

Attitude of Gratitude: Lack of Gratitude by the Exodus Generation, Ex 15:24-26; Lack Evident by the Entitlement Mentality of American Culture; Lack of Gratitude by Nine Lepers; Expression of Gratitude by One, Luke 17:11-19; Expression of Gratitude toward Thessalonian Believers by Paul, 1 Thess 3:7-9; by GDC toward Richard Hays; GDC Memorial Garden & Walk of Honor: Roster

Appreciation Sunday

Attitude of Gratitude

October 18, 2009

Following the Exodus from Egypt, the Jews wandered for forty years in the Sinai Jornada. They were a rebellious, arrogant, and spiritually blind congregation of over two-million people whom the Lord referred to as His “chosen people” (Deuteronomy 7:6). Even though there was no expression of gratitude for what the Lord provided, He kept an unbroken logistical supply line flowing.

Even though the first generation was the recipient of more miracles than any other group in history, they were not impressed because they had an entitlement mentality: always taking, never giving. Nevertheless, the Lord was always faithful in supplying provisions for His priest nation.

With complete divine supply at their disposal, all the Jews had to do in order for the pillars of cloud and fire to blaze a straight wheel-track to Canaan was to develop some gratitude in their souls. They never were willing to do so and as a result the sparse and desolate world of the Jornada was used by the Lord to execute the entire first generation of ungrateful Jews with the exceptions of Caleb and Joshua.

Although the Jews expressed their ingratitude throughout the Jornada experience, the Lord performed a series of miracles on their behalf.

The first test after the Exodus was a three-day period of no water followed by the discovery of bitter water at Marah \mä'-ra (bitterness)\ which they could not drink.

Exodus 15:24 - So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?”

v. 25 - Then he cried out to the Lord and the Lord showed him a tree; and Moses threw it into the waters and the waters became sweet. There the Lord made for them a statute and a regulation and there He tested them.

Exodus 15:26 - And the Lord said, "If you will give earnest heed [exhibit interest] to the voice of the Lord your God [+V toward Bible doctrine], and do what is right in His sight [develop wheel-tracks of righteousness in the norms and standards of the conscience], and give ear to His commandments [orientation and adjustment to the imperative moods], and keep His statutes [develop behavior patterns based on doctrine], I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I the Lord am your healer."

The Jews had witnessed and been the beneficiaries of the miracles of the ten plagues, the inundation of Pharaoh's army, and the provision of sweet water at Marah. Unfailing gratitude for such provisional acts should be forthcoming. It was not.

Instead, the Jews grumble to Moses rather than place their faith in the Lord to provide. They have their eyes on the problems rather than the solutions.

On the other hand, the Lord gives them four conditionals in Exodus 15:26 that if followed would guarantee them good health: (1) positive volition, (2) development of wheel-tracks of righteousness, (3) orientation and adjustment to divine mandates, and (4) development of behavior patterns in compliance with divine directives.

This promise was applicable to the Jewish people throughout the dispensation of Israel, the Incarnation, the early pre-canon years of the Church Age, and explains much of the healing that takes place in the Gospels and the first nine chapters of the Book of Acts. Yet the first generation of post-Exodus Israel all died in the Jornada because of negative volition and an entitlement mentality. The only survivors were Caleb and Joshua.

The first generation's failures continued unabated including the no-water protests at Meribah \mer'-i-ba\, the golden-calf debauchery at Sinai, and the rejection of the minority report by Caleb and Joshua at Kadesh-barnea \kā'-desh-bär'-ne-a\ following the reconnoitering of Canaan by the twelve Israelite spies. These failures among others reflected a lack of confidence in the Word of God and a gross expression of ingratitude for His consistent provisions.

One of the major problems faced by those with an entitlement mentality is their constant effort to avoid testing for the purpose of purification. By demanding that God or others instantly resolve their problems they refuse to confront issues that would result in either salvation or spiritual growth. The desire to avoid testing results in failure to either apply doctrine or take responsibility for their own poor decisions.

Entitlement is defined as "a guarantee of access to benefits because of rights, or by agreement through law. It also refers, in a more casual sense, to someone's belief that he or she is deserving of some particular reward or benefit. It is often used as a negative term in popular parlance (i.e. a sense of entitlement). The legal term, however, carries no value judgment: it simply denotes a right granted. In clinical psychology and psychiatry, an unrealistic, exaggerated, or rigidly held sense of entitlement may be considered a symptom of Narcissistic Personality Disorder."

