

Thanksgiving

This Thursday, most of us will be sitting down with family to observe the Thanksgiving holiday. This is typically a time when we express thankfulness or gratitude for our many blessings. The concept of gratitude has been given a lot of attention from those in the psychological field in the last 20 years or so. Studies have been done. Research has been conducted. One of the clear findings of all these studies has been the undeniable evidence that a practice of gratitude can improve both one's mental and physical health.

Psychology Today writer, Najma Khorrami M.P.H., wrote an article titled, 'self-care and gratitude: How they go hand in hand' [Oct. 2020] Khorrami states: "With coronavirus affecting the global population and societies at large, the debacle begs the question, what are we doing to initiate, promote, and sustain self-care?"

She then goes on to assert that during this period of shut-downs, mask wearing, and social distancing, taking care of one's own emotional well-being should not be neglected. One area she singles out for attention is in the regular practice of gratitude.

Dr. Robert Emmons agrees with her: 'We discovered scientific proof that when people regularly engage in a systematic cultivation of gratitude, they experience a variety of measurable benefits: psychological, physical, and interpersonal.'

- Grateful people are better able to handle adversity / stress in life
- Gratitude drives away toxic emotions such as resentment / anger / bitterness / jealousy
- Gratitude encourages more positive emotions such as joy / happiness / love
- Grateful people are better able to overcome depression / recover from illness, surgery or life trauma more quickly
- Grateful people spot the good in life and are better able to overlook the bad

The studies all point to the fact that better mental and physical health is found right here - - - in the practice of gratitude. This is not surprising to Christians. Calls for gratitude and thankfulness are woven like a thread throughout the Bible as part of healthy spirituality. 'In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.' [I Thess. 5:18]

Christian writer Phillip Yancey notes, 'I am a Christian not because Jesus' way benefits society but because I believe it is true. If true, it should create the conditions in which human life works best.' So, give thanks to God this week. It's good for you!