

Less Thinking, More Thanking

Sermon Title: **Less Thinking, More Thanking**

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Speaker: **Stephanie Bronner**

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Stephanie Bronner: Being grateful can also add to the longevity of what God is doing for you.

Female: You are listening to BrothersoftheWord.com. This is the sermon titled, "Less Thinking, More Thanking" by Stephanie Bronner. This sermon is number 6564.

(Music Playing: 00:00:17 - 00:00:28)

And now for, "Less Thinking, More Thanking."

Stephanie Bronner: We thank you for joining us today at Brothers of the Word because brother and sister, you need the word. Hallelujah. We thank you so much everyone who has come out to celebrate life and health and being able to move. We're thankful for those who are watching online at BrothersoftheWord.com as well as on Facebook live. We thank you tonight. We want you to stay tuned because we're going to give you something that will turn that frown upside down because we're going to talk about gratitude tonight. How many of you glad to be in the house of the Lord one more time? Hallelujah, hallelujah.

So in Pastor C. Elijah's honor, I will give you just a little bit of humor. It's one I like. I hope you all will like it but I know I do. The title, "The surgeon and his wife." A middle-aged surgeon and his wife are walking along a sandy beach when they noticed a brass lamp protruding from the ground. The wife picks it up and gently wipes it and immediately sprouts from the lamp is a genie. You each may have three wishes, the genie says. The surgeon allows his wife to go first. She asked for a house on the cliff side nearby overlooking the beach and suddenly, a mansion appears in the distance. She then asked for an immense wealth amount. This too is also granted. Finally, as a 50-year-old, she asked to be free of all illness for as long as she lives. This is also granted. And as a token of gratitude, the genie transports them to the doorstep of the cliff-side mansion. The genie then turns to the surgeon and inquires what his wishes are. The man then states, "I like to have a wife that is 20 years younger than myself." The genie nods and makes the surgeon 70 years old. Right? Yeah, you can relate. So he should have been thankful for his wife that he had, right? Okay, because it changed him not her.

So tonight's sermon topic is, "Less thinking, more thanking." Okay? Tonight's sermon topic is, "Less thinking, more thanking." So C. Elijah Bronner is the wonderful co-pastor that speaks on Thursday nights and in 2013, he spoke on this very topic in one of his series. It's called, "Developing winning habits." And in this series, one of those habits is number seven and that's gratitude. And in that, he said that gratitude grows and it is cultivated as well as criticism and complaining grows and cultivates and it can happen faster if you let it. So I wanted to give you an example of something that happened to me when I was standing in the Walmart line. I'm sure all of you can relate.

So I'm standing in line and in the African-American community, I'm going to be very politically correct, the lines were very long. And knowing that I still had time, I was not in a rush, I didn't have anything really to complain about but I was a little perturbed and agitated that I had to wait in such a long line. Like it was like in the aisle, like down the aisle like where them jewelry is. I was like in that part. And the lady who was like two people ahead of me, she decided that she wanted to vent. And in my standing there, I'm hearing her give these fragrant compound curse words and doing certain things on her face and her neck and her body and it was a little entertaining so of course, I started listening. I'm like, "Well, let's look at this. Look at look at, look at look, at look at this. Look at this."

So she continues on and as she's two minutes in and I stood there and I was like, "You're right. This is an extremely long line." Yeah, why don't they have more registers open? This really is ridiculous. I'm not -- look customer service, they standing back there. They aren't doing nothing. That is like forever. Why are they not on the register?" I thought to myself I was like, "Oh snap. Okay." So I said, "Oops" and I just acted like that I've forgotten something on the aisle and I just pulled out of line and went on. I had to go on like shake myself because I started feeling some kind of way like, "Okay do I need to put all my groceries back and have an attitude and go tell the people over in the customer service, you have just lost my business because this is ridiculous."

I took on the attitude that this lady had and I don't even know her. So I had to go back into the aisles, go down the noodle aisle and look at some things and get my mind right because whatever she had grown was just growing in me so it's easy for it to grow and cultivate. So I had to change what I was growing. So in the next time I got back in line which was even farther back, I said, "Okay, you know what, let me change this. Okay. I'm thankful that I can stand. Okay. I don't have any aches and pains. I'm fine. You know what, I've got a buggy full of groceries and there's somebody in line who's worried about paying for them. Lord, thank you that I can pay for my groceries without worrying about it because the same price of this bread is the same price somebody else is paying for the same bread. So then I said, "Okay Lord, you know, I thank you that guess what, I got my headphones in my purse" so I pulled out my headset and I started watching a YouTube video. I had to come out of what somebody else was cultivating for me and become more grateful.