Signs and Symptoms of Entitlement include:

Teens feel entitled to a new car when they turn 16,

Kids and teens who "must have" the latest fads and fashions,

People entering the workforce feel entitled to start at the top,

Workers who just don't like their jobs feel entitled to quit and collect unemployment,
People who feel they should be given handouts until they find jobs that "suit" them,
Expecting a certain standard of living without work or effort,
Feeling entitled to move back home with parents because being an adult is "too hard,"
Feeling justified in supporting their lifestyle on credit, and expecting parents or others to "help" pay their bills.

Entitlement Mentality Is Wrecking Economy

By Jonathan Hoenig

FROM WELFARE TO food stamps to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, our country now marshals a massive network of trillion-dollar entitlement programs colloquially known as the "social safety net." Many Americans see these bureaucracies as defining achievements of a nation where "nobody is left behind."

Forget the fact that the entitlements, many of which began with the goal of providing "basic minimum benefits" have grown into a gargantuan burden costing over \$1.5 trillion a year and careening toward total collapse. For example, payouts will begin to exceed the revenues into Social Security in just nine years and current estimates have the entire system going belly up in 2041.

The fundamental problem with the social safety net, however, isn't bankrupt economics but bad philosophy.

A government can only provide a safety net insofar as the wealth that net consists of—food, clothing, shelter, medical services—has been created by productive individuals. The freebies government is so eager to expropriate don't grow from the ground, but must be produced by entrepreneurial individuals who create corporations, raise cattle, invest in financial markets, run restaurants, develop pharmaceuticals, and so on. From the creation of kidney dialysis to the transportation of affordable food, it's the reasoning mind that produces the wealth that makes our lives secure, not a bloated government bureaucracy.

As I've written before, it is America's historical commitment to capitalism and individual rights that has differentiated our prosperous economy from the socialist basket cases of North Korea, China and communist Cuba. When economic freedom is protected, societies see vast increases in productivity that result in higher-quality, lower-cost products.

One only need look at the least-regulated sectors of our economy — electronics, computers and food, all of which have declined in price — to see that phenomenon occur

At the heart of the social safety net is the moral belief that the government is responsible for our lives. Under this altruist sensibility, we are duty-bound to serve the needs of others, meaning that anyone needy has an inherent claim on anyone better off. The wealthy aren't merely able to deal charitably with those in need, but are legally obligated to sacrifice their earnings for the benefit of those they might not voluntarily wish to support. Moral bankruptcy eventually leads to financial collapse as well, and the evidence is growing more obvious with each passing day.

It's more than evident that a government "safety net" is anything but safe. Instead of the altruist philosophy that only the needy matter, our country desperately needs to return to the notion of rugged individualism under which we are each responsible for and capable of achieving our own security without the immoral coercion of publicity-seeking politicians. Any alternative leads to dependency, stagnation and economic despair.¹

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The Exodus generation had an entitlement mentality toward God and His grace. Whenever they were without they whined; whenever God provided they never offered their gratitude but assumed they deserved it or He owed them. Those who possess an entitlement mentality never acquire capacity for life.

Therefore, all exigencies in life should be the object of the believer's gratitude. In the Greek New Testament, the word that indicates gratitude is the verb **εὐχαριστέω, eucharisteō**. It can be translated: be thankful, be obligated to thank, to give thanks, to return thanks, to be grateful, or to show gratitude.

These concepts are expressed primarily to God but also to fellow believers and the Bible provides examples of each.

Gratitude is expressed numerous passages of Scripture and we will note a couple of examples.

1. Gratitude is often not expressed by those who should be the first to do so. Arrogance and self-centeredness override good manners and cause appreciation to be ignored because of an entitlement mentality:

Luke 17:11 - Now on the way to Jerusalem Jesus was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.

v. 12 - As He was entering a village, he was met by ten men with leprosy. They stood at a distance,

v. 13 - raised their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

v. 14 - When He saw them He said, Go and show yourselves to the priests. And as they went along they were healed.

Luke 17:15 - Then one of them, when he saw he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice.

v. 16 - He fell prostrate on the ground at Jesus' feet and thanked Him. (Now he was a Samaritan.)

v. 17 - Then Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"

v. 18 - "Was no one found to turn back and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Luke 17:19 - Then He said to the man, "Get up and go your way. Your faith has made you well."

