



## 01\_The Number One Reason to Be Grateful

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**0:00:52.9 Sonja Corbitt:** It's the Bible Study Evangelista show, and I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Catholic Evangelista, back after a long study break with a new series, The Healing Power of Gratitude.

**0:01:03.0 SC:** In a break like I have taken over the last several weeks, if you are jonesing for some Bible Study Evangelista, you can always find the previous series on my website, [biblestudyevangelista.com](http://biblestudyevangelista.com). Click Begin, then Podcasts, then slide over to the right to Previous Series, and then you can search till your heart's content. For all of the previous series, there are series there on anger and anxiety and fear, Catholic social justice. We looked at cherished, what it means to be cherished in a relationship with God and with other people, end times, healing corruption in the church, healing the father wound. We looked at how to rest and how to be at peace, making sense of the Old Testament, a series or a show on the Our Father prayer, physical healing, the sacraments, you name it. There's all kinds of stuff on there. And as I do the series, I try to refrain from dating any of the series so that they will remain evergreen for you and you can listen to them anytime, especially during a break, because I do take sometimes a long break in between so that I can study. I'm actually working on another book and some other things going on too.

**0:02:18.6 SC:** But this series is on gratitude. And gratitude, my friends, is a worldview. And to begin with, I had some difficulty in how to present the series. There are over 275 studies to date through which science has been providing clinical proof that supports what our religions and spiritual traditions, whatever they are, have been saying for millennia. Gratitude does us good. And the research on how gratitude affects our health positively was the obvious springboard for this series. But if gratitude is so obviously good for us, why are we so ungrateful? And why are Christians who have so much to be grateful for, why are we as negative and unhealthy as people who have no relationship with God whatsoever or the church? And maybe it's blasphemous, but why? Why be grateful when your marriage is painful and deteriorating when your kids are away from the church and they're living sinful lives, when your daily life is full of anxiety and fear, and maybe painful, physical suffering and struggles. But while I was studying for the series, I also

noticed something else and it started to really bug me. A pronounced problem with defeat in God's people. It seems that we struggle to focus on what's important in the spiritual life and so we live defeated lives.

**0:03:43.3 SC:** It's a constant negativity and discouragement. And it seems that we're not grateful because we don't know why we should be. So those two things sort of collided. I almost just decided not to do the gratitude series and instead maybe take a turn. But then I realized in studying, that they actually go together and that God was sort of directing me in how to offer the series. So we're going to look at gratitude from a biblical perspective because it's very different than the secular perspective. Well, it's not very different, but it is different. So how is Christian gratitude different from secular gratitude and what exactly should we be grateful for? Is it our family and friends or our material blessings, our physical health? Well yeah, of course. But Jesus said that these are all things that the Gentiles or the ungodly, the word Gentiles is sometimes a euphemism for the ungodly. And these are things that all the Gentiles seek. And it's not that there's anything bad in them. In fact there's a really neat phrase that pops up in the prayer after communion every so often. It says, with the needed solace of the things that pass away, they or we may strive with ever deepened trust to things eternal.

**0:05:04.3 SC:** So the church recognizes that we need the solace of created things, people and goods. As Jesus said, the Father knows you have need of all these things. But we have something greater and more important to be grateful for and to strive for. And so Jesus said, rejoice that your names are written in heaven. And then he goes on to thank God. And because of the whole topic of gratitude, we're going to look in another episode at Jesus's own Thanksgiving prayers or his own gratitude. But what we see is that biblical gratitude helps us return our hearts to what is eternal. Living in the midst of so many evils and temptations and sins, the problem is losing sight of the eternal, of becoming distracted. And that's what I have been seeing. I'm seeing that people are struggling because they're distracted by the evils, the temptations and the sins in themselves, in the people they live with, in the world, just so distracted. And gratitude helps us focus properly. And that's exactly why it heals. So in this series, we're going to look at what the Bible says about gratitude, how gratitude heals us like clinically, we're going to look at some of those studies, and especially what it means that our names are written in heaven.

