

151115 Cultivating a Heart of Gratitude 3

The Power of Beauty in Gratitude

Introduction:

- Where we have been:
 - Gratitude made practical. Defined and gave basic understanding of gratitude. Journal and foyer board.
 - Steps to cultivating a heart of gratitude: ***Choose to have a heart of gratitude, recognize the gift and the giver of the gift, appreciate it, and acknowledge or express gratitude.
 - Pride and Humility. **Those who lack humility will not be grateful when they receive. In their mind, they do not see the gift or giver. They see something they deserve or are entitled to.
- As we start this third message of the series Cultivating a Heart of Gratitude I want to talk about beauty and how it relates to gratitude.
- Video of the old man.
- *"Give to the Lord the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!"* (1 Chronicles 16:29, NKJV)
- How does beauty relate to gratitude? Simply said, ***Beauty leads to appreciation and appreciation is necessary to express genuine gratitude. Let's begin.

I. Beauty and Gratitude

- A. What is beauty? Where is it found? How can I spot it? Everyone is born able to spot some things beautiful but most of us will learn to see beauty. (Spot it by leaning about it)
1. Talking about beauty tends to be a bit philosophical. So I ask another question: Do we think of beauty or do we feel it? I believe we feel/experience beauty. Beauty is a label we attach to different sorts of experiences. I.e. Grand Canyon is beautiful, medium rare Filet Mignon is beautiful, a 100 yard kick return is beautiful, a DNA link is beautiful, a successful rocket launch is beautiful! Are they beautiful because we think it beautiful or is it beautiful because we feel it.
 2. ***Beauty is the state of contemplating a subject with no other purpose than appreciating it.
Anonymous
 - a) In keeping your gratitude journal, you are reflecting upon your day and contemplating different events and moments. As you do, you are capturing beauty, appreciating the moment, and finding and expressing gratitude. I.e. This week my granddaughter brought me a spicy chicken biscuit. I greeted her at the office door gave her a hug and she twirled for me. I was caught in a moment of beauty: her innocence, her blues eyes sparkling under a swirl of blonde hair as she spun so easily upon her toes...beauty, appreciation, gratitude! A picture etched in my thoughts!
 - b) Appreciating beauty *can* be carried on by means of the senses: looking at a sculpture, fall leaves, or a city skyline; listening to Beethoven's 8th Symphony; tasting a mushroom *risotto*; feeling some fresh water in a hot day; and so on.
 - c) However, senses may not be necessary in order to obtain an aesthetic attitude: we can rejoice, for instance, in imagining a beautiful house that never existed; in discovering or grasping the details of a complex theorem in algebra, or discovering an answer to a construction problem. So beauty appears to be something that is felt that brings us pleasure/

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happiness. This is important to gratitude because it is the things we feel 'that bring pleasure' that give us the greatest motivation to be grateful.

3. Beauty is also experienced in those time of "Transcendence/otherness". I.e. The first time I saw the ocean, the Rocky Mountains, Victoria falls in Zambia, above the clouds on the Appalachian Trail.
- B. The basic meaning of 'beauty' *pā'ar* in the Piel is "to beautify/glorify." An additional meaning in this stem is "to boast" I.e. a grandparent. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* "*One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple.*" (Psalm 27:4, NKJV) It pulls thanks and worship out of us and it leads us to boast or to declare something. I.e. "Its magnificent!" "It's gorgeous!" "It's breath taking!"
- C. Beauty is also the quality present in a thing or person that gives a sense of pleasure (feeling/experience) or deep satisfaction to the mind, whether arising from sensory manifestations (as shape, color, sound, etc.), a meaningful design or pattern, or something else (as a personality in which high spiritual qualities are manifest).
- D. Because beauty is a subjective experience, it is often said that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." **The Jewish Talmud said it this way: "We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are." Therefore, 'in the eye of the beholder. I see many things as beautiful now than I did when I was twenty. I have learned value along the way.
- E. We must learn to see beauty: in others, in life, in ourselves.
 1. For something to be beautiful it must be recognized as such and appreciated. For something to be appreciated it must be recognized as beautiful. Beauty leads to appreciation.
 2. And appreciation is the set up for gratitude! "*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!*" (Isaiah 52:7, NLT)

II. Appreciation and Gratitude

- A. Appreciation means to understand the worth or importance of (something or someone); to admire and value (something or someone); to be grateful for (something or someone).
 1. The word "appreciation" means to really see something for what it is- an awareness of how special, how unique, how blessed, how big, wonderful or awesome something is.
 2. ***Appreciation is a recognition not based on comparison, but based on the intrinsic value, character or immensity of a thing or state itself.
- B. Appreciation is something learned.
 1. Some people are born "appreciators". They see the world at its essence—the beauty of a sunset, the fragile green new leaf, the boundless energy of a small child.
 2. Most must be helped to learn to see the beauty and wonder in the world, creation, of others. I.e. My grandfather taught me much of the appreciation of life. Rabbits, swallows, pheasant feathers. My mom taught me the beauty of shadows, shading, and mixing of color to paint the details of a picture. My dad taught me the beauty of prayer and answered prayer. (He modeled it, he taught it, he led it.)
- C. Another aspect of appreciation is respect toward someone or something valued.
 1. In relationships, this translates as care, concern, affirmation, fair treatment, and courtesy.

