

An old saying says, "There are two sides to every story." Never is this saying more important than when there is a disagreement. Both parties' perspectives have merit. Both viewpoints have been shaped by what has made them who they are – nature, nurture, experience. Both sides need to be considered.

The two-sided school of thought can be applied to the act and work of gratitude and, specifically, thanks to God. In God's omnipotence, both sides richly receive when we give thanks to the Almighty, who glorifies him. Giving thanks is in our DNA; when we allow gratitude to flow, we also find health and wholeness. But first, we must be taught gratitude.

As young children, when someone gave us something, we heard echoes of our parents' mantra, "Now, say thank you." If you are a parent, you have often said it to your children. A true spirit of gratitude must be intentional to ignite a solid attitude of thanks. The rhythms of gratitude must be implemented to become an embedded pattern.

This is where "Two-Sided Gratitude" comes into play. This resource is a journal that helps guide you into an intentional rhythm of gratitude. Each day will offer a short portion of scripture followed by prompts for you to express your reflections and build your gratitude mindset.

In his book, "**Atomic Habits**," author James Clear shares that it takes about three weeks for a behavior to begin to form. Therefore, this journal provides forty days of journaling to help you develop a deeper spirit of gratitude. According to research, jotting down what you're thankful for can:

#### TWO-SIDED GRATITUDE INTRODUCTION CONT.

- Improve the quality of your sleep.
- Reduce stress.
- Increase positivity.
- Strengthen self-worth.
- Help you celebrate the present.

"God smiles when we praise and thank Him continually. Few things feel better than receiving heartfelt praise and appreciation from someone else. God loves it, too... An amazing thing happens when we offer praise and thanksgiving to God. When we give God enjoyment, our own hearts are filled with joy." - Rick Warren

God bless you as you further develop your spirit of gratitude.

"Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name." 1 Chronicles 29:13 (NIV)

• Today's scripture says "now" is the time to give thanks. At this very moment, what comes to your mind for which you want to say "thank you" to God?

• How do you feel as you acknowledge this reminder of God's goodness?

"Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song." Psalm 95:2 (NV)

• Today's scripture speaks of singing thanks to God. What song comes to mind that speaks of your thankfulness to him?

• As you wrote the words to your song of thanks, what feelings did it evoke?

"Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind." Psalm 107:21 (NIV)

• Today's scripture gives thanks for God's unfailing love. Journal a time recently you have felt that enduring love.

• What emotion did the remembrance conjure up in you today? Ask God to bring it to mind when you need it most today.



"I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation." Psalm 118:21 (NIV)

• Describe a recent answer to prayer. Give him thanks.

• Journal how you have benefitted from that answered prayer. Be specific.

"I get up in the middle of the night to thank you; your decisions are so right, so true—I can't wait till morning!" Psalm 119:62 (MSG)

• We all have sleepless nights when we toss and turn due to concerns. Be proactive! What will be the statement of thanks you will utter the next time you have an anxious mind during the night? Centering on this statement of gratitude can settle your heart and mind to return to the sleep God intends for you.



"The Lord will comfort Israel again and have pity on her ruins. Her desert will blossom like Eden, her barren wilderness like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found there. Songs of thanksgiving will fill the air." Isaiah 51:3

• Journal a difficult time when you felt a deep-seated sense of God's joy through it all.

• Thank God for how he works in all circumstances.

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." Daniel 6:10 (NIV)

• Today's scripture speaks of a willingness to give thanks to God, even in the face of opposition (Daniel 10). Describe a time in your life when you needed to give a sacrifice of thanks and praise.

• How has your spirit been strengthened by the experience you described?

"...Jesus told the people to sit down on the grass. He took the bread and the fish, He looked up to heaven, He gave thanks, and then He broke the bread. Jesus gave the bread to the disciples, and the disciples gave the bread to the people..." Matthew 14:9 (VOICE)

• Today's scripture is the account of Jesus feeding 5,000 people (Matthew 14:13-21). Jesus takes a small offering of food and multiplies it for God's glory. Jesus gives three sound steps on how we can live a godly life:

- o take what you have,
- o give thanks for what you have,
- o and use it for his glory.

