



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “GRATITUDE IS YOUR GREATEST WEAPON”

Ps. Rice Brooks– November 22, 2015

#### **WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)**

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Where does gratitude rank on your list of required Christian qualities?
- Do you think that gratitude is a choice or a feeling? Why so?
- Who is the happiest person you know? What characteristics does that person display that make him/her look so happy?

#### **WORD (10-15 minutes)**

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Romans 1:21*

*But realize this that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power. 2 Timothy 3:1-5*

*Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17*

The passages above show the importance of gratitude, and the dangers that the lack of it represents. Gratitude is the greatest weapon we have to protect our lives.

**Gratitude protects your mind.** (Rom 1) In a world where everything is about our minds, keeping the light on in our minds is crucial. When you stop being thankful, you open your mind to darkness. When we allow ourselves to be ungrateful, we are turning off the light to be able to see God's hand in our life.

**Gratitude protects your relationships.** Most people are one offense away from leaving the most important relationships in their lives. People say they have philosophical differences as a euphemism for “we don't like each other.” In any relationship you don't have the exact same philosophy, but we still need those relationships.

Gratitude reminds us of all the good moments we had together and protect us from destroying the relationship. Most of our key relationships could have ended, but gratitude for the things God allowed us to have together have saved them.

**Gratitude Protects your Work.** Deuteronomy 28:47-48 warns us that if we do not serve the Lord with gladness, he will put a yoke on us. Lack of gratitude creates a yoke on our lives. Ingratitude generates a spirit suspicion that covers our work.

Phil 2:14 tells us to do everything without grumbling so that we may stand out in this crooked generation. God is looking and people are looking. You won't go unnoticed. It does not take much to stand out today. Just a spirit of gratitude makes us stand out when everybody else is complaining. There is a position that you can have, if your disposition is right.

**Gratitude protects your prayer** Philippians 4:4: Be anxious for nothing, but present your request with thanksgiving. When you stop being thankful even your prayers become empty. We ought to enter his gates with thanksgiving. That way our prayers are filled with thanksgiving. When we stop being thankful, our relationship with God becomes all about what have you done for us lately. There is something about a thankful heart; that no matter what you say with your lips, the bad smell from your heart will come out, and there is no air-freshener that will neutralize it.

Gratitude unspoken is ingratitude.

**Gratitude protects our faith.** When we are grateful, we can trust God despite our circumstances. We live in a time when God is shaking things to open people's hearts. This is not the first time God has done something like that. The church in Philippi started in a prison, when God shook open the gates of the prison. Because Paul was able to see beyond his circumstances, he saw God was shaking more than the doors, he was shaking the jailer's heart. Gratitude keeps our faith alive. It keeps people from giving up on God. We need God more than we need to be mad at him.

When you don't turn from God, you turn to God.

**Gratitude Protects our Future.** Gratitude is our greatest weapon against fear. If we spend our time walking in fear, we may default our future. Most of the time the things that afflict us are real, but we magnify them. If we keep anything too close to your eye, it becomes the biggest thing in your life. Gratitude helps us put things in its proper perspective. Being grateful doesn't take away our problems, but it puts them in their proper perspective. The Scripture says that one day we will see Satan, after being in the presence of God, then we will say: Is this the one who tortured the nations?

Gratitude is our greatest weapon. Let's use it!

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- How are you doing with God's command to "give thanks in all things"?
- From what do you need protection the most at this time in your life? How can you apply today's lesson as a weapon to guard your life?
- What are some visible blessings for which you are thankful?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Repent for any form of ingratitude you have been displaying.
- Thank God for his goodness toward you.
- Pray God will grant you a spirit of gratitude.