So it's an attitude of gratitude that you're supposed to have even though the people around you can change your attitude. You have to be in charge of what you are cultivating. So AV, if you could pull up the first slide, if you could pull that up for me because we're going to be talking from Colossians Chapter 3 Verse 15 and there was a quote as they're pulling it up. There's a quote that I saw online and it says, "Gratitude turns what we have into enough."

Research shows that adulating and attitude of gratitude simply expressing appreciation and be more thankful can measurably improve your overall well-being. For example, studies prove that gratitude can increase happiness, reduce depression and strength and resiliency. Grateful people often experience reduced blood pressure, less chronic pain, increased energy, even longer lives. People who purposely express your gratitude report higher self-esteem from those who don't and they're more likely to help others. A pro-social behavior also linked to greater happiness. People who capture grateful thoughts before bed sleep better than those who don't.

Why so many positive changes? Because gratitude actually rewires our brains kick-starting the production of dopamine and serotonin. Like antidepressants, these feel-good neurotransmitters activate the bliss center of the brain creating

feelings of happiness and contentment. This appears to be self-perpetuating. Research suggests that with regular practice, you will train your prefrontal cortex to better appreciate and retain positive experiences and thoughts and to deflate the negative ones.

Here are a few simple ways to deliberately cultivate that attitude of gratitude. Celebrate minor accomplishments. Think about what you have rather than dwelling on what you don't. Tell the people in your life something you appreciate about them. Tell yourself too. Volunteer. Hold the door for a stranger or simply smile more and you'll probably feel better as kindness and giving are connected to gratitude. Similar positive brain changes can occur from regular meditation and mindfulness. Keep a daily gratitude journal using an old-fashioned notebook or a high tech app (ph). The science is clear. Give gratitude a go. You'll be thankful you did.

Stephanie Bronner: So in this video, it basically gives us a rundown of ways to have more gratitude. When you have an attitude of gratitude, you celebrate minor accomplishments which is savoring positive experiences. Number two, be thankful for what you have and not for what you don't. Number three, tell people in your life something that you actually appreciate about them as well as tell yourself. Number four, volunteer. Do something kind for someone else. Five, smile more. So I believe that smiling is like breaking off a piece of the Holy Spirit and giving it to someone. It is free and it is accessible for everybody. Six, pray or meditate. When you spend time with God, it gives you a whole new perspective on your life. And seven, keep a gratitude journal. It's very key to write those things down that God has done for you because there are times in your life when situations might hit you. You just might need something to look back at to remind you of the goodness of God.

So, if you could AV, I have a slide, it's a picture. Slide number two. So if you think about the words, think and think. There's only one difference in those two words and that is one letter in the very center, the 'i' and the 'a'. Think and thank.

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So when you're trying to go from less thinking to more thanking, you have to go less of the 'i' and give more of the 'a'. And I want

you to associate 'a' with the alpha and the omega. He is the beginning and the end. So when you're in the middle of a situation that doesn't seem positive, I want you to realize that if it's not positive, then God isn't finished. I want you to know that the alpha has his hand in everything. He is the creator of all and he has a finished product. The word says, "He knows the plans that he has for you, plans to prosper you, to keep you."

So on the second slide that he brought up, it is the picture of the letter 'i'. If you will just look at it, it has the image of a single person. And many times, we bring up the word 'i' and it is all about me, me, me. It has nothing to do with the father. It has nothing to do with the son. It has nothing to do with the Holy Ghost. So when you're trying to go from less thinking and more thanking, you can then say, "I'm no longer going to focus on the 'i' because I have no arms when I do that. I have no motion when I do that. I have no legs. It's just my head trying to maneuver this body that God has given me. I have to think more on the 'a' which is the alpha and you have to also think about it in a sign language, when you do the 'i', it is the smallest of the motions when you're doing sign language. This is the 'i' but when you do the 'a', it is strong. It is solid. It is the alpha. It encompasses all the fingers of the hand. It has strength. So when you're changing from doing less thinking to doing more thanking, I want you not to do the 'i'. I want you to do the 'a' and be thankful. Okay? Amen.

