

PRESCRIPTION NO. 2 - BE THANKFUL

- [Way of the Week #18 - ASK FOR HELP](#)

Part of being a real and authentic member of the church is to acknowledge your weaknesses and to be willing to ask for God's help and the support of others. None of us can go at it alone. Vulnerability is a sign of strength and a gift to others.

- **Pray Together**

Share requests with one another and spend time in prayer, bringing your joys, pains, strengths and weaknesses before God. Commit to supporting one another in prayer throughout the week.

- **Read: Colossians 3:15-17 (NRSV)**

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- **Discussion**

1. Scripture is chock full of directives to be thankful and grateful for all that God has provided for us. Paul's letter to the Colossae church is just one of many scriptural examples, just like the five zillion articles Drs. Trzeciak and Mazzarelli found on the topic when searching PubMed. If the Bible and scientific research tells us to make gratitude a "way of life" what makes thankfulness so hard for some of us?
2. Maybe being thankful isn't a challenge for you - what advice or tips can you share with others about becoming a more grateful person?
3. Part of our struggle to be grateful, beyond any genetic predisposition, is our lack of contentment with what we have. We live in a world that tells us we NEED more - more money, more everything ... we never have enough. We experience every day battles with envy, materialism, narcissism and cynicism — all of which happen to be societal and personal factors that act as a barrier to gratitude. The passage from Colossians tells us to be grateful on three occasions. The first and third reference Paul uses the word *eucharistos*, which is where we get the word "eucharist" (aka the celebration of the Lord's Supper). When Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper he gives thanks to God (*eucharistos*) before distributing the bread and wine to the disciples as they celebrated Passover together. The second usage, "gratitude" comes from the Greek word *charis* which means both "grace" and "gratitude." How does the passage from Colossians inform your understanding of thankfulness and gratitude. In what ways do these literal translations of the Greek text inform your understanding of thankfulness and gratitude?
4. Why do we want MORE when God has given us everything we need? How can you change this mindset in your life?
5. Drs. Mazzarelli and Treziack talk about relational gratitude in *Wonder Drug* and differentiate it from personal or generalized gratitude (see pp. 204-205); where we simply acknowledge the personal blessings we have observed in our own life. Paul, too, is talking about a relational form of gratitude as well. It is a gratitude that has been given to us, free of charge, through grace by God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Gratitude, in a Biblical sense, is acknowledging this relational gift of grace. It is a deeper (from the heart) and more intentional (think breaking of bread and distribution of the wine) form of thanksgiving that emanates from God's love for you and me. As followers of Christ we

are called to not only receive God’s grace but share this grace — with others. What ways can you share the gift of God’s grace with others (see **SINCERELY YOURS** pp. 207-209)? Who can you share a note or message of gratitude with? Will you make a “gratitude visit” or send a note or email to someone?

6. Spend a few minutes writing down the names of a few people you are grateful for and then note what it is about them, their character, a kind gesture or something else, you are thankful for about them. Commit to sharing this note of gratitude with the individual.

I am grateful for _____	Because they _____.

An aside: I consider myself appreciative of people in my life but I sometimes have a difficult time articulating it, with friends, colleagues and, yes, my spouse (here’s a cheap plug for our [Couple’s Book Group](#) and [Couple’s Night](#) - we will talk about this in greater length there!). In the meantime, consider asking “Siri,” “Google,” or “Alexa” to remind you at a specific time during the week (or just plug it into your calendar) to send an email, notecard, or text message to someone expressing your gratitude.

7. Prayers of Adoration or Thanksgiving are important in helping us practice “gratitude” in our lives and help us to connect with God on a more intimate level. These prayers do not come easy or naturally to us. Richard Foster, in his book *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*, reminds us, that this type of praying “must be learned. It does not come automatically. Notice our own children! They do not need to be trained to ask for things. To get empirical verification for this, all we need is one trip with our children to a shopping mall or supermarket! But to express thanks? That is a wholly different matter. What endless effort it takes to help our children cultivate a habit of gratitude. The same thing is true for us. Thanksgiving, praise, adoration – these are seldom the first words in our minds ... or on our lips. We need all the help we can get in order to move into a deeper, fuller adoring.” – Richard Foster; *Prayer*, p. 87.

How can you cultivate prayers of adoration and gratitude into your daily life? What challenges do you see in making this a part of your daily prayer life? If you don’t have a daily prayer life, how might you start one? What might this look like in your daily life? In what ways do you already do this and how do you do pray in this manner?

Here are some books on prayer and other spiritual disciplines that will help you learn to pray as you learn to be other-focused:

Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home by Richard Foster
Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foser
A Praying Life by Paul E. Miller