

Appreciation: A source of tremendous encouragement

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How can we inspire ourselves, and others, to greater spiritual growth? There is one Godly trait that we could all develop and use more effectively in our efforts to inspire ourselves and those with whom we come into contact.

In today's fast paced world, people selfishly omit to convey appreciation towards others, and even towards God! 2 Timothy 3:1-3 tells us "that in the last days...men shall be lovers of their own selves...unthankful...without natural affection". Are we too wrapped up in our own selfish interests? Are we perhaps insensitive or uncaring to the welfare of those around us? Timothy tells us that in the 'last days' – or in this end time - when material possessions and the obsession to acquire wealth is unparalleled and unprecedented, selfishness would abound and, as a result, people would be unthankful and would lose their natural affection toward others. These terms refer to those who *think* they have a right to be served and waited upon, yet feel no obligation to return the favor and, worse still, do not express gratitude for what is done. Could we relate to this? Do we selfishly think we have a right to services from our spouse's, our children, employees, colleagues or from anyone else that we may have an affiliation with or with whom we come into contact, *without* demonstrating our appreciation for what is done for us?

On the term 'without natural affection' (verse 3), Clarke's Commentary indicates that people have lost or are losing 'that affection which parents [should] bear to their young, and which the young [should] bear to their parents'. The type of affection being described in this verse is 'an affection which is common to every class of animals; consequently, men without it are worse than brutes!' If we do not show affection, or are unappreciative of others, we are here compared to being worse than animals! Verse 5 tells us that if we fall into this selfish attitude, although we have a 'form of Godliness', we would be 'denying the power thereof'. This same verse concludes by telling us: 'from such turn away'!!

There is great power in expressing appreciation, and also in receiving it. In addition to uplifting the person expressing it, appreciation can truly encourage and motivate people who receive it. This is a small way in which we can help encourage others to develop Godly character!

Hebrews 10:24 states: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works". We must regard the wellbeing and happiness of others so that we can make an effort to excite them, edify them and help them to persist in their life and in their calling. When we show appreciation, we rouse and 'provoke' that person to perform better in any given task, even in their spiritual growth! When we demonstrate appreciation we excite others to further good works.

It is important to be aware of, and acknowledge, the effort and successes of all those around us. There is true power in expressing appreciation for each other. Philippians 4:8 admonishes us to meditate on the things which are praiseworthy, and if there is anything worthy of praise we ought to praise!

We are to give thanks in everything! "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess.5:18). Every good thing that we experience is something for which we should express appreciation and gratitude. We should also be appreciative of our trials (1 Peter 1:6), because it is from these that we can learn, grow and build Godly character.

Showing appreciation to those around us, and most importantly to God for all that He has done and given us, also promotes a positive, uplifting attitude within us. This type of attitude radiates joy and other right kind of fruits (Gal 5)! These are the type of fruits which people that we come into contact with can positively feed off! How powerful is the trait of showing appreciation to others!

Let us give thanks always for all things (Ephesians 5:20). Give thanks to God and those we come into contact with. Once this admonition is applied diligently, fantastic rewards will be reaped by those showing appreciation as well as by those receiving it! Let's inspire ourselves and others to greater spiritual growth by showing appreciation!