



As Thanksgiving approaches, consider this question: *What is the impact of thankfulness?* An article in *The Wall Street Journal* summarizes fascinating research on the topic:

Adults who frequently feel grateful have more energy, more optimism, more social connections and more happiness than those who do not. They're also less likely to be depressed, envious, or greedy. They earn more money, sleep more soundly, exercise more regularly, and have greater resistance to illness.¹

Dr. Robert Emmons, psychology professor at the University of California, has studied gratitude for more than a decade and is considered to be the world's leading authority. After conducting three scientific studies on the topic, Emmons concluded that practicing gratitude can increase happiness levels by around 25 percent.² And Dr. P. Murali Doraiswamy, a brain and mind health expert at Duke University Medical Center asserts:

If [thankfulness] were a drug, it would be the world's best-selling product with a health maintenance indication for every major organ system.³

DISCUSS

In what situation has expressing gratitude helped change your outlook?

The Bible is filled with instructions to be thankful, and Philippians 4:6-8 talks about thankfulness even in situations that may cause anxiety.

Read Philippians 4:6-8

1. In your own words, what does verse 6 instruct us to do?
 2. What promises are stated or implied as a result?
 3. What is the opposite of thankfulness? When are you most likely and unlikely to feel thankful?
 4. How is this kind of peace described, and where does it come from?
 5. Verse 7 talks about peace that will guard your heart and mind. Where have assaults on your heart or mind come from?
 6. How is this kind of peace described, and where does it come from?
 7. What additional help does verse 8 give on how to guard your mind?
 8. What practical steps would you like to take in response to this discussion?
- What will help you take those steps?

¹ *Wall Street Journal*. November, 2010. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704243904575630541486290052>

² <https://www.spring.org.uk/2007/09/practicing-gratitude-can-increase.php>

³ <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2017/11/24/thanksgiving-gratitude.aspx>