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2. All of these bring value to the individual. We are all fearfully and wonderfully made. We are originals and not copies. Originals have much more value.

III. Growing In Appreciation

- A. Appreciation has to do with worth, value, importance, uniqueness. So the question that remains now is: How do I grow my ability to appreciate? Lets start with children and maybe we can learn as I teach you to teach them.
 1. Preschool:
 - a) Discovery. Nature is a major doorway to appreciation. The awesome beauty and power encountered in natural places with natural things inspires a young child's appreciation.
 - (1) The sound of a bird in the tree overhead
 - (2) The rustling grass as the wind passes by
 - (3) A butterfly lighting briefly on a blossom—all are breathlessly beautiful and awe-inspiring
 - (4) Learning is what this is. It is getting understanding and that in turn leads to appreciation. Part of leaning is the desire to explore, to seek, to discover. And gratitude is the ability to recognize the gift and the heart of the giver. If one has not learned the art of looking or exploring or seeking then gift and heart of giver will often be overlooked.
 - b) Care is an important aspect of appreciation. Help your child take care of their things.
 - (1) Teach them to respect their belongings and property of others, to care for others feelings.
 - (2) Demonstrate an attitude of thankfulness for what you have and for your life together. Prayer, celebrations and shared reflection are simple ways to express your gratitude.
 - c) Affection is a powerful way to express appreciation. Hugs, kisses, gentle touches and loving words show your child how much you value him and others. Simple thank-you's given often and sincerely introduce your child to the graciousness of appreciation. There is no more powerful teacher than your own example!
 2. Young school age children.
 - a) They are strongly influenced by those outside the home. They will encounter those who lack appreciation and respect for people and property. You will need to counter this by continuing to deliberately teach and demonstrate appreciation.
 3. Grades 4-6th
 - a) Older school age children can begin to show appreciation in more tangible ways. It is important to foster the development of gratitude in order to keep your youngster's heart open at a time when many around them are "shutting down" in this way.
 - b) A personal journal provides a forum for thoughtful expression.
 - c) Sending thank-you notes is a grownup way to show gratitude.
 - d) Volunteer activities can keep your child's heart open and give them a chance to be a blessing to others.
 - e) Again, your own appreciation and how you show it will be the best teacher for your child. Know that how you view and respond to the world around you and the life you live will be

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- the critical factor in opening your child's heart to appreciation. Your example is the most powerful teacher.
- B. Must take time to reflect, ponder, muse. This is important don't underestimate the power of reflection.
1. *"I remember the days of old. I ponder all your great works and think about (muse) what you have done."* (Psalm 143:5, NLT) Muse: The basic meaning of this verb seems to be "rehearse," or "go over a matter in one's mind." This meditation or contemplation may be done either inwardly or outwardly *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
 2. *"I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways."* (Psalm 119:15, NLT)
 3. *"I stay awake through the night, thinking about your promise."* (Psalm 119:148, NLT)
 4. *"Sing to him; yes, sing his praises. Tell everyone about his wonderful deeds."* (1 Chronicles 16:9, NLT) In Prov 6:22 the son who has bound his father's teaching to his heart will find that the teaching, in turn, will "talk" with him. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
- C. Purpose to add value to other people's lives. Gratitude is a simple way to do that, but it requires you to spot something beautiful about that person, appreciate it and give gratitude to them by acknowledging it. Paul's introductions to his letters almost always do this. He gives thanks to the Lord remembering who they are.
1. When someone doesn't say—"thanks" - you feel hurt, used, ignored, and taken for granted and you wonder why you bothered to do something for the person in the first place.
 2. But when they do express gratitude and you can tell they have thought about it you feel appreciated, valued, happy.
 3. A big man is who makes us feel bigger when we are them.

Conclusion:

To Cultivate a heart of gratitude:

1. Choose to do it.
2. Recognize the gift and the giver of the gift.
3. Appreciate the gift and the giver.
 - Cultivate Awareness-Look around you and take note of what you value. What and who do you appreciate in your life? Write down what you observe (i.e., your spouse, your children, your job, your daily meals, your friends, your country, your car, your home, the customer service you receive, the coffee you drink, etc.).
 - Cultivate Curiosity Learn more about each person or item on your list: How do these people do what they do each day? What contributes to these important things in your life? Ask questions, study, and research. Do whatever you have to do in order to better understand what and whom you treasure.
 - Cultivate Memory: You feel grateful only for what you remember. Practice recalling the most important people and things you care about in your life. Recite them in the morning. Add them to your prayers. Reflect on them each day. Thank them. You feel grateful only for what you remember. Practice recalling the most important people and things you care about in your life. Recite them in the morning. Add them to your prayers. Reflect on them each day. Thank them.
 - Take a moment to activate appreciation in your heart.
 - Think of someone and purpose to add value to their lives today with gratitude.
4. Share the gratitude