Finding the Good: Practicing Gratitude

"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. His love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever.
Give thanks to the Lord of lords. His love endures forever."
Psalm 136:1-2

i thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

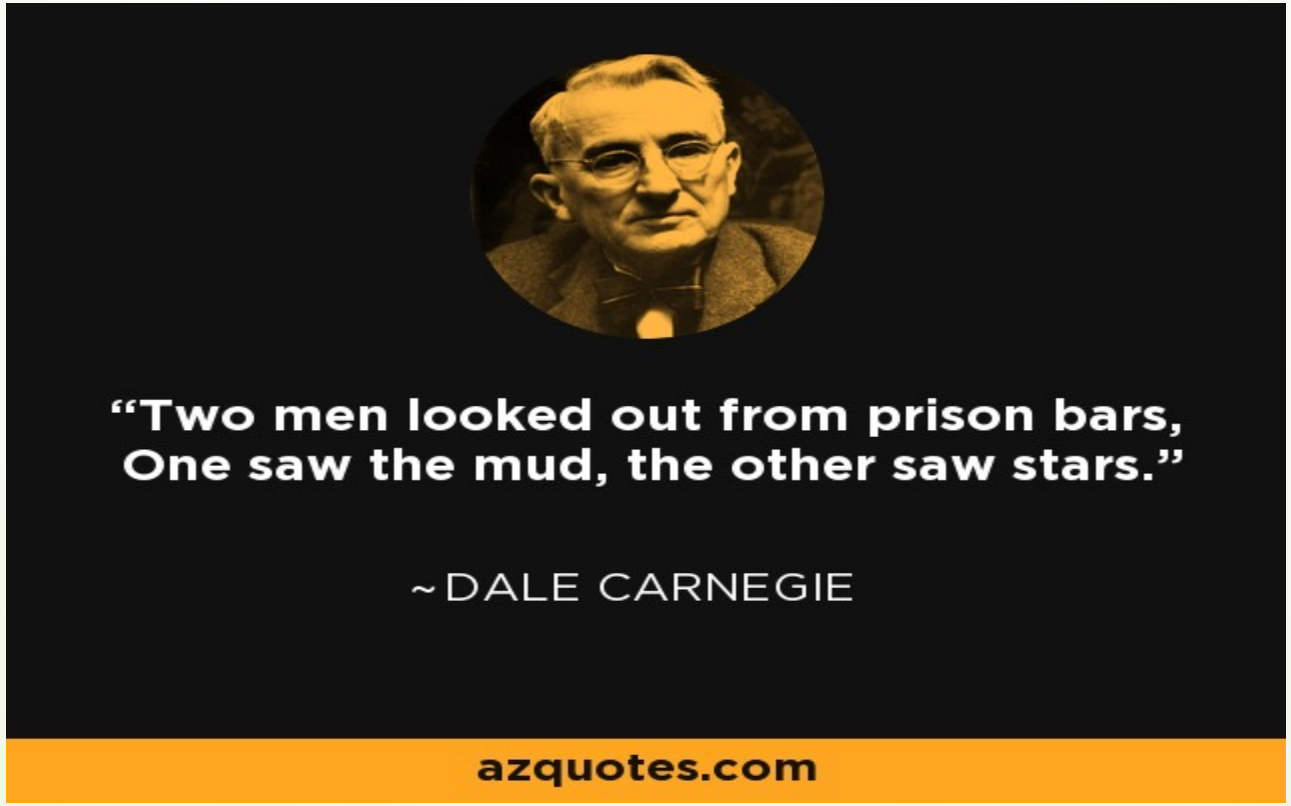
(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

e e cummings

Noticing.
Mindfulness.
The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made them both. Proverbs 20:12



Be joyful always; pray continually; **give thanks in all circumstances**, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Gratitude, thankfulness, or gratefulness, from the Latin word gratus 'pleasing, thankful', is a feeling of appreciation felt by and/or similar positive response shown by the recipient of kindness, gifts, help, favors, or other types of generosity, towards the giver of such gifts.