**0:06:23.2 SC:** In short, what it means to be a child of God and what the Bible says about our identity in Christ. That seems to be a really, a topic of interest for a lot of people. What is your identity in Christ? And that's the whole reason why we should be people of gratitude. We should be happy people. We should be joyful people. And when we're not, it's partly because we don't know who we are in Christ. So in order to focus properly, we have to know who we are in Christ. And we have to be thankful for that in specific ways. So we can, as people of God, we can rejoice and be thankful as Jesus directs us to. So I'm going to show you some of the biblical reasons to be thankful in this series. And I'm going to arm you with a proper focus so that you can stay focused, not just in gratitude, but in your life with Christ. But first, today, let's explore gratitude as both a secular and a sacred topic. Because in the secular world, the secularists like to separate gratitude and thanksgiving into two different things. It was so strange to me as I was doing the research for this series, how carefully people were trying to differentiate between thanksgiving and gratitude.

**0:07:49.8 SC:** Some said thankfulness is a reaction while gratitude is a chosen state of being. And so where thankfulness, they say, is an emotion, gratitude is an attitude of appreciation, which is, you know, all good, right? It's all true. They say that gratitude is an emotion, expressing an appreciation

for what one has, as opposed to what one wants. And that's according to Psychology Today. And then Harvard Medical School says that gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what one receives, tangible or intangible, as they acknowledge the goodness in their lives. So again, there's a differentiation. Being grateful is about appreciating what one has, as opposed to one wants and being thankful or thanking one, someone implies that you're acknowledging your thanks for someone for something that someone has given you. And to that I would say indeed, because this effort at trying to differentiate between the two, according to the secularists, seems to be a matter of thanksgiving, meaning that you thank someone specifically, a person, and gratitude being this attitude, or a way of being, right? We see this all the time, the attitude of gratitude. I mean, it's almost a trite phrase, or even a trite idea anymore, we should all be grateful, we should all spend time in gratitude.

**0:09:20.6 SC:** And it's all true. I'm not, I'm really not making fun of it. Because what's interesting is that the secularists, or the new agers, especially, they've sort of co-opted gratitude as its own religious practice. And in fact, they actually even say that one of the things that they tell us that we should do is write gratitude letters, right? And I actually love this a lot. But it really should be called a Thanksgiving letter, I suppose, if being thankful means that you're thankful to a particular person. But a gratitude letter, there's a person on our community who had an exercise for Advent to write gratitude letters, and they were beautiful. And in fact, I think I'm going to do some of those myself. But this, this idea of gratitude, being connected to spirituality is kind of, it's not really new. Of course, it's not new, since, you know, we Christians have been talking about it forever. And even before us, people have recognized that gratitude is good, it's healthy. But the new agers have made this connection to gratitude and spirituality in a way that is almost cultural now. So they even say that being grateful is parallel to feeling a divine presence.

**0:10:42.9 SC:** And it allows us to recognize the value and the virtue of things in our lives. And so in this respect, gratitude can be seen as a remedy to suffering, they say. And some even consider, as I said, gratitude to be a form of spirituality all on its own. And this is sort of, the line between the secular idea of gratitude and the sacred. The secularists have made gratitude a form of spirituality on its own. They just are thankful, they are grateful without recognizing the person from whom all of these good gifts come. So again, the mark of new ageism is that it's impersonal. It's a gratitude that is impersonal, for the most part. Because even if it acknowledges thanks to a particular person, it doesn't acknowledge thanks to the one, the one who gives us every good and perfect gift according to the scriptures.

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**0:12:24.2 S1:** Sonja created the Love the Word Bible Study Method just for you. Based on Mary's personal practice and formulated for your personality and temperament. Get your Love the Word meditations every Monday morning by signing up at [biblestudyevangelista.com](http://biblestudyevangelista.com). Now here's Sonja.

**0:12:55.8 SC:** Etymology is the study of the roots of words, and etymologically, the terms gratitude and thanks are the same. Thanks is the word that the Bible uses. It doesn't use the word gratitude very often, in fact, ever, really, because the word "thanks" in the Old Testament isn't even used.

