Him? This is the way you will say thanks; by being obedient to the heavenly vision.

When God called me, He gave me a word. He said, From today you can teach. It is my prayer

to be obedient to the heavenly vision. That is why I am writing this book. I am endeavouring to obey the heavenly vision. Many people discard their heavenly vision. They make light of it. It is important that you say, "Thank you" by obeying the heavenly vision.

2. Say, "Thank you" to God by continuing faithfully and relentlessly in your call till the end.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I CONTINUE UNTO THIS DAY, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

Acts 26:22

You can say, "Thank you" to God by *continuing in the ministry*. Many people start and stop. Today, you must decide to continue. It is nice to start things. But it is not that easy to continue. Jesus said "If you continue in my Word, then are you my disciples." (John 8:31).

When I decided to serve the Lord, I knew that I would have to continue it for the rest of my life. Real ministry has to do with lasting long. It has to do with persisting and continuing with the original calling.

3. Say, "Thank you" to God by witnessing relentlessly to the small and to the great.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I CONTINUE UNTO THIS DAY, WITNESSING BOTH TO SMALL AND GREAT, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

Acts 26:22

Paul decided to continue witnessing to the small and the great. Many ministers start by talking to the small and end by talking to the great. Paul continued by talking to the small and the great. It is important that you continue to minister to the small and the great.

One day, I went out witnessing with a fellow minister. As we walked together through the streets he remarked, "It is very unusual for someone like you to be witnessing out on the street." I thought to myself, how strange it is that someone whose work it is to preach the gospel is rarely found out there talking to the small and the great.

Most ministers start speaking to the small but end up ignoring the small people of this life. Rise up and show your thanksgiving to God by witnessing to the small and to the great.

4. Say, "Thank you" to God by accepting to relentlessly preach about the cross and the sufferings of Christ.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:
THAT CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Acts 26:22-23

You must say thanks to God by preaching about the cross of Jesus Christ. Do not veer off into vain jangling and high-sounding topics. Today there is a lot of vain jangling coming from the pulpit. Ministers of the gospel use the biggest words they can find from the dictionary and as many examples as they can get from the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

There is no need to preach from Encyclopaedia Britannica. All you need to do is to preach about the cross of Jesus Christ and the sufferings that Jesus went through for us.

There is power in the cross of Jesus Christ and in the preaching about the blood of Jesus.

It is time to show your gratitude to God by maintaining the cross as the main thing in your

life. I once heard a man of God discounting the cross. He said that he no longer preached about the blood of Jesus. He continued, “No one wants a bloody religion. Everyone wants hope. People want to know about the kingdom and not the blood.”

But our message is not about what people want to hear. Our message is the cross! As Paul said, “I determined to know nothing amongst you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2)

5. Say, “Thank you” to God by serving God until people think you are mad.

And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, PAUL, THOU ART BESIDE THYSELF; MUCH LEARNING DOTH MAKE THEE MAD.

But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

Acts 26:24-27

Apostle Paul was so fervent in his preaching that people thought he was mad. Festus turned and told him in a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning seems to have made you mad.” There is a way you can serve God until people think you have gone crazy.

If people do not find you odd, your passion and zeal is not at the highest level! You must be filled with passion and zeal for God. God has done so much for you.

When you think about the cross you tend to wonder why Jesus went to these lengths to save us. If God wanted to save His people, why all the drama with the cross?

Even apostle Peter felt that it was a bad idea for Jesus to die on the cross. He promised to resist any attempt by Jesus Christ to get himself crucified. It did not and does not make any sense for someone to die on the cross because someone else has sinned. And yet God has chosen that by the foolishness of preaching of the cross, men should be saved.

We are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation. (Romans 1:16) Since God loved you in such a way that Jesus even looked as though He was mad to be going on a cross, it is your duty to love Him in such a way that people will even think you are mad or beside yourself. That is how to say thanks.

You must say, “Thank you” to someone by doing something that is equal and commensurate to what He has done for you.

Jesus’ love for us cannot be at level hundred whilst your love for Him is at level twenty. You must boost up your love and your gratitude for Jesus.

6. Say, “Thank you” to God by rejecting the world’s opinion.

And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

BUT HE SAID, I AM NOT MAD, MOST NOBLE FESTUS; BUT SPEAK FORTH THE WORDS OF TRUTH AND SOBERNESS.

For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

Acts 26:24-29

The Bible says that if you love the Lord you will not love the world. If the love of the world is in you the love of the father is not in you. (1 John 2:15). As you grow in your love and appreciation of God you will absolutely reject the world, its standards and all its ideas.

