

THE BIBLE VIEW

In This Issue:

[*A Grateful Whale*](#)

[*Never Satisfied*](#)

[*Grateful for What She Had*](#)

[*Some Murmur, Some Are Thankful*](#)

[*Unsubscribe*](#)

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A Grateful Whale

Bill Brinkworth

A 45 - 50 foot humpback whale was rescued off the coast of San Francisco. The whale had become entangled with ropes, crab traps, and weights. The animal was so weighted down that he could hardly surface to get air. A rescue team was summoned to attempt to free the 50-ton behemoth.

Divers went into the water and discovered that at least 20 crab-pot ropes, each being about 240 feet long, and their weights were tightly wrapped around the whale. The humpback's tail was encircled four times by ropes. Twelve crab traps, each weighing 90 pounds, hung off the whale.

Soon four divers were in the water cutting off the entanglements with curved knives. The whale quietly waited and allowed the rescuers to free him. The diver who cut the rope from the creature's mouth remarked that the whale winked at him as he did his work.

After realizing he was free, the animal swam to each diver and nuzzled him. It was as if the animal was showing a thank you to each one that had had a part in his new freedom. He certainly was appreciative to those that worked to free him.

Is it possible that that whale had more manners and appreciative courtesy than most people do? There are too many husbands that rarely thank their wives for all the important things they do to make their lives easier. Too many children never even think of thanking their father for working diligently each day to provide for their upkeep, nor do they even consider thanking their mother for her sacrificial efforts to provide a good home for them. Countless bosses are the topic of criticism and gossip, but are hardly ever thanked for providing a job for their employees. Teachers put in long hours in going the extra mile to grade papers and spend much of their time helping those that do not want to be helped and never hear any form of appreciation. Police put in long days trying to protect residents they do not even know; and face ridicule and threats from many that are breaking laws, but rarely do they ever receive any gratitude. The Lord, who gives us far more than just our "daily bread", is also rarely thanked for all He does in our lives.

Many make our lives much more pleasant and safe. We owe them for their work and effort. It takes no intelligence or character to ridicule, judge, or criticize others. It does take an appreciative, grateful spirit to realize what we have and to thank others for their part in our lives. As the whale "thanked" his rescuers, there are many of us that need to do the same to those that have helped us.

“If gratitude is due from children to their earthly parents, how much more is the gratitude of Christians due to their Father in heaven?” — Hosea Ballou

Never Satisfied

Bill Brinkworth

The people of Israel cried out because of their long bondage in the hands of the merciless Egyptians, and God delivered them. As God physically led them to a place He would give them to live, they still were not content with seeing the presence of the Almighty and His mighty deeds. They began to murmur and complain again. God was angered and sent a fire that consumed many (*Numbers 11:1-2*), because of their sin. Many died until the man of God pleaded for God to stop His judgment.

Did they learn their lesson? Two verses later, they let the sin of discontentment again get control. They talked of all the good things they had in Egypt. They licked their lips over the thoughts of the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic they had in Egypt. They just were not happy with what God had given them.

It is not mentioned that they remembered the bad things in the land. It is not mentioned that they recalled their slavery, lack of religious freedom, lack of freedom to do what they wished, pain, misery, and suffering. All they could do was remember the “good times.”

Sound familiar? Many get their lives changed when they get born-again. God cleaned up many a dirty, ruined life. Drunks and wife-beaters have been changed to wonderful, respectable, sober, non-violent husbands. Liars and cheats have their lives completely changed, and their lives become lives of honesty. Their character becomes forthright and outstanding. Criminal lives become lives of outstanding citizenship. All lives become changed when they are saved and are obedient to God’s commandments. They may not be perfect, but they are not the same lives they were before they were saved. They have so much to be content with, but then discontentment rears its ugly head. Complaining and dissatisfaction creep into their conversation. Soon, they are no different from the children of Israel. They begin to lust for the “good ole days.”

Let the truth be known! There were very few “good ole days” before we were saved. They were days that sowed sin; whose consequences you may be still reaping to this day. They were days of committing sin that scarred your life and hurt others around you. It is amazing how a mind can change the memory of a perilous past into something that seems far better than it was. We do exactly what the people of Israel did.

To avoid non-productive murmuring and discouraging complaining, here are some biblical truths that can help you avoid the downward spiral of discontentment:

- Remember that we are naturally never satisfied. We always want more! We have to get control of what the flesh desires and let the spirit of God do the guiding.
*“Hell and destruction are never full; so **the eyes of man are never satisfied.**” Proverb 27:20*
- Let your thought-life and conversation never be about things you do not have or should not have. Thinking and talking about them then leads to the desire for the real things.
***“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”** Hebrews 13:5*

- Realize that the world and God owe you nothing. Nothing this world has to offer is permanent anyway! Even that big house you have is only a pup-tent, because, pilgrim, you are only passing through this life.
*“But **godliness with contentment is great gain.** For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” 1 Timothy 6:6-7*
- Be happy with what you have, or what you are going through. No matter where you find yourself, be content.
*“ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in **whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.** I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Philipians 4:11-12*

Anyone can complain. It takes no intelligence or character to do so, but there never is any gain in doing so. Grumbling also will never make one happy or change any situation. It will always make situations worse! However, being content and finding peace in any situation will help you find yourself happy with what you have and will guarantee a happier, more contented person.

“A man’s contentment is in his mind, not in the extent of his possessions.”
 — Spurgeon

Grateful for What She Had

Wermullerus, 1551

A dear little girl had been taught to pray specially for her father. He had been suddenly taken away in death. Kneeling at her evening prayer, her voice faltered; and as her eyes met her mother’s, she sobbed, “O mother! I cannot leave father out of my daily prayers. Let me say, thank God that I had a dear father once, so I can keep him in my prayers.” Many stricken hearts may learn a sweet lesson from this child. Let us remember to thank God for mercies and blessings past, as well as to ask for mercies and blessings for the future.

“If you want to live more you must master the art of appreciating the little, everyday blessings of life. This is not altogether a golden world, but there are countless gleams of gold to be discovered in it if we give our minds to them.”

-Porter

Some Murmur, Some Are Thankful

Trench, 1881

Some murmur when their sky is clear
 And wholly brought to view,
 If one small speck of dark appear
 In their great heaven of blue;
 And some with thankful love are filled
 If but one streak of light,
 One ray of God’s good mercy, gild
 The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task
And all good things denied?
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How Love has been their aid
(Love that never seems to tire)
Such rich provision made.

“The very word ‘murmur’, how simple it is, made up to two infantile sounds — ‘mur mur’. There is no sense in it, no wit in it, and no thought in it. It is the cry rather of a brute, than of a man. ‘Murmur’ is just a double groan.” — Spurgeon