

11/01/08

Proverbs 13:3 **GUARD YOUR MOUTH TO GUARD YOUR LIFE**

The most important thing we can do for God in this life is learn to guard our mouth. Why is this so important? Because according to the God's Word, EVERYTHING in this life revolves around what we say. So if you guard your mouth, you're guarding your life at the same time. Proverbs 18:21 says that death and life is in the power of the tongue. Proverbs 4:20-22 says we're to give attention to God's Word because they're life to those who find them, and health and healing to all their flesh. How do you give attention to God's Word? By putting it into your heart, and speaking it out of your mouth. Into the heart, then out the mouth. It's not complicated, but something very few believers actually do.

If you want your life guarded from the enemy and his evil designs against you, make sure you have control of your tongue. Make sure your words are only words that repeat what God has already said, or words that agree with what God has already said. By doing that, you're not only guarding your mouth, but your life at the same time. Always remember this: **THE BIBLE IS A BOOK OF WORDS ABOUT WORDS**. Right from the beginning, in Genesis 1, we see that everything God creates is done by speaking words of faith. And, since we're made in His image and likeness, we're designed to operate the very same way. Your words have the God-given ability to create! That's why you have to watch what you're saying, because if you don't do that, your words will actually become ammunition the devil uses against you. So do what you must to objectively analyze what's coming out of your mouth. If it's not something that gives God something to work with, **CHANGE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!** Guard your mouth to guard your life!

11/02/08

Matthew 6:31 **DON'T USE YOUR MOUTH TO WORRY WITH!**

In today's verse, Jesus gives us a golden nugget of truth never to forget. He said in essence: Don't use your mouth to express worry, about anything! Yesterday we saw from Proverbs the importance of guarding your mouth to guard your life. Today, we see the same truth revealed from a different angle. If you want to guard yourself from the sin of worrying (and to worry over things IS a sin as far as God is concerned), you must make sure you're not expressing your worries with words. Notice how Jesus taught the truth. He said: "Therefore do not worry, SAYING..." Notice carefully. Don't SAY anything that amplifies your worries. Don't SAY anything that fuels your fears. You have to guard your mind, and then guard your mouth. I like the way the older King James translation renders this passage. From that translation, it says "Take no thought, saying..." How do you take a thought the devil tries to plant in your mind? By saying something out of your mouth that opens the door to him.

How do you "take a thought"? By saying something that agrees with the thought. This is what the devil tries to do to sow worry into your heart and mind. He introduces thoughts that, if accepted, will open the door to him and allow him to create a stronghold in your mind and body. This is what worry will do against you. So, don't worry! How do you fight the temptation to worry? By keeping your mind renewed to the Word of God, and not allowing your mouth to utter anything that disagrees with God's Word. Your mouth is the key here. When you're tempted to worry, about anything, guard your mouth with extra diligence and vigilance. Make sure you're not "taking" the devil's thoughts by saying words out of your mouth which reinforce the lies he is trying to plant in your mind. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. How? By using your mouth ONLY for the purpose of saying things that honor God and protect His ability to work in you and for you. So don't use your mouth to worry with! Listen to what you're saying, and if what you're saying agrees with the worries trying to gain a foothold in your life, **CHANGE** what you're saying!

11/03/08

Matthew 11:3 DOUBTS COME TO US ALL

No matter how strong you are in faith, doubts will always come around to test you and tempt you. This is to be expected. As long as the devil is around, he'll continue to try and plant doubts in your mind about God's faithfulness in your life. In our passage today, we see John the Baptist struggling with doubts about who Jesus is. And remember, it was John who boldly announced that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. When Jesus came to be water-baptized, John told the whole crowd that this man was in fact the Lamb of God, sent to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29-36). So what happened after that? Doubts came in. And they were so persistent and strong, that John finally had to send a few of his disciples to ask Jesus if He was indeed their Messiah. The question was: "Are you the One, or should we be looking for someone else?" So if a man like John the Baptist had struggles with doubts about who Jesus was, and is, then don't feel so surprised when doubts come to you in the same way! Just understand where the doubts are coming from, and who is sending to you, and why. Satan's most productive method to destroy our faith in God is by successfully planting doubts in our minds about God's Word, and God's faithfulness. Therefore, learn to recognize those doubts when they come, and resist them in Jesus' Name.

It doesn't matter if you're the greatest man or woman of faith that there is. Doubts will come against you, because the devil is still here, and "doubt" is his middle name. How was he able to successfully tempt Eve in the Garden of Eden? He introduced doubt into her mind about what God had said to her. Once the doubt had been accepted by the woman, the deception was well on its way towards sin. And that's the way he will work against you too. Once you accept and entertain his doubts in your mind, it's just a short step from there to sin. The sin of doubt leads to other sins after that. So the moment you realize that doubt has come against you, raise up a standard in your life by resisting those thoughts with the spoken Word of God. Do what Jesus did when He was tempted. Three times the devil tried to introduce doubt to Jesus by using the word "if". "IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD..." What's the devil trying to do? Get Jesus to doubt God and His Word. And that's the same thing he'll try to do against you. So when (not if) the doubts come, rebuke them by speaking the Word of God to the thoughts trying to gain a stronghold in your mind. You can't stop the doubts from coming, but you can keep them out of your mind. As one preacher once said, "You can't stop the birds from flying above your head, but you can prevent them from building a nest in your hair!"

