

POSTURE OF GRATITUDE

30 January 2026

SUMMARY:

This message explores the relationship between expectation and gratitude following a 21-day prayer journey. Rosemary Downes emphasizes that expectation is not merely a mood or vague optimism, but rather a posture of readiness for God's work at any moment. Drawing from Mary's Magnificat and various scriptural examples, the message challenges believers to maintain continuous gratitude regardless of circumstances. The message reveals that gratitude is not dependent on outcomes but rooted in who God is and His faithfulness. Rosemary Downes shares personal experiences of becoming more aware of God's presence and encourages developing daily habits of thankfulness, which decreases fear and anxiety while strengthening faith. The message concludes with a call to discipleship—not just hearing the word, but actively becoming people characterized by gratitude.

KEY POINTS

- Expectation is a posture of readiness, not passive hope, believing God will act at any moment
- We must give God our plans for the year rather than fitting Him into our agenda
- Mary's Magnificat demonstrates the proper response of gratitude and praise when God works
- Gratitude should be deeply rooted in us, becoming part of our spiritual DNA
- God holds all things together, both physically (laminin protein in cross shape) and spiritually
- We cannot manufacture joy and positivity in our own strength. It must come from God within us
- Creating small daily habits of gratitude rewires our brains and strengthens our immune systems
- God sees us individually, like He saw Zacchaeus, and wants relationship with us
- The tragedy of the nine lepers who didn't return to thank Jesus shows the importance of gratitude
- Discipleship means doing the work to become what we hear preached, not just receiving religious entertainment

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

- Luke 1:46-55 (Mary's Magnificat)
- Habakkuk 3:17-19 (Rejoicing even when circumstances fail)
- Psalm 23 (The Lord is my shepherd)
- Colossians 1:17 (In Him all things hold together)
- James 1:17 (All good gifts come from the Father of lights)
- Psalm 107:8-9 (Give thanks to the Lord)
- Psalm 104:5 (Enter His gates with thanksgiving)
- Philippians 4:6-7 (Present requests with thanksgiving)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (Give thanks in all circumstances)
- Luke 17:11-19 (The ten lepers)

QUOTES

- Expectation is not just a mood. It is not vague optimism or passive hope. It is the posture of someone who believes that when God speaks, something will happen.
- I can live a day feeling like God isn't with me. But it's not how I feel. It's not a mood. It's a heart, a posture of expectation, a posture, a readiness that at any moment, at any second, God could speak.
- I don't know what I'm being thankful for, but I do know who I'm being thankful to. I can thank God for what has happened in my past and He's always looked after me.
- Even with my hard effort, and my working and my doing what I need to do on this earth, even if things seem to fail, yet I will still praise him. From my lips will still come, you are great, oh God.
- In him all things hold together. So even in our human bodies, God holds everything together. On top of our spiritual bodies, where he holds everything together.
- When you increase gratitude, you decrease fear, anxiety and stress. They have done studies in the brain where if you're doing gratitude stuff, the part that's the fear and the anxiety decreases.
- We can't do it ourselves. We've got to see God in our lives. We've got to see that God is looking at our lives, is interested in us.
- Jesus looking up and saying, I see you, Zacchaeus. I'm coming to your house. Jesus tries to tell us all the time I'm interested in you. I'm coming to your house, are you expectant of me coming?
- Where's the other nine? Why weren't they thankful for what I did? Where's their gratitude? God doesn't hold grudges like we do, but he does still want our gratitude, our praise, our acknowledgement that it is him.

GOD SEES YOU
SMALL GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help your small group dive deeper into the message.

OPENING PRAYER

Pray the IMPACTERS Community Prayer.

