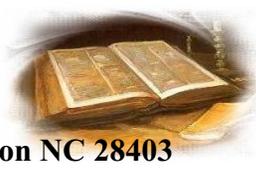


# THE EXAMINER

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## Reflecting on Gratitude by Hoyt H. Houchen, Aurora, Colorado

Gratitude has become a rare gem in the world that is dominated by cold and selfish calculations. The word "thanks" is becoming more and more obsolete. So many in our generation seem to think that the world owes them everything. Gratitude occupies no part of their thinking, much less does it find any expression in their vocabulary. Increasing numbers of our young people are becoming bums - moochers on society, getting all they can without a word of appreciation to anybody for anything. Dejected by a generation of ingrates, some reflections upon gratitude is appropriate.

Repulsive as it is, pity must also have a place in our hearts for so many youngsters who, having had improper guidance (or none at all) from their parents, are frustrated. It is my conviction that the impudence, ingratitude, selfishness, and indolence so common among our youth today reverts almost entirely to home background. A look at the homes from which so many of these bums and ingrates have come would indeed be

revealing. We can be sure that genuine love, in most instances, was unknown or at least about. Expressions of kindness and appreciation were probably never heard. When I was growing up my parents taught me at an early age to be polite and thank others for favors granted. This was a part of my early training and it was instilled into me as a part of my Bible teaching. I was taught to be respectful to grownups. The Lord has blessed us with three fine sons and three fine daughters-in-law. They are also teaching our grandchildren to be thoughtful, thankful, and appreciative. This kind of training was no doubt yours too, for at least most of you, so the previous comments are not intended to convey any impression of boastfulness. For what I have received, I am very grateful. But in contrast to this kind of home training, many of our boys and girls are never taught the lessons of thankfulness and appreciation.

Ingratitude has always been common to man. We recall that on

one occasion Jesus healed ten lepers (Lk. 17:11-19). Only one of them was appreciative enough to come back to the bountiful Lord and say, "thanks." "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving thanks: And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?" Pitifully, our Lord expressed His disappointment of those who were ungrateful. Notice that the majority were ingrates.

We are surrounded by young people who parade about the word "love" on placards, drive about our streets with the word on their bumper stickers and make it their main talking point. Yet, the very ones who make "love" their forte are among the most surly, rude, defiant, and ungrateful among human beings. Many of them are leeches who suck all the blessings and advantages from the body of society, but never realize the true meaning of "love." Like Joseph Fletcher, author of Situation Ethics, who makes "love" the glorified "it" in his book but admits that it is a "semantic confusion" (see p. 15 of his book), so, many of his young followers are just as confused and do not begin to know what real

love is. Living as bums and moochers and expecting a "hand-out" is not expressive of the kind of love taught in the Bible. For one thing, love expresses itself in gratitude and giving. The love of God expressed in **Jn. 3:16** is the most generous and bountiful manifestation of love on record. Our love to God is measured by service that we render to Him - the keeping of His commandments by faith to the very best of our ability (**Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3**). Humbly we realize that there is no way by which we can repay God, who so bountifully gives us "richly all things to enjoy" (**1 Tim. 6:17**). We sing the beautiful song with such a wonderful sentiment, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." But actually we cannot count all of our blessings; they are too numerous. However, we can try to enumerate them and at the same time thank the Lord for the ones that we are not aware of, giving a general thanksgiving for all of them.

Abundant are the verses in the Bible which refer to thankfulness. Such passages are: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (**Col. 3:17**); "Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ to God, even the Father" (**Eph. 5:20**); "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward" (**1 Thess. 5:18**); and, ". . . in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (**Phil. 4:6**). The Psalms of the Old Testament radiate praise and thanksgiving.

