

Humbly Grateful or Grumbly Hateful?

By Sheila Lutz

Notes: ESV Bible was used for answers

Possible answers to questions are in purple. Underlined sections of Scripture contain the answers. Additional texts, questions, and information are in red.

Lord, I want to be humbly grateful for the sacrifice at the cross that You made for my salvation, yet I'm not sure how "humbly" plays out in my day to day living. Am I grumbly hateful when it comes to situations where I must forgive readily and live joyfully? Lead me Lord, as I study Your Word each day — and especially this day. Amen.

True stories:

Lauren had prayed for a promotion, or at least recognition, for years. Finally, her prayers were answered, but she was placed with new co-workers — one who ignores her and the other who flies off the handle for no reason.

Single Anitra, age 45, is finally getting married. Her fiancé has planned a destination wedding for Valentine's week, but their flight is delayed over and over — finally rescheduled for 2 p.m. the next day — the exact time he had booked the wedding chapel.

Cheyann's best friend once gave her Bible based advice about forgiveness. Today she came to Cheyann for advice: forgive or not forgive. Cheyann repeated the reminders she had previously received, but — surprise! — the words were not accepted. Her friend became angry and said Cheyann's failure to agree with her was mean. Cheyann was at a loss.

Hannah can't understand it. Those younger women offered to help with the kitchen duties at church, but they keep changing things. Don't they know that her group has done this for years and knows the best way? Yet, she wants and needs their help

Can you identify with any of these women? **Answers will vary.**

What is the likely outcome in each of these situations? **Possible answers:**

Lauren — dissatisfaction, poor job performance, anger, resentment

Anitra — doubts about marriage, starting off marriage with anger or sadness

Cheyann — depression, sadness, anger, resentment, low self-esteem

Hannah — confusion, anger, either pride or low self esteem

Can you be humble without being grateful? Can you grumble without being unkind? Without sinning?

For this study we will use the following definitions:

"humble" — as not thinking yourself better than others

"grateful" — appreciative of benefits received; affording pleasure or contentment

"grumble" — murmur or mutter of discontent (especially between the teeth); growl; complain

"hateful" — dislike intensely; detest; be unwilling to do something

Do any of these situations involve “righteous anger?”

According to some, humility without gratitude is false pride. Grumbling (definitions above) means intense dislike (hate), and therefore is not what God teaches in his word.

HUMBLY GRATEFUL — GOD’S WAY

GUIDE MY WORDS AND ACTIONS, O LORD!

Proverbs 15:1 A soft word turns away wrath.

Psalms 37:3 and 27 Praise the Lord and do good

Psalms 143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

CHOOSE CONTENTMENT OVER CONTENTIOUSNESS

Does what others do determine your mood? Why? Often we let our feelings govern our actions rather than rely on the Word to quiet our heart and act in love.

Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Hebrews: 13:5–6

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” ⁶ So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

BE PREPARED FOR THE NEGATIVE STUFF

Psalms 119:143

Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight.

1 John 3:11–24 (especially 13 & 18)

Love One Another

¹¹ For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

¹² We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

¹⁹ By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰ for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

I Peter 4: 12–19 (if time is short, check verses 12, 13, and 19)

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory^[b] and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good

PUT THE BEST CONSTRUCTION ON EVERYTHING

Stay in Peace (peace is power)

Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.

I Peter 3:8–17 (key verse 11)

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For

“Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

We don't just receive peace; we have to actively pursue it in faith!

RELY ON THE POWER OF PRAYER

Learn the power of Prayer — tell God you need Him. Listen to the Holy Spirit when He prompts you.

What is the pattern of prayer for many Psalms?

Check out Psalms 4, 5, 13, 35, 64, 71, 102 (If time is short look at the beginning and ending verses of Psalms 4 and 5.)

What things do you find to replace anger, sorrow, or complaints in these passages?

These Psalms all begin with anger, sorrow or complaint and end with praise to the Lord. Psalm 4:4 — Be angry but sin not. Tell God the negatives of your life and then pray the positive with joy, peace, recognition of God's power, singing, trust in God, rejoicing, telling others about God, exultation, taking refuge in God, praise with instruments, voice, and speaking with the mouth and the soul, thankfulness for salvation, children, and security.

James 5:13–16

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Philippians 4:4–9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Ephesians 3:14–19

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 6:10–20 (key verse 18)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the

breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

THINK ABOUT OTHERS

As part of the body of Christ, we need other people, but getting along with others isn't always easy. Do we always forgive readily or think of others before self? *Answers will vary.*

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses

Proverbs 19:11 Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

James 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger

LIVE TO SERVE

Matthew 16:24–26 ²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

John 12:24a–26

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Psalms 37:3–9

³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

⁴ Delight yourself in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.

⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
and your justice as the noonday.

⁷ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,
over the man who carries out evil devices!

⁸ Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

⁹ For the evildoers shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

Romans 12:1–2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,^[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world^l but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Matthew 6:33–34

³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

BE OBEDIENT

1 Peter 1:13–23 ¹³Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” ¹⁷And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, ¹⁸knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you ²¹who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. ²²Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

Psalms 119: 9–16 AND 169–176

⁹How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

¹⁰With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not wander from your commandments!

¹¹I have stored up your word in my heart,

that I might not sin against you.

¹²Blessed are you, O LORD;

teach me your statutes!

¹³With my lips I declare

all the rules of your mouth.

¹⁴In the way of your testimonies I delight

as much as in all riches.

¹⁵I will meditate on your precepts

and fix my eyes on your ways.

¹⁶I will delight in your statutes;

I will not forget your word.

- ¹⁶⁹ Let my cry come before you, O LORD;
give me understanding according to your word!
- ¹⁷⁰ Let my plea come before you;
deliver me according to your word.
- ¹⁷¹ My lips will pour forth praise,
for you teach me your statutes.
- ¹⁷² My tongue will sing of your word,
for all your commandments are right.
- ¹⁷³ Let your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.
- ¹⁷⁴ I long for your salvation, O LORD,
and your law is my delight.
- ¹⁷⁵ Let my soul live and praise you,
and let your rules help me.
- ¹⁷⁶ I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant,
for I do not forget your commandments.

MICAH 6:8 IS THE Key verse for the study.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Armed with the Word, how can Lauren, Anitra, Cheyann, and Hannah be humbly grateful?

How can you turn your grumblings to gratitude? _____

Answers will vary. Possible answers: prayer, praise, sing, make music, tell others of God's love, keeping a watch over your mouth until you can speak in love, delight in what God teaches, seek God first, choose to be happy, read and meditate on God's Word, trust God and His power, find something good to do for others, speak softly, pursue peace, exercise self-control, remembering they are forgiven children of God too.

In Your Word, You have shown me, O Lord, what is good. May I ever be just, speak and sing joyfully, love mercy and kindness over selfish gain, and ever — oh, ever — walk humbly with You, my Lord and my God. Amen.

Closing Song: "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," (LSB #702; TLH #394) or "My Faith Looks Trustingly" (LW #378)