

Gratitude - is this feeling behind people's sense of the importance of God?

The essentials: Gratitude is recognising that something is good. It does not need good to be intended. In fact there is more gratitude in good being just there unintended than there is in somebody making it their own by intending it. After all unless good is there whether intended or not nobody can intend it. Intention is not everything for if a mad or hypnotised person thought they were doing us a favour by killing us we would be far from grateful to that person. The goodness of their intention would be the very reason we give them no gratitude whatsoever in our heads or heart.

The honour that is gratitude cannot be given. It is earned so it is not a gift to the good person. They are getting what they earned. So despite that we give it as a gift. It follows that we can be grateful for all that is good in our lives even if it has nothing to do with God or any person. Gratitude is what we do for ourselves for it is nice to feel grateful. To argue that we need a god to be grateful to forgets that gratitude is not logical but illogical. Gratitude is good for us for it is us being better than the truth by mastering it. We are grateful despite it. Gratitude can be stirred as long as something benefits you and it does not matter if gratitude makes sense.

Gratitude is a form of joy mixed with surprise. Gratitude is not so much about the fact that somebody cares but about that somebody benefited you. If God for some reason cannot do much for you his good intentions and love will mean little or nothing to you. He only gets gratitude when he is able to help and has helped. Gratitude does not fit the idea of a God who is to be loved for his own sake.

Gratitude is an attitude. Professor Robert Emmons, University of California, Davis, states "Gratitude is an attitude not a feeling that can be easily willed. Even if you are not satisfied with your life as it is today, if you go through grateful motions, the emotion of gratitude should be triggered. It is like improving your posture and, as a result, becoming more energetic and self-confident - Attitude change often follows behavior change. By living the gratitude that we do not necessarily feel, we can begin to feel that gratitude that we live." Lesson: it is work that makes you grateful not self-hypnosis or even a happy event and certainly not God or belief in God.

Thanking God or anyone for being good means you really thank goodness not him in the sense that he lined up with goodness and sacrificed his own will to line up. So though we thank people we really mean we thank goodness.

Love is no good without gratitude so gratitude is fundamental and love is not.

The components of gratitude

Gratitude comes when you think you don't deserve something nice and you get it.

Gratitude comes from being helped by a being that might spitefully refuse to help you but helps you anyway. Gratitude to a loving God who never sins or harms is an oxymoron. Its a self-righteous pretence.

Not deserving something could mean getting something nice though you deserve to get something bad.

Not deserving could mean that you are given something and the giver does not care what you deserve or if you deserve.

Being happy that somebody has given for and to you comes from the assurance that others care about you and makes you feel safer. It is this that matters more than the fact that you received something without deserving. The fellow-feeling expressed towards you is what matters to you more than the gift.

A woman knows she is totally hated by her son's boss. She goes and asks the boss to give her son a pay rise for his sake not hers. The boss reluctantly agrees. The woman will still be grateful. The point is that gratitude is a response of joy to something going right. She is able to feel tremendous gratitude for a favour that is not done for her as if it were done for her. The favour is an insult to her in the sense that it is given without any respect for her. But she is still grateful.

Gratitude is not very rational which is its charm. Believers who say you need a God to thank are making it too rational. If you do that, you will rob gratitude of its power and value.

Gratitude that is based on you getting something good when you feel you should get something bad or nothing is not healthy and is pathetic.

Gratitude that is based on you getting something from somebody who does not care what you deserve has a sting. Part of

of it is about feeling you should get something bad.

Gratitude that is based on you getting something from somebody who is not even thinking if you deserve is the best.

The paradox

Good and random are not mutually exclusive.

The paradox of gratitude is that if a person does good to you and this person exists by pure chance and is good by pure chance and has chosen you to be good to you by chance that enhances the sense of gratitude. It is as if the role of chance makes you able to appreciate the person maximally.

It is a paradox for you think that good has to come from an agent in order to be good. But if chance creates the agent then chance is more important than the agent.

The little things

Gratitude should be an outlook on your life not a response. We should not wait until somebody does something nice for us before we feel grateful. See each moment as special even if it cannot be seen as a gift at all.

It is more important to be grateful for little things than big things. It is because the wonderful little things will always happen and they happen often. Your joy in them builds up when you keep noticing them and make the effort not to take them for granted. It would be a waste to be grateful for nothing but the big things.

Sense of entitlement

If you lack a sense of gratitude then you feel that all others do for you and all you get in life is owed to you. You have a high opinion of your value. Its about you which means you devalue everybody else. Religion says it makes you devalue God for you are virtually calling him stupid if he loves others as much as you.

You may think you are owed nothing but good for your goodness is inherently so exceptional. No matter what you do you are wonderful just because you are you. You are just good in the way a diamond is. That is being inherently precious. What if you think you are good in the sense that your good deeds are exceptional? You think you deserve better than everybody else. If there is a choice between you winning the one billion dollars and Johnny down the road then it should be you.

It is possible to think life owes you nothing but wonderful things and think it is the same for others. Though Christianity's "Love your neighbour as yourself" is not saying to think like that, that is how it is interpreted. That is what Christians want to mean by it and mean by it. That is still involving a sense of entitlement.

God does not have any needs. So he can indulge you and its nothing to him. For that reason the doctrine that God exists in some form even if he is not love is enough on its own to give you a sense of entitlement WITHOUT the ideas of deserving good things etc being involved. What if you are willing to embrace suffering for God? You feel entitled to support and so the sense of entitlement is still there.

The notion that God has strange unknown and obtuse ways can mean that the good things in your life that you see as coming from him can be seen as your entitlement for some reason that you cannot fathom.

You can have a sense of entitlement not for yourself but for those who are part of you like your children. So you can seem good and caring and still lack gratitude for all that is done for your children is done for its owed to them.

Gratitude is consistent with having a universe of luck and chance. It makes no sense in the light of belief in God.

Gratitude is about you

Gratitude comes from your ability to honour yourself alone for making you what you are.

Gratitude is the feeling of joy when somebody expresses love to you in some way. It could be that they tell you they love you. It could be that they simply do something nice for you.

Gratitude tells the other person, "I am glad you helped me or did this for me." It praises the other person. The other person feels praised merely by seeing your grateful response.

Gratitude links you to other people and them to you.

Gratitude is the most important emotion of all. It is so good for mental and physical health. Love as in the emotion is impossible unless gratitude appears first.

FINALLY

People say you need a God to be grateful for the blessings that just come into your life. Translation: You need a crutch to be grateful to. That is not gratitude. Gratitude just happens and cannot be thought or manipulated into existence. It is about me celebrating the other for me. It is not about God. You can be grateful for somebody trying to hurt you when it backfires and benefits you hugely so it is not even about the intention of the other person. God is equated with good intention so gratitude is atheistic. Gratitude to God as a role model does not make any sense for God has nothing to be grateful for so he cannot be an example for us. Nothing can add to God's happiness therefore there is no gratitude in God. Gratitude comes from knowing things can hurt you as well as harm you and God cannot be hurt.