

Culture Making | Gratefulness
Luke 22:14-21; 23-24

[Thanksgiving is] the most psychologically correct holiday of the year...Cultivating an “attitude of gratitude” has been linked to better health, sounder sleep, less anxiety and depression, higher long-term satisfaction with life and kinder behavior toward others, including romantic partners. A new study shows that feeling grateful makes people less likely to turn aggressive when provoked, which helps explain why so many brothers-in-law survive Thanksgiving without serious injury.

—John Tierney, NY Times

GRATITUDE IS LIKE GLUE

Gratitude is a form of social glue. In the capitalist economy, debt is to be repaid to the lender. But a debt of gratitude is repaid forward, to another person who also doesn't deserve it. In this way each gift ripples outward and yokes circles of people in bonds of affection. It reminds us that a society isn't just a contract based on mutual benefit, but an organic connection based on natural sympathy—connections that are nurtured not by self-interest but by loyalty and service.

— David Brooks, The Structure of Gratitude (NY Times)

"Pride slays thanksgiving."

—Henry Ward Beecher

"The worst moment for an atheist is when he feels a profound sense of gratitude and has no one to thank."

—G.K. Chesterton

HOW CAN GRATITUDE CAN HOLD US TOGETHER?

GRATITUDE HELPS US TO FACE SUFFERING

Luke 22:15-16

Then He said to them, "I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

John 11:41-42

"Father, I thank You that You heard Me. I know that You always hear Me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so they may believe You sent Me."

“There’s a common explanation that profound sadness leads to someone’s becoming a comedian, but I’m not sure that’s a proven equation in my case, I’m not bitter about what happened to me as a child, and my mother was instrumental in keeping me from being so.” “She taught me to be grateful for my life regardless of what that entailed, and that’s directly related to the image of Christ on the cross and the example of sacrifice that he gave us. What she taught me is that the deliverance God offers you from pain is not no pain — it’s that the pain is actually a gift. What’s the option? God doesn’t really give you another choice.”

—Stephen Colbert

GRATITUDE HELPS US BECOME OUR TRUE SELVES

Luke 22:21

But look, the hand of the one betraying Me is at the table with Me! 22 For the Son of Man will go away as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”

Romans 1:18; 21-25

For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth...21 For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles. 24 Therefore God delivered them over in the cravings of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served something created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

"But know this: Difficult times will come in the last days. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, 4 traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people!"

1 Thessalonians 5:18

“Give thanks in everything, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6

“Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

Colossians 4:2

“Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving.”

The gratitude journal was brief — just one sentence for each of the five things — and done only once a week, but after two months there were significant effects. Compared with a control group, the people keeping the gratitude journal were more optimistic and felt happier. They reported fewer physical problems and spent more time working out.

"Further benefits were observed in a study of polio survivors and other people with neuromuscular problems. The ones who kept a gratitude journal reported feeling happier and more optimistic than those in a control group, and these reports were corroborated by observations from their spouses. These grateful people also fell asleep more quickly at night, slept longer and woke up feeling more refreshed. "If you want to sleep more soundly, count blessings, not sheep,"

Dr. Emmons —NY Times

(v.19) And He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

'He gave thanks'=Eucharisteo

Eucharisteo=Grace

Chara=Joy

(v.20) In the same way He also took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant established by My blood; it is shed for you."