11/04/08

Joshua 14:11 BE STRONG FOR WAR!

When Caleb made this statement to Joshua, he was 85 years old. Most people would say that a man who is 85 years old is an old man, but this man was different. This man was as strong at 85 as he was when he was 40! What for? For war! What a great example to look up to. The reason he worked at staying young at heart, physically fit and ready for battle, was because he knew he was at war. And for us today, the situation has not changed. We're still at war, and our enemy is the same one he had to contend with back then. Oh yes, there were the giants in the promised land, they were the ones he had to physically go out and defeat on the battlefield. But behind the scenes, in the unseen realm, his enemies were the same as ours, the devil and his demon forces. And to defeat them today, and everyday, you're going to have to get strong, and stay strong! It's that simple.

Caleb is such a hero to me because not only was he radical, fanatical, passionate and strong, he was also a man of war. And even more than that, he REMAINED a man of war as he grew older physically. He didn't allow himself to get old, worn out and sickly. He stayed sharp. He told Joshua his strength was equal to the level of strength he had when he was 40, which was 45 years before! Imagine that! No wonder God said this man had "another spirit" about him (Numbers 14:24). How about you?

Could God describe you like He described Caleb? It should be a goal you set for yourself. No, you won't get there overnight, but you can get there. It is possible. The Holy Spirit is living within you, and right there, you have the ability to be a man or woman like Caleb. Passionate, strong and DANGEROUS! You know that when those giants saw Caleb charging up the mountain to attack, they were shaking and quaking in fear. Well, when you put on your spiritual armor and confront the devil, is he shaking and quaking in fear over the prospect of facing you? He should be, but unfortunately, in too many cases, the enemy just laughs when we say we're coming against him. Why? Because we're not ready, we're not strong, and we're nowhere near the kind of fighting condition needed to engage the enemy successfully. But you can change that. Its all up to you. You can be a modern-day Caleb, if you want it badly enough. Start today!

11/05/08

Joshua 14:8 **NEVER FIND WHAT THE PEOPLE SAY!**

When you decide to be like Caleb, a man or woman of war, you're going to encounter multitudes of Christians who will try and talk you out of your decision. The devil will use them to try and discourage you from trusting God and believing for the miraculous. This is what was going on back in Caleb's time, when he and Joshua were giving Moses and the people their intelligence report about what they saw in the promised land. There were 12 spies who went over to spy out the land, but only 2 gave a good report of faith. 10 gave an evil report of doubt and unbelief. And in today's verse, Caleb reminds Joshua about that many years later, as Joshua is going about the task of dividing up the promised land for the Jews to live in. Caleb says that even though he was surrounded by people who, with their words of fear and doubt, made the hearts of the people melt, he **WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD**. And today it will be no different for you if you decide to be a Caleb for God.

Why will it be no different? Because you're still facing the same enemy he faced, the devil. His tactics have never changed from then until now. He still works to use ignorant, faithless, confused, shallow, weak and double-minded Christians to do his dirty work, namely, to discourage the minority of us out there who have actually committed ourselves to doing something of significance for God in this life. So when you come along and demonstrate the kind of wild, passionate faith that Caleb had, expect the weaklings to come out of the woodwork, trying to discourage you from trusting God and believing for the impossible. Trust me when I tell you, they're **EVERYWHERE**, and you'll meet them quickly the moment you decide to move from being just average or mediocre to something significant for the body of Christ. When they surround you with their words of doubt, unbelief and caution, do what Caleb did. **CHOOSE** to completely and without reservation, follow the Lord. That's what Caleb meant when he said he **WHOLLY** followed the Lord in spite of all the doubt and unbelief around him. We must do the same today.

11/06/08

Joshua 14:10 **STILL GOING AND GOING AND GOING!**

For awhile now, there has been a certain TV commercial advertising Energizer batteries. It features a small bunny rabbit with a drum, beating the drum as he encounters situations where others are quitting, giving up and throwing in the towel for exhaustion. The tag line talks about the fact that when using these batteries, you can just keep going and going and going! Well, that's a perfect description of Caleb here in today's verse. God gave him a promise at the age of 40. And at the age of 85, he could still recite and quote the promises, word for word, to Joshua. He was not an old, feeble, worn-out decrepit old man. He was strong and "full of beans" as we say. In other words, as he got older, he didn't get older, he got wiser and stronger. What an example for us today.

Caleb said that God had **KEPT HIM ALIVE** all those years between 40 and 85. Why? Because God knew He had made a promise, and when God makes a promise, He **WILL** honor his promise no matter what. As long as the one He promises to is in faith and fully trusting God, God will move heaven and earth to fulfill promises made, even if it means supernaturally keeping someone alive in the desert for more than 40 years. And if you show God you have that same kind of spiritual tenacity, He'll do for you exactly what He did for Caleb. He'll protect you, empower you, strengthen you, prolong your days, and **KEEP YOU ALIVE** until the promise has come to pass! If God did it for Caleb, He'll do it for anyone who stands their ground in faith because He is no respecter of persons. He plays no favorites when it comes to this sort of thing. Caleb, year after year out in the desert, just kept going and going and going. Just like the Energizer bunny, he stay sharp, strong and alert, while watching all the unbelieving Jews die off one by one in the wilderness. God will strengthen you to do the same, keep going and going and going, surrounded by doubt, unbelief and fear. All He needs is your faith, and complete trust in His faithfulness. If he has that from you, that's all He needs. So don't be like the multitudes of Christians who faint and wilt in the wilderness of life. Be like Caleb, and just keep going and going and going, in God's power and might. Your faith will see you through to victory!"