Reflect on these steps and apply them to your own life today.



"Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you." Matthew 26:27 (NIV)

• Often, when the word "cup" is mentioned in the Bible, it symbolizes suffering. At the Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30), the cup symbolizes suffering in this account. As a disciple of Jesus, he asks us to join him in doing the same.

What is an area of suffering you can now look at with thanksgiving?



"At one time you were held by the power of sin. But now you obey with all your heart the teaching that was given to you. Thank God for this!" Romans 6: 17 (NLV)

• Today's scripture references our life before Christ and our victory over sin through him. You may not feel you are all you should be in Christ at this moment, but give thanks that you are not what you used to be!

"Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!..." Romans 7:25

• Today's scripture uses the word "delivers, " a present-tense verb, or an action or state that happens in the current moment. Our deliverance from sin is ongoing, fresh, and new with every utterance of confession.

What fresh grace and mercy have you received recently? Give thanks to the Lord.

"but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory [as conquerors] through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57 (AMP)

• Consider a recent victory. Thank God for how he worked through you to bring it about.

• What in your heart has been strengthened because of this memory?





"I will exalt you, Lord, for you rescued me. You refused to let my enemies triumph over me. O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health. You brought me up from the grave, O Lord. You kept me from falling into the pit of death." Psalm 30:1-3 (NLT)

• These words from Psalm 30 describe the work of God in our lives. Give thanks to God for his rescue of your soul, the strength to triumph over temptation, and the wholeness he brings. Be specific.

"As he entered a village, ten men, all lepers, met him. They kept their distance but raised their voices, calling out, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' Taking a good look at them, he said, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' They went, and while still on their way, became clean. One of them, when he realized that he was healed, turned around and came back, shouting his gratitude, glorifying God. He kneeled at Jesus' feet, so grateful. He couldn't thank him enough..." Luke 17:11-16 (full account Luke 17:11-19, MSG)

• Think of a time when you were healed in either body, mind, or spirit. Even if you have given thanks for that healing, you identify with the leper who "couldn't thank him enough." Pour out your thanks to him.

• What benefit to your soul do you feel because of this remembrance?

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." Colossians 3:16 (NIV)

• The Lord works through others to encourage us in our spiritual journey. Who has been that person for you? Thank God for bringing them into your life. Connect with this person to let them know you remember their impact on your life.



"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him..." 1 Timothy 1:12 (NLT)

• God has empowered you in some way to serve him. It might be beyond anything you ever imagined. Journal it.

• How have you benefitted from your service to God?

"O house of Israel, bless and praise the Lord [with gratitude]; O house of Aaron, bless the Lord..." Psalm 135:19 (AMP)

• Giving thanks is not just a solo activity. God encourages us to give thanks as a Body of Christ. Think of a time you were gathered with other believers and united in praise and thanksgiving to God. How did that make you feel?



"I will exalt You, my God, O King, and [with gratitude and submissive wonder] I will bless Your name forever and ever." Psalm 145:1 (AMP)

• Today's verse combines gratitude with "submissive wonder." What does that mean to you? What effect does that wonder have on you?



"But He gives us more and more grace [through the power of the Holy Spirit to defy sin and live an obedient life that reflects both our faith and our gratitude for our salvation]. Therefore, it says, "God is opposed to the proud and haughty, but [continually] gives [the gift of] grace to the humble [who turn away from self-righteousness]." James 4:6 (AMP)

• Our obedient life to Christ shows itself in our gratitude for our salvation and humility for what he has done. Thank him for your salvation and ask him to continue to keep you humble.

"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, and offer to God pleasing service and acceptable worship with reverence and awe..." Hebrews 12:28 (AMP)

• Gratitude is evident in two ways: worship and service. Are these evident in your life? Is there one of these aspects of a godly life that needs more attention? Sit in God's presence with this question and not only journal your findings.

"Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in [union with] Him [reflecting His character in the things you do and say—living lives that lead others away from sin], having been deeply rooted [in Him] and now being continually built up in Him and [becoming increasingly more] established in your faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing in it with gratitude." Colossians 2:6-7 (AMP)

• Is there a possibility that you have grown stagnant in an area of your spiritual journey? If so, today's scripture suggests jumpstarting that growth by "overflowing...with gratitude". List some people, things, and circumstances you are thankful for but may have taken for granted.

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"...put on the new self [the regenerated and renewed nature], created in God's image, [godlike] in the righteousness and holiness of the truth [living in a way that expresses to God your gratitude for your salvation]." Ephesians 4:24 (AMP)

• As you get dressed today, change your clothes, put on shoes, or put on your coat, use these actions to be a trigger for reminding yourself you must be intentional about putting "on the new self" by recalling what you are grateful for. What did this exercise do for you?

"...learn [by experience] what is pleasing to the Lord [and letting your lifestyles be examples of what is most acceptable to Him—your behavior expressing gratitude to God for your salvation]." Ephesians 5:10 (AMP)

• Consider ways to express your thankfulness today: words, gifts, acts of service, email, cards, etc. Write down who you wish to thank and the best way to do it. Follow through!



"I am God Most High! The only sacrifice I want is for you to be thankful and to keep your word." Psalm 50:14 (CEV)

• Today's scripture is God's message to each one of us. God's greatest desire is that we give him a sacrifice of thanks and integrity. What do you sometimes use to replace your thanks and promises to God? Remember that nothing replaces thanks and integrity.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers." Philippians 4:6 (TLB)

• The opposite of peaceful meditation is worry. Worry will intensify distractions and rob our hearts and minds of thankfulness. What concerns are occupying your attention and distracting you from the free flow of thankfulness today? Journal your findings and end with a prayer of thanks.



"Go through His gates, giving thanks; walk through His courts, giving praise. Offer Him your gratitude and praise His holy name." Psalm 100:4 (VOICE)

• Today's scripture encourages us to walk through God's gates and courts. We must never assume this "walk-through" is always easy and light. There may be trials to experience. This verse states that whatever we walk through can be done with a thankful heart. How does that ring true for you today?

"I never stop thanking my God for treating you with undeserved grace by giving you Christ Jesus..." 1 Corinthians 1:4 (CEV)

• Spend some time thinking that God's grace is a gift. You didn't earn or deserve it, but it is given freely. Write your prayer of thanksgiving.



"...the same God who resurrected the Lord Jesus will raise us with Jesus and will usher us all together into His presence. All of this is happening for your good. As grace is spread to the multitudes, there is a growing sound of thanks being uttered by those relishing in the glory of God." 2 Corinthians 4:14-15 (VOICE)

• The reward of a life in Christ is living eternally with him in glory. That certainty fills our hearts with gratitude and praise. Give thanks for the certainty of heaven with Jesus.

Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, those who follow Jesus have better uses for language than that...Thanksgiving is our dialect." Ephesians 5:4 (VOICE)

• Our tongues can hurt or heal. Today, accept God's request for thanksgiving to be your default language in every conversation. Write your prayer to God, asking him to remind you to speak words of grace and thanksgiving every time you have unedifying words or thoughts. He will work through you if you submit to his leadership.

"For God, who gives seed to the farmer to plant, and later on good crops to harvest and eat, will give you more and more seed to plant and will make it grow so that you can give away more and more fruit from your harvest." 2 Corinthians 9:10 (TLB)

• Today's scripture speaks of seeds and harvesting of crops. Certainly, the phrase "For God...will give you more and more seed to plant and will make it grow so that you can give it away..." can be taken in a myriad of ways.