**0:13:14.3 SC:** There isn't a specific word for that. The concept of thanksgiving evolves theologically throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, in the Hebrew, it's closely tied with the verb, "to bless". For instance, in Deuteronomy 8:10, it says, "When you have eaten and are full in the promised land, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which he has given you." So because there is no separate word for thanks in the Hebrew, the most common Hebrew noun used for thanks is derived from the verb, to praise and to confess. I love that. And here's the clincher, specifically because we're talking about the secular view. I mean, we've moved now into the biblical view, but we were talking about the secular view of gratitude in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, but in the New as well. In the Old Testament, as I said, the word "thanks" or the word "thanks" is not actually even its own word. To praise or to confess is the root of the word that the Bible uses to bless, and it never has a human being as its object. I find that fascinating. So whereas the secularists are thanking the human being or just having an attitude of gratitude, the Bible and specifically the Old Testament always thanks God.

**0:14:47.1 SC:** The object is always God. And so there's evidence that the reason God did not respect or accept Cain's offering in Genesis 4, which was the first murder, the account of the first murder in Genesis 4, there's evidence that that was because Cain's heart was ungrateful. He did not give thanks. Why? Because he was self-sufficient. Now the Bible itself doesn't actually give us a specific reason, but the gifts offered by Cain and Abel were both acceptable in themselves. And on that passage in Genesis 4, St. Bede the Venerable says that men are often placated by gifts from those who have offended them. But God who discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart lets himself be placated by no gift as much as by the pious devotion of the offerer. And so pious devotion of the offerer combined with what the book of Hebrews says about Abel's faith in Hebrews 11:4 implies that there was a faith in God's goodness in his gifts. Specifically in Hebrews chapter 11:1 it talks about how faith is exemplified by these people and it gives us this whole litany of people. And Abel is one of the first. He is the first actually.

**0:16:11.7 SC:** So we'll come back to the word gift later, but for right now I just want to emphasize that God gives us gifts. We don't really have anything to give to God and to think and behave otherwise is to try to buy God's favor. And that's kind of what Cain seems to have done. He seemed to have been presenting God this offering as something God should be grateful for rather than he being grateful for God's blessing and God's favor on the ground and on the fruit of the ground. So this is going to become the main theme of the series. God gives us gifts. We don't give him gifts. We don't have anything to give him but our love. And even that the Bible says is as filthy rags in Isaiah 64:6. Our righteousness is as filthy rags and that term, filthy rags. I don't mean to be coarse but the Bible itself uses this language. It's the wording for feminine hygiene linens. So when it says our righteousness is as filthy rags, it paints this picture. The Hebrew language is a language of pictures rather than specific words which is why the word "thanks" is not actually a specific Hebrew word.

**0:17:32.6 SC:** It's more the idea of praise and confession. We're confessing that we have received a gift and we're praising God for that gift because we don't have gifts to give him. He doesn't need anything from us. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the Bible says. He doesn't need anything we have. He desires our love but even our love, our righteousness, our best is as filthy rags. But



continuing on in the evolution of the word "thanks" in the Bible, by the time of Leviticus, the Israelites had started this thank offering as part of the sacrificial system, and of course that was prescribed by God himself when he gave the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. But a thank offering was a, it was a type of peace or fellowship offering which I find very interesting that idea that the people of God offered a specific offering in response to an unsolicited special divine blessing and it was a type of peace offering or a type of fellowship offering, so it was it was a way of relating to God. It was a... Not that they were buying his love or attention the way Cain tried to do or it seems to be anyway, but that they were truly acknowledging the blessings of God especially in a thank offering which was an unsolicited blessing.

**0:19:04.0 SC:** And in doing so, they were drawing him into fellowship with them and themselves into fellowship with God. So it was a bloody offering presented to God, we see in Leviticus chapter 3 verse 1, part of the offering was eaten by the priest which represented God's acceptance of the offering and then part of it was eaten by the worshipers and their guests. So God hosted the meal and he communed with the worshiper and the other participants. This sacrifice celebrated the covering of sin, the forgiveness of God and the restoration of a right and meaningful relationship with him and with life itself. So the thank offering then was a special offering that God's people presented to God that helped draw them into relationship with him and him into relationship with them or them into relationship with God. Anyway, you know what I mean. So it was a fellowship or a peace offering but it had its own, it was its own offering altogether, a thank offering. And then as we're kind of tracing the evolution of the thanks idea, we see in the Psalms that Thanksgiving has this really prominent place both on an individual level because David and other authors wrote those Psalms but also on a community level because the community itself used those Psalms in worship.