11/07/08

John 1:50

WHAT DO PEOPLE SEE IN YOU?

What do people see when they see you? I mean, when they see you do they see the work of God in manifestation? Do they see the Holy Spirit at work in your life? Do they see the power of God flowing in and through you? Christians, like most everybody else in the Western world, take a lot of time at the start of each day to dress up, put on make-up, and do all the other things we do to make ourselves "look" right in our own eyes, and in the eyes of others. But what about the real you, the spirit man inside? Are you paying as much attention to how he looks, to yourself and to others, and especially, to God?

Jesus, in our verse today, told His disciples that if they continued to hang around with Him, they would **SEE** greater things. That's the way it should be with all of us if we call ourselves Christian. It's God at work in us and through us that people should be able to see. Is this the way it is for you? When people see you, do they see Jesus in you? That's what our Lord told His disciples just before His arrest, crucifixion and resurrection. He told Philip that when they were looking at Him, they were looking at God the Father (John 14:9). Does that mean God the Father and Jesus are one Being, or one Person? **NO!** Some would say that, but that's not at all what is being said here. Jesus is simply telling Philip, and us, that God is so at work in Him, and so dominates everything Jesus says and does, that to look at Him is to look at a mirrored reflection of God Himself. So, when people see you, do they see Jesus in you? Can you say, like Jesus did, he that sees you sees Him? If you're like most believers, probably not! Well, you can't change the past, but you can do something about the future. As time goes by, will people see greater works of God in you and through you? Only you can determine whether they will or won't.

11/08/08

Matthew 5:36

IGNORE WHAT PEOPLE SAY TO YOU!

Today's verse is a great reminder to **ALWAYS** take God at His Word, and **NEVER** listen to what the people have to say about it! When servants from Jairus' house came to inform him that it was too late and his little girl had already died, this verse says that Jesus **IGNORED WHAT THEY SAID**, and quickly spoke words to encourage the father to keep believing and trusting God. I like the way that is worded. He **IGNORED** the negative report. He **IGNORED** the declarations of fear, death and defeat. He **IGNORED** those who surrounded Him with an evil report. Instead, He **SPOKE** words of faith, and immediately re-established an atmosphere of faith between Himself and Jairus. When you find yourself surrounded with

words of doubt, unbelief and uncertainty about God's ability in your life, IMMEDIATELY move to re-establish your atmosphere of faith. Speak the Word of God, out loud, so you can hear it. Romans 10:17 says faith comes by HEARING, and HEARING by the Word of God.

When you speak God's Word in response to a bad report, or in response to someone's comments that seek to destroy your faith and trust in God, you're using your faith as the shield its described as in Ephesians 6. In that passage, the Bible tells us to take the shield of faith, which is the Word of God. How is that shield used? By SPEAKING words with agree with what God has already said. In that way, you can successfully move past all the doubters that forever seek to surround you with words of death and doubt. Learn to ignore them, as if they aren't even there! Just fix all your attention on what God has said, and never mind about what anybody else says to the contrary. If they get offended with you when you do that, don't be surprised. They probably will get angry, or hurt, or offended at you. They did when Jesus did it, so they'll do it when you follow the Lord's example. If so, so what? You're not ignoring them for their benefit, but for your own! Your primary responsibility is to stay in faith, and to do that, you're going to have to learn how to ignore those around you who don't speak faith the way you do. You don't have to be mean to them, but just ignore them! Keep your eyes and ears inclined to God's Word, and nothing else. In doing so, you successfully use your faith as the shield it was designed to be in situations like the one in our story for today. The only Words that matter are God's Words! Never forget that!

11/09/08

John 17:16

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE!

Have you ever heard somebody say that to someone else? YOU DON'T BELONG HERE, GET OUT! What are they saying when they say something like that? They're saying "you don't fit in here", or, "you are not like we are". Well, Christians (like you) need to always remember that while living on earth, we're really out of place. Yes, Jesus has come to take back the keys of authority, and yes, He will return to establish the original plan and purpose of God. But for us today, now in this time, recognize that you don't fit! You don't belong here! The only reason why God allows us to stay is because we're commissioned to evangelize the world, in essence, to help them change and become like us! Too many times, it's the opposite that happens. Christians become so worldly and carnal, they become just like the sinners and unbelievers. They think, talk and act just like people who don't know Jesus. But in our verse today, in the midst of that great prayer He prayed, Jesus makes this statement to God about us. He said to God, "Father, they are not of this world, in the same way I'm not of this world". Is that how you see yourself today?

