

Thinking Thanking

Battling to Bring Blessings Into Focus

November 23, 2025



Today we're fighting for a future with God by growing a deeper gratitude toward God! Cuz every single day – God relentlessly gives every single human exactly what they need to spiritually satisfy every single desire. So, if we find ourselves feeling anxious or upset from some unfulfilled expectation, it's a sign our material mind is distracting us from seeing God's better blessings – which is the #1 way the enemy makes us lose our way when trying to follow God's lead. So, to keep us on guard and on track, the question that needs ongoing attention is: **Where's your head at?**

So, let's take a quick poll; raise your hand if you can raise your hand? Great – now how many of you made it here today? Okay, and how many have been able to breathe – all morning? Wow! So, last question – how many of you have thanked God specifically for that strength, safety, and survival? Me neither! Why?! Well, Proverbs offers honest insight on how human minds handle whatever we have:

Give me neither poverty *nor* riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say, 'Who is the LORD?' – Proverbs 30:8-9 NIV

But c'mon – does anybody ever think about how inhaling oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide requires such physiological precision that every breath we take is a minor miracle? Again, I don't!



But the principle that Proverbs points out is – **abundance breeds amnesia.** Cuz **we won't be thankful for what we don't think about.** That is, we all tend to tune out what we don't have to worry about – making essentials like oxygen, easy to overlook when they're ever-present.



But that highlights a critical failure in our flesh's focus that has the power to sink our spirit: **we're blessing-blind!** Cuz we're blessing-abundant! After all, the very fact that we're all here – after throwing a wrench in God's gears back in the garden – means every second we exist is an gift of God's grace! And the same earthly eyes that pushed us to walk past all the perfect produce for the one forbidden fruit – are still behind our fleshly flaw that keeps us from seeing and seizing God's gifts: **we get distracted by different but ignore normal.** And that human part of our perception needs to take a backseat to our spiritual sight or we'll be no better than any other animal!



Like fish. Cuz fish are surrounded by water but don't even know they're wet for the same reason we're blessing-blind: **when something essential is everywhere you don't notice it anywhere.** However, if that's true, so is the inverse; **when something essential is nowhere you notice it everywhere.** So, if you want to teach a fish about water, let 'em leave it. Cuz the second a fish is out of water, they know all about it. They need it to breathe. They need it to move. They need it to live. And as they slowly start drying and dying, all fish instantly know: they want the water back!

Well *likewise*, God allows us to wander away from the life-giving *gifts* of His love that He baked into every inch of *our* lives so when His *blessings* go missing, we'd suddenly see how much we want Him:



God did this so that [people] would seek Him and *perhaps* reach out for Him and *find* Him, though *He is not far* from any one of us. 'For in Him we live and move and have our being.' – Acts 17:27-28 NIV



He's the living water and we're the foolish fish who are swimming in a sea of mind-blowing *miracles* that are so *routine* – we only *notice* them when they're *missing*. And although *that* should be *convicting* enough to go home and try being *more grateful* – what I *really* want you to hear *today* is *this*: it's more than a *bummer*; **blessing-blindness means the enemy is winning your spiritual battle.** And *that's* the *biggest* problem *there is*!



So we're gonna *unpack* it to build a bulletproof *battle plan* to *overcome* the enemy! And *that* starts with the Scriptural *strategy* Bruce outlined last week where we bring the battle *to our enemy* with a **"Hi Cutie!"** AKA:

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. – Romans 12:21 NIV

And he reminded us that the *"good"* we need as our *ammunition* – is found in God's *Word* cuz *that's* where we *learn* to *recognize* and *receive* all our *blessings*. But you know what that makes *evil*? The *absence* of *that* good. In the same way *cold* is just a *lack* of *heat* and *darkness* is a *lack* of *light* – **evil only exists when God's good goes missing.** But, because we're *surrounded* by His blessings, **God's good only goes missing when we stop seeing!** And **we only stop seeing when something else steals our attention!** So *hear this* loud and clear: To *win* the war for your heart, **the enemy doesn't have to destroy you; he just has to distract you.** Cuz *emptiness* is all evil needs to *exist*; so if the enemy can *keep* our attention on *empty, earthly* matters, our *flesh's* focus can *starve* our *spirit*!