**0:20:35.8 SC:** So they started out being specific private prayers between the worshiper and God and then the community began to use them in their collective worship and we actually continue to do that even now. The church calls the Psalms the masterpiece of prayer or the masterpiece of the Bible and that's why in part because of this Thanksgiving idea, they are full of Thanksgiving. And then in the New Testament, that's when we switch from the Hebrew to the Greek. The New Testament was written in Greek and so the language is somewhat different. Thanksgiving is tied to the concept of grace or Charis. Most Greek words that are related to thanks are connected verbally including the noun, Thanksgiving, Eucharista and the adjective, thankful, Eucharistos and the verb, to give thanks or to be thankful. Eucharistio. So you can see already that in the actual Greek language, the word grace is in the word Thanksgiving. Charis, Eucharist, Eucharistos, Eucharistio. People in the New Testament they offer Thanksgiving to God in worship, in individual prayer, at meals. And throughout the series, we're going to look at Jesus's prayers of Thanksgiving, we'll do that separately. But we also have lots of Thanksgiving in Paul's writings. And so in the New Testament, Thanksgiving is a response to the redemptive work of Jesus.

**0:22:07.4 SC:** We see that specifically in Paul in Romans 7:25. But also texts like Luke 24:30, the road to Emmaus indicate that Thanksgiving held a really important part in both Jewish and Christian meals but in Jewish and Christian life. I can't wait to even get into some of this, you're not going to believe, you're not going to believe how much Thanksgiving the people were giving God all the time. So that's the Old Testament Hebrew, the New Testament Greek and then the word gratitude actually comes from the Latin. It's not Hebrew, it's not Greek, the word gratitude is a Latin word or at least though it's rooted in Latin, gratis or gratus. It's a benefit, a favor, a grace, something free, that's exactly what the word grace in the New Testament Greek means. A benefit, unmerited favor, free, something a freely given. A gift, we could just say a gift or a benefit. Medieval Latin,

gratituo, that comes from the root for grateful or gratus and there are only a couple of instances of that word in the Vulgate. I actually looked, I did some research. The Vulgate is the Latin translation of the Bible which came to us in the original languages as I said in Hebrew and then in Greek and then the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament with the Greek New Testament and then the Latin is the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Old and New Testaments.

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**0:25:18.7 SC:** My point in giving you all of this etymology or the roots of the word gratitude is to just show you that gratitude is actually not even a biblical word, it comes from the Latin and the Old Testament didn't have a word for thanks, instead it used the idea of blessing and praise and confession, those... The blessing was the real idea but the word "blessing" came from the root for confess and praise which we'll get into a little more deeply shortly but I just wanted to show you that this whole attitude of gratitude thing is very secular. Instead the Bible directs us to thank God from whom all blessings flow, the old hymn says.

**0:26:15.7 SC:** And so thanksgiving, give thanks with a grateful heart, we see in the Psalms but that word grateful is actually, it's a Latin word. It's not even necessarily biblical, it said in the online dictionary that the first use of the word gratitude was in 1523. So that would be in writing, not in the vocal use of the word gratitude, but the Latin root "gratus", so lots of stuff comes out of that, grateful, grace, gracious, gratify, gratitude, ingratitude, gratuity, and gratuitous. So you have grace and grace originally meant in the scriptures, a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving and so that's where we get the term that the family said grace before dinner to give thanks for their food. Grace also means, especially in the New Testament, a gift that is freely given.

**0:27:10.5 SC:** So later in history those who were blessed were said to have pleasing qualities and then that word grace came to mean charm or polite beauty, I'm just kind of tracing the evolution of the word here. So they would say something like she possesses such grace and charm, she is so gracious, right? So grace sort of took on that sort of nuance, then gratitude meaning thankfulness and that's closely related to the word grace. Again, a prayer of thanksgiving, people express their gratitude because they didn't deserve all of the good things they were given. And so those gifts or graces were given freely they were they were blessings, then you have to gratify, to gratify is to make someone else grateful.

