

## Equipped to have an attitude of gratitude

We're all familiar with attitudes, both our own and those of other people. Attitudes involve the way we think about something or someone, as well as the way we feel about them and act towards them. We sometimes allow our attitudes to be shaped by someone else's behaviour. For example, if you think you've been slighted in some way by another person, you might develop a bad attitude in that you start having negative thoughts and feelings towards them. You might even decide to avoid them. But you don't have to respond in that way. It's a very freeing truth to realize that **you can choose** your attitude!

No matter what is going on in our lives, we should always be thankful.<sup>1</sup> This includes the hard times as well as the good times. This doesn't necessarily mean we have to be thankful **for** our difficulties, but it does mean being thankful **in** our difficulties. How, then, can we develop this attitude of gratitude? Here are some suggestions, based on the word **GRATITUDE**.

**G**ive praise to God at all times.<sup>2</sup> This is a great thing to do because it takes your focus away from yourself and places it on him. Despite our changing circumstances, **he** never changes, so we can always praise him for who he is and what he is like.

**R**emember what God has done.<sup>3</sup> Bringing to mind some of the great things God has done in the past should be a stimulus to offer gratitude for what he is doing now and will do in the future.

**A**lways be thankful.<sup>4</sup> This verse is one that links being thankful with God's will for us. Do you want your life to be in line with his will for you? Then, be thankful - always!

**T**rust God completely.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes it is difficult to understand why certain things are going on in our lives. At times like this, it's so easy to doubt God's care for us, yet a doubting heart and mind will find it difficult to have an attitude of gratitude. So, stop doubting and start trusting!

**I**ntentionally choose your attitude.<sup>6</sup> The first time I heard someone say that we can choose our attitude towards people and situations, I wondered why I hadn't heard that said before. There are many things in life that are beyond our control, but this is not one of them. Why not decide today to choose your attitude?

**T**hink before you grumble and complain.<sup>7</sup> If we're not careful, a grumbling and complaining attitude can so easily become the default response to situations that we don't like. Instead, think 'attitude of gratitude'.

**U**nderstand that attitudes are learned.<sup>8</sup> In the same way as contentment is a learned response, gratitude is also. As such, it takes time to develop a consistent attitude of gratitude, so don't be discouraged that it doesn't happen overnight.

**D**evelop friendships with positive, encouraging people.<sup>9</sup> Attitudes can be contagious and, before we know it, we've taken on board the way other people think and feel about a situation. So, it makes sense to surround ourselves with people who show gratitude and who will encourage us to do the same.

**E**njoy God's blessings.<sup>10</sup> There's an old chorus that says, "*Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done*". Why not take time to write down as many blessings as you can think of and then make up your mind to enjoy them? You'll be pleasantly surprised at how helpful this is in promoting an attitude of gratitude!

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 2:6, 7

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 43:1

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 147

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:18

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 3:5

<sup>6</sup> Philippians 2:5

<sup>7</sup> Philippians 2:14

<sup>8</sup> Philippians 4:11b

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews 10:25

<sup>10</sup> John 1:16