

June Devotional: Appreciation By Jerry Furniss [Thank you Bonnie for your kind and inspiring words.]

In December the devotional touched on appreciation. In January, the devotional was on Acknowledgement, Acceptance, and Appreciation. This month, I would like to again emphasize the importance of appreciation.

Always be **joyful**. Never stop praying. Whatever happens, **give thanks**, because it is **God's will** in Christ Jesus that you do this. Don't put out the Spirit's **fire**. Don't despise what **God has revealed**. Instead, **test everything**. Hold on to what is **good**. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-21)

One of the secrets to life is appreciation. Appreciation is an important character trait that God desires for us (**God's will**). However, appreciation, like faith, is empty (**no fire**) if it is not shown. An action is required. Also, for every action, there has to be an object or subject for that action. Yes, I think there is a plan being formed here. First, in any interaction, we are to evaluate (**test**) the subject or object, of any discussion, independent of whether it is perceived as good or bad (**whatever God reveals**). Then, in that evaluation, we are to look for something to be appreciative of. Finally, we are to express our appreciation in some way (**GIVE thanks**). Let me assure you that any method of expressing your appreciation will undoubtedly be something **good** and **joyous**, and in-line with **God's will** for you. This is how we meet the goal God has for us, to enjoy life to the fullest. We also bring joy to those whom we show our appreciation. Also, by appreciating God's wisdom, you build faith (**fire**).

Think about this. If you do not exercise something (like a muscle), it will become weaker until it is gone. If you cannot communicate or show your appreciation, then you have no appreciation. This means that you have no joy, therefore no faith, therefore no hope, therefore no meaningful life. However, if you spend all your time showing your appreciation, you will not have any bandwidth left for dwelling on the negative.

Showing your appreciation is the best way to acknowledge and accept love from others; what others have done and are doing to meet your needs. It will also make you feel like you belong. If you do not show your appreciation, then those deeds are for naught but your own pride and entitlement. Let's exercise our appreciation always. To get us started, show how much you appreciate your church family, the lunches, the Sunday school, the choir, the prayer list, the monthly devotionals, and your heart friends! How will you show your appreciation? Try it; it will freak people out!