Something is terribly wrong if Christians find themselves wanting what sinners want, acting like sinners act, and talking like sinners talk. Of course we need to wise in our evangelistic dealings with people, but at the same time, we shouldn't blend in so well that nobody can identify us! People who know you should know what you believe, and should know you're a Christian. By what you do, by how you talk, and by how you live your life. I'm not talking about being some kind of spiritual prude, out of touch with reality. Those kinds of Christians are missing the whole point of what they're here to accomplish in this life. We're to mingle amongst the unbelievers in such a way that they WANT what we have, while at the same time, keeping ourselves pure, sanctified and undefiled with the world's ways. But no matter what goes down with you in your life, always remember that in essence, you don't belong here! You're a citizen of heaven, and are just visiting planet earth to get a job done for Jesus. Your priorities should be upon heavenly things (Colossians 3:1-5), not earthly things. You shouldn't be talking, acting, planning and living like people who don't know Jesus. You should be different, and that's a good thing. Sinners should know who you are, and why you're different from them. Not to drive them away, but to entice them to come in and enjoy the free gifts that come with salvation. You're not like everybody else, so

don't try to be! You're in this world, but you're not of this world. There is a big difference between the two.

11/10/08

Daniel 3:17,18 **NO MATTER WHAT, GOD WILL COME THROUGH FOR YOU!**

Sometimes when you talk and teach about faith, the "Doubting Thomas" types like to quote this passage right here. Folks who don't understand faith like to highlight the word "if" in these verses, to supposedly support their contention that its ok to put an "if" in your declarations of faith towards God. That is not at all what these 3 Hebrews were telling the King, and that is not at all what they were showing about the life of faith. What they WERE telling the King, and us, is that no matter what the enemy throws against us, we KNOW that God will never leave us, and we KNOW that He WILL deliver us! Not maybe, but for sure! That's true faith! There is no "if" in our declaration of God's power, or His ability and willingness to use that power to bring us to victory, every time. They were saying, in essence, that IF you throw us in the fire, God will deliver us. And, IF you don't throw us in the fire, God will still deliver us! And IF our God chooses to take us home to heaven at this time, that's still victory, and we're not bowing to your golden image! The emphasis here is not on what the King does or doesn't do, but rather, upon God's power to deliver those who chose to stand their ground in faith. Their usage of the word "if" is not a badge of doubt about God's ability. Rather, it's a declaration of their faith, AND God's ultimate sovereignty. God is sovereign, isn't He? Of course, but He's also given us authority on earth, and that is why He searches to and fro, looking for people to show Himself strong to (2 Chronicles 16:9).

History is full of examples of people unwilling to yield their faith in God, in the face of torture, hardship, persecution and even death. They basically said the same thing the 3 Hebrews said to the King in our verse today. No matter what you "threaten" me with, I'm not backing down! I'm trusting God, and I believe He WILL come through for me. That's it! That's the true life of faith. And, if I do end up in heaven through all of this, where's the defeat in that? After all, what are you going to threaten me with, heaven for all eternity? That's hardly a threat friend! The "if" isn't about God, its about whatever the enemy, or life in general, throws against us. If we're attacked, that's fine, because as far as we're concerned, God is able, and more than willing, to protect us and deliver us. If we're not attacked, that's fine too, God is still God, and we still have a job to do for Him in the Name of Jesus. If that's your attitude today, you're on the right track! If it isn't your attitude, change it! You might be facing some kind of "fiery furnace" today in your life. So what? The issue is not the fiery trial's ability to wreak havoc in your life. The real issue is your decision to believe that God's love for you, and His exceedingly great and precious promises, are more than enough to deliver you in victory from whatever test or trial you're facing today. So choose, and do it now! When the 3 Hebrew children were in fact thrown into the fire, God protected them, and when they came out, they didn't even smell like smoke! And you too, can come through your fiery furnace victoriously, without a trace of fire or smoke on you! Take heart my friend. No furnace of fire is too hot for God!

11/11/08

Daniel 3:15 **WHO IS THE GOD WHO CAN DELIVER YOU?**

King Nebuchadnezzar asked the 3 Hebrew children a question. "WHO is the God that can deliver you from my hand?" I'll tell you who He is! He's the One who, from Genesis to Maps, consistently shows Himself strong to ANYONE who dares to trust Him and believe His Word. Old Testament or New, God is a God of power and might! In fact, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 4:20, told the Corinthians that the kingdom of God is not in word (intellectualism), but in power (miracles). People love to intellectualize God, and that's such a waste of time! God is God, and that's it! He has the power, and LOOKS for places

to demonstrate it. And your faith, and mine, should NEVER be placed in some intellectual acceptance, or understanding of God. That will never work my friend! So when you're facing your fiery furnace, as these 3 Hebrew children were facing theirs, you need to know how to answer that same question. Who IS the God who can deliver you from the impossible mess you're facing today? He's the miracle worker! He's the One who split the Red Sea (Exodus 14:13). He's the One who held back the river Jordan so His people could cross on dry ground (Joshua 3:17). He's the One who caused the walls of Jericho to fall down flat (Joshua 6:5). He's the One who holds all things together by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). He's the One who says that nothing is too difficult for Him (Genesis 18:4). He's the One who brought Jesus into the Earth as a Man (Luke 1). And, time and space could not suffice to list or mention all that God has done for those whom He loves, and guess what? He loves YOU!

