

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Gratitude

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Do You Appreciate What You Have Before It's Gone?

Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Michael Green

There is a fictitious story about a day when the sun did not rise. Six o'clock came, and there was no sign of dawn. At seven o'clock, there was still no ray of light. At noon, it was as black as midnight. No birds sang, and only the hoot of an owl broke the silence. Then came the long black hours of the afternoon.

Finally, evening arrived, but no one slept that night. Some wept; some wrung their hands in anguish. Every church was thronged with people on their knees. Thus they remained the whole night through.

After that long night of terror and agony, millions of eager, tear-streaked faces were turned toward the East. When the sky began to grow red, and the sun rose, there was a

loud shout of joy. Millions of lips said, “Bless the Lord, O my soul,” because the sun had risen after one day of darkness.

The very consistency of God’s blessings sometimes seems to dull our gratitude. The wonderful thing about the mercies of God is that they are fresh every morning and new every evening. Let us remember to be constantly thankful to our gracious God.

“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

Always Green

Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Michael Green

An evergreen is always green despite the changes in weather around it. It is green in the heat of summer and the cold of winter.

So also our lives are to be characterized by an enduring thankfulness that is unaffected by the changes around us. When the heat of a pressured week or the deadly cold of pain strikes us, we should stand “ever green,” continually thankful, regardless of what surrounds us.

“A little boy was asked by his father to say grace at the table. While the rest of the family waited, the little fellow eyed every dish of food his mother had prepared. After the examination, he bowed his head and honestly prayed, ‘Lord, I don’t like the looks of it, but I thank you for it, and I’ll eat it anyway. Amen.’”

— Green

In Everything, Give Thanks

Author Unknown

‘Mid sunshine, cloud or stormy days,
When hope abounds or care dismays,
When trials press and toils increase
Let not thy faith in God decrease
“In everything give thanks.”

All things we know shall work for good,
Nor would we change them if we could;
‘Tis well if only He command;
His promises will ever stand
“In everything, give thanks.”

He satisfies the longing heart,
He thwarts the tempter’s cruel dart,
With goodness fills the hungry soul,
And helps us sing when billows roll.
“In everything, give thanks.”

“Be thankful you’re still above ground.”

The Blessing in Being Robbed

Matthew Henry

After being robbed, Bible commentator Matthew Henry, wrote in his diary, “Let me be thankful. First, because I was never robbed before. Second, because although they took my wallet, they did not take my life. Third, because they took my all, it was not much. Fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”

Thankful for the Fleas

Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Michael Green

“Rejoice evermore.” I Thessalonians 5:16

In The Hiding Place, Corrie ten Boom related an incident that taught her always to be thankful. She and her sister, Betsy, had just been transferred to the worst German prison camp they had been to, Ravensbruck. On entering the barracks, they found them extremely over-crowded and flea-infested.

That morning, their Scripture reading in I Thessalonians reminded them always to rejoice, pray, and give thanks for all circumstances. Betsy told Corrie to stop and thank the Lord for every detail of their new living quarters.

Corrie, at first, flatly refused to give thanks for the fleas. Still, Betsy persisted, and Corrie finally succumbed to her pleadings.

During the months spent at that camp, they were surprised to find how openly they could hold Bible study and prayer meetings without the guard's interference. It was not until several months later that they learned the guards would not enter the barracks because of the fleas.

Memorial of Gratitude

Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Michael Green

A very poor and aged man busied in planting and grafting an apple tree was rudely interrupted by this interrogation, "Why do you plant trees? You cannot hope to eat the fruit of them?"

He raised himself and leaning upon his spade replied, "Someone planted trees for me before I was born, and I have eaten the fruit. I now plant for others that the memorial of my gratitude may exist when I am dead and gone."

Count It All Joy

Barbara Brinkworth

As a new Christian, over 40 years ago, a close friend encouraged me to read the Bible daily. Of course, there were many things I did not understand.

As I read the Bible through each year, the stories in God's Word became more familiar. I looked forward to my time in the Scriptures.

Four or five years later, there was still one verse that made no sense to me. It was James 1:2, "My brethren,

count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations;” How could one thank God for problems?

I had been through many tests and trials since I had trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. During those times, there had not been a lot of joy going on. I had to move from West Virginia to New Jersey to care for my ailing parents. My younger brother died at 36, and ten days later, my mother died. Within two more years, my dad died — unsaved. That was very hard to accept. Also, my oldest daughter was involved in a very serious motorcycle accident. Whew! Was I joyful during all these events? I think not.

Since God’s Word is true, what had I missed about James 1:2? How could I accept and understand that verse? God had the answer, and he gave it to me as a present on my forty-second birthday. Here is how it happened:

I was at a Bible seminar with two friends, who were also sisters. At some point, the speaker discussed James 1:2. As always, I had listened in vain, hoping to apply that verse to my own life. During the next break, I spoke to my friends about their mother, Dot. She had been through many trials recently, including the death of her husband and some serious physical problems of her own. She was discouraged, to say the least. Suddenly I found myself saying, “Wouldn’t you think Dot would see God’s hand working through her problems? Wouldn’t you think she would know God cares and count it all...?” I stopped mid-sentence. That was my answer to the meaning of James

1:2. It was not that I should be joyful for the trials, but rather joyful about the God of the trials.

Through the testings and temptations God brings into our lives, He teaches us how to live and serve Him better. He also reveals more about Himself to us in each diverse situation. As we see Him work through our trials, we are more assured of His love and care. We learn more about His character. Our faith is strengthened as we see God working on our behalf in ways only He could accomplish.

Now, James 1:2 is part of my own personal arsenal to keep discouragement at bay. During times of diverse temptations, I can better trust God and count it all joy. I wait and see how He will use the trials in my life for my ultimate good and His eternal glory.

“The brook would lose its song if we removed the rocks.” — *Author Unknown*

Never Happy

Stennett.

The discontented man is ever restless and uneasy. He is dissatisfied with his station in life, his connections, and almost every circumstance that happens to him. He is continually peevish and fretful, impatient of every injury he receives, and unduly impressed with every disappointment he suffers.

He considers most other persons happier than himself and enjoys hardly any of the blessings of Providence with a calm

and grateful mind. He forms a thousand distressing fears concerning the future and makes his present condition unhappy by anticipating the misery he may endure in years to come.

“Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.” *Proverb 27:20*