¹ Jonathan Hoenig, "Entitlement mentality Is Wrecking Economy," March 31, 2009, <http://www.smartmoney.com/investing/stocks/entitlement-mentality-is-wrecking-economy-22799/#>

- 1) The “foreigner” is identified in context by Luke’s parenthetical in verse 16, (“Now he was a Samaritan.”). Samaritans were a people of mixed origin composed of Samaritan Jews and Assyrian colonists who migrated following the conquering of Israel by Sargon II in 721 B.C.
 - 2) The implication is that the other nine men were Jews, those who should have perceived Jesus as Messiah but were more interested in improving their temporal health than giving consideration to the perfection of eternal life.
 - 3) The Samaritan was appreciative for both temporal and eternal healing. The Jews were more interested in being healed and fed temporally with no thought of the eternal state. The entitlement mentality is one of extreme self-centeredness.
 - 4) As mentioned earlier this is indicative of a “narcissistic personality disorder,” defined by the Mayo Clinic as, “a mental disorder in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance and a deep need for admiration. They believe that they’re superior to others and have little regard for other people’s feelings. But behind this mask of ultra-confidence lies a fragile self-esteem, vulnerable to the slightest criticism.”
 - 5) Such individuals do not have the concept of cause and effect regarding those things they expect to be provided for them.
 - 6) The cause is assistance from the Lord by means of His grace and mercy; the effect is healing but with a purpose: to demonstrate that He was the Messiah who had the power to not only heal the sick but also the client nation.
 - 7) The one who showed gratitude was a man who was despised by the Jews. Verse 16 says he thanked Jesus: *eucharisteō*. In fact he exhibited three categories of grace orientation: (1) he verbally praised God, a form of thanksgiving (v. 15), (2) he prostrated himself before the Lord, a demonstration of genuine humility and authority orientation, and (3) he thanked Him, an expression of an attitude of gratitude (v. 16).
2. The next example is taken from 1 Thessalonians. In this Epistle we find a conflict between Jews who lived in Thessalonica and new converts to whom Paul had spent time grounding them in the doctrines of Christianity. Paul and his missionary team of Timothy and Silas were opposed by these Jews and the three evangelists were forced to relocate to Berea (Acts 17:1-10).

The team found a more receptive audience in Berea but once the Jews in Thessalonica learned of their successes there, they went to Berea and caused such an uproar that it was decided by the team that Paul should travel to Athens. Because of these two events, Paul became concerned that the believers in Thessalonica may have regressed spiritually.

To learn the status at the church in Thessalonica, Paul sent for Timothy and Silas to join him in Athens. There they discussed the situation and Paul decided to send Timothy back to Thessalonica to get a situation report. After gathering information, Timothy then went back south to join Paul and Silas at Corinth. There Timothy reports in with good news, the result of which elicited thanksgiving from Paul and the inspiration to write 1 Thessalonians.

What we learn from this passage is that believers who have a grace mental attitude have a desire for fellow believers to advance spiritually, remain positive, and stand fast in the face of opposition.

1 Thessalonians 3:7 - So in all our distress and affliction, we were reassured about you, fellow believers, through your faith [use of the faith-rest drill].

1 Thessalonians 3:8 - For now we are alive again [an idiom for enthusiasm over Timothy's good report and the Thessalonians' steadfastness], if you stand fast [στήκω, *stēkō*: stability under the pressure by the Jews to renounce Christ and doctrine] in the Lord.

v. 9 - For how can we thank [εὐχαριστία, *eucharistia*] God enough for you, for all the joy [χαρά, *chara*: inner happiness] with which we rejoice [χαίρω, *chairō*: the expression of inner happiness] because of you before our God?

When we receive blessings from God we should show the same gratitude as the Samaritan who praised God and gave thanks to Christ through whom the miracle was performed on his behalf.

When we receive blessings from others, which include various and sundried forms of expression, we should be as Paul and express our thanksgivings to God for them and pray for their continued ability through the power of the Holy Spirit to be sustained in their advance in the midst of the cosmic conflict.

The attitude of gratitude develops under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. As the believer grows in grace his capacity for gratitude increases accordingly.

The purpose of gratitude is to establish a relationship with God that advances to spiritual rapport with Him. There is no way to have a meaningful rapport with people until you have developed rapport with God.

