

Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 102.1)

LESSON 25 (CORE)

“Let Every Thing That Hath Breath Praise the Lord”

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| Hook | Psalms is the longest book of the Bible (150 chapters and the most pages) and has influenced not only Israelite history but also Christian hymn tradition and even popular culture. And we are spending just one lesson on it, so get as much as you can from it. 😊 |
| Goal | Class members can discuss their favorite Church hymns and songs, and reflect on how music and other practices can increase our gratitude. |
| Overview | (see below) |
| Conclusion | |

To help class members show their gratitude for the Savior and for the many blessings that he and our Heavenly Father have given us.

- I. Sunday School
 - a. Gratitude (how worship and religious rituals help increase and maintain gratitude, gratitude journal)
 - i. Gratitude quotes
 1. Monson (October 2010 Conference)
 2. Eyring (October 1989 Conference)
 3. Outgoing RS President Bonnie Parkin (April 2007)
 4. Summary: focus on and be grateful for what we have, bring what we have to remembrance, avoid comparison and coveting, work to be grateful for even what is difficult (we seek comfort; God seeks growth and opportunity to love and serve. Life is supposed to be difficult)
 - b. Psalms
 - i. Introduction to the Psalms
 - ii. (thoughts on Psalms, favorite Psalms) (Psalm 23 of course, go through reading)
 - c. Music (and poetry as well, since they are related)
 - i. Music in personal devotion
 - ii. Music in worship
 - d. Hymns from additional perspectives
 - e. Concluding thoughts (how we can use music/incorporate more gratitude in our lives)

Biblical Poetry:

In addition to vivid imagery, the primary feature of Hebrew poetry is *parallelism*, which is of more than one kind: (keep these in mind as you read through the assigned Psalms)

- Synonymous (Parallel clauses both present similar ideas, thus intensifying)
- ^{Ps 22:18} they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.
(Note that the second clause gives more detail about the first)
- Antithetical (Parallel clauses present contrasting ideas)
 - Ps 37:9: For the wicked shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.
- Synthetic (Second clause completes or compliments meaning of the first)
 - Ps 51:14: ¹⁴Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

<http://libguides.northcentral.edu/content.php?pid=409211&sid=3347663>

The Psalms are an expression of human response to God, so the types span the extremes of human emotion. They also provide an impressively clear window into Israelite thought and religion.

Types of Psalms

1. Laments or Prayers (Heb *tephilla*). *Community Laments* arose from times of national crisis. The *Individual Laments* arise from a variety of situations of individual crisis.

Community Laments: e.g., Psalms (12), 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, (108), 123, (129), and 137; five of these are gathered in Book III (73–89).

Individual Laments: Book I: 3–7; 9–10; 13; (14); 17; 22; 25; 26; 28; 31; 35; (36); 38; (39); 40:11–17; 41; Book II: 42–43; 51; (52); (53); 54–59; 61; 64; 69; 70; 71; Book III: 77; 86; 88; Book IV: 102; Book V: 109; 120; 130; 140–43. When the *affirmation of trust* dominates, the psalm may be called an Individual Psalm of Trust: 11; 16; 23; 27; 62; 63; 131.

2. Hymns or Songs of Praise (Heb *tehilla*).

Included here are Psalms 8; 19:1–6; 29; 33; 47; 65; 66:1–12; 78; 93; 95–100; 103–6; 111; 113; 114; 117; 134; 135; 136; 145–50.

3. Songs of Thanksgiving (Heb *toda*). At the heart of these psalms is the *story of the deliverance*.

Psalms 18; 30; 32; (34); 40:1–10; 66:13–20; 92; 116; 118; and 138. The story of the deliverance is summarized briefly, “O Lord my God, I cried to thee for help, and thou hast healed me” (30:2;

cf. 18:3; 34:4, 6; 40:1–2; 66:19; 92:4; 116:1–2; 118:5; 138:3) and often expanded (18:4–19, 31–45; 30:6–11; 32:3–5; 66:16–19; 92:10–11; 116:3–4, 6–9, 16; 118:10–18).

4. Royal Psalms. These psalms originated during the period of the Monarchy and functioned during that period. After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E, they took on another significance, projecting into the future a description of an ideal king to come.

Psalms 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 110; 132; and 144:1–11.

5. Songs of Zion. These celebrate the Lord's choice of Mt. Zion in Jerusalem as the earthly center of the Lord's presence

See Psalms , 48, 76, 84, 87, and 122.

6. Liturgies. Associated with worship

Here may be included Psalms 15, 24, 50, (68), 81, (82), 95, 115, 132.

7. Wisdom and Torah Psalms. Reflect on life and give advice on living it well.

Included here are Psalms 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133, and Psalms 1, 19, and 119.

Conference quotes

President Monson: (October 2010)

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/the-divine-gift-of-gratitude?lang=eng&query=gratitude>

My brothers and sisters, do we remember to give thanks for the blessings we receive? Sincerely giving thanks not only helps us recognize our blessings, but it also unlocks the doors of heaven and helps us feel God's love.

My beloved friend President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "When you walk with **gratitude**, you do not walk with arrogance and conceit and egotism, you walk with a spirit of thanksgiving that is becoming to you and will bless your lives." 3

...

We have all experienced times when our focus is on what we lack rather than on our blessings. Said the Greek philosopher Epictetus, "He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has." 5

This is a wonderful time to be on earth. While there is much that is wrong in the world today, there are many things that are right and good. There are marriages that make it, parents who love their children and sacrifice for them, friends who care about us and help us, teachers who teach. Our lives are blessed in countless ways.