So, ask yourself. Who is my God to me? Who is He when the going gets tough? Who is He when everybody says its impossible for me to be victorious? When the enemies of my soul gang up on me, and try to convince me that there is not way, who is my God to me? Its time we Christians stood up and quit listening to the King Nebuchadnezzar's of the world! When they try to taunt us, and ridicule us, and laugh in our faces, its time to stand up and say, "You know what? My God is ABLE, and my God is WILLING, and my God WILL bring me through to victory! So it doesn't matter who you are, or what you say, I'm in covenant with Almighty God, and NOTHING you say or do can change that!" It might seem strange for you to say that if you're not used to it, but try it on for size, and I'm sure you'll get to like the sound of it!

11/12/08

Matthew 9:12 WHY DO YOU EAT WITH SINNERS?

We have a responsibility to God, and to the world He loves. Paul said it this way: "I am a DEBTOR, to Greeks, barbarians, wise and unwise (Romans 1:14). In other words, he knew he OWED them something, and for us today: we OWE the world something too. What do we owe them? The truth. The Gospel. The Word of God. This is something most Christians have forgotten. They've become too wrapped up in their own little world, and have become totally selfish and self-centered. The Pharisees were like that in Jesus' day. That's why they couldn't understand why Jesus hung around with tax collectors and sinners. They couldn't understand because they had forgotten their purpose. Most Christians have forgotten their purpose too. Have you?

Ask yourself the same question as the one found in our verse today. Why should you eat with tax collectors and sinners (unbelievers who don't know what you know about Jesus)? And, do you hang around with them? Do you look for opportunities to share the truth about Jesus? Do you even care? Do you pray and believe God for His Spirit to touch a person's heart so they will really listen to the things you've got to say? That's what we OWE them, the truth! We have the God-given responsibility to share Jesus with the world, its called the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-20). Do you understand your purpose? Do you realize WHY you're on earth? Do you understand WHY you didn't just get transported to heaven the day you got saved? Do you eat with sinners? Do you mingle with those who don't know the truth. Do you make yourself available, AND DO THEY KNOW YOU'RE AVAILABLE? If you can't answer these questions correctly, wake up and get with the program! Its time! The world in your areas of influence is waiting to hear!

11/13/08

Acts 10:33 YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY!

This story from Acts is one that brings tears to my eyes almost everytime I read it. It underscores to me how awesome and important our responsibilities are to spread the Gospel into all the world. If you read the whole passage leading up to our verse today, you see to what great lengths God went to

orchestrate Peter's availability so that Cornelius and his household could hear the Gospel and get saved. I want you to understand how important you are to God when it comes to evangelism. Cornelius says it best when he says to Peter, "...now we are all present before God, to hear all things that God has commanded you." What "things"? Things pertaining to eternal life! When the angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to fetch Peter, he told him that Peter would speak words by which all he and his household WOULD BE SAVED (Acts 11:14)! Imagine that! The words that led men to eternal salvation come from OUR MOUTHS! What can possibly make you more valuable and important to God than that?

Friend, you have something to say, to the world around you! Are you saying it? Are you sharing words by which people may respond in faith to get saved? For Cornelius and his household, they owe their salvation to Peter's sermon. Of course we know Jesus saved them through His death and resurrection, but they wouldn't have had the faith to believe in Jesus unless Peter had delivered the message first. That makes Peter VERY important, doesn't it? Well, it's the same for you today. Are there people waiting to hear all things that God has given you to speak? Yes, there are! You may not even know who they are right now, or where they are right now, but rest assured, you are the answer to someone's prayers. They just haven't met you yet, and heard you preach or share the Gospel with them. So, realize how great a responsibility you've been given by God, and don't neglect that responsibility in any way. As it says in 1 Peter 3:15, ALWAYS BE READY to give an answer to those who want an explanation about what you believe and why. God is, right now, working behind the scenes to arrange meetings with you and others, in the same way He arranged a meeting between Peter and Cornelius and his household. Why? Because as an Ambassador for Christ, you HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY! So, say it, and don't ever apologize for sharing Jesus! It's your job, your responsibility and your life's message, so do it!

11/14/08

Romans 1:21 PROTECT YOUR ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

For the next ten days, leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday here in the USA, we're going to highlight the topic of THANKFULNESS. In today's verse, God shows us that in the times in which we live, one of the signs we will see among sinners is an unthankful attitude. If you look around, you can see it everywhere today. People have a "you owe me" kind of attitude, and that's NOT what God wants for His children. You can understand if unbelievers have that kind of mentality because they're governed by selfishness and don't know any better. But for Christians, it should be the opposite! Of all people on earth, we should be the most grateful, and the most thankful EVERYDAY! Maintaining an attitude of gratitude protects us from sliding into a mindset that is unhealthy and reprehensible in the sight of God. If you read a few verses farther, you see that when these people let an unthankful heart take root within them, God eventually had to give them up to their FUTILE THOUGHTS and DARKENED HEARTS. May it not be so with you!

