The Power of Gratitude

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

By Terry Baxter

Introduction:

1.  The past 44 years of my Christian life has been a journey of personal growth and change.

2. When I came to Jesus I was very dysfunctional, wounded, bitter, backwards and empty. I was a mess!!!!!

3. Early in my study of Scripture, I started building a biblical philosophy for life.  Let me briefly share a few of my early Transformational Pillars of Truth.

#1: I am not stuck being the old me in life because Jesus Christ has saved me and is in the process of changing me.  I will embrace that change.  (Based on 2 Corinthians 5:17)

#2: My present circumstance in life are the direct result of who I am as a person and not fate or chance.  If I want my circumstances to change then I must first change.”  (Based on the Law of the Sower found in Galatians 6:7-8)

#3: Outer change is built on inner change and inner change comes from renewing my mind with biblical truth.  This is the only way to put off the old self and put on the new self.  (Ephesians 4:22-24)

#4: There is no limit what God can do in or through a man or woman who is fully and wholly committed to Him.  (John 15:1-16)

4.  Over the years I have embraced a continual process of personal growth and development, learning, stretching, conquering fears and phobia’s, enjoying Gods creation and living beyond my comfort zone without allowing others to put boxes around me or limiting the power of God.  It has sometimes been a bumpy ride, especially for my wife and family, but God has been so good.

5.  I have made many mistakes and gone down some dead-end roads, but I have learned how to learn from my own mistakes and better yet, I have learned how to learn from the mistakes of others. I have observed that most people are stuck in ruts in life.

6.  I believe we are either expanding or contracting, growing or shrinking, moving forward or moving backward, building up or tearing down, adding value to others or exploiting them as we go through life.   God wants us to be intentional, Spirit filled, abundant and fruitful in this life.

7.  I trust this Thanksgiving season you are eager to embrace change, leave your ruts behind and move forward in a godly direction with fresh resolve.

TRANSITION:  In this message, I am going to throw you a chain with Eight Links to Personal Change associated with Gratitude.  I challenge you to grab this chain and let God pull you out of any ruts you may be stuck in today.

I. LINK #1: Vs 16... **Rejoice Always**: Changes your Focus from the negative to the positive and from your struggles to your blessings.

II. LINK #2: Vs 17... **Pray without ceasing**: Changes your focus from yourself to God and from the impossible to the possible.

III. LINK #3: Vs 18... **In everything give thanks**: Changes your focus from your struggles to your victories and from complaining to complimenting.

IV. LINK #4: Vs 19... **Do not quench the Spirit**: Changes your focus from the flesh to the Spirit and from your perspective to Gods perspective.

V.  LINK #5: Vs 20... **Do not despise prophetic utterances**: Changes your focus from human wisdom to godly wisdom and from relativism to biblical truth.

VI. LINK #6: Vs 21a ...**Examine everything carefully**: Change your focus from reckless to researched and from impulsive to intentional.

VII.  LINK #7:  Vs 21b... **Hold fast to what is good**: Changes your focus from the bad to the good and from drifting through life to purposeful living.

VIII. LINK #8:  Vs 22... **Abstain from every form of evil**: changes your mindset from bondage to freedom and from blame to personal responsibility.