**0:27:55.0 SC:** You can gratify a waiter in a restaurant by leaving a tip, the gratuity is extra money, it's freely given, it's a gift. It's not required or necessary, although, I would argue that you better leave it or they'll be very upset and spit in your food. The adjective is gratuitous, that violence on television is gratuitous, it's not necessary, it's an extra, right? At thanksgiving, we all remember gratitude, we give thanks for our blessings. So the opposite of gratitude is ingratitude, a person who is not thankful is called an ingrate, these are all sort of nuances of the word, the root word in latin, Gratus. So what's the takeaway here, the takeaway is thanksgiving and gratitude, biblically speaking, are the same thing whereas the secular idea uses that term gratitude as this attitude that doesn't... It's not directed toward God at all, it's just this attitude. "Oh, I'm thankful." I'm not sure who you're supposed to be thankful to, if you're not thanking God for giving you the blessings that you've received.

**0:29:05.0 SC:** So the secular idea is just this sort of ethereal attitude of gratefulness for the stuff and the people in a person's life, and that's... There's nothing wrong with that, I'm not making fun of it, I'm just saying that's not the focus of the scriptures. And this is why we're so ungrateful and so discouraged and so despairing and so defeated as Christians because we've adopted this idea that we should just be grateful, in this sort of ethereal way that doesn't mean anything at all. We need to focus on the blessings specific from God, right. And of course that includes our family members and those that we love and our jobs and the houses that we live in and the food that we eat. All of those things, yes, but ultimately the scriptures are very clear that our gratitude must be focused on God himself. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift, the bible says.

**0:30:00.9 SC:** So gratitude is this way of seeing things, it's a world view and it always involves one factor in three ways. This one thing, a good or a gift is in every one of the three language roots, the Hebrew, Greek and the latin. The word grace or the word gift. In the old latin, it was bene which means a good or something good. Gratitude always involves three benes. The first bene involves benefit, bene-fit. In order for me to be grateful or to be thankful, I have to receive a gift. I have to understand it's a good thing for me to receive.

**0:30:41.2 SC:** I have to find it favorable, and the bible has a lot to say about this idea of benefit. Psalm 103 says, "Praise the Lord, oh my soul and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases." I'll come back to that in a later episode. "Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion who satisfies your desires with good things," That word "good" there is a benefit. Again, forget not all his benefits, he satisfies your desires with benefits. See the play on words there? Our lives are full of these benefits from God. And we're blind to them, we're blind to them most of the time. Thankfulness or gratitude, I'm going to use the word gratitude because that's the title of the series. But the my point here is that gratitude is thanksgiving and thanksgiving requires that we understand these benefits and we know they're good. We know that they're benefits from God and we recognize their goodness.

**0:31:47.9 SC:** The second bene of gratitude is a benefactor. A benefactor, it's sort of related to the word for factory, it means one who does good. A benefactor gives a benevolence, so you've got that other bene. Benevolence means to will the good, a benefactor wills the good and does good. To be grateful then, you have to believe then, not just that benefits are coming your way but that they didn't come randomly or by accident, they are gifts from someone. And you must believe that the benefactor has beneficial intentions towards you. And this was the the sin I believe ultimately of Cain. He didn't recognize that the benefits came from somebody and he didn't believe in the

goodness of God. In fact, the commentary on Genesis 4, that's in Hebrews chapter 11 actually says that, that Abel had faith, and faith is defined in that very first verse of of Hebrews chapter 11. That God is a rewarder, he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Chapter 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and then in verse 6, it says, But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe, one, that he is that he exists. And two, that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

**0:33:26.0 SC:** So it seems that part of the problem with Cain's offering was that he did not believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. How do we know that? Well, it seems that Cain seemed to rely on himself to get the goodness from the land rather than recognizing that it was God who gave it to him, gave him the breath to be able to be alive, gave him the strength in his body to be able to work, gave him the land to be able to till and cause the land to be fruitful in order for it to bear the food that Cain was supposedly offering to God. So there is an important principle, the benefactor is one who rewards, who gives a good, who gives a gift to someone else. He is benevolent and so the gifts that we have come from someone and this someone has good intentions toward you. This is a true, this is something to be truly thankful for and this is something that I think that a lot of people don't believe and this is where we fall into the the same sin of Cain. We get so angry, our lives are full of anger because we're so self-reliant, we're so proud, we think we've done it all ourselves. We don't recognize that God is good, that he has given us everything we have, the very breath that we breathe, the fact that we're even alive is a gift from him.

