Dear Parents,

When our children are small we have to prompt them to do everything. Go clean your room, chew with your mouth closed, say thank you. At some point, these things should become automatic. Do you find yourself STILL prompting your child to say thank you? When does that become automatic?

Instilling gratefulness in our children takes work. They are not born grateful, they’re born selfish. So how do we teach them gratefulness? How do we help our child embrace gratefulness? Check out this quick video, then well dive deeper!

<https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/99466317/526ad886c4>

Gratefulness is an attitude that we choose to have. In reality a grateful heart has NOTHING to do with what we have, material possessions. A grateful heart also isn’t birthed out of positive circumstances in life. Gratefulness is an attitude we possess when we know WHOSE we are.

When you read of Paul and Silas imprisoned in Acts 16, you find out they’d just been severely beaten by a crowd and drug to prison. In prison that evening we see Paul and Silas doing 2 things; praying and singing hymns. We can learn a lot about gratefulness from the responses of these men. Upon a severe beating and imprisonment, we see them expressing adoration and gratefulness to God. They’re attention wasn’t fixed on their circumstances; it was fixed on God Himself.

So now that we understand that gratefulness isn’t about being thankful for our stuff or our great circumstances, but rather an attitude fixed on God Himself, how do we instill an attitude of gratefulness in our children?

* Live in the present. Living in the past keeps us tied to guilt and regret. Living in the future leaves us striving for things that we’re not promised. Live for today.
* Make sure when you express gratefulness that isn’t just for things. Be grateful for good attitudes, great friends, kind words, etc.
* Develop an understanding of money with an allowance. While instituting an allowance, teach what it means to tithe, save, give and spend.
* Expose your children to people from all different walks of life. Help them see that what people HAVE doesn’t define WHO they are.

Gratefulness is an attitude of contentment. It’s when we say I don’t need more from God to follow Him completely. I’ll follow now. Our children will learn gratefulness from us when they see it modeled through this type of attitude.

Building Young Disciples,

Pastor Sarah