

Weekly Action Report

Looking at Romans 1:18-31 *we explored the importance of both acknowledging God's qualities and being grateful for what He has done.* Paul goes to great lengths in the passage to point out the consequences the world suffers from when people refuse to do these two things. I pointed out that culture creates a sense of discontent through the overwhelming negativity that we are bombarded with from the media. And although a free market economy is an amazing thing, it depends on us being dissatisfied with what we currently have! Our pride also encourages us to believe that we deserve more from life than we currently have.

I offered **two tools** to help you grow in Godly gratitude. The first is to begin and end every day with giving thanks to God. Remember the story I told about the man who began every day by landing on his knees every morning as he got out of bed, giving God thanks for waking him up that day. The second tool is to mature into a person who can as

Paul writes, "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18). The key to moving towards this goal is believing what Paul and James both say about trials and challenging circumstances. They tell us that

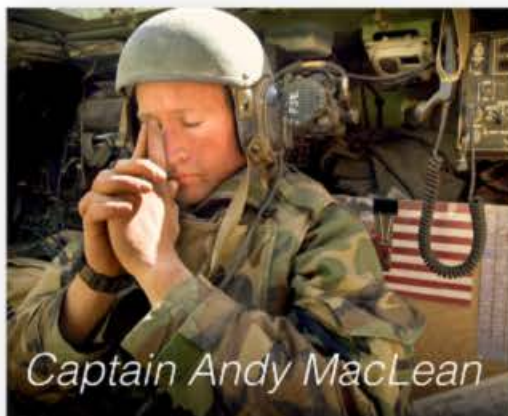
they "produce" something extraordinary in us as we walk with God through these times, knowing that these trials are God's great tools to develop the character we wouldn't get any other way (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4)!

People who are grateful for all that God has done for them are transformed into people who best express that same grace and forgiveness to others! And that is a "Public Faith" that God will use!

Overheard:

"God is more interested in your character than your comfort. God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy." –Rick Warren

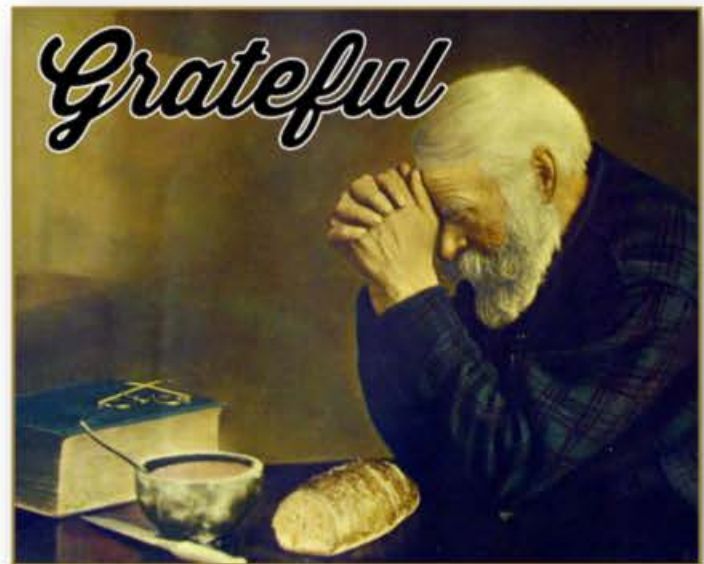
"The single, greatest act of worship you can render to God is to thank Him. It's the epitome of worship because through gratitude, we affirm God as the ultimate source of both trial and blessing—and acknowledge our humble acceptance of both."
–John MacArthur



Captain Andy MacLean

Talk it out: Make some time to sit down at a kitchen table, at a coffee shop, or at the beach and explore with someone the topic of gratitude and how it shapes our lives.

- What does it say about gratitude that one of the very first things we all teach children to say is, "Thank You"?
- Although it seems like an easy thing to do, what prevents us from giving God thanks at the start and end of every day? How can we get better at it?
- Day in and day out, what do you find that you are most thankful for?
- Who could you express your gratitude towards today that you haven't done for in a while?
- Most people appreciate it when others express their gratitude towards them, what form of gratitude most resonates with you: a gift? extra time together? a hug/pat on the back? words/ letter of appreciation?
- What can we learn about the human heart from the fact that although the Bible says, "give thanks in all circumstance" in challenging seasons of life we all struggle to do it?



"Grumbling and gratitude are, for the child of God, in conflict. Be grateful and you won't grumble. Grumble and you won't be grateful." – Billy Graham

Pray it in: Make some time this week to pray. Ask God to help you recall some of the ways that He has been good to you over the last few weeks, likewise ask Him to help you see how He is growing you through the trials too. In all these things give Him thanks. You may find as you pray the need to confess that have taken God's goodness for granted or that you have neglected to believe that He has your best in mind even as you work through current trials.

Store it up: Committing verses to memory is a key way to hold on to the truths of God that we need to be regularly reminded of. Here is a great one for this week: "6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, *with thanksgiving*, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6–7).