**0:35:00.9 SC:** And to live as though our whole lives are just so miserable is a constant middle finger to God, living in anger and misery as Cain did seems to be a specific indication that your life is empty of thanksgiving to God and that's a scary place to be according to the book of Hebrews. The second bene is benefactor and we must know that the gift comes from a benefactor all of the gifts and that that benefactor has our good at heart always, that everything ultimately is a gift.

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**0:36:00.6 S1:** If you love having bible study in your pocket, you can become a friend of the show. Click on the yellow Friend of The Show button on biblestudyevangelista.com and become a supporter of any amount and any frequency. Now here's Sonja.

**0:36:39.9 SC:** You know that old line, count your blessings instead of sheep, that's actually a song that we hear sometimes at Christmas. The second bene is the benefactor idea, the first is the benefit, the second is the benefactor. If I'm going to be grateful, if I'm going to be thankful, I have believed that God is good. I believe that he wills my good. I believe that he orders all things to my good, and the writers of the bible are convinced that they have a great benefactor. James says this in his book, Don't be deceived, dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of lights. This is an expression of God's goodness, a good God exists and he is always giving to us. He is always giving us gifts, he is benevolent, he is a benefactor. Then we have that third bene that contributes to thankfulness or gratitude, there has to be a benefit, that's number one. A benefactor, number two. And then there has to be a beneficiary, the one who receives the good, the one who receives the gifts and that's you. You are the beneficiary of the benefits of a God who is a benefactor. He has your best interests at heart, and this is part of what helps the saints rejoice in all their sufferings. They know to search for the good in the suffering. This is why I teach you all the time about pop quizzes because there is always a good in it.



**0:38:17.0 SC:** God does not give a snake in response to a prayer from one of children for a fish. God always gives good gifts. Do they look good on the outside? Not always, sometimes they look exactly like snakes, but we trust in the benefactor, who is good and who gives us good gifts. We trust in that and we are thankful for that. We can be thankful before we even see the reality of it and that's exactly what faith is according to Hebrews chapter 1. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. We don't see the good in it right away. We don't see the thing that we're hoping for right away, but that doesn't mean it's not present. It doesn't mean that God doesn't have it in mind and in his heart for you. It doesn't mean any of that.

**0:39:11.4 SC:** It may look like a snake on the outside but the bible is clear, God always gives a fish in response to a prayer for a fish. He doesn't then offer you a snake and go, Aha! You silly stupid person for believing that I would give you something... Of course he gives us the good thing, of course. All things work together for good, for those who love the lord, the book of Romans says that third element is what contributes to a life of thanksgiving or gratitude, there has to be a benefit, there has to be a benefactor and there has to be a beneficiary. The one who receives the good and that's you. You are the beneficiary of the benefits of a god who has your best interest at heart always. Our parents didn't always have our best interests at heart. Our spouses don't always have our best interests at heart.

**0:40:06.6 SC:** Sometimes we don't even have our best interests at heart, but God always always has your best interest at heart. He is a true benefactor and this is a reason for thanksgiving. We can trust, when we can't see the good in it, we can trust that whatever is occurring there is a good in it. And we'll talk about ways to see that and to reframe it and to understand God's perspective, we'll talk about all that, but it's very very important to understand the biblical basis of the word, not just the word gratitude but the attitude of thanksgiving.