Thanksgiving directed toward God allows us to appreciate the divine good that is exhibited by fellow believers on our behalf.

If someone comes to your aid in time of need then that act of divine good is accomplished for your benefit by means of their capacity to execute the plan of God. To have the capacity to assist others is to have gratitude toward God for making it possible to a conduit for divine provision.

Therefore, if you are the recipient of another person's grace efforts then your first inclination should be to express gratitude toward God. The individual involved was designated by divine decree to assist you. Then where possible and appropriate, convey personal thanks to that person.

Thanksgiving is the modus operandi of the believer who has developed capacity for life and possesses an attitude of gratitude.

Today we at Grace Doctrine Church express our gratitude to a man who, along with many others, played a critical role in our church's purchase of this property and the construction of this building. When we first began to investigate the idea of building a church, one of our Doritos, Richard Hays of Knoxville, Tennessee, volunteered his architectural talents. Once we got to where we could proceed with construction, Richard drew up the blueprints that culminated in this place of worship.

We were able to take occupancy of this church free of debt in no small part due to Richard's grace. Without the obligation to pay the going rate for architectural assistance we were able to save around 150-thousand dollars in expense.

Another thing that also enabled us to avoid borrowing money was to delay the construction of the Grace Doctrine Church Walk of Honor, a garden and walkway in front of the church that would express gratitude to all the members of this local church who have served in the armed forces of our country. Richard, you designed this tribute for us and I am happy to report that it is now completed.

We extend to you our gratitude for the most valuable contributions that you made to this church is bringing the dream of Our Own Place to reality. Your efforts were essential to its completion and your grace made it possible for us to have a beautiful place to worship our Lord. First of all, we want to make you an honorary member of the local congregation of Grace Doctrine Church, and consequently, the placement of a dedicatory paver in our new Walk of Honor in recognition of your _____ years of service in the United States Coast Guard.

We will dismiss after closing prayer and ask that everyone gather under the porte cochere where we will have a special ceremony officially opening our Walk of Honor, the placement of Richard's paver under the Coast Guard emblem, and the lowering and presentation of the Coast Guard flag to Richard.

The Grace Doctrine Church Memorial Garden and Walk of Honor

U.S. Air Force (18)

Mark Allen (USAF)
Daniel C. Clayton (USAF)
Richard C. Clayton (USAF)
Skip Collins (USAF)
Deborah J. Danyluk (USAF)
Lee J. Hatfield (USAF)
Jay A. Humphrey (USAF)
Harold E. Keistler (USAF)
Thomas P. Moore (USAF)
Ericka Oxford (USAF)
Lloyd Oxford (USAF)
Everett Probasco (USAF)
Michael T. Probasco (USAF)
Ella Ray, (USAF)
Robert B. Thieme, Jr. (USAF)
Melvin L. Turner (USAF)
Daniel R. Van Hoose (USAF)
Vernon E. Waymire, Jr. (USAF)

U.S. Marine Corps (6)

John G. Brunner (USMC)
Brian R. Buxton (USMC)
Christopher E. Hunt (USMC)
Doris T. Hunt (USMC)
Gary Lowery (USMC)
Peter B. Todsens II (USMC)

U.S. Navy (10)

Robert K. Brodin (USN)
John W. Brunner (USN)
Robert W. Hall, Jr. (USN)
Michael V. Modeer (USN)
Victor A. Modeer, Jr. (USNR)
Spencer Risty (USN)
Tyler M. Risty (USN)
Harry F. Tague (USN)
Gary D. Watson (USN)
Michael P. Weber (USN)

U.S. Army (18)

Bernell F. Bircher (USANG)
Mark J. Davey (USA)
Daniel E. Hunt (USA)
James C. Hunt (USA)
Matthew T. Hunt (USAR)
Otis L. Johnson, Jr. (USA)
Ryan L. Johnson (USANG)
Matthew C. Lawson (USAR)
Eric R. Olsen (USA)
Alan S. Rawlins (USA)
A. Weldon Schott (USA)
Paul F. Seals (USA)
Brett M. Turner (USA)
Mark Vesser (USA)
Rickey L. Voyles (USA)
Matthew Wojciechowski (USA)
Thomas Wojciechowski (USA)
Gary E. Yess (USA)

U.S. Coast Guard (1)

Richard S. Hays (USCGR)