Do not love the world! Do not like the things that are in the world. Do not admire them. Do not try to be like the world.

Apostle Paul absolutely rejected the world's opinion of him. Worldly men thought he was mad. But he knew that he was not mad. He was doing the right thing. The world cannot tell us what is right. Absolutely reject every worldly opinion about your church activities and your ministry. If the world finds you crazy for going on a mission, it is entirely up to them!

On their dying day they will realise that you chose the right thing and it was right for you to give thanks to God by giving Him your life.

7. Say, "Thank you" to God by desiring others to serve God just like you do.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, BUT ALSO ALL THAT HEAR ME THIS DAY, WERE BOTH ALMOST, AND ALTOGETHER SUCH AS I AM, EXCEPT THESE BONDS.

Acts 26:28-29

Apostle Paul was so grateful to God for saving him and putting him in His service. He said to the king, "I wish everybody would be like me. Of course I would not want everybody to be a prisoner like I am. But I really wish everyone would serve God as much as I do."

If you really love the Lord and if you are grateful to Him, you will want others to love God in the same way. When you have found a good thing, you will always want to share it with others. Other people are going to be glad when they find Jesus in the same way that you have found Him. I have always wanted all my friends to serve the Lord and to love the Lord. I have always wanted people to appreciate God and to love Him as much as I try to.

One day I met a doctor who was fully dedicated to his medical practice. I told him that there was something higher and greater than medicine. I encouraged him to serve the Lord because serving the Lord is far greater than serving the medical profession. It is a good thing to be a doctor but it is greater to serve the Lord. Serving Jesus is what is called the high calling. When you are a medical doctor you look after the bodies of men. But when you are in the ministry you look after the spirits and souls of men; the part of men that is going to live forever.

There are pastors who *do not* want their children to be ministers of the gospel. They want their children to be lawyers and judges. Why would you want your child to do something different from what you are doing? If what you are doing is a great thing, you should desire all your children to live the way you live.

8. Say, "Thank you" to God by not letting the grace of God be in vain.

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD I AM WHAT I AM: AND HIS GRACE WHICH WAS BESTOWED UPON ME WAS NOT IN VAIN; BUT I LABOURED MORE ABUNDANTLY THAN THEY ALL: YET NOT I, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS WITH ME.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

Paul said that the grace of God was not in vain. Why should the grace of God be in vain?

His grace will be in vain only if you are ungrateful and unthankful. When you think of the great grace that has been shown to you in saving you and rescuing you from darkness, how else can you say thanks?

Paul said the grace of God was not in vain. I hope the grace of God is not in vain in your life.

There are people that I have appointed as pastors and put into the ministry that have brought me joy. There are others that I have appointed and helped to be in the ministry that do not bring me joy. There are people that I think I made a mistake in promoting and encouraging. There are people that I appointed who have misused the grace and opportunity I gave them. It is easy for a person to misuse and misappropriate the grace of God.

You will not be one of those!

You must rise up and serve God so that no one can say that God made a mistake in saving you and loving you so much.

9. Say, "Thank you" to God by labouring more abundantly than everyone else.

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I LABOURED MORE ABUNDANTLY THAN THEY ALL: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

1 Corinthians 15:10

How do you show that the grace of God is not in vain? By saying, "Thank you" with your life! Paul said that he laboured more abundantly than everyone else. You must work harder than everyone else. God is calling you into the ministry. You must work harder.

There is no future for a lazy person in the church. Paul was not lazy. He was more hardworking than all the other apostles. Why was he so hardworking? Because he was conscious of the grace that had been shown to him. He did not want anything to be in vain. He wanted to say thanks to God for His goodness, His love and His mercies.

How can I say, "Thanks"? How can you say, "Thanks"? By working harder and labouring more abundantly than everyone else!

10. Say, "Thank you" to God by giving Him your reasonable service.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

Say, "Thank you" to God by giving Him your reasonable service. How can I say thanks? By being reasonable! What has God done for you? He has saved you. He has washed you. He has taken you out of the gutter and honoured you with a great opportunity to serve Him. How can I say thanks? By being reasonable!

One day I spoke to a lady who had had several boyfriends. She had had several encounters with several men. However, now that she was married, she was slow, uninterested and indifferent. Her poor husband, who had waited so long to be married to her, was not enjoying a nice, frisky, agile and enchanting girl. This lady had lost the zest for life and love.