So there's a story I'd like to tell you. So it is a story about gratitude. A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat at his feet. He held up a sign which read, "I am blind. Please help." There were only a few coins in the hat, spare change from folks as they hurried past. A man was walking by and he took a few coins from his pocket, dropped them into the hat then he took the sign away from the boy turned it around and wrote some words. Then he put the sign back in the boy's hand so that everyone who walked by could see these new words. Soon the hat begin to fill up and a lot more people were giving more money to the blind boy. That afternoon, the man who had changed the sign on his way to work returned to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and ask, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?" The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way. I wrote, today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it." Both signs spoke the truth but the first sign simply said

the boy was blind which is what we deal with, we deal in truth. While the second sign conveyed to everyone walking by how grateful they should be to have sight.

Simply put, gratitude is a habit. It is a way of looking at the world and all the good things in it with a feeling of appreciation regardless of whether or not your current situation is to your liking. Gratitude is a heart-centered approach to being at peace with yourself and with all that you have. When you practice this feeling of gratitude, it attracts even more things into your life for which to be grateful. Less thinking, more thanking. Say that out loud. Less thinking, more thanking. Less thinking, more thanking.

This is also illustrated in Luke Chapter 17 starting with Verse 12. AV, I've got a video that I like to play. It is the story of the 10 lepers. It's very short.

The thankful leper. This is Jesus who is the son of God and the savior of the world. Jesus did many amazing things while he was on Earth. One day, he was traveling to Jerusalem and was going through a village when 10 men who had leprosy came to him. Now in the time Jesus lived, leprosy was a terrible sickness that could be caught very easily. Because of this, people with leprosy were sent outside of the places that they live. They were called unclean and no one wanted to be close to them. But when these men who had leprosy saw Jesus coming, they called out to him and said, "Jesus have mercy on us" and Jesus saw them and said, "Go show yourself to the priest." And as they went, they were healed and had leprosy no more.

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When one of the men saw that he was healed, he came back to Jesus shouting, "Praise God! He thanked Jesus for what he had done. Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal 10 men? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give glory to God except this Samaritan?" Then Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you." And so the man was healed because he had faith and he was thankful for what Jesus had done for him.

Stephanie Bronner: So in the other half of this wonderful parable that was told, that was actually seen in the word of God. Jesus made a

statement at the end. It was very impactful to me because he said, "Your faith has made you whole." So in my mind, Jesus is intentional so I thought well, what if the situation of the other nine meant that they were healed for a season but because they were not thankful, it was temporary? What if they were not whole? What if the leprosy or another type of disease would return to them because Jesus said on other occasions, "Go and sin no more lest another more horrible thing come upon?" He was very intentional with his words.

So being thankful to God for the things you have is vital for God to continue to bless you for the completion of what he started in your life. I'm sure that leper was very thankful that he went back because the others, I'm sure they were excited. They were probably glad to know they could be back in civilization. They were glad to know that they could go to the priest and show the priest, "Hey, we no longer have the sores. Look, my hand is whole again. I don't have the things on my face. I can take these bandages off of me. I am no longer unclean. I can now be put back in society." But the one leper said, "Let me go back and thank you because that's not something you had to do. We asked you and you did it."

So being grateful can also add to the longevity of what God is doing for you. So I would advise you to go back and listen to Pastor C. Elijah's whole sermon because it was 10 amazing habits that were "Developing Winning Habits" that he talked on. And like I said, number seven was gratitude. So within that, number one, he said, "Don't compare in thinking less about what you have. You should actually stop comparing and you will live better. Comparing yourself to the Jonases, looking back at your high school situation thinking that the high schoolers that you went to school with would look at you and say that you're successful because this person has less than you or that person has less than you or you're looking at the person on the street and saying, "I have more than them." You don't know the heart that God is looking at. Man judges the outward appearance. God looks at the heart. So it's important that we not compare.

And let me tell you something that Teddy Roosevelt said. "Comparison is the thief of joy. Don't focus on what you don't have and don't focus on what your friends do have. Focus instead on where you are, what you do well and who you are in this very moment. Be thankful for that.

So AV, if you can, please go ahead to video number three.

