



Navigators Discipleship Tool

At Thanksgiving, we list the things for which we're thankful but often fall short of having a day-to-day "attitude of gratitude."



GRATITUDE *or* PLATITUDE?

When the Thanksgiving season rolls around many of us find ourselves confronted with our shortcomings in the area of giving thanks. It's a little bit like facing the New Year and all those resolutions we didn't follow through on last year. And yet, we know we're supposed to be thankful. After all, the Bible tells us to "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

So on Thanksgiving, we sit around the table and list the things for which we're thankful. That's not a bad thing to do. And sometimes we really mean it. But so often it falls so far short of having that "attitude of gratitude" that we know God really desires. Our prayers of gratitude are sometimes just platitudes. We say the right words but we're not really people who are characterized by a thankful spirit.

The author of Hebrews, however, gives us a slightly different perspective on giving thanks:

"Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15, NASB).

Giving thanks is a sacrifice of praise. A sacrifice, by definition, costs us something. What does giving thanks cost us? What do we have to give up in order to be grateful?

PRIDE: Sometimes we're not grateful because we think we deserve something. We feel that we earned it or that it is ours by right. You don't thank your employer for your paycheck because you earned it. You may be thankful for your job, however, because there are a lot of people just as qualified as you who don't have jobs. Giving thanks can be a humbling proposition.

RESENTMENT: There are times when we're not thankful because we don't have exactly what we want (or think we want). Someone else has more than we do, or their life seems

to be better. And yet, Scripture says that God gives us perfect gifts (James 1:17).

PRIORITIES: When Jesus healed 10 lepers (Luke 17:11-19), only one of them came back to thank him. Jesus even asked, "Where are the other nine?" The Bible doesn't give us an answer. Wherever they were and whatever they were doing was more important to them than thanking Jesus. For one, however, giving thanks was the most important thing he could think of. And Jesus told him, "... your faith has made you well."

There may be other things that keep us from developing thankful hearts—from being grateful people. But these are a good place to start. This year, before you sit down to Thanksgiving dinner and share your list of things you're thankful for, grab a few minutes alone with God and ask Him to show you what things might be keeping you from being a thankful person.