An unthankful, ungrateful heart opens the door to a mind governed and controlled by futile thoughts, and a heart that is called dark. On the other hand, being continually thankful for the things you have RIGHT NOW from God, keeps your heart bright, and your mind in focus. When you spend your time thanking God for everything you already have, you won't allow the devil to come in and plant seeds of discontentment over things you don't have, whatever those "things" may be. If you keep reading in Romans chapter 1, you see an ungodly progression down the road which ultimately leads to perversion, sexual sin, and a basic rejection of God's goodness and grace. Where did this procession towards ungodliness begin? With an unthankful heart! So Christian beware! As we approach our annual Thanksgiving holiday, take time to stop and reflect upon ALL the many blessings you have right now in Christ. Concentrate on those things, and as you do, you'll begin to see that whatever it is that you don't

have pales in comparison to all the things you already have thanks to God's goodness, mercy and grace.

11/15/08

Psalms 107:21,22

OH THAT MEN WOULD GIVE GOD THANKS!

In our second daily segment leading up to Thanksgiving, today's passage comes from Psalms 107, which is actually an entire Psalm devoted to the importance of giving God thanks. I'm highlighting these two verses, but if you read the whole Psalm, you see this theme reoccur from beginning to end. David, by the Holy Spirit, is imploring his listeners (remember the Psalms were originally songs sung to the Lord) to always excel at the giving of thanks. Look at how its worded in verse 22. **LET MEN SACRIFICE THE SACRIFICES OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD!** Do you excel in offering sacrifices of thanksgiving to God? Most believers don't. I hope you're not one of them.

The constant giving of thanks is one of the best ways children of God can remain humble, prioritized and focused concerning spiritual things. The more you say "thank you" to God, the more often you remind yourself of His goodness in your life, and how much you **ALREADY** have in comparison to most people in the world today. As a missionary, I sometimes get very short with people who gripe and complain about how "hard" it is to live in the USA. I'm thinking to myself: Have these people ever taken a trip beyond our borders into the third world? I'm not talking about some cruise somewhere, or some vacation to some resort either. I'm talking about going out into the cities, slums, garbage dumps and sewage ditches of the world, to see how millions upon millions of people "live", if you care to call it living. If you've ever done it, you know that it only takes one trip like that to set yourself straight about how blessed we are in the USA. Baby, on your **WORST DAY**, as an American, you have far more right now at your disposal, than 90% of the rest of the world has, or even dreams about having. So, instead of spending time grumbling about how difficult things are for you, start being a doer of this Psalm. And start to excel in offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. And remember this: even if you live under the bridge, eat dog food and push a shopping cart around with all your possessions inside the cart, if you're Christian, you **RICHER** than most of the richest people in the world. Why? Because you have eternal life, and they don't. Someday they'll lose it all when they die, but even the lowliest pauper received a King's welcoming when they die and go to heaven! Read Luke 16:19-31, and let God's Word remind you about being thankful, everyday!

11/16/08

2 Chronicles 32:24,25

OTHERS SUFFER WHEN YOU'RE NOT THANKFUL

Today is our third installment in our series leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday. Here in today's passage, we find a situation all too common among people today. We're in a jam, facing impossible problems, and have no way out. We go to God with the worn-out promise: "God, if you get me out of this mess just this one more time, I promise, I'll never do this again." Have you ever prayed a prayer like that? I have, and I bet you have too. In our moments of desperation and despair, we cry out to God for help and deliverance, promising Him that if He gets us out of the jam we put ourselves in, we'll never again make these mistakes again! Ha! I've broken those kinds of promises so many times I would need a calculator to keep count! So have you, and so did Hezekiah the King. In his situation, he was facing certain death from his illness, and cried out to God for healing. What did God do? Heal him. Completely and totally. And how did Hezekiah repay the Lord for this? The Bible says he **DID NOT REPAY GOD FOR THE KINDNESS SHOWN TO HIM**. In other words, he was ungrateful, and unthankful.

But as bad as that is, notice what it says after that. **THEREFORE**, the anger (wrath) of God was looming over not only him, but over all of Jerusalem and Judah too! That means a lot of innocent people

were in danger of experiencing God's wrath and judgment because of Hezekiah's pride, which manifested through an ungrateful and unthankful heart. Friend, realize with me today that if you choose to be ungrateful to God for all the times He's bailed you out of the messes you got yourself into, you not only jeopardize yourself, but a lot of people around you! People like your spouse, children, loved ones, family, close friends and neighbors, people like that! Christians need to know that an unthankful heart becomes a spiritual poison affecting not only the one exhibiting it, but many innocent people within that person's area of influence. For Hezekiah, his area of influence included the city of Jerusalem, and the nation of Judah. So, they were unknowingly dragged into the situation Hezekiah created with his own unthankful heart! Think about that for a moment! Do you want your loved ones penalized because of your pride and ungratefulness towards the goodness God has already extended to you? I doubt it! Therefore, guard your heart, and don't make the mistake Hezekiah made. This Thanksgiving holiday season, examine your heart and make sure you harbor no pride, ungratefulness and unthankfulness towards God. Your loved ones will thank you for it!