Thankfulness: Aware and appreciative of a benefit; grateful; conscious of benefit received; well-pleased; glad. From Old English meaning to recompense, reward; related to "loving memory."

Why would it matter to God to see gratitude and thankfulness displayed in our lives?

What kind of person lives a life of gratitude?

What impact does a grateful person have on others?

How does being around a bitter person impact others?

What attitudes work against gratitude? Cultivate gratitude?

Jesus gives thanks to His Father: Occasions and Outcomes

"I **thank you**, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will." Matthew 11:25, Luke 10:21

Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given **thanks**, He distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. John 6: 11

See also Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:32-44, Luke 9:10b-17

"Father, I **thank** you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." John 11:41, 42

…the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given **thanks**, He broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:23, 24

Thanking the LORD

103 [1-2] O my soul, bless GOD.
From head to toe, I'll bless his holy name!
O my soul, bless GOD,
don't forget a single blessing!

[3-5] He forgives your sins—every one.
He heals your diseases—every one.
He redeems you from hell—saves your life!
He crowns you with love and mercy—a paradise crown.
He wraps you in goodness—beauty eternal.
He renews your youth—you're always young in his presence. (*The Message*)

SHARE:

For which of these blessings, these God-given benefits, are you especially thankful today?

If God did not provide these blessings, what would your life be like? What could you do?

How do you usually show gratitude to God?

"I **thank** my God in all my remembrance of you." Philippians 1:3

1 Timothy 2:1: First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and **thanksgivings**, be made on behalf of all men,

Romans 1:8: First, I **thank** my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

1Corinthians 1:4: I **thank** my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus…

1 Thessalonians 3:9: For what **thanks** can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account…

Ephesians 1:16: I do not cease giving **thanks** for you, while making mention of you in my prayers…

2 Timothy 1:3: I **thank** God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day…

Philemon 1:4: I **thank** my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,

Colossians 1:3: I give **thanks** to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you…

1 Thessalonians 1:2: We give **thanks** to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers…

2 Thessalonians 2:13: But we should always give **thanks** to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification…

“I am not **sure** that you are of the same kind. But the realm of silence is large enough beyond the grave. This is the world of light and speech, and **I shall take leave to tell you that you are very dear."** George Eliot

SHARE:

For whom (specific person, or type of person) are you especially thankful now?

How do you typically express gratitude to and for others?

What do others do that lets you know that they are thankful for you?

Why does it matter to show your thanks for others by praying for them? What difference does that make that you pray for them?

What about gratitude in hard times and places?

- In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of our faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and gory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:6- 7
- Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. 1 Peter 4:12-13
- And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 1 Peter 5:10

What do you KNOW to be true that gives you perspective, hope, and even gratitude in hard times?

Cultivating a grateful heart.

- Begin keeping a gratitude journal, noticing and recording the god gifts God has given you. What do you say to God about these things?
- End each day by thanking God for at least one thing. Tell God what it meant to you.
- Write a letter of thanks to someone who has touched your life in the past year, month, or week.
- Get a current hardship firmly in hand. How do you feel about it? Tell God. Where is there evidence of God's presence in this hardship? Is there anything you can be thankful for? If not, spend time with Jesus as He prays in Gethsemane. What does He want you to know?
- What things encourage you to be grateful? Songs? Stories? Certain people? Incorporate these things into your life.
- Abstain from making comparisons with others.
- Have a Thank You party or outing! Invite people you want to honor with a thank you.

Gleaned from "Gratitude," Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*

What do you have that you did not receive?

1 Corinthians 4:7b

Pray.
Share.
Thank.

Thou that hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.

Not thankful, when it pleaseth me;
As if Thy blessings had spare days:
But such a heart, whose pulse may be
Thy praise.

George Herbert, *Gratefulness*

For all that has been, thanks.

For all that will be, yes.

Dag Hammerskjöld, *Markings*