We can lift ourselves and others as well when we refuse to remain in the realm of negative thought and cultivate within our hearts an attitude of **gratitude**. If ingratitude be numbered

among the serious sins, then gratitude takes its place among the noblest of virtues. Someone has said that “gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.”⁸ How can we cultivate within our hearts an attitude of gratitude? President Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church, provided an answer. Said he: “The grateful man sees so much in the world to be thankful for, and with him the good outweighs the evil. Love overpowers jealousy, and light drives darkness out of his life.” He continued: “Pride destroys our gratitude and sets up selfishness in its place. How much happier we are in the presence of a grateful and loving soul, and how careful we should be to cultivate, through the medium of a prayerful life, a thankful attitude toward God and man!”⁹

President Smith is telling us that a prayerful life is the key to possessing gratitude.

Do material possessions make us happy and grateful? Perhaps momentarily. However, those things which provide deep and lasting happiness and gratitude are the things which money cannot buy: our families, the gospel, good friends, our health, our abilities, the love we receive from those around us. Unfortunately, these are some of the things we allow ourselves to take for granted.

The English author Aldous Huxley wrote, “Most human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted.”¹⁰

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1989/10/remembrance-and-gratitude?lang=eng&query=gratitude>

President Spencer W. Kimball described that process of inspired writing: “Those who keep a book of remembrance are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives. Journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity.” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, p. 349.)

As you start to write, you could ask yourself, “How did God bless me today?” If you do that long enough and with faith, you will find yourself remembering blessings. And sometimes, you will have gifts brought to your mind which you failed to notice during the day, but which you will then know were a touch of God’s hand in your life.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2001/10/gratitude?lang=eng&query=gratitude>

It is human nature, I suppose, to seek elsewhere for our happiness. Pursuit of career goals, wealth, and material rewards can cloud our perspective and often leads to a lack of appreciation for the bounteous blessings of our present circumstances.

It is precarious to dwell on why we have not been given more. It is, however, beneficial and humbling to dwell on why we have been given so much.

President Joseph F. Smith has instructed us that “the spirit of gratitude is always pleasant and satisfying because it carries with it a sense of helpfulness to others; it begets love and friendship, and engenders divine influence. Gratitude is said to be the memory of the heart”

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2007/04/gratitude-a-path-to-happiness?lang=eng&query=gratitude> (Bonnie Parkin, outgoing General Relief Society President)

Gratitude requires awareness and effort, not only to feel it but to express it. Frequently we are oblivious to the Lord’s hand. We murmur, complain, resist, criticize; so often we are not grateful. In the Book of Mormon, we learn that those who murmur do not know “the dealings of that God who ... created them.”³ The Lord counsels us not to murmur because it is then difficult for the Spirit to work with us.

Gratitude is a Spirit-filled principle. It opens our minds to a universe permeated with the richness of a living God. Through it, we become spiritually aware of the wonder of the smallest things, which gladden our hearts with their messages of God’s love. This grateful awareness heightens our sensitivity to divine direction. When we communicate gratitude, we can be filled with the Spirit and connected to those around us and the Lord. Gratitude inspires happiness and carries divine influence. “Live in thanksgiving daily,” said Amulek, “for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you.”⁴

Mercies and blessings come in different forms—sometimes as hard things. Yet the Lord said, “Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in *all* things.”⁵ *All things* means just that: good things, difficult things—not just some things. He has commanded us to be grateful because He knows being grateful will make us happy. This is another evidence of His love.

Jonathan Haidt, Happiness Hypothesis

This is the adaptation principle at work: People’s judgments about their present state are based on whether it is better or worse than the state to which they have become accustomed.⁹ Adaptation is, in part, just a property of neurons: Nerve cells respond vigorously to new stimuli, but gradually they “habituate,” firing less to stimuli that they have become used to. It is change that contains vital information, not steady states. Human beings, however, take adaptation to cognitive extremes. We don’t just habituate, we recalibrate. We create for ourselves a world of targets, and each time we hit one we replace it with another. After a string of successes we aim higher; after a massive setback, such as a broken neck, we aim lower. Instead of following Buddhist and Stoic advice to surrender attachments and let events happen, we surround ourselves with goals, hopes, and expectations, and then feel pleasure and pain in relation to our progress...there are two fundamentally different kinds of externals: the conditions of your life and the voluntary activities that you undertake.³³ Conditions include facts about your life

that you can't change (race, sex, age, disability) as well as things that you can (wealth, marital status, where you live). Conditions are constant over time, at least during a period in your life, and so they are the sorts of things that you are likely to adapt to. Voluntary activities, on the other hand, are the things that you choose to do, such as meditation, exercise, learning a new skill, or taking a vacation. Because such activities must be chosen, and because most of them take effort and attention, they can't just disappear from your awareness the way conditions can. Voluntary activities, therefore, offer much greater promise for increasing happiness while avoiding adaptation effects. One of the most important ideas in positive psychology is what Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, Schkade, and Seligman call the "happiness formula:" $H=S+C+V$ The level of happiness that you actually experience (H) is determined by your biological set point (S) plus the conditions of your life (C) plus the voluntary activities (V) you do.³⁴

Haidt, Jonathan (2006-12-26). *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (p. 91). Basic Books. Kindle Edition.

[Link to McConkie, purifying power of Gethsemane](#)