Properly, emphasis should be placed upon the Christian's life, work, and worship; and while he should excel in all of these areas, gratitude must not be slighted for it too is an essential part of him. While we despise the ungrateful attitude which is so apparent in the world about us, how many of us as Christians express our gratitude to others? We are debtors to God and a niagra of praise and thanksgiving should come from our lips daily to Him. But we also owe much to our fellow-men, and especially Christians. Has the absence of gratitude had its effect upon us? Is it gradually fading out of our lives? Will it be a forgotten virtue in our posterity? Are we headed for a future generation of ingrates? Husbands, wives, children, parents, how long has it been since you sincerely expressed your gratitude for each other? Brethren, when have you expressed appreciation to the elders who serve well in the congregation where you are a member for their work? When was the last time that you expressed

thankfulness to faithful deacons for their untiring, and too often unnoticed, efforts? How long has it been since you gave that sound and faithful gospel preacher a word of encouragement or some expression of appreciation? Or, when have you told that godly brother or sister in Christ how much his or her faithfulness encourages you? A genuine word of thanks can make the day for one who may be despondent or discouraged.

In a world where selfishness and greed have made it cold and dark, Christians can yet kindle the fire of gratitude and light the lamp of thanksgiving so that warmth and light will again prevail. Appreciation can be learned by those who have never known it. A sincere "thank you" costs so little, takes such little time to say, but means so much. Let us thank God for every wonderful gift of His love. Let us thank others for all that they have done and are doing for us. And, I thank you so much for sparing a few moments of your time to reflect with me on gratitude. **Via - Truth Magazine XXIII: 15, pp. 251-252 April 12, 1979**

### **JOHN THE BAPTIST a "BAPTIST"**

After a century of contending that John the Baptist was a Baptist, and even a Missionary Baptist it is refreshing to have the

greatest southern Baptist of them all admit the truth. Billy Graham's answer to the following question speaks for itself. — **James P Needham**  
**MY ANSWER - By Billy Graham**

**QUESTION:** I have heard the argument that John the Baptist was a Baptist. Will you please tell me if he was, and if so, where do you find it in the Scriptures?

**ANSWER:** John was called "the Baptist" because he baptized with water. I do not think that many Baptists would say that he was the first member of the Baptist church.

The Baptists as a distinct denomination date from the time of the Reformation in the 16th century. The first Baptist Church in America was founded in Providence, R. I., in 1639 by Roger Williams.

Unfortunately, it is the tendency of some religious people to push back their origin to the Apostles of Christ, thus establishing that they are the "original" Christians, and the only real church.

The important thing, whether you be Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or whatever, is to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ. When we get to heaven, I don't think we will all have little "dog tags" telling which denomination we were members of on earth. When John saw in Revelation the great company of the redeemed, he asked who they were. The angel said: "These are they which have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb." The question which will be asked on entrance to heaven is not: "Of what sect are you?" but, "Have you been redeemed by the blood of Christ?"

**Via: Searching the Scriptures - Vol 1, Number 1 - January 1960**

## **A GLORIOUS CHURCH**

<p><b>JESUS LOVED &amp; GAVE HIMSELF</b>  <i>HE PROMISED - MT. 16:18          HE GAVE HIMSELF - EPH. 5:25          HE PURCHASED - ACTS 20:28          HE IS HEAD - EPH. 1:22,23; COL. 1:18          HE WILL SAVE - EPH. 5:23</i></p>		<p><b>HE SANCTIFIED &amp; CLEANSED</b>  <i>BY WORD - JO. 17:17; 15:3          WORD PREACHED - MK. 16:15,16; ACTS 2:36-41; 17          THE CORINTHIANS - 1 COR. 6:9-11; ACTS 18:8          WASHED - WATER &amp; BLOOD - ACTS 22:16; REV. 1:5          REDEEMED - 1 PET. 1:18,19</i></p>
<p><b>A GLORIOUS CHURCH</b>  <i>GORGEOUS - FREE FROM SIN - GAL. 1:3-5          NOT HAVING SPOT (WITHOUT MORAL BLEMISH)          OR WRINKLE (FLAWLESS) - JS. 1:27; 2 PET. 3:14          PROVISION TO MAINTAIN - 1 JO. 1:7          GLORY TO GOD - EPH. 3:21</i></p>	<p><b>SHOULD BE HOLY &amp; WITHOUT BLEMISH</b>  <i>HOLY (SEPARATE) - COL. 1:21,22; 3:12,13          WITHOUT FAULT - PHIL. 2:14-16          HE OUR EXAMPLE - 1 PET. 1:15,16          HOLY NATION - 1 PET. 2:9          TEMPLE IS HOLY - 1 COR. 3:16,17</i></p>	