

Deliberate Appreciation Is Very Biblical

Deliberate appreciation is not just good clinical practice, it is also very biblical. The Old Testament contains many passages encouraging us to deliberately remember, and be grateful for, what the Lord has done for us:

This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD a lasting ordinance. . . . And when your children ask you, “What does this ceremony mean to you?” then tell them, “It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the Israelites. (Ex. 12:14, 26–27)¹

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. (Deut. 5:15)

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years. (Deut. 8:2)

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. (Deut. 8:10)

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. (Deut. 24:18)

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight. . . . In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.” (Josh. 4:1–7)

The Psalms are especially full of exhortations to deliberately remember and appreciate the Lord’s goodness:

Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done. For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted. (Ps. 9:11–12)

You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. (Ps. 22:23–24)

Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. (Ps. 30:4–5)

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and

¹. Unless otherwise specified, Scripture quotes are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

shout for joy. For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. (Ps. 33:1–5)

Shout with joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! . . . Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf! He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot—come, let us rejoice in him. . . . Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. (Ps. 66:1–9)

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Ps. 100:1–5)

Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. . . . Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced. (Ps. 105:1–2, 5)

See also: Ps. 68:4–6; 95:1–7; 96:1–13; 98:1–9; 103:1–22; 107:1, 2, 43; 117:1–2; 118:1–29; 134:1–2; 135:1–3, 19–21; 136:1–26; 147:1–20; 148:1–14; 149:1–9; 150:1–6.

And many of the Psalms *model* deliberately remembering and appreciating the Lord's goodness:

I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high. (Ps. 7:17)

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. . . . (*ten more verses of specific appreciations*). (Ps. 9:1–18)

I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. . . . (*forty-six more verses of specific appreciations*). (Ps. 18:1–50)

Praise be to the LORD, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. The LORD is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one. (Ps. 28:6–8)

I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together. . . . (*nineteen more verses of specific appreciations*). (Ps. 34:1–22)

See also: Ps. 3:3-6; 5:4-12; 8:1-9; 12:5-7; 13:5-6; 16:1-11; 19:1-11; 21:1-13; 22:3-5, 9, 10, 22-31; 23:1-6; 25:8-15; 30:1-12; 31:19-24; 33:1-22; 36:5-12; 40:1-10; 48:1-14; 54:4-7; 57:1-11; 63:1-11; 65:1-13; 66:1-20; 67:3-4; 71:14-24; 73:1-28; 75:1-10; 76:1-12; 77:10-20; 89:1-18; 92:1-15; 95:1-7; 96:1-13; 98:1-9; 99:1-9; 100:1-5; 103:1-22; 104:1-35; 105:1-45; 106:1-48; 107:1-43; 108:1-5; 111:1-10; 113:1-9; 116:1-19; 118:1-29; 124:1-8; 126: 1-3; 134:1-3; 135:1-21; 136:1-26; 138:1-8; 139:1-18; 144:1-2; 145:1-21; 146:1-10; 147:1-20; 148:1-14; 149:1-9; 150:1-6.

The apostle Paul repeatedly encourages us to be grateful and to thank the Lord for his goodness:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 5:18-20)

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Col. 3:15-17)

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. (Col. 4:2)

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

And Jesus models appreciation and gratitude, as he thanks the Father for many things:

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. (Mark. 6:41)

When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people. (Mk 8:6)

They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. (Mark. 8:7)

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. (Luke. 22:17)

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. (Luke. 24:30)

Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." (John. 11:41)