[Cuz, unfortunately] The *spirit* is willing, but the *flesh* is weak. – Mark 14:38 NIV



There's a study I love about Olympic athletes where they analyzed *faces* on the podium and found *silver* medalists often looked *less happy* than the *bronze*. Why? *Silver* tends to *look up*: **"I almost had gold."** *Bronze* tends to *look down*: **"I almost had nothing."** Same podium, same stadium, totally *different* levels of joy – all because of *where their head was at*. *That's* the power of attention and *that's* why the enemy wants *your focus*.

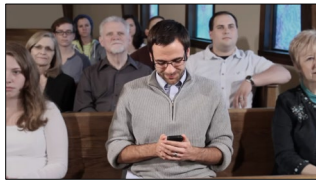


So, *what do we do*? Unfortunately, we *can't* just decide to *focus* on what *should* have our attention and *ignore* doing what *shouldn't*; *otherwise* we'd *all* be perfectly *disciplined* disciples *immune* to the enemy's *empty* distractions. But does *that* sound like anyone *you* know? Of course not! Cuz our *flesh* prefers *easy* paths – even if they're *empty*; and *immediate* fulfillment – even if it's *fleeting*. So the problem *isn't* just that we *don't* know what's *right* – it's that **we don't want what's right enough.**



Sure, *our spirit* does – but our *weak-willed, easily-distracted* *flesh* loves the path of *least resistance*.

That means it's not just a *willpower* problem. It's a *wantpower* problem. We *want* the *distractions* more than the *blessings* – and in the overly intellectual 19th c. sermon titled, “*The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*” Thomas Chalmers gives a great explanation of *why willpower doesn't* have enough *force* to make the *change*: We can't just *shut down* desire – *the heart's too powerful!* He says:



“It is quite in vain to think of stopping one of these pursuits in any way else, but by stimulating to another.”

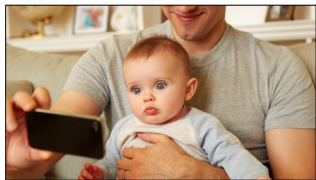


Simply put, *willpower* won't work cuz *denial* isn't enough – we need a stronger *love* to replace an *existing pursuit*; **desire can't be suppressed without being supplanted**. So, if we want to change our *will*, we have to change our *want* – which is why *Scripture* says:

Above all else, guard your heart, for *everything you do* flows from it. – Proverbs 4:23 NIV



And *that's* why the Christian walk *isn't* about *trying* to follow some *legalistic rules* that you *know* are right – **it's about falling in love with the Lord you know you need!** Cuz when *Jesus* becomes our *deepest desire*, we *don't* have to *try* to focus on *His presence* or fill our heart with *His will*, it just naturally *happens* the way every *lovebird* tells *their* partner, **“I only have eyes for you!”** Cuz *true love* *doesn't* feel like daily *discipline* or rigid *restraint* – it feels like the *freedom* to follow *your heart*! Case in point:



Jacob served *seven years* to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a *few days* to him because of his love for her. – Genesis 29:20 NIV

Seven years of work felt like a *few days*?! That's the *effect* of *wantpower*! So, **how do we get our heart to want God's will above all else?**

Well, *that's* the *easy* part, cuz your heart's a *pushover*! In fact, training it is one of the *few* benefits of our *shallow flesh* – cuz it develops a desire for whatever it stares *at* the *most*. Don't believe it? Then just *see* how far you make it *today* before you see some *advertisement* that paid *millions* of dollars *just* to spend a *few seconds* in front of *your eyes*. Our *attention* is the *best* marketing department that ever existed – cuz **what gets thought the most – gets sought the most.**

[So, no wonder the *Bible* stresses *constant contact* as a daily discipline] Keep this *Book of the Law* always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. [And] – Joshua 1:8 NIV

Pray continually [to keep the *conversation* going; then, you'll] – 1 Thessalonians 5:17 NIV

Take delight in the *Lord*, and *He* will give you the desires of your heart. - Psalm 37:4 NIV

Cuz **delight isn't just a feeling; it's a focus. It's** the result of giving *something* enough *attention* – that you start *seeing* all its *deep, desirable value*. And giving **attention with intention of increasing desire is called gratitude**. Which makes *gratitude* a powerful weapon in the war for our heart.

