

Thankful
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2 Samuel 22:26-36, 50-51

Opening: *“What do you saay?”* **Why do good parents teach kids to say thank you? What are some of the benefits of regularly telling God thank you! Physical? Emotional? Mental? Spiritual?**

- Thank You Notes are almost a lost art! Ponder these rhetorical questions about thank you notes and we'll come back to them later:
- Ever forget to write one? How did it make you feel? Did you feel anything?
- What if you sent it to the wrong person? Ridiculous? Perhaps not.
- What if you were not clear what the thank you note was for?
- Would you ever write one to yourself? People do it all the time.
- In 2 Samuel 22, David didn't just write a thank you note to God, in typical David style he wrote a song. It's a song of thanksgiving that was later added to the Hebrew hymnal as Psalm 18.
- Looking at David's thank you song to God we'll see the benefits of gratitude to God and how we can get better at telling Him thanks.

Big Idea: Gratitude to God is good for us because it lifts our spirits, shifts our thoughts, and reminds us of His greatness, protection, and love.

- We looking at some selected verses in this chapter.
- The first four are an opening stanza.

2 Samuel 22:1–4 (NLT)

David's Song of Praise

David sang this song to the Lord on the day the Lord rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. ² He sang:

“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;

³ my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.
He is my refuge, my savior,
the one who saves me from violence.

- Verse one gives us the context of this song. God had rescued David from all his enemies. David went beyond the traditional victory celebration. After the parade and the party, David paused to reflect and thank God.
- God delivered David from battle, are you in a battle yourself right now?
- Without battles in life, there would never be victory celebrations!
- David did what we all should do when we sit down to be grateful: he described who our Heavenly Father is. He does it in beautiful language – “rock,” “fortress,” “refuge,” “savior,” “the one who saves me from violence.”
- Verse four states the facts and teaches a principle:

⁴ I called on the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies.

- For fifteen verses David described the battle and God’s fierce power.
- In verses 20-25, David described how God rewards us for doing right.
- This is not to imply that we can earn our salvation. It’s simply stating the fact that God rewards obedience to His commands.
- Next he talked about God’s justice.

2 Samuel 22:26–36 (NLT)

²⁶ “To the faithful you show yourself faithful;
to those with integrity you show integrity.

²⁷ To the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.

²⁸ You rescue the humble,
but your eyes watch the proud and humiliate them.

- God can be counted on for perfect justice. Faithfulness, integrity, and purity will be rewarded; yet the “crooked” will also get their just reward.
- Humility brings rescue and pride brings humiliation.
- Theological term: Divine retribution -- the law of sowing and reaping is part of God’s economy (Gal. 6:7–8). In the OT this takes the form of blessings and cursings.¹
- Holman Old Testament Commentary: *“God is not morally neutral in his treatment of human beings. Those who behave virtuously will find the Lord to be a source of blessing in their lives. Conversely, those who reject the way of virtue will experience God’s judgment.”*ⁱⁱ
- Then David recounted how God empowered him supernaturally in battle.

²⁹ O Lord, you are my lamp.

The Lord lights up my darkness.

³⁰ In your strength I can crush an army;
with my God I can scale any wall.

³¹ “God’s way is perfect.

All the Lord’s promises prove true.

He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

³² For who is God except the Lord?

Who but our God is a solid rock?

³³ God is my strong fortress,
and he makes my way perfect.

³⁴ He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
enabling me to stand on mountain heights.

³⁵ He trains my hands for battle;
he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.

³⁶ You have given me your shield of victory;
your help has made me great.

- David used dramatic language (“surefooted as a deer,” “scale any wall,” “draw a bronze bow”) to make a point: “In your [God’s] strength” I can do whatever God has assigned me to do.
- What New Testament verse does that remind us of?

- Verse 31 is singled out as a great memory verse. We need to be reminded that God’s way is perfect and His promises are true. He is our shield!
- When that verse says God’s way is perfect it describes faith as a journey.
- Our lesson writer makes a good point:

“Applied to a path, it means that it is smooth and cleared of debris. It is not obscure, so that the traveler gets lost. Following God, the way that we should go is straightforward and not beset with needless obstacles and frustrations. It may not be easy, but it won’t be mazelike.ⁱⁱⁱ”

- The next section of verses again describes how God delivered David.
- Then he ends his song with a doxology – a statement of praise to God.

2 Samuel 22:50–51 (NLT)

⁵⁰ For this, O Lord, I will praise you among the nations;
I will sing praises to your name.

⁵¹ You give great victories to your king;
you show unfailing love to your anointed,
to David and all his descendants forever.”

- Gratitude to God is good for us because it lifts our spirits, shifts our thoughts, and reminds us of His greatness, protection, and love.
- What can we learn from David’s song of thanksgiving to God? How do we get better and more consistent in practicing gratitude to God? Let’s go back to the metaphor of writing thank you notes and our earlier questions:
- Ever forget to write a thank you note? **How did it make you feel? Did you feel anything? What does that teach us about gratitude to God?**
- What if you sent it to the wrong person? A ridiculous example, but how often do we neglect to focus our thanksgiving on the only true source of protection, deliverance, and blessings? [“God is great God is good...”]

- What if you were not clear what the thank you note was for? **Why should we be as specific and detailed as David was in thanking God?**
- Would you ever write one to yourself? Absurd? **How do people do it all the time? How might it have been easy for David to fall into this trap?**
- Are we too quick to write a complaint letter, but rarely a thank you note? **What would you call a child that complains but is never grateful?**
- One last question: **How does practicing gratitude shift our troubled thoughts?**

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Gratitude to God is good for us because it lifts our spirits, shifts our thoughts, and reminds us of His greatness, protection, and love.
- Let's summarize what we've learned from David's song of thanks:
 - We need to just DO THANKS consistently. How rude and ungrateful we are when we DON'T say THANKS to God.
 - Yes, we need to show gratitude to others, but we need to make sure we daily direct our gratitude to the true source: God.
 - Being specific will engrave God's faithfulness on our hearts.
 - Gratitude to God helps me remember who I am and who HE is, and to know the difference!
 - When it comes to complaining, God welcomes us to vent, but how dare we complain without also thanking Him for his blessings. Remember, a child that complains but never says thank you is basically an entitled, spoiled, brat!
 - Practicing gratitude to God will shift our "stinkin' thinkin'." When our thought pattern becomes "head trash" we need to do a little less thinking and a lot more THANKING.
- One more reason to practice daily gratitude to God:
 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT) ¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

- This week let's slow down daily and practice gratitude to our Heavenly Father? Yes, it's GOOD for us, but most importantly He is WORTHY!

ⁱ Patterson, P. (2003). Divine Retribution. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S.

ⁱⁱ Andrews, Stephen J.. Holman Old Testament Commentary - 1, 2 Samuel (p. 351). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

ⁱⁱⁱ Explore the Bible Leaders Guide – Lifeway 2018