

The Poison of Ingratitude

Deuteronomy 8:6-20; Matthew 20:1-15; Luke 17:11-19

Stuart W. Bryan

I. But where are the nine? (cf. Lk 17:11-19)

Thankfulness is an essential virtue. Paul writes that we are *to give thanks in everything* (1 Thes 5:18). We are to be a people characterized by gratitude.

II. A Root of Bitterness (cf. Heb 12:15)

“looking carefully...lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled...” (12:15). Bitterness is simply a form of ingratitude and Paul tells us that it is contagious – by it *many become defiled*.

III. My power and might have gained me this wealth. (cf. Dt 8:17-18)

Ingratitude is *“forgetfulness of or poor return for kindness received.”* Note that ingratitude doesn’t have to do with how we _____ but how we _____.

Ingratitude is a condition of the heart that manifests itself in action. Ingratitude is *the belief that we deserve more than we have received and so we fail to give thanks for what we have received.*

Ingratitude is not a result of our _____. The source of our ingratitude is not *in our circumstances* but *in our hearts*. After all, it is not simply when we’re suffering that we’re tempted to ingratitude. We are often ungrateful even in the face of abundant blessing.

Note the case of Israel. Israel was on the cusp of entering into a blessed land, so God commands them to be sure to thank Him when they enter the land: *When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless Yahweh your God for the good land which He has given you* (Dt 8:10). Yet it was at this very point that they would be tempted to forget God and to be ungrateful: *Beware...lest your heart is lifted up, and you forget Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt...and you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth’”* (8:11,14,17). They would be tempted to forget that it was God who had brought them into the land and who had given them (18) the *power to get wealth*.

IV. Is your eye evil? (cf. Dt 15:9; 28:54,56; Pr 28:22)

The idea conveyed by the image of an “*evil eye*” is _____. Rather than imitating the Lord of all who is generous and open handed even to his enemies, those with an *evil eye* are selfish.

So ungrateful are the workers in the vineyard that they begrudge the owner his open-handed generosity. They felt that *they deserved something more* than the owner was giving them. They had an “*evil eye*.”

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Mt 6:22)

A man with a _____ eye is able to see the blessings that God has bestowed on him. The man with the _____ eye, however, cannot see the good that God has given.

V. Overflowing with Gratitude (cf. Col 2:7)

If we truly understand that any good we have received is a result of God’s grace and kindness, then we will be overflowing with gratitude. Paul urges the Colossians to be _____ *with thanksgiving* (2:7).

VI. Conclusion