Cuz **giving God gratitude *isn't just shifting our focus, it's training our eyes to see the blessings that surround us*** – and that makes it an *indestructible defense* against the *evil* of *emptiness*. Cuz the more *good* we *recognize* and *receive*, the more we *overcome* the *evil* of *anger*, *anxiety*, and *apathy* – since it simply *can't exist* in the *presence* of *Godly affection*, *assurance*, and *appreciation*! Which means, **gratitude toward God is ammunition against our enemy**. It's only when we forget gratitude that our eyes drift to focus on the emptiness where evil grows.



And I remember a *comedian* talking about the idea saying, “We live in an *amazing world* – and it's *wasted on people*; cuz when our phones buffer for a second, we say, **“Ugh! It's taking too long...”** Give it a *second*! It's going to *space*. Will you give it *one second* to get back from *space*? Is the speed of *light* too *slow* for you? I was on an *airplane* with high-speed *internet* and when the thing *breaks down*, they *apologize*, **“We're so sorry the internet's down.”** And the guy next to me says, **“O, great! This stinks.”** And I wish I was *there* when he tells the “*horror*” story cuz I wanna say, **“O, really? But, did you fly in the air – incredibly, like a bird? Did you partake in the miracle of human flight?”** Everybody on every plane should be *constantly* screaming, **“WOW!”** Cuz you're *flying*. You're sitting in a *chair* in the *sky* – on a *five-hour* trip that used to take *years* where a bunch of people would just *die* along the way! Everything's *amazing*, yet somehow, *nobody's happy!*”

Listen, **gratitude is about way more than attitude**; there's a war for your heart and every moment we're not *thinking* about *thanking God*, we're taking something *amazing* for *granted* and leaving *empty* space for *evil* to grow! And *that's* why “*thanksgiving*” is repeated throughout God's Word as an *essential* routine. Thank *offerings* were part of the OT *sacrifices* (LEV 7:12); *giving* thanks is taught as a *core* part of *prayer* (COL 4:2); our *worship* is supposed to be an *act* of *thanks* (PSA 95:2); and our *witness* gets its *weight* from our *thankfulness* (PSA 9:1)! They're all ways for the *thoughts* in our *head* to *fill up* the *battlefield* in our *heart*. So **where's your head at?** Is it rooted in *gratitude* to focus on God's blessings – or is it distracted by *empty* earthly offerings – feeling more *stressed* than *blessed*?

[Well, let's let *Scripture* lay out the solution *once more*:] Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is *true*, whatever is *noble*, whatever is *right*, whatever is *pure*, whatever is *lovely*, whatever is *admirable*—if *anything is excellent or praiseworthy*—think about such things. – Philippians 4:6-8 NIV

Cuz **thankful thinking is how we take the fight to the front lines!** I mean, if the greatest country on *earth* began at a *Thanksgiving table* 400 years ago, just *imagine* what would happen if *you* built your little life with the *same mindset*! All the blessings you've *been* swimming in – would finally *drown out* every bit of *evil* that's been holding your heart *hostage*. So, **this Thursday, I want everyone to go on the offensive – with a round of Blessing Bingo!** Grab some *cards* on the way out and use this *holiday* weekend to start *training* your eyes to see what your *spirit* already *knows*: **Jesus overcame this world on the cross so His blessings could overwhelm your life through your heart.** And as you *mark* your card with all that *Godly good*, remember **your gratitude isn't just loading in your love for God – it's loading up your weapon for the enemy**; and once he's *gone* it's an *eternity* of *smooth swimming*!