11/22/08

First Thessalonians 3:10-13 Are you praying the word in Thessalonians

A FIFTH inspired prayer is found in First Thessalonians 3: 10-13. Once again, this is a pray you can pray to have God's love within you developed to it's fullest extent. You're praying for God to help you increase and abound in love in 3 areas; 1) Love towards believers, 2) love towards sinners, 3) and love towards God Himself. When that begins to happen, you enter into true holiness, with a heart that is established and unshakeable! Personalize it. Pray it this way: "Father, I pray that your love, shed abroad in me, will increase and abound more and more towards Christians, unbelievers, and most especially, towards you! As I do this, I thank you my heart will become truly holy, established and unshakeable, everyday - until my Lord's return. Amen"

True holiness is simply letting the love of God have it's way in you and through you. Holiness is not about the external, but all about the internal. God is love, and God is holy. He said you're to be holy as He is (1 Peter 1:15,16). So, you're to walk in love as He is love (1 John 4:17), and the more you do, the holier you become in His sight! Religion doesn't know the first thing about true "holiness". Don't be religious, be real! Its all about letting God's love dominate, and that makes you the holy person God wants you to be. Pray this everyday, and let that love dominate towards Christians, unbelievers, and most importantly, towards God Himself!

11/23/08

Psalms 100:4 Do you know how to approach God?

The Bible tells you exactly how to approach God, yet most believers don't do it correctly. When you come to God in prayer, come before Him with THANKSGIVING! Let a thankful heart be the foundation for every episode in your prayer closet. Instead of starting your conversation with a long list of things you want from God, start by recounting all the good things He's ALREADY provided you in your lifetime. Just doing that would occupy your time for quite some time! The Bible has a lot to say about developing, and protecting, a thankful heart. Its what I call an "Attitude of Gratitude". How about you? Do you tell God daily about how thankful you are for all those good and perfect gifts He's given you? If not, why not?

At this time of year, Americans celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. For Christians, this should have special meaning. Really, EVERYDAY should be a Thanksgiving holiday for us because of what we enjoy in Christ. Stop and think about all you have because of Jesus, and make that the focal point of your prayer time. Salvation. Health. Healing if you get sick. Prosperity. Mercy. Forgiveness. Patience. Love.

EVERY perfect gift has come to you from God (James 1:17). Thank Him for these things. Not just once in awhile, but everyday, many times during the day. The more you thank God for what you have, the more you appreciate what you have.

11/23/08

2 Chronicles 32:24-26 Do you have Hezekiah's problem?

When Hezekiah was in trouble, he reached out to the Lord for help, and got the help he needed. Have you ever reached out for the Lord's help in a time of trouble? And when He delivered you, did you thank Him for it? Do you still thank Him for it? Are you grateful for what Jesus did to get you out of the mess you got yourself into? Hezekiah wasn't. And many Christians are like him today. Ungrateful and unthankful. They act like God owes them an answer to their prayers. Notice Hezekiah "did not repay according to the favor done to him (vs.25), for his heart was LIFTED UP. That means he was prideful. An unthankful heart is a prideful heart. Don't let that be you! Count your blessings right now, and spend time thanking God for them. Pride is the root of so many evils, and an unthankful heart is one of the prime ways that pride will manifest in your life.

As you prepare to enjoy your Thanksgiving Holiday this year, make sure you spend time meditating on all that God has given you. Never mind all the hours cooking food, instead focus some quality time in prayer, thanking God for the many blessings you enjoy today. Too many Christians spend their time in prayer talking to God about all they don't have, when they should be thanking God for what they do have. A roof over your head? Food on the table and in the cupboard? Clothing to wear? A healthy body to live in? Air to breathe? A decent job? A loving, caring spouse? Children who love you and the Lord? On and on you can go, so start today! Be THANKFUL! Be GRATEFUL! God has been good to you! Let Him know you appreciate His goodness in your life!

11/25/08

Luke 17:12-19 God expects your thanks!

When miraculously healed from leprosy, one man out of ten came back to thank Jesus for his healing. One in ten! What did Jesus say about that? "Where are the other nine?" (vs.17) In other words, Jesus EXPECTS your thanks, even if He doesn't specifically ask for it. It's implied and understood that when God does something good to you or for you, you're to say "thank you"! Do you do this? Many believers do not. They just take God's goodness for granted, never stopping to say "thanks" for what they've been given. And many times, sinners are more thankful than believers! In our story today, the healed man who came back was a "foreigner" (vs.18) That means he didn't even have a covenant with God, like the Jews. Yet he had enough presence of mind to come back and thank the Lord for his healing. How about you? Too busy to say "thank you" to God? Change if you need to!

For every one who comes back to say "thanks" to God, there are nine who don't. Just like in today's story, most people have an attitude of ingratitude. Yet the man who came back was a Samaritan, an outcast from the Jewish nation. Nine Jews got healed, one Samaritan. Who came back to say thanks? The Samaritan. Are you like the Jews who didn't bother to say "thank you", or the Samaritan who took the time to return and offer thanks for his healing? What has God done for you lately? Have you spent time on your knees saying "thank you"? I hope so, because an unthankful heart is one of the signs of the times (2 Timothy 3:2)! Don't let that be you! Be thankful everyday, because everyday is a gift! Many living today will never see the light of tomorrow, they'll be dead before the sun comes up. Today is God's gift to you, cherish it and thank Him for it.

