

THE INDISPENSABLE GIFT!

Scripture used: [Psalms 150 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon gave us a special sermon this week, focusing on an indispensable gift we've all been given. Drawing from the research of Dr. Robert Emmons and his book [Gratitude Works](#), Pastor Hurmon showed us the wisdom of the book of Psalms, which has a thread of gratitude running through its entirety. Our scripture this week is the final Psalm, but the theme of gratitude exists through the entire book. Modern research is now catching up with the Biblical wisdom from thousands of years ago. Neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy all point to the incredible power of gratitude. And we have so much to be grateful for, especially the love of God found in Jesus. If we train our brain to pay attention to the blessings of God in our lives, our lives can be transformed.

KEY POINTS

1. **Gratitude is a superpower and a wonder drug.** Research shows us that gratitude can do just about anything. People who practice gratitude enjoy immediate benefits. Relationships improve. Motivation increases, and so does focus. Self-confidence increases, and so does willpower. If gratitude could be taken as a pill, everyone in the entire world would have a prescription!
2. **The grateful person sees life as a series of blessings and gifts.** This is based on perspective. It doesn't mean that grateful people actually have better lives by any objective measure. Pastor Hurmon shared the story of a woman going through cancer treatment who became a source of intense joy to the entire hospital staff. What did she do that was so transformative? She expressed consistent gratitude in deeply personal ways to every single person who helped her, regardless of the ultimate outcome.
3. **We must cultivate an attitude of gratitude.** Even though gratitude has the power to transform our lives, few of us actually put it into practice. Some (or all) of these issues get in the way. First, we tend to be fixated on the future, never slowing down to appreciate where we are and what we have. Second, we tend to be preoccupied with the past, never acknowledging those things that God put in our path that were tough at the time but now offer opportunities for growth. Third, our brains are hardwired to have a negative bias. We protect ourselves from risk, and that sometimes means we dwell on what we lack rather than what we have. Finally, we are entitled. This is the worst fear of parents across the United States. We all know that entitlement will rob us of any kind of happiness, but we can't help feeling that we are owed or deserve certain things in life. So what should we do?
 - a. **Praise the Lord in.** King David tells us that God is everywhere. That means we can praise Him no matter where we are or how we feel. The Apostle Paul reminds us in [1 Thessalonians 5:18 \(NLT\)](#) to be thankful in all circumstances.
 - b. **Praise the Lord for.** King David tells us that God expresses Himself in many ways. His power and greatness are all around us. [Psalms 103:1-2 \(NKJV\)](#) starts off by reminding us of this, then lists many things that God's people have to be grateful for.
 - c. **Praise the Lord with.** King David expresses his gratitude in songs, in prayer, in dance, and more. He also sees God working in nature all around him. There are many ways to say Hallelujah!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - There is no shortage of blessings all around us. This is true even for those of us going through difficult seasons. The issue is not whether God has blessed us. The issue is whether we are looking out for the ways God has blessed us. What are you thankful for in this season of life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Early in their marriage, Pastor Hurmon and Dr. Rhonda learned an important technique. They took the time to say "thank you" whenever it was obvious the other person was making an effort. This did not mean they ignored the annoying or negative things, but they did highlight specific actions that meant a lot. They continue this simple, powerful practice and it has made the biggest difference in their four decades of marriage! What impact have you seen gratitude have in your life?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon asked us to do two things as part of the gratitude challenge. First, make a daily list of things for which you're grateful. Update this list with "new mercies" each day. Second, think of two people who had a positive impact on your life. Write one a letter in November and the other a letter in December, explaining how you've been blessed by them. Prayerfully affirm "I accept the gratitude challenge!"