

Reasonable Gratitude

Philippians: Fighting for Joy

Online Only Sunday

2021-02-14 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on Philippians 4:4-7

CG Flow:

- Welcome
- Jesus Loves Me (Dave)
- Dismiss Sprouts
- Surrounded
- Preaching
- How Deep the Father's Love
- Homework
- Amazing Love (Dave)

Facebook Live Description:

Happy Valentine's Day! Join us ON ZOOM OR RIGHT HERE ON FACEBOOK LIVE THIS SUNDAY MORNING at 10am! We'll be back in person at the Boys & Girls Club of Manhattan next Sunday!

"Reasonable Gratitude"

Philippians 4:4-7

February 14, 2021

Ben Deaver

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WEB: <https://tallgrass.church>

INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/tallgrasschurch/>

YOUTUBE: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0drX4wrsE5n9yLza8HSNIQ>

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*Because God first loved you, you exist to love God and love your neighbors!*

## Welcome + Happy Valentine's Day + All the Things!

- I hope it's the thought that counts because I sent everyone a Valentine from Tallgrass Church but most of the envelopes are completely torn up and taped shut because sending the mints I intended to send would've increased the shipping cost by seven times.
- I loved thinking about and praying for each family I sent those Valentine's to.
- Super Bowl Score Prediction Winner—Josh Molina
- Galentine's Dinner at El Patron TOMORROW (Monday, February 15)
- Guys Group this Tuesday
- WOTY
- A Peacemaker's Checklist
- *Love the Other* Challenge

Pray for everyone!

**Philippians 1:3-11** <sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

## Practicing Gratitude in the Moment

What are you thankful for in this moment we're sharing together?

- Let's take a few minutes to make a list and then share that on the Zoom Chat when I give the green light.
- This can be very simple things that you typically take for granted like heat in your home, coffee in your cup, socks on your feet, vehicles in your garage, a computer or phone to Zoom on, etc.

## Jesus Loves Me (Dave)

## Dismiss Kids and intro Mingle

## Mingle Question(s):

How are you doing in your fight for joy these days?

Any reports on Word-of-the-Year or the Peacemaker's Checklist or the *Love the Other* Challenge?

## *Philippians: Fighting for Joy*

- How's everyone doing in the fight for joy?

## *Surrounded (Peter)*

## *What's a reasonable response to the world in which we live?*

- Monday morning discouragement and anxiety—I woke up Monday morning with a fresh wave of discouragement. I try to list out possible reasons for the discouragement. Here's my list from Monday morning:
  - Terrible Chiefs' loss in the Super Bowl
  - Difficult interactions with my kids
  - Sadness and disappointment about some friends moving on from Tallgrass Church
  - Wanting more people to be present at Central Gathering
  - Eating poorly the last several days...celebrating Maris' and my birthdays
  - 7 Pillars Group has just concluded and that created healthy weekly rhythms
  - Lack of fasting rhythm catching up to me
  - Not winning the night or the morning
  - Need a good ol' cry
  - It's just that time of year, post-Holidays blues!
  - I just turned 40 and am wrestling with certain disappointments
- As the week progressed, there were a few more things to add to this list of possible reasons for discouragement and anxiety:
  - More relational sadness and heaviness this week.
  - I've been thinking about all the good friends who've come and gone from Manhattan over the years.
  - Extreme prolonged cold
  - The reports about Ravi Zacharias' sexual abuse was confirmed and gotten even worse than previous reports I had read. BTW, this is one of the reasons I'm so thankful our church is doing things like Sexual Integrity: 101 and the 7 Pillars of Freedom group.
- So what's a reasonable response to the world in which I live? What's a reasonable response to the world in which YOU live?
- Paul has something to say about this.

**Philippians 4:4-7** <sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your **reasonableness** be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## *PRAY w/ palms up in surrender!*

Have everyone stay muted and pray on their own for a few moments?!

- Paul had to clear up the relational disharmony between Euodia and Synteché first before his first challenge to the whole church in Philippi.
- Remember, Paul is writing this from prison!
- His first challenge to the church is to...REJOICE! And he says it again, REJOICE!
- This is the only REASONABLE response to the Gospel.
- He's going to illuminate a pathway to be able to REJOICE, to FIGHT FOR JOY!

## Reasonable Gratitude

**Philippians 4:4-7** <sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your **reasonableness** be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

"reasonableness"—Fight for sanity. Fight for seeing reality.

**Cultivating Gratitude**—One of the ways we battle anxiety and become more reasonable is by cultivating gratitude. One of the key ways we fight for joy is by cultivating gratitude.

- This morning we'll link reasonableness with gratitude. We'll stay in these few verses for at least another week, maybe two.
- We'll start this morning considering what the Bible says about reasonable gratitude and conclude with some homework and what secular research says about reasonable gratitude.

**Jambo Moment**—I had a moment several days ago when Jambo walked right past my shins and I thought, "I have a domesticated animal in my house whom I love and has added so much to my quality of life."

