

Thankfulness in Recession

12/05/10

The Key to Vitality part 3

The key to vitality is Thankfulness.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,

²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image...

Ephesians 5:3 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints;

⁴ and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

How can we be thankful especially when things are not going well?

1. Worship the Creator not the creation.

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2. Meditate on God's word.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

3. Converse with God continuously.

Ephesians 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

²⁰ always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

4. Prioritize spiritual growth over happiness.

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5. Prioritize the mission over happiness.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;

⁸ *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

¹¹ For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

¹² So death works in us, but life in you.

¹³ But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore also we speak;

¹⁴ knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

¹⁵ For all things *are* for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

6. Reflect on all that God has done and has promised to do.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

⁷ that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

7. Maintain an eternal perspective.

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⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 13:12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

¹³ Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

¹⁴ For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.

¹⁵ Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

8. Accept the truth that faithful Christians suffer.

Hebrews 12:4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

⁵ and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him;

⁶ For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives."

⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?

⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

2 Corinthians 6:4

⁴ but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,

⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ... ⁹ as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death,

¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

9. Choose humility.

Deuteronomy 9:4 "Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is dispossessing them before you.

⁵ "It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

10. Choose contentedness.

Numbers 11:1 Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard *it*, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed *some* of the outskirts of the camp.

² The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died out.

³ So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.

⁴ And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat?"

⁵ "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

⁶ but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment.

⁷ For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

⁸ And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

11. Put away comparison, competition and jealousy.

Numbers 12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman);

² and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it.

³ (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)

⁴ And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out.

James 3:13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

12. Trust and obey.

Deuteronomy 1:26 "Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;

²⁷ and you grumbled in your tents and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us.

13. Hang around thankful people.

Ephesians 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

²⁰ always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

14. Just do it .

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always;

¹⁷ pray without ceasing;

¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.