

“Pastor Jeff: The Worst of Sinners”

I Timothy 1:12-17
Pastor Jeff Burkholder
November 23, 2008

In order to cultivate a grateful heart, we need to...

1. Remember who we were apart from Christ (verse 13).

“Often my eyes fill with tears at the memories of my foolishness and sin. And in the same instant, my heart will be filled with an unspeakable, holy joy. I am no longer the same! By the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, I’ve been forgiven of the countless sins I’ve committed...Many people today try to run from the past. I suppose I could try to as well, by leaving the hometown that holds so many reminders of my sinfulness. But I consider living here a gift from God. The regular reminders of my past are precious to me.”

C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*,
Multnomah Publishers, Sister, Oregon, 2002 p. 13.

2. Acknowledge our sin (verses 15 and 16).

“‘Total depravity’... means...that sin reaches to every aspect of our personhood. Its damage of us is total. Physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, motivationally, socially, we have been damaged by sin. Its ravages are inescapable and comprehensive. No one has dodged its scourge, and no one has been partially affected. We are all sinners. It reaches to every aspect of what makes us *us*.”

Paul David Tripp *Whiter Than Snow: Meditations on Sin and Mercy*,
Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 2008. pp. 27-28.

“We find this all so hard to accept because we studiously hold onto the possibility that we’re more righteous than the Bible describes us to be. When we look into the mirror of self-appraisal, the person we tend to see is a person who is more righteous than any of us actually is!”

Paul David Tripp *Whiter Than Snow: Meditations on Sin and Mercy*,
Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 2008. p. 28.

“Those who live closest to God are usually the most keenly aware of their own faults.”

Homer A. Kent Jr. *The Pastoral Epistles: Studies in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*,
The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1982 p. 86.

3. Reflect on God’s grace (verse 14).

Grace— blessings we don’t deserve and can never be repaid.

4. Realize God desires to use you despite your past and struggles (verses 12 and 16).

“I’m so grateful to Christ Jesus for making me adequate to do this work. He went out on a limb, you know, in trusting me with this ministry...And now he shows me off—evidence of his endless patience—to those who are right on the edge of trusting him forever.”

1 Timothy 1:12,16 The Message

“If you want God to bless you and use you greatly, you must be willing to walk with a limp the rest of your life, because God uses weak people”

Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, p. 278

Conclusion: As we understand who we are and what Christ has done for us, praise and worship will flow from our hearts (verse 17).

Guide to Cultivating a Grateful Heart

I. Reflect on who you were apart from Christ.

What words describe you before you met Christ?

What words describe the circumstances surrounding your life before Christ?

Describe what you think your life would be like presently without Christ.

II. Reflect on God's Grace.

How has God blessed you in ways you don't deserve and could never repay?

Spiritual Blessings

Relational Blessings

Material Blessings

III. Acknowledge your sin and God's mercy.

Mercy— spared punishment for which we deserve.

What are the sins in your life that God has granted you mercy for?

Think in terms of sins of commission, sins of omission.

Think in terms of words, actions, attitudes, thoughts and idols of your heart.

IV. Reflect on the reality God desires to use you.

Read and meditate on I Corinthians 1:26-2:5.

Based on I Corinthians 1:26-2:5:

1. Who does God choose to be His servants and why?
2. How does this passage apply to you?
3. How does it make you feel that God desires to use you despite your inadequacies and weaknesses?

V. Express your gratitude to God.

Set aside time to praise and worship God in a way that is meaningful for you. Here are a few ideas:

1. Play your favorite worship CD.
2. Go for a walk while listening to worship songs on your iPod.
3. Write a letter to God thanking and praising Him.
4. Go for a walk and as you walk, talk to God—thank Him and praise Him.
5. Read Psalms as expressions of your gratefulness to God.

VI. Interact with someone close to you about your gratitude for God.