



The last five years have seen a flurry of articles written on what has been called the “Me generations” or “millennials” – those born between 1980 and 2000. Social studies, along with specific polling, has revealed an acute deficiency among these generations not generally found in the preceding generations. They lack thankfulness. That being said, many millennials would disagree. Not that they lack thankfulness but that such should be viewed as a problem (or deficiency). The “new thinking” is that thankfulness is a hindrance – or mental obstacle that keeps people from truly being happy, successful or pursuing a more meaningful path in life. Ironically, suicide and depression has plagued these generations more than any prior. Equally so, the work ethic and perseverance necessary to upward movement in career or the business world has proven to be the worst among the Me generations. That being said, millennials are not the only ones affected. The predominance of such thinking has also influenced older generations. We are progressively becoming a “Me America”, a place where thankfulness no longer exists. Unfortunately, ignorance as to what constitutes and secures thankfulness as well as what God teaches to be the consequences of lacking thankfulness have caused not a few Christians to follow this destructive path. Hence the reason for this study on the subject of Thankfulness.

What (then) we (as Christians) need to know to about thankfulness:

- 1. Being thankful means possessing _____ recognizing Him to be the primary cause of all _____.**

- 2. Experiencing/feeling the deep sense of gratitude that accompanies/defines thankfulness doesn’t happen without _____ what God has promised to/done for us.**

- 3. Where there is genuine thankfulness, there is also reciprocation, a giving back (to God) of faithful obedience. Our obedience is the return _____.¹**

- 4. All forms of unhappiness (depression, discontentment, unfulfilled living, etc.) and poor performance (laziness, lack of productivity, etc.) can be (and often are) _____.**

¹ “[Grace] is best captured by the anthropological category of gift. This category is broad, but covers a sphere of voluntary, personal relations that are characterized by goodwill in giving of some benefit or favor and that elicit some form of reciprocal return that is both voluntary and necessary for the continuation of the relationship...A modern Western dictionary tells us that ‘gift’ means something handed over ‘gratuitously, for nothing.’ But even the slightest knowledge of antiquity would inform us that gifts were given with strong expectations of return – indeed, precisely in order to elicit a return and thus create or enhance social solidarity. Those of us brought up in the West are likely to be surprised (even shocked) by the gift practices of non-Western cultures today. We should expect a similar or even greater surprise when we encounter ancient practices and opinions...In archaic societies, the gift-system was basic to, and the glue between all the realms which modernity has distinguished – economics, law, kinship, religion, aesthetics, ritual, and politics...In such societies the exchange of [gifts] constitutes a unifying social choreography: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to return. Each of these interdependent moves carries the force of social necessity, since they constitute the most important bonds of society (and of the relations between humans and gods). Families and groups (tribes) are tied together internally and externally by the offering and receiving of gifts – an unwillingness to receive is a sign of hostility or mistrust...In many contexts gift-giving operates as a substitute for war – soothing or sublimating hostility with gifts...The gift is therefore at one and the same time what should be done, what should be received, and yet what is dangerous to take. This because the thing that is given itself forges a bilateral, irrevocable bond [of reciprocation]... ‘Why is it that a gift is received with a burden attached?’ Because the thing or service given is not detachable from the person who gives it, and that tie with the donor can only be acknowledged by a counter-gift. [A] loss of honor...would result from failure to reciprocate.” – John M.G. Barclay (*Paul And The Gift*)