Today, what is the harvest that God has given to you? What abundant blessings are yours today? Who can benefit from that overflow in your life? Journal what God reveals and with whom you can share this harvest.

"When my soul is in the dumps, I rehearse everything I know of you, From Jordan depths to Hermon heights, including Mount Mizar." Psalm 42:6 (MSG)

• Today's scripture speaks of a mindset of praise and gratitude no matter our mindset. The psalmist uses geographical locations to correlate emotional highs, lows, and everything in between.

Where are you today, emotionally speaking? We can express any emotion, and he will receive us graciously and lovingly. Journal your emotional state ending with thanksgiving, knowing "in all things God works..." (Romans 8:28)



"The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: 'He is good; his love endures forever.'" 2 Chronicles 5:13 (NIV)

• Songs are often a source of praise and thanks. What lyrics come to mind today that remind you of God's goodness? Journal the lyrics. You may just find yourself singing them throughout the day!



"Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twentyfour elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things...' Revelation 4:9-11

• In today's scripture, the disciple John envisions the return of Jesus to set up a new heaven and earth. It is said the elders giving praise represent the church of believers, and the crowns represent what is valuable to the elders.

What do you value here on earth? Relationships? Reputation? Is there a valued possession that you would lay before the throne of God to show your thanks and praise to him? Envision laying your valued "crown" before him. How does it feel to give it over to him as an act of praise and thanks?

"Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:28 (NIRV)

• Today's scripture strongly commits to giving thanks "no matter what happens." Take some time to reflect on what that means to you. Since he remains the same, even when circumstances change, our thanks should never change and always be on our lips.

What is the "no matter what" in your life that you need to place thanks to God above?

"I will give thanks to the Lord because he does what is right. I will sing the praise of the name of the Lord Most High." Psalm 7:17 (NIRV)

• Today's scripture states that thanks are given to the Lord because, whatever happens in the world around us, "he does what is right."

When were you in a difficult season in your life and yet gave thanks? What did you learn from that? Give thanks for the revelation you have received.



"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him..."1 Timothy 1:12 (NLT)

• Today may be a workday. You've encountered all the challenges of a morning of getting yourself ready, maybe family to get off to school, and hustled through a commute to get to work/school. Through it all, give thanks – for the clothes you wear, the food you have eaten, family, and employment/school. Thanks can change your perspective from a seemingly mundane day to a day of gratitude. Write your prayer of gratitude and be specific.





"But if anyone loves God [with awe-filled reverence, obedience, and gratitude], he is known by him [as his very own and greatly loved]. 1 Corinthians 8:3 (AMP)

• Today's verse identifies the love of God as awe-filled, full of reverence and obedience. What about your love for God has caused you to be:

	Awe-filled
	Full of reverence
ļ	
	Obedient
,	Obedient

Be filled with thanks, for you are considered his very own child, greatly loved!

"O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will praise and give thanks to Your name; For You have done miraculous things, Plans formed long, long ago, [fulfilled] with perfect faithfulness." Isaiah 25:1 (AMP)

• Today's scripture reminds us that perspective is important. We often see the hand of God after a life's occurrence. It is not always possible during it. This type of review always strengthens our spirit of gratitude in our lives.

When was a time in your life that you now can see how the hand of God brought you through what was seemingly impossible at the time? Give him thanks.

"The Eternal is the source of my strength and the shield that guards me. When I learn to rest and truly trust Him. He sends His help. This is why my heart is singing! I open my mouth to praise Him, and thankfulness rises as song." Psalm 28:7 (VOICE)

• This verse shares how we can truly develop a true spirit of thankfulness through rest and trust. In which – rest or trust – are you most needed today? Share that with the Lord and thank him for this revelation and how you can be strengthened in this area.



"How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God's presence." 1 Thessalonians 3:9 (NLT)

• Today's scripture speaks of our thankfulness for those who have nurtured us in the faith. Who comes to mind that you can list and even reach out to today to let them know what an impact they have made on your life of faith?.



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