**0:40:48.3 SC:** It is personal, there is a good or a grace or a gift, there is one who gives the gift and there is one who receives the gift, and that is you. The gifts are innumerable, they are innumerable but the number one gift is that all things work together for good. The number one gift is actually God himself. He actually said this to Abraham. I remember being so struck by this in Genesis chapter 15, God comes to Abraham before he's Abraham and he says to him, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward. There's that idea of reward again, that we looked at in chapter 11 of Hebrews. We have to believe that God is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, not those who haphazardly seek him, not those who who seek him once a week at mass or if we even go to mass or once a day at mass but always diligently, with all your heart. The bible says that if we seek God with our whole hearts, he will be found by us. If you haven't found God, you're not diligent enough yet. He says I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward, he says to Abraham.

**0:42:02.1 SC:** And then Abraham goes, Okay, well what are you going to give me? I'm childless. And I love that about Abraham because God says, I am your reward and Abraham says, Well what are you going to give me? I mean that is just an echo of my own attitude as I was reading as I... Especially when I was so caught up in negativity and fear and anxiety and and just ugliness, my own sin, my own self-medication, my own pain and woundedness. When I saw this verse I thought, you know, Abraham, I can totally get into that. What are you going to give me, lord? Because it seems like my whole life has been nothing but crap, to this point, pain. And I know it sounds blasphemous but that's exactly what Abraham says. He says, Okay, well what are you going to give me? And so I did the same thing. I said, Alright, lord, what are you going to give me? And he he

goes on to say, I am your exceedingly great reward.

**0:43:03.0 SC:** And I got to thinking about that. I was like, Well, I can think of a whole lot of other things I would rather have. I'm just being honest, I know this sounds so blasphemous but it's the truth. I just remember reading it and thinking, Well I can think of a lot of things that I want, lord. If you were going to ask me what do I want? These are the things I would say but I would not say, Dear lord, just give me you. [laughter] I'm just being honest that's that's not where I was at the time. And Abraham wasn't either and I felt very comforted by that because I felt less alone. But God sort of reiterates, I am your exceedingly great reward. And I looked that up. Exceedingly means vehemently, urgently. Urgently and vehemently great. The root of it is to increase, to heap up, to multiply abundance and blessing. Blessing or benefit.

**0:43:58.2 SC:** I am your exceedingly great benefit, your exceedingly great reward, you're vehemently multiplied, you're urgently increased and heaped up benefit. God himself. How can that be? If you don't know perhaps it's because you haven't had a heart of thanksgiving for what you've already received throughout your life. And I know that was true of me. I'm not, it's not an indictment, I'm not accusing, I'm not being critical. I'm saying we don't understand the benefit of having God in a relationship with him and that because we don't it makes us negative, we live in defeat, we don't recognize the gifts that come from him directly instead we we cultivate this attitude of gratitude that's completely impersonal, it's so secular, it has very little to do with the truth that God loves you personally.

**0:45:00.4 SC:** That he is your exceedingly great reward. And faith, according to Hebrews 1, faith is knowing that God is. First of all that he exists and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, so here's what I would say to you. Diligently seek him, set aside time every day to be in the scriptures, to be in prayer, not just to check it off your list, but to find his face, find his voice, find his presence, find him, seek him. Knock, Jesus said, and the door will be opened. He is your exceedingly great reward. You already have him. You're looking for things outside. The things that the gentiles seek and Jesus said don't look for that stuff. Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Rejoice that God is your benefactor. Rejoice that that he has given you gift upon gift upon gift. Grace upon grace, rejoice in those things. Focus on that, don't focus on all the stuff you don't have, don't focus on all the things that are wrong.

**0:46:12.8 SC:** Focus on your benefactor, focus on the rewarder, your heaped up vehemently multiplied increased abundance. Your blessing, he himself is the blessing. I know that that can sound deflating but all I can tell you is it's because you don't know him yet. If you knew him, you would know the truth of it. So all I'm saying is lean in and perhaps you do know him and you know that this is true. Diligently, diligently seek, press in, search for his face, search for that relationship but always always always focus on the gifts. The gifts that come from him, the person of God and yourself as the beneficiary. The benefit is the blessing, thank him for the blessing because he is the benefactor and you are the beneficiary. Thank him just for that, just for being and being benevolent and being good and rewarding you for seeking him. Thank him, my friend.

**0:47:51.3 S?:** Thank you for listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show. Find out more at [biblestudyevangelista.com](http://biblestudyevangelista.com).