11/26/08

2 Timothy 3:2 Are you a sign of the end times?

Paul wrote to Timothy and told him what signs to look for that would indicate the soon return of our Lord Jesus. One of the signs is many people exhibiting an unthankful and ungrateful attitude. Would you be classified that way today? Think about it. Do you spend more time with God talking about the things you don't have, rather than praising and thanking Him for the things you already have? Many people do exactly that when they pray. Yet in Psalms 100:4, we're all told to come into the presence of the Lord with THANKSGIVING first! Thanking Him for all He's already provided creates the right atmosphere for fellowship with your Heavenly Father, and reminds you that even if you never received another blessing from God, you already have enough right now to shout the victory for the rest of your life!

As the return of our Lord draws closer, we're going to see this attitude of ingratitude increase. More and more, people are going to have the ungrateful "you owe it to me" attitude, and while we can expect that from unbelievers, it should NEVER be the attitude displayed by Christians. Of all people, believers should be the first to walk in a daily awareness of all they have in Christ right now, salvation, healing (if needed), health, promised prosperity, dominion, authority over the devil, you name it and God has given it, already! So don't be like the many around you who always grumble about what they don't have. Be thankful! Be grateful! Be appreciative of all you've been given by God's grace. The more you do this, the more insulated you'll become from the unthankful, and the better your times of fellowship will become with God!

11/27/08

John 4:34 What kind of meat do you like?

Jesus told His disciples His "meat" was to do the will of God. That means He found His strength, sustenance, power and direction from finding and fulfilling God's will. The same is true for you. Your source of strength, life and health, from a spiritual perspective, is to do God's will. Amazingly though, many Christians live life in a state of total ignorance of God's will, and then wonder why their life lacks purpose, direction, excitement and fulfillment. God knows what's best for you, He knows what you need more than you know what you need. Give Him the chance to prove that truth by making the decision to find and fulfill God's perfect will for you life, nothing less and nothing else.

Hebrews 10:7 says Jesus came for one purpose, to do God's will. That is your purpose too. Do God's will. Ecclesiastes 12:13 tells you your whole duty as a human being is to fear God and keep His commandments. In other words, find and do God's will. That is your purpose for existence, and nothing else. Do you know what God's will is? Most believers don't know. They have a vague concept of what God's will might be, but they've not taken time to study the Scriptures to really find out. God's will is all that matters, so take the time to find it and fulfill it! Nothing else should matter to you. If you really love Him, prove it by keeping His commandments. John 14:15 says that if you really love Jesus, you prove it by keeping His commandments. Do you love Jesus? Then do His will, and keep His commandments. Period. This is the meat that provides you with life force, nothing else.

11/28/08

1 Thessalonians 5:18 How do you fulfill God's will?

When Jesus said His meat was to do God's will in John 4:34, He was saying He was a very thankful man. Why? Because First Thessalonians chapter 5 says to be thankful in all things because THIS is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Thankful in all things! That is God's will for you. Be thankful, not just in some things, but in all things! Don't be thankful FOR all things, that's not what God is saying. Be thankful IN all things, which means that no matter what you're going through in life, be thankful that

God's word has a promise that covers your situation, and guarantees your victory if you stand in faith. So if you want to please God, be a thankful person like Jesus was. Not just in good times, but in ALL TIMES!

God has never said we should be thankful FOR all things. Don't thank God for cancer, car crashes, catastrophes, heart attacks, child rebellion, etc. Don't thank God for the work of the devil or the flesh. But IN everything, thank God for the guarantee of victory! As an example, if you're battling sickness, don't thank God for being sick, but instead, thank Him for 1 Peter 2:24, that declares that by the stripes of Jesus you WERE healed! Thank God in everything. No matter how difficult your life may get at times, stay thankful, and stay grateful. It provides you with the power to keep everything in perspective, and that is an important part of your step by step journey to victory!

11/29/08

Romans 1:21 You will lose what you are not thankful for!

Thanklessness begins a progressive walk away from God. The more ungrateful you become, the more distance there is between you and God. If you don't reverse the trend, you'll wake up someday and wonder how you drifted so far away from the Lord! So take the time to stop, pause and reflect on ALL the benefits God loads you with daily (Psalms 68:19)! The more you do, the more thankful you'll become!

Reflect on these statistics. If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, be thankful! You're more blessed than the million who won't survive the week. If you've never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation, be thankful! You're ahead of 20 million people around the world. If you attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death, be thankful! You're more blessed than almost 3 billion people in the world. We'll keep going with this list tomorrow! Stay thankful! Be grateful! Appreciate everything God has given you!

11/30/08

Psalms 119:62

One of the reasons David was so blessed by God was his thankful heart. Over and over as you read through the Psalms, you read how thankful and grateful he was towards God. I believe its one of the prime reasons he's called a man after God's own heart. He never got tired of saying "thank you" to God! Yes, he made mistakes, and committed sins. Just like us today. But in spite of all his failures and shortcomings, he remained grateful, and never took God's love, forgiveness, mercy or grace for granted. Do the same in your life today, and everyday! In the middle of the night, David would rise, not for a midnight snack, but just to thank God for His righteous judgments! Think about that! How many do you know who do such things? Do you?

Reflect on these statistics. If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, be thankful! You're richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in your pocket, be thankful! You are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. If your parents are still married and alive, be thankful! You're indeed rare, especially in the United States! Set your alarm for midnight! Get up and say "thank you" to God! You have so much to be thankful for!