- I tried to practice gratitude in that moment.
- I looked around the house and thought about how many amazing things we have that increase our quality of life that we can so easily take for granted.
  - Himalayan salt lamps
  - Essential oil diffusers
  - Multiple devices
  - Food and drink options
  - Blanket options
  - Hair stylist
  - Local gym
  - Local coffee shops
  - Comfy
- Do I FEEL gratitude for these things when I see them or interact with them? Do I FEEL gratitude for the people in my life when I think of them, or see them, or interact with them?
- Comparison is a contentment killer, a joy stealer, a thanksgiving thief!
- There are a thousand thanks to genuinely give for each moment of your life if you'll take the time and effort to cultivate gratitude. Take a moment. Look around you. Try to FEEL gratitude!
- Then to begin to consider, how much MORE the love of Christ should cause us to bask in gratitude!
- My go to prayer for people and for myself is Ephesians 3:14-21. I will pray this over us a little later.

Receiving the Good News of Jesus leads to a reasonable response to the world in which we live—gratitude!

## *Reasonableness or Graciousness?!*

- Did anyone read Philippians 4:4-7 in a different translation this morning?
- “reasonableness”—Fight for sanity. Fight for seeing reality.
  - “gentleness” NIV
  - “considerate” NLT
  - “moderation” KJV
  - “gentle spirit” NASB
  - “graciousness” CSB
- I’ve been chewing on this all week. “Reasonable” and “graciousness” just seemed so different to me. How can they both be accurate translations?!

Jesus tells a parable that I think helps us understand how this word “reasonable” can also be translated “graciousness” or “gentle spirit.”

## *Parable of the Unreasonable and Ungrateful and Ungracious Servant*

**Matthew 18:23-35** <sup>23</sup>“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup>And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. <sup>35</sup>So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

So, a reasonable response to the world in which we live, in which we have been forgiven our debts by our Creator, is gratitude to our Creator and graciousness to those around us! When the Gospel rightly grips your heart, the reasonable response is graciousness. They are one and the same!

## *How Deep the Father’s Love (Peter)*

## Homework:

Become more rooted in reality by cultivating gratitude!

Become a more reasonable and gracious person by cultivating gratitude!

1. Gratitude Journal
2. Gratitude Letter
3. Leverage Lent to create space and capacity for gratitude as we head towards Easter together!

## Secular Research

### 1. Gratitude Journal—"3 Good Things" Exercise

- Participants were asked to write down three things that went well each day and their causes every night for one week. In addition, they were asked to provide a causal explanation for each good thing.
- The "three good things" exercise produced a 2% increase in happiness in a week, a 5% increase after a month, and 9% at six months.
- So do a gratitude visit to boost your happiness and then to the "3 Good Things" exercise to maintain your happiness!
- Just start today! Write down three things you're thankful for today. The more specific, the better. Bask in that gratitude. Then take some time to share those three things with another person including why you're thankful for those three things.
- Depressive symptoms declined by 28% after one week, and continued to lower as it continued.
- *Count Your Blessings*—Pick a time every week to sit down and write about your blessings — reflecting on what went right or what you are grateful for. Sometimes it helps to pick a number — such as three to five things — that you will identify each week. As you write, be specific and think about the sensations you felt when something good happened to you.
- Jeff Huffman (Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School) performed a study of suicidal patients. He gave the patients nine different positive psychological exercises. Which were the most helpful exercises? The two best exercises were writing a "gratitude letter" and "counting [their] blessings." — <http://sonjalyubomirsky.com/files/2012/09/Huffman-et-al.-2014.pdf>

### 2. Gratitude Letter and Visit—Thank You Card

- Participants were given one week to write and then deliver a letter of gratitude in person to someone who had been especially kind to them but had never been properly thanked.
- Martin Seligman (University of Pennsylvania Psychologist and President of the APA in 1998) found that the "gratitude visit" immediately increased happiness by 10%. But these results cut in half in a week were totally gone in six months.
- Paul took great pains to send letter to groups of people and individuals. If he can do it, then we can do it.
- Letter writing has so many beautiful benefits. Even just making you slow down and put pen to paper can be so good for us these days.
- If you can't deliver the letter in person and would like to mail it but don't want to get a stamp, bring it next Sunday morning or get it to me some other way and I will put a stamp on it for you.
- Let's take 5 minutes right now to begin writing thank you letters to people whom God brings to mind.

## Five Minutes for Thank You Letters!

There's boatloads more research out there that you can refer to. But we don't just rely on research. And we don't just give thanks in general. We trust the Word of God and we give thanks to God Himself!

### 3. Leverage Lent

- Leverage Lent to create space and capacity for gratitude as we head towards Easter together.
- Have Maris share.
- Three options for Lent:
  - Pray as you go: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/> // <https://pray-as-you-go.org/article/growing-back-better-a-lent-retreat-2021/> //
  - YouVersion: <https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/> //
  - Lent in light of pandemic: [http://thewell.intervarsity.org/dear-mentor/dear-mentor-pandemic-lent?fbclid=IwAR3DycHvhRUS3SRGXPqXggM07ZTlPmM8xk7bHBwwUiF\\_GMtKrZ7ic7FqcY8](http://thewell.intervarsity.org/dear-mentor/dear-mentor-pandemic-lent?fbclid=IwAR3DycHvhRUS3SRGXPqXggM07ZTlPmM8xk7bHBwwUiF_GMtKrZ7ic7FqcY8)

### 4. BONUS: A Thousand Thanks Challenge

- Take one of the items you mentioned earlier and tackle this challenge.

*PRAY!*

**Ephesians 3:14-21** <sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

*Amazing Love (Dave)*