

DEVELOPING THANKFULNESS

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INTRODUCTION:

Thankfulness is something we teach our children early on. The basic lesson involves provision. There's another lesson on thankfulness that's necessary to learn that requires discipline and development. This perspective lifts thankfulness from being thankful for what we see to being thankful even though, even if, or even when what we see, isn't something we would normally be thankful for.

PSALMS 23:1-3

These verses focus on being thankful for God's provision.

- A good shepherd's love, care and provision.
- His resources are unlimited.
- I'm content, safe and secure as I dine.
- Waters of trust confidence and peace.
- Anchors my soul and keeps it from wondering.
- Guides me along the right path.

PSALMS 23:4-5

These verses focus on being thankful for God's presence, even when, even if, or even though. This takes thankfulness from what is seen to what is not seen. The focus being on thanking God for His presence while surrounded by the evil works of darkness – confusion, insecurity, sickness, lack, uncertainty, etc.

- **NUMBERS 14:9** Joshua was sitting at the same table that the other spies were sitting at. Instead of seeing giants and fortified walls, he saw bread.
- **2 CORINTHIANS 2:14** "It is well with my soul" even when it seems unfair, when there's no money, when physically challenged, when persecution arises, or an ambush comes.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-30

Jesus perfectly modeled the highest level of thankfulness when He thanked the Father when He was about to sit at the table of persecution and death.

- **HEBREWS 12:2** While seated at the table of the enemy and waiting to be devoured, Jesus thanked the Father. His focus was on the outcome of His efforts. The joy set before Him was the finish line: taking His place at the right hand of God on the empty throne and becoming the High Priest of the New Covenant. Instead of being fixed on the false accusations, suffering and death, He fixed His gaze on complete victory over every work of darkness.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

We all have a choice to make. We can complain about the challenges we will surely face in this life, or we can overcome what we see by looking at the finished work of Christ and thanking God for the victory we have in Him.

CONCLUSION:

Training our hearts to be thankful does many good things. It gives God all the glory. It protects us from letting our lives be defined by what we don't have. It reminds us of our need to stay humble and dependent on God.