

Accelerating into our Future Part 8: Cleansing our Hearts for Restoration and Blessing

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This is the will of God for your life. ¹⁷ Always keep on praying. ¹⁸ No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you (1 Thessalonians 5:17-24, TLB). What is God's will for me? To pray. What is prayer? Talking to Him, asking Him for help. Basically, God's will for us is, "*Lord, help me and thank You.*"

The ten lepers in Luke 17 called on the name of Jesus and asked Him for mercy. In Greek, *mercy* means relief from suffering. Jesus answered their prayer. Upon seeing that he was cured, one leper turned back, recognising and thanking and praising God with a loud voice, thanking Him over and over and over again. Jesus said to this man, ¹⁹ Get up and go on your way. Your faith, ... has restored you to good health. (Luke 17:18-19, TLB)

That word that is used there, *restored*, is to be made whole. Shalom came on his body and everything that was dead, that had fallen off his body, was restored to him - fingers, a nose, toes. Why is it the will of God for us to give thanks in all circumstances? It touches the heart of the Father that we return to give thanks for His blessing, for His deliverance. It also releases the restoring power of God to bring wholeness to our spirits, to our souls, and our bodies.

Say this with me; "I'm a grateful person." The Lord wants us to increase in our gratitude so that we can increase in blessing. That our lives can be restored. All those areas of our lives that have gone dead over many years, the Lord wants to restore.

God delivered the children of Israel from a domain of darkness, from Egypt. Egypt is an example of the world. God delivered His people with mighty power, with miracles and He journeyed with them to the promised land. God was with them. The wilderness was not their destination. It was God's plan that the children of Israel would go and immediately inherit the land. But it took them 40 years to travel the distance they could have traveled between 10 and 12 days.

Time and again we see in Exodus how the Israelites were ungrateful, they complained about the circumstances to Moses and to the Lord. If we find areas of ungratefulness in our hearts, it is expressed in impatience, frustration, discontentment. The Israelites were discontent with God, with their circumstances and with Moses. They dishonoured and resisted God's delegated authority.

Gratefulness is not something that a child is born with; they have to be taught. A child that is not grateful normally becomes more demanding. An ungrateful child resists God's delegated authority. Ultimately their attitude will delay their progress – as happened with the Israelites in the wilderness. They didn't know yet, but their provision was right ahead of them. They had lost sight of what God had already done. He had just delivered them from bondage, and they had already forgotten. They were only focused on their own needs.

Gratefulness keeps our minds and hearts remembering what He has already done, and keeps our eyes focused on where He is taking us. Gratefulness. Gratitude. Recognising the good.

The eye is the lamp. Their eyes were dark. They did not recognize the good in what God or their leaders were doing for them. The children of God wanted more. Their ungratefulness for what God was doing and providing on their journey to the promised land made what Egypt had more attractive. Remember Egypt is the type of the world. It made bondage more attractive.

This was in my heart for us as a people - are we grateful for just enough while we journey to the promised land together? Because what's waiting for us in the promised land? Abundance, abundance, abundance. Are we there yet? I'm not. Are we grateful for just enough while we journey to the promised land together? We're going in together. Because God is taking us as a people, just like He was dealing with them as a people. That's how He works; He wants to take in a people, He wants to take in a family. It's not His best in a family if only one person is blessed in a family.

I believe we are a grateful people. And yet, God wants to hear it. He wants us to return, to recognise and give thanks to Him for our deliverance so that He can restore our lives. God wants to hear it, and our hearts need to hear it so that we can be cleansed and be restored to wholeness. A grateful heart attracts wisdom and instruction for strategy.

God wants to speak to you directly so that the fear of God will come upon you and you won't want to sin against Him. When we allow God to speak to us directly, it changes what we want. It's much easier to change when you want to change.

When we are ungrateful for both our deliverance and our leaders and we continually reject His voice to us, both the written Word and His messages to us, we will end up like Aaron and Miriam. Becoming bitter towards the leaders; bitter towards God. This is not us, but I believe God wants us to increase in both gratitude to Him for our deliverance from darkness and for His words.

God wants us to increase, full stop. We have to increase in our gratitude for His words to us; for our spiritual leader. Because, if we're not grateful for Pastor John, we're not really listening. We won't love him the way that we should love him. If we don't love the Bible, if we're not grateful for it, we'll mistreat it. What needs to come out of our mouth? "Thank You. Thank You for Your holy precious written Word."

Let us give thanks to God for our breath and our very existence. Grateful children recognise that their lives don't belong to them. Let us give thanks to God, our Father, for our lives that have been bought by the blood of Jesus. Our lives are not our own. Grateful children recognise that it is by the good graces of those who care for them that they receive anything at all. Let us give thanks every day for our bodies, for our life, and for the food on our tables.

Grateful children recognise the price and the sacrifice that is required by those who care and provide for them. Let us give thanks for our parents, our bosses, our governments, and our spiritual leaders. God uses them all to provide. Grateful children find the good in all circumstances. Let us find cause to give thanks in everything.

Grateful children do not expect things to be given to them but appreciate all things. Let us give thanks for our salvation, for the blood of Christ and for our deliverance. Grateful children do not demand. They humbly request and then wait, trusting that their Father has heard them and will provide as He sees in His wisdom to provide.

Grateful children are not entitled to the blessings of the Father. They value and look after their blessings. Let us give thanks to God for all of His promises, for they are yes and amen. Let us give thanks for His promises of healing, prosperity, and peace. Let us give thanks for His blessing that produces fruitfulness, multiplication, dominion, and replenishment.

Grateful children welcome correction and discipline. They value the instructions of their Father. Let us give thanks to God for His correction and His discipline. Let us give thanks for His instruction both in scripture and from our messengers. Grateful children recognise what their

parents have done for them, both their provision and instruction. They recognise that it is all leading them towards a good life and a better future.

So, let us give thanks to God for His instructions that come from our parents and that lead us into truth and a good life and a better future. And let us thank God for restoring our families and our homes.

God wants us to be grateful for the Holy Spirit. If we will increase in our gratitude for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God that lives within us, He will come more.