



AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Our society sets aside time each November to count our blessings and express thankfulness. But God wants his people to embrace gratitude as a lifestyle, continually thanking him for what he's done for us and what he gives us.

Some parents might say their teenagers act more entitled than grateful. Entitlement, the opposite of gratitude, leads to feelings of disappointment and frustration. Gratitude, however, could be the key to happy, well-adjusted teenagers, according to new research.

Psychology professor Giacomo Bono, Ph.D., found that grateful teenagers were happier, more hopeful, and better behaved at school than their peers. (See "The View" for more details.) "More gratitude may be precisely what our society needs to raise a generation that is ready to make a difference in the world," he said.

For Christians, gratitude doesn't depend on circumstances. Instead, we can be thankful to God for his never-changing love and the free gift of salvation. God promises to meet all our needs and tells us to give thanks in each and every situation—even the tough ones. Parents can set an example for teenagers by being grateful for what they already have and for seeing the blessings in both joyful and challenging times.

THE VIEW

Researchers found that the most grateful teenagers had a 15% increase in life satisfaction, as well as a 15% increase in feeling like they had a meaning for life.

They also experienced a 17% boost in happiness and hopefulness, as well as a 15% decrease in feeling symptoms of depression.

Additionally, teens who experienced the greatest increase in gratefulness over a four-year period had the greatest reductions in behaviors such as cheating, detention, and drug and alcohol use.

—California State University

TIPS >>>

Try these tips for reinforcing a sense of gratitude in your family. They'll deepen your Thanksgiving celebrations and also make life more meaningful year-round:

- **Fill a gratitude jar.** Set a jar, slips of paper, and pens in a prominent place in your home. Have each family member write down things for which they're thankful. Every week, empty the jar and read the reasons behind one another's gratitude.
- **Provide a fresh perspective.** Have family members each write their names on a piece of paper. Pass around the papers, and have each person write down what they'd be thankful for if they were the person named.

- **Foster altruism and service.** Helping other people indirectly leads to feelings of compassion, gratitude, and self-confidence.
- **Put teenagers in charge.** Ask kids to come up with an idea or new tradition to help your family be grateful this season—and all year.
- **Show proof of your thanks.** For Thanksgiving dinner, ask everyone to bring to the table three objects for which they're thankful. They can represent: 1) something new this year, 2) something intangible, and 3) something basic to their lives. Take turns sharing your objects.
- **Make it a habit.** Stick with your gratitude practices, especially during difficulties. Remind kids how tough times help them grow.

PONDER THIS

- What are you most thankful for, and why?
- What makes you pause to thank God for your blessings? How can you remember to do this more often?
- What lessons about gratitude would you most like your teenagers to learn, and why?





Gut-Check Gratitude

Expert Insights for Parents of Teenagers

By Mike Nappa

At the end of a recent sermon, my husband prayed, “God, if I were you, I wouldn’t choose me. But you do. You already have. And it changes everything.” Those words shot through me, into my gut. If I’m being honest with God, I’d say that, too. If I were God, I wouldn’t choose me to do any of his work.

But God has already made the choice to love me. He has already chosen me to be salt and light. So it’s time to embrace this gift of grace with thankfulness. If you’ve felt condemned when you’re not, try these things:

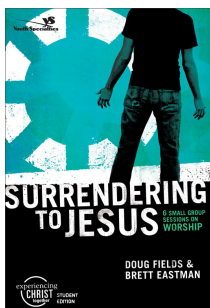
1. Say aloud “I am loved.” You’re a beautiful part of Jesus’ family, so express deep gratitude for that.
2. Write down “I have a purpose.” Start digging. Unearth the creativity that gets squelched in fear and monotony. Do something random. Wander around in a place you’ve never been. Listen and breathe. Let go in order to really grasp the way your Creator blesses and holds you.
3. Look around and take inventory of your life. For each area, ask how it has been affected by God’s love and his calling. Let

that be fuel for your next steps, your next thoughts, your next words of thanks.

4. Go! You know that one thing you keep dreaming about? Your intentions are to do it, to take care of it, to talk to someone about it. It lights up your face when you talk about it. All that is great, but it will only begin to happen as you take steps toward it. Take the first step, whatever that looks like, thanking God for your talents and opportunities.

I’m thankful for gut-check prayers—and for the many ways God showers down his love and blessings. He has

RESOURCE



One of the six small-group sessions in *Surrendering to Jesus*, a resource by Doug Fields and Brett Eastman, is titled “Wild Gratitude.” Kids will discover how they can respond to Christ for everything he’s done for them.