After all, she had given it away and dissipated it with several other guys. On top of it all, she seemed not to appreciate the grace of being married. I asked her if she had been like an agile antelope gambolling and galloping across the mountain face with all those other gentlemen. She smiled meekly and said, "Yes."

"Since you did all these things for all these people, why do you not do it for your dear

husband," I continued.

I asked her, "Did any of these fellows offer to marry you? Did any of them really like you? Did any of them give you a ring?" She smiled sheepishly and said, "No."

I continued, "Is it not reasonable for us to expect that you would show, at least, the same level of aerobics, gymnastics and acrobatics for your present husband?"

She smiled meekly and promised that she would give her reasonable service to her dear husband. Unfortunately, it was only lip service.

It is my prayer that you would not only give lip service to the request for you to offer *a reasonable service* to the Lord.

It is only reasonable for you to become a missionary. It is only reasonable for you to give yourself to the mission to go to the islands and the nations of the world. It is only reasonable for you to rise up and go all out, giving God your youth, giving God the best times of your life.

Jesus gave His youth. He gave His best days for you!

He never had another life on this earth; just the one that He gave up for you! How can you say thanks to Jesus? By serving Him reasonably!

Dear friend, it is reasonable that you give Him your entire life, beginning from today. No one will be able to call you an ungrateful child! No one will be able to say that you did not love God.

You are fully dedicated to Jesus and I declare that your life is a message of thanksgiving to God for all that He has done for you in saving you from your sins and making you a new creature.

How can you say thanks for His call to the ministry?

How can you say thanks to God for His giving you the opportunity to read this book? How can you say, "Thank you" by being reasonable and giving Him something that matches what He has given you? Think about it! He gave you His youth! He gave you His best days!

Why do you want to give yourself to Him when you cannot hear well?

Why do you want to give yourself to Him when you need glasses to read?

Why do you want to give yourself to Him when you cannot remember things anymore?

Why do you want to give yourself to Him when you cannot walk straight?

Why do you want to give yourself to Him when you cannot understand computers? Why don't you give Him yourself when everything about you is working well?

Why do you want to give yourself to Him when you are half dead?

Why do you want to give yourself to Him when you need medicine every day to stay alive?

God wants you when you are handsome. When you are older you will not be as handsome as you are now. When you are older you will not be as pretty as you are now. God wants pretty people too.

God wants handsome people who are anointed to serve Him. Why do you not give yourself to Him now that you are intelligent, agile, strong and well? How can you say thanks?

Jesus gave Himself to you when He was agile, strong and young. Why do you want to give yourself when you are bent over having back ache every day? Jesus gave Himself to you when He could hear well and see well! Jesus gave Himself for you when He did not need

to wear glasses!

This is the time to love the Lord! This is the time to serve Him! How can I say thanks? Say thanks by loving Him. You would have been dead in a grave by now. You would have been destroyed by now.

You would have had a thousand heart breaks from a thousand boys who played with your body. You would have had nine boyfriends at the same time. You would have had twenty-five girlfriends at the same time and died of HIV long ago.

But Jesus has saved you!

He has washed you. He has brought you to His church. He has given you a pastor.

Today you are reading a Christian book! What a blessing! How can you say thanks? You can say thanks with your life?

If you want to write a letter to Jesus, I will not be able to show you a post office that can receive it or transmit it to Him. You have to say, “Thank you” in another way. THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN SAY, “THANK YOU” IS WITH YOUR LIFE!

Thank you for your nice songs but somebody else wrote them.

Thank you for the nice hymns that you sing and the worship music that comes from your lips. But these are words that you have learnt. They are not your own words!

You must rise up and give Him your life! You must give something that He knows is genuine; something that is real, something that is from you.

He gave you Himself! Give Him yourself and it would be indeed a reasonable service, a reasonable sacrifice and a reasonable ministry. How can you say thanks? By saying, “Thank you” in a reasonable way!

May you become one of those grateful people who serve God joyfully and gladly for the abundance of all things.

You will never be called ungrateful or unthankful! On earth and in heaven, you will be acknowledged as a grateful, thankful and appreciative child who was saved by Jesus Christ. Angels will rejoice when they see you giving thanks with your life. They will be glad that you have appreciated the great gift that you have been given.

Conclusion

To the making of many books there is no end!

It is time to give thanks to God for your great salvation!

It is time to give thanks by taking your place in the ministry!

You have a great gift and the world is waiting to hear from you.

Say, “Thank you” to God with your whole life!

With these few words, may you be encouraged to give thanks with a grateful heart!