**Vocation IS Ministry**

*Our abilities, whatever they may be, are God-given. Our work, no matter what we do,*

*matters to God. Our jobs, well done, show our love for others.*

**Episode 10: Grateful for Work**

“He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things he has not, but rejoices for those which he has,” Epictetus. “Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others,” Roman historian Cicero. Seneca, Cicero’s contemporary, adds, “He who receives benefit with gratitude repays the first installment on his debt.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer—wrote, “In an ordinary life we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich.”

“Androcles & the Lion,” *The Game*, Peggy Noonan, Roger Scruton, and Louis C.K.

The Two Pillars of Life (diagram) Two Foundation Stones of Life (diagram)

Grace, Thanksgiving, Giving: The Importance of Original Languages

* God's grace (charis)
* results in our thanksgiving (eucharistia)
* motivating us to gift-giving (charisma).

2 Corinthians 8-9

* [8:1] . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . [9:15]
* “Grace” “Grace”
* “The Grace of God” “Grace (thanks) be to God”
* 8.1 Grace of God; 8.2 Grace = “joy”; 8.4 Grace = “favor”; 8.6 An act of Grace; 8.7 An act of Grace; 8.9 Grace of Christ; 8.16 Grace = “thanks”; 8.19 An act of Grace; 8.20 Grace = “gift”
* 9.5 Grace = “gift” (2x); 9.6 Grace = bounty (2x) = “Confession”; 9.7 Grace giver is “hilarious”; 9.8 Grace is lavished, super-blessing; 9.9 Grace given freely; 9.11 Grace = “Communion” (eucharis); 9.12 Grace = “Communion” (eucharis); 9.13 Grace = “Confession”; 9.14 Grace of God; 9.15 Grace = “Thanks” for the “Gift”

Questions to Ask:

1. How can we express our gratitude? (service, lavish, every good work)
2. How much should we give? (excessive, superfluous, superabundant)
3. How do we take communion with gratitude? (eucharis)
4. How should we sing with gratitude? (confession, doxology)
5. How should my emotion change toward gratitude? (begging, with hilarity)

The quotes noted on top, front are attributed to these historical figures, accessed in various references.  In this case, the statements are taken from Robert A. Emmons’ book *Thanks: How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier* (p. 15). Some claim <$$ can bring happiness [15]. YouTube videos of C K’s stand-up or late-night-talk-show appearances reminds us that we expect too much and are too little thankful.[1]

To be thankful is to acknowledge someone outside of ourselves. What we need is confession, the essence of the word for “thankfulness” in Hebrew. [2] We tend to think of going to confession to ask forgiveness for sin or giving a confession of guilt before a court of law. But The First Testament term emphasizes a declaration of God’s greatness. Exaltation, praise, or glorification remembering God and His works is a confession.[3] Our confession is to be made among the nations and in large assemblies of people, with song.[4] Confessional praise was to be wholehearted with a right mind continually.[5] Indeed Jesus came from Judah’s line, whose name means “to confess.”[6]

G. C. Berkouwer takes gratitude to its ultimate level: “The essence of Christian theology is grace, the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude.” Doing right is proper confessional reaction. Doing right is based on remembering we live before Another. Doing right is a small response to a large endowment. 2 Corinthians 9:15 summarizes what should be our singular feedback, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” R. C. Sproul answers, “Once we have received this grace of eternal life in Jesus Christ, we should be willing to crawl over broken glass to honor and praise Him for that grace.”[7]

Ecclesiastes compares “life as a gift of God” with those who only see things “under the sun.”  The refrain which runs throughout the book[[8]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftn8) establishes the baseline barometer for human purpose.  Solomon calls to his readers for a shift of mindset.[[9]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftn9) For believers in The Personal Eternal Triune Creator, mindset shift is first upward, then inward, then outward. Even “secularists” find benefit in God’s law. [14]

To acknowledge life as a gift of God, one’s whole focus and concentration must be moved from ourselves to One outside ourselves.  Disciples of Jesus as Lord bow the knee to their Sovereign Savior both in response to Who He is as well as what He has done.  Appreciation is born out in worship.[[10]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftn10) Our love for God through others[[11]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftn11) brings joy in our God-given lives.  “Androcles and The Lion” teaches the lesson: Thanksgiving in this life begins by looking up, changing within, [[12]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftn12) and giving out.[[13]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftn13)

[[1]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-crawling-over-broken-glass/#_ftnref1) Excerpts of C.K.’s humor can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOtEQB-9tvk.

[2] To know, acknowledge, declare, praise, to give thanks; from the Hebrew word *yadah.*

[[3]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-crawling-over-broken-glass/#_ftnref3) Psalm 89:5; cf. Psalms 105, 106, 145.

[[4]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-crawling-over-broken-glass/#_ftnref4) 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 35:18; 28:7 and 109:30.

[[5]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-crawling-over-broken-glass/#_ftnref5) Psalm 86:12; 119:7; 30:12

[[6]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-crawling-over-broken-glass/#_ftnref6) Ralph H. Alexander.  1980.  yadah.  *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.*(Moody): 1:364-66.

[[7]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-crawling-over-broken-glass/#_ftnref7) R. C. Sproul.  2009. *Romans: The Righteous Shall Live By Faith*. (Crossway): 203.

[[8]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftnref8) 2:24-26; 3:13-14; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:9.

[[9]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftnref9) “Mindset” is defined as a pattern of thinking established through habitual practice of a philosophy.

[[10]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftnref10) “Worship” is the total response of the total person to our Lord Jesus.  “In all things He shall receive the preeminence” (Col 1:18) who has “reconciled all things to Himself” (1:20) that we should do “all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (3:17).

[[11]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftnref11) Mark 12:30-31.

[[12]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftnref12) For example, 2 Kings 23:24-25.

[[13]](http://warpandwoof.org/biblical-theological/thanksgiving-androcles-and-the-lion/#_ftnref13) Gratitude signals acknowledgement that I am responsible to someone else.  Christians practice thanks through prayer (Ps75:1) in all things (Eph 5:20). Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-36; 2 Thess 2:15-17.

[14] https://www.cornellclaritas.com/blog/cornells-secular-sabbath

[15] https://www.cbsnews.com/news/money-income-happiness-how-much-do-you-need-study-empower/