

The greatness of gratitude – Michael Cassidy



A monthly column by Michael Cassidy, evangelist, author, Christian leader and founder of African Enterprise whose ministry in Africa and the world has spanned more than 50 years.

The words “thank you” are so simple, yet without them life would be immediately saddened and impoverished. For to receive favours, blessings, or kindnesses and not to say “thank you” is to reveal that we are totally introverted, and selfish. It also shows that we place all other people as under some sort of special obligation to us, while we are excused of any obligation to them.

Actually the word of thanks is so simple, so easy to accord and so positively beneficial in effect that it is astounding that we are so slow and negligent to extend it.

The opportunities to generate in others the blessings of our expressed gratitude come at every turn in life.

On the way to work you stop to have your car filled with petrol. The attendant has a tedious, monotonous and largely unappreciated task. Yet his own dignity and value cannot but be lifted in his own heart as you say a genuine ‘thank you’ for the service rendered. The same principle can apply to the waiter who serves you in a restaurant, the domestic who cooks for you, the attendant who serves you in a shop.

How about in your office? When did you last really thank a colleague or secretary or partner for what they mean to you in the accomplishment of your daily business?

Perhaps the home is where most sacrificial services are taken most easily for granted. Thus, many a husband has the impression his wife spends all day twiddling thumbs, and he takes her meals, tidying of the house and garden and care of the children entirely for granted. Likewise wives can become matter of fact about what it costs the husband in more ways than one to keep the bills paid and the family fed and clothed. How wonderfully the wheels of many a marriage would be oiled by regular expressions of gratitude for services rendered, both small and large, and blessings received thereby.

Likewise there is many a young person who has never paused to express gratitude to a mother and father for all they have done. I heard recently of an entire family relationship transformed by a daughter writing to her father and saying how much she loved him and appreciated his sacrifices on her behalf.

Perhaps more ingratitude is manifested in our relationship to God than anywhere else. Food, clothing, shelter, health and life itself are grabbed as rights without any reference to Him. The beauties of nature are overlooked or assumed. Eyes are turned away from the wonders of scripture. Ears remain deaf to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Hearts are hardened to resist the redemptive call of Calvary. In short we are utterly ungrateful.

Yet if we do in fact pause to say 'thank you' to God, fresh blessings become ours. Says Paul: "In nothing be anxious. But in everything by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God. And the PEACE of God which passeth all understanding will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Philippians 4:6-7).

The Psalmist exhorts this way: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness and come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise: be thankful until Him and bless His name. For the Lord is good: His mercy is everlasting: and His truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100).

I am sure that if you find the greatness of gratitude you will be eternally grateful.