



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

OVERFLOWING WITH GRATITUDE

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 2:6-9 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Leviticus 22:29-31 | John 6:37; 14:3
Ephesians 1:4; 2:8 | Hebrews 9:27

► SUMMARY

A thankful person acknowledges God as the source of every provision and blessing.

As believers, our gratitude should overflow in response to the benefits we receive as children of God. In fact, a thankful heart is a defining characteristic of a godly person since it's an expression of His indwelling presence. Even in the Old Testament, the Lord desired gratitude from His people. They didn't have the Bible, so He used a sacrificial system of worship to teach them that He—the holy, sovereign God—was the source of every good thing. They learned to express their gratitude by bringing Him offerings.

The sin of ingratitude actually began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve decided that what God had given them wasn't enough. He provided a perfect environment with abundant fruit from every tree—except one. But, they weren't satisfied, so they crossed the line and disobeyed God. And they are not alone in this sin. Any time we don't appreciate what the Lord has given us or want something that is outside His will, we also express ingratitude.

► SERMON POINTS

The Key to Overflowing Gratitude

Our thanksgiving begins as soon as we acknowledge that Christ alone is responsible for our salvation. He chose each of us before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4) and gave us the gift of faith so we could believe in Him (Eph. 2:8). From the moment we accepted

Him as Savior, the Lord began to develop the qualities that produce grateful hearts. In Colossians 2:6-7, Paul teaches us that we should be thankful because:

- **We have sealed relationships.** The moment we first trusted Jesus, our relationships with Him were sealed, and we became children of God. That fact alone ought to create a lifetime of gratitude.
- **We can walk with Him.** As believers, we enter into dynamic relationships with Jesus that can continue to grow in Christlikeness.
- **We have been firmly rooted.** In Jesus, we are securely grounded like trees with strong roots that keep us standing upright during the storms of life. These roots grow deep and draw nourishment from God's Word to keep us from being swayed by adversity.
- **We are being built up in Him.** Salvation is the foundation of the Christian life, but we have the responsibility to build upon it by reading Scripture and applying its truths to our lives.
- **We can be established in our faith.** In a world full of distorted religions and false philosophies, we can be grounded in the truth of our faith and recognize deception when we encounter it.

Reasons for Gratitude

Although we're usually thankful for blessings such as good health and family, we should not overlook the many spiritual blessings we gain through Jesus Christ. For example, we:

- Were chosen by God before the foundation of the world.
- Are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who guides and enables

us to do the Father's will.

- Are eternally secure, and no one can take that from us.
- Have been given the gifts of the Spirit to help us accomplish what God calls us to do.
- Enjoy an intimate relationship with the Lord, which is more satisfying than any human bond.
- Have the Lord's peace in our hearts.
- Are loved unconditionally by God, regardless of our mistakes.
- Experience the Lord's presence with us moment by moment—no matter where we are.
- Serve a God who has promised to meet all our needs.
- Enjoy His protection, which is something we'll fully understand only when we reach heaven.
- Can rely on the promise of a bodily resurrection.
- Have a home in heaven we will see one day.
- Have the Bible to teach and guide us.

A Test of Gratitude

We can evaluate our relationships with the Lord by measuring our gratitude. That's why Paul used the word overflowing to describe how great our thankfulness should be. People who have grateful hearts are:

- **Positive.** Thankfulness keeps us focused on what the Lord is doing in our lives.
- **Aware of God's presence.** When we know that the Lord is actively involved in our lives and helping us through every difficulty and hardship, we can sense His presence.
- **Humble.** We recognize the Lord as the source of every good thing and admit we had nothing to do with it.
- **Peaceful.** When we place our trust in Christ and watch for His activity in our lives, we have His peace.
- **Thoughtful of others.** Gratitude makes us sensitive to the needs of those around us and eager to help them.
- **Generous.** When we recognize all that God has done for us, we look for ways to pass blessings on to others.
- **Unselfish.** If we're thankful, we are willing to joyfully share whatever we have.

- **Expressive.** Seeing what God is doing in our lives motivates us to tell others and encourage them to trust Him.
- **Friendly.** Thankful people are pleasant and kind to others.
- **Contagious.** A grateful attitude displays the character of Jesus in our lives, and that is very appealing to those around us.
- **Motivated.** Thankfulness prompts us to give, share, and serve.
- **Servant-hearted.** We want to serve Christ by giving ourselves away to others.
- **Faithful.** After watching God repeatedly work in our lives, we develop great trust in Him that influences our thinking.
- **Fruitful.** Instead of focusing on ourselves, we desire to be used by our heavenly Father to achieve His purposes.
- **Joyful.** Gratitude produces deep, abiding joy because we know that God is working in us, even through difficulties.

► RESPONSE

- Thankfulness is a choice. If it's lacking in us, we must decide to make a change.
- As we recognize and acknowledge God's wonderful blessings and ask Him to give us grateful hearts, He will begin transforming our lives. No one can deliver on that promise for you but Christ Jesus.
- Then, as we live in Christ, His characteristics of goodness, love, kindness, and generosity will pour through us until we are truly overflowing with gratitude.

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