ICE BREAKER

Question: Share one thing from the past week that you're genuinely grateful for - something small or large that you might have overlooked without intentionally thinking about it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Expectation is a posture, not just a mood.** It's the readiness of someone who believes that when God speaks, something will happen.
2. **Gratitude must accompany expectation.** Before God answers our prayers, we need to develop a heart of gratitude for who He is and what He's already done.
3. **God is always present.** Like a shadow at the edge of our vision, God is constantly with us, even when we don't feel Him.
4. **Gratitude is scientifically powerful.** Studies show gratitude decreases fear, anxiety, and stress while improving physical health and immune function.
5. **God holds all things together.** Even at the molecular level (laminin protein shaped like a cross), God is holding our bodies and our lives together.
6. **Only one leper returned.** Jesus healed ten lepers, but only one came back to thank Him. God desires our gratitude and acknowledgment.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section 1: Understanding Expectation

Q1: Rosemary asked, "What are you expecting?" After 21 days of prayer, what are you genuinely expecting God to do in your life this year? Be specific.

Q2: How is "expectation" different from "hope" or "wishful thinking"? What does it mean to have a "posture of readiness" for God to move?

Q3: Can you relate to Rosemary's description of feeling like God isn't with you some days, even while praying? How do you handle those times?

Section 2: Mary's Example

Q4: Mary's response to the angel was immediate praise through the Magnificat. What does her response teach us about gratitude in unexpected circumstances?

Q5: Mary praised God not just for what He did in her life, but for what He was doing for all people. How can we expand our gratitude beyond our personal circumstances?

Section 3: Gratitude in Difficulty

Q6: Read Habakkuk 3:17-18 together. What does it mean to rejoice in God even when "the fig tree does not blossom"? Share a time when you've had to (or struggled to) praise God despite difficult circumstances.

Q7: Rosemary mentioned being grumpy about feeding Bruce's chickens but recognizing her priority should be God's work. What "small things" in your life reveal where your heart priorities really are?

Q8: The message mentioned that gratitude decreases fear and anxiety. Have you experienced this in your own life? How might practicing gratitude change your mental and emotional health?

Section 4: The Power of Small Habits (

Q9: Rosemary emphasized creating "small daily habits to remember to be grateful." What daily habit could you implement this week to increase your awareness of God's presence and blessings?

Q10: The university student tried to be positive through self-effort after reading a book, but it didn't last. Why can't we sustain joy and gratitude on our own? How is God-given gratitude different?

Q11: Only one of the ten healed lepers returned to thank Jesus. Why do you think the other nine didn't return? What keeps us from returning to Jesus with thanksgiving?

REFLECTION EXERCISE (5-10 MINUTES)

Individual Reflection: Take 2-3 minutes of silence. Ask yourself:

- In what area of my life am I least grateful right now?
- What is one thing God has done that I've forgotten to thank Him for?
- What am I expecting God to do, and am I grateful in advance?

Sharing (Optional): Invite anyone who feels comfortable to share one insight from their reflection time

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week's Challenge: Choose one:

Option 1: Gratitude Journal

Start each day this week by writing down three things you're grateful for. Include at least one thing about God's character or presence in your life.

Option 2: The "Shadow Reminder"

Like Rosemary noticing God "at the edge of her eyesight," set 3 daily reminders on your phone that simply say "God is here." When it goes off, pause and acknowledge His presence.

Option 3: Thank-You Prayer Walk

Take a 10-15 minute walk this week dedicated entirely to thanking God out loud for specific things—past provisions, current blessings, and future promises.

Option 4: Rewrite Your Story

Think of a current difficulty in your life. Write out a "Habakkuk prayer"—acknowledging the hard reality but ending with "yet I will rejoice in the Lord because..."

Option 5: The One Leper Challenge

Identify one answered prayer or blessing from the past year that you never properly thanked God for. Spend time in worship and thanksgiving for that specific thing.

Option 6: Gratitude Accountability

Pair up with another group member. Text each other one thing you're grateful for every day this week.

CLOSING PRAYER

Go around the circle and have each person pray a one-sentence prayer of thanksgiving to God. The leader can close by praying for the group to maintain hearts of gratitude and expectation throughout the week.