BIBLE FOCUS

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.
Psalm 107:1, NIV

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

MAINSTREAM MUSIC



KATY PERRY

Background: Pop singer Perry, 29, got her start in gospel music at age 16 but soon headed in a completely secular direction. Her hits, including “I Kissed a Girl” and “Last Friday Night,” are often about sex, relationships, and parties. Perry flaunts her sexuality and wears provocative clothing on tour. She was named Billboard’s 2012 Woman of the Year. High schools around the U.S. recently entered a lip-dub contest for Perry’s new hit single “Roar.”

Albums: *Prism* (2013), *Teenage Dream* (2010), *One of the Boys* (2008)

What Perry Says: Perry says she fought suicidal thoughts after her divorce from comedian Russell Brand. “All the songs are real-life moments. I can only write autobiographically. I put all the evidence in the music. I tell my fans if they want to know the real truth about stuff, just listen to the songs.”

Explore: You can watch the video for “Roar,” the first single from *Prism*, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=CevxZvSJLk8.

CHRISTIAN MUSIC



DUSTIN KENS RUE

Background: Kensrue, 32, was the lead singer of Thrice, a post-hardcore secular band. They were incredibly popular, even with faith-filled lyrics. Now Kensrue is worship pastor at a Mars Hill church, and his first full-length worship album is terrific. He’s just as unflinching here as he was with Thrice. “God Is Good” assures us that when darkness abounds, God is still there and still loves us.

Albums: *The Water and the Blood* (2013), *This Good Night Is Still Everywhere* (2008)

What Kensrue Says: “I’m not a believer in the subcategory of Christian music. ‘It’s Not Enough’ from the new record was going to be a Thrice song, and it asks hard questions, and it’s also influenced by the book of Ecclesiastes.”

Explore: The video for “It’s Not Enough” is available here www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeRSIQIPkpo.

MOVIES

Movie: *Ender’s Game*

Genre: Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi

Rating: PG-13

Synopsis: In this film, based on an award-winning novel, a young boy is recruited to join Battle School. There he’s trained to fight an alien menace in order to save humanity.

Our Take: The book is a classic for good reason. The story is compelling and interesting, and the protagonist is a kid, so teens connect immediately.

Movie: *Catching Fire*

Genre: Action, Drama, Sci-Fi

Rating: PG-13

Synopsis: After winning the Hunger Games, Katniss made some enemies, including President Snow. As he tries to exact punishment, rebellion spreads across the districts.

Our Take: This popular series has lots of entry points for discussion, including sacrifice, standing up for what’s right, how we are to handle disagreements with government, etc.



VIDEO GAMES



Assassin’s Creed IV: Black Flag—The popular series incorporates a few new tactics, as you’re an assassin-trained captain commanding a pirate ship. You’ll be recruiting, fulfilling missions, and exploring on land and under the waters. (Rated M; Xbox 360, PS3, PC, Wii U)

WWE 2K14—Another entry in the popular wrestling franchise lets you play as current and classic wrestlers. One unique feature is that you can relive iconic moments and matches from the past 30 years of *Wrestlemania*. (Not yet rated, but probably T; Xbox 360, PS3)

NOVEMBER 2013



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2
High School Girls Retreat Dates: November 15th-16th Time: We're meeting at the church at 6pm on Fri. and returning to the church at 3pm Sat. Cost: \$40, plus money for a fast food lunch Location: Sheraton Hotel / 3000 N Loop W Fwy, Houston, TX Contact: Amy Pardue / amy.pardue@houstonfirst.org / 713-957-7632						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
			MS - Ignition Night 6:30—8:00pm Rm 364 HS - AMP Café 7:00—8:30pm Rm 363			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
			MS - WIRED Rm 364 6:30 - 8:00pm HS - AMP Rm 363 7:00 - 8:30pm		High School Girls Retreat Friday night @ 6pm - Saturday afternoon @ 3pm,	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
High School Ski Trip Info Meeting 12:12 - 12:45pm Room 362			MS - WIRED Rm 364 6:30 - 8:00pm HS - AMP Rm 363 7:00 - 8:30pm HS Ski Trip Info Mtg 5:45 - 6:15pm Room 362			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
AMP/WIRED Sunday MS - Rm 364 HS - Rm 363			NO AMP/WIRED		HFBC Offices Closed	

ALL High School students & their Parents...join us for a very brief informational meeting about the upcoming HS Spring Break Ski Retreat. There will be 2 meetings pick the 1 that works best with your schedule.
 March 16th - 21st @ Crested Butte, Colorado

