

## Appreciation



Gratitude requires education! When you are born, you enter an environment of which you have no understanding and to which you can not attribute any ownership or patronage, it is only after some schooling that you will understand the full value of the habitat in which you exist. There is a problem!! That is, education comes in many forms and often generates conflicting messages. The Bible says that God is the benefactor of our Total existence but we don't often live as though that is true, nor do we pass that knowledge on to others or our offspring.

What kind of knowledge would we disclose to every individual whoever they might be that we come in contact with which could declare our gratitude to the God that created us? The best knowledge you can communicate is to Live the statement, **"God values me therefore, I will value myself. I am beautifully and wonderfully made. I will not waste the investment that God has made in my life."** And then ask the questions, "How has God invested in me and my life?", "Would it behoove me to say thank You to Him for that investment?" and "Shouldn't I make others aware that God invests in everyone?" The aforementioned statement embodies the concept that God values others as well, has made similar investments in them and expects you to value them as much as He does.

I would enumerate the kinds of investments God has made in all of us and you can list those specific ones that are characteristic of you.

1. Jesus, because of Him and what He offers to each of us our enjoyment of the rest of these blessings will be "Eternal" not just for a brief period of time.
2. The breath of life. Genesis 2:7, *"Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."* Not just for Adam & Eve but for all their off spring (That's you).
3. More than that to sustain our life we get air to breath, water to drink and a planet filled with food.
4. All of "Creation", Revelation 4:11 tells us that it was God's will and power that provided us with all that we see and experience and that He is worthy to receive glory and honor.
5. The blessing of building materials to construct homes, other structures and methods of transportation.
6. To prepare the food, to build and to manufacture He has given us the gift of intelligence
7. According to Paul even the "Thorns" are really a gift, though we might not appreciate them, James 1:2-4 tell us to rejoice in them for they provide "Growth", Romans 5:3-4 and 2 Corinthians 12:6-7 tells us that we should boast of our tribulations and afflictions.
8. Ephesians 2:8-10 says that we were created for "Good Works" "Prepared Beforehand" to do but not boast about.
9. Our wealth is a gift, Matthew 25:14-30 tell us not everyone gets the same amount of wealth but what we do with it to benefit "The Master" will determine the final outcome.
10. Saying "No!" to Prayer, Matthew 20:20-23 tells us that we may not know what we are asking for but God does and we may regret the request later.
11. God's Love Letter (The Bible), Hebrews 4:12 tells us of the nature of the contents of the Bible, 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us of its functionality and Every Page from Genesis to Revelation tells us of Jesus.

12. God's Grace and Love, Romans 5:2+5 tells us of the justification of Jesus and how it gives us access to God's Grace and Love through the Holy Spirit.
13. The Holy Spirit, Luke 1:35 tells us that the Holy Spirit produced Jesus in Mary, John 16:13 tells us what the Holy Spirit can do with you but Ephesians 4:30-31 tells us that disobedience can grieve Him and even drive Him away.
14. Peace, is a big deal in the Bible and is mentioned 429 times, in the New Testament, Matthew 5:9 making it, Romans 14:19 pursuing it, James 3:18 harvest of it, John 14:27 God's Peace, Philippians 4:7 Peace bestowed, John 16:33 explained, Luke 1:79 why Jesus, Mark 9:50 Salt & Peace.
15. Joy, persists even after happiness is gone, Psalm 16:11 talks about "Eternal Pleasure" in His presence, 1 Peter 1:3-9 talks of joy through faith in the imperishable inheritance, even in trials.
16. Prayer, 1 Samuel 1:9-20 prayer answered, 1 Samuel 2:1-10 thanks for prayer answered, Luke 2:25-38 praise for the advent of Jesus, Luke 11:1-13 prayer lesson 101, Acts 16:19-34 prayer and rejoicing even in prison, Colossians 4:12 prayer for others, 1 Timothy 2:1-4 prayers and thanksgiving for a peaceable life, James 5:13-18 prayers for health and wellbeing both spiritual and physical.
17. Adoption, redemption, forgiveness, Ephesians 1:3-8 explains that we have been bought through the "Blood of Jesus" but not into slavery, rather into family through "The Grace of God" and this is "Today" not "The Distant Future".

One wouldn't have thought that I should have had a hard time enumerating the blessings of God but this composition has been a challenge. Primarily due to the volume of God's blessings, it is impossible to list them all in a couple of pages and to expand on each blessing would have represented a book, but if you read the book He provided, not only will you find Jesus on every page but "Blessings and Gifts" as well.

So during this "Thanksgiving Season", why not use some of your blessings to be a blessing to others and in the end when you say "Thank You" to God remember the limitless volume of gifts that you are acknowledging appreciation for.