Say, thank you for grace. Thank you for mercy. Thank you for understanding. Thank you for wisdom. Thank you for empowerment (ph). Thank you for your love. Thank you for kindness. Thank you for humility. Thank you for peace. Thank you for prosperity. Say, thank you in advance for what's already yours. That's how I live my life. That's why I am one of the reasons why I am today. Say, thank you in advance for what is already yours. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you for this day. Thank you for every moment that led to this thing. Thank you for the hard times. They made me appreciate the good times. Thank you for the lessons. They were needed for my development. Thank you for my eyes. They get to witness the miracles of today and tomorrow. Thank you for everything I take for granted. Thank you for all of my blessings. Thank you for my drive. Thank you for my spirit. Thank you for my strength. Thank you for giving me the courage to fight through the hard times. Thank you for the people in my life, those I love and those I'm learning from. Thank you for it all. Thank you. Thank you. It's the key that opens the door to instant happiness.

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Unlocks the door to everything we are really seeking in life, happiness and contentment. Think about it. No matter what you say you want. Money, richness, health, to help others. Why do you really want it? When you drill deep down, the only reason anyone wants anything is the feeling we believe we will get from having it. That all boils down to happiness and contentment. And the truth is, we can have it now if we are grateful. And if you get quiet, get away from the noise of the world and think for a moment about what you could be grateful for, I'm sure you can find plenty (ph). Be grateful there's food on the table. Air in your lungs, life in your body. Get grateful that you have opportunity, opportunity to take your life to a whole another level. So decide right now as you are going to live your dreams and never settle until you do.

Get grateful for the middle strength you've been given to survive the hard times. Get grateful for your lands if you have them.

Many are not so blessed. Your eyesight if you have them. Many are not so blessed. Your hearing if you have it. Many are not so blessed. The health you do have. Many are on worst positions. Get grateful for that one person who has had an impact in your life or many people if you are so blessed. Then grateful you can choose to be that person for someone else, the one that makes a difference in someone else's life no matter how small. Get grateful you get to experience this magical universe.

Today, look for miracles. I guarantee if you are looking, you will see them. There are unlimited things to be grateful for. Open your eyes. Unlock your amazing life. It's ready for you right now. Thank you for this day. Whatever it brings whether a challenge I need to grow, a lineup to teach me patience and unexpected blessings. Every moment of joy, whenever today brings, thank you. Whatever it brings, I pray I have enough presence in each moment to know that no circumstance is my life, no high or low no event, no thing is my life. Life is energy and I know I'm so much more than my physical body. Thank you for my ability to love to give to others my authentic love and kindness without expecting anything in return. Thank you for my strength. Thank you for my presence. Thank you for my ability to attract only the things and people that are in harmony with what I need in my life. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for this day. Whatever it brings.

Stephanie Bronner: Awesome. See what I'm saying? Didn't that just make you feel good to know and feel the happiness that is hours already. All you're doing is thinking about the things that you already have. Not even the things that you know you will receive, the things you have right now. COVID-19 has changed everything about our lives and this holiday season that happens this month, the birth of Jesus, Christmas, is going to be very different but I want you to sit and know that God is still in the blessing business. That just because you don't get the things that you thought you were going to get, you are still so blessed. You're overflowing with God's grace, his mercy, his favor, your health, your strength, your life, breath, the ability to move and have your being. It is so much that we should be thankful for and this message is intended to help you realize it before the depression hits you. This message is to be there for you to help someone else before the depression hits them. So also, I want you to realize that gratitude gives you better health.

These are some things that Pastor C. Elijah mentioned in his series on “Developing Winning Habits.” Gratitude gives you better health. Your thoughts are powerful. Gratitude gives you more energy. It will fill up your tank. Gratitude helps you to sleep longer and better. Count your blessings instead of counting sheep. Gratitude gives you better perspective about life. You are excited to see what else God will do. If it is still negative, then God isn’t finished. When you see how good God has been, it should remind you of how good God will be again.

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And finally, I want you to realize that everything you have in your hand is already a blessing from God and we need to be thankful. God bless you. Thank you so much for joining us today at Brothers of the Word. You can e-mail or send this message to a friend free on BrothersoftheWord.com. We thank you for joining us. And in this holiday season, we ask that you understand you are blessed beyond measure and we want your mouth and your heart to be thankful. Thank you for joining us again at Brothers of the Word because brother and sister, you need the word. Hallelujah!

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