

Gratitude:

Being thankful; showing appreciation



The Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that they should, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1Thessalonians 5:16) Christians are to have an ‘attitude of gratitude’ - being thankful and showing appreciation in, as the Bible says, ALL circumstances. Yet, those who profess faith in Christ, are often the loudest complainers - especially in our marriages. Stop and consider for a moment... Do *you* spend more time showing appreciation to and for your spouse? Or do you spend more time bringing up the negative things they do? Or perhaps you are like me; you don’t *say* negative things, you tend show the negativity through body language and gestures. Our negativity is *not* God’s will for our lives!

Brothers and Sisters, it is God’s will that we demonstrate gratitude in *all* circumstances. Yes, if our spouse does something wrong or hurtful, we may need to address that situation, but even then, addressing the situation should be done with an attitude of seeking to help our spouse grow in Christ, rather than just ensuring that they *know* that they have hurt us. Marriage and relationship expert, John Gottman states that healthy marriages require 5 positive interactions for every negative interaction. We don’t have to let busyness or stress or anything else keep us from showing gratitude to our spouse! It is being purposeful about remaining positive every day.

What can *you* do to show more appreciation for your spouse? Look for the good things that they do and then says something! It is having a Philippians 4:8 attitude of thinking about the true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy things, rather than focusing on the negative. Perhaps, you can make the change and be more positive to see how long it takes them to notice. If your spouse doesn’t notice after a day or two, turn it up—get more positive! Being thankful for your spouse and showing him or her your appreciation for who they are and what they do *will* improve your marriage.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

The *Fortified Marriages Manual and Workbook* is a great tool to help couples grow in their marriage relationship. Additional information about gratitude in marriage can be found in the following articles:

How gratitude transforms your marriage by Amy Van Veen - focusonthefamily.ca

Practicing Gratitude in Marriage by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrot - www.symbis.com