

FAITH-BASED COMMITTEE  
CHARACTER COUNCIL OF HAMBURG  
Spiritual Reflection on the November '04 Character virtue of  
“**GRATEFULNESS**”  
(From a Christian perspective)

“Gratefulness is having an attitude of appreciation for talents, rewards and opportunities afforded.”

A popular contemporary worship chorus encourages us to “Give thanks with a grateful heart...” What is the difference between thankfulness and gratefulness? Thanks acknowledges, while gratefulness appreciates. Unfortunately, I believe that both this nation and the Christian church in America have drifted into a culture of entitlement and expectation that neither acknowledges nor appreciates the talents, rewards and opportunities they have been afforded by God and this great nation.

One only needs to read the Declaration of Independence, the cornerstone document upon which our nation was founded, to see what our founding fathers knew: Our inalienable rights come from our Creator, not from human governments. Our Constitution established freedom “of” religion; not freedom “from” religion. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, it is an excellent time to reflect upon the talents, rewards and opportunities with which we have been blessed by God Almighty in this nation. In a nation of such abundance it is often too easy to take our blessings for granted.

I have traveled on four continents, been to some of the most remote areas of Africa on missionary journeys and I have served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam. I have done without, been in fear in hostile and dangerous surroundings of people and places. But it was none of these things that gave me an appreciation, gratefulness for my profound blessings. It was the manifest realization of God’s consuming love for me that caused me to be grateful. It was the realization of what Christ had redeemed me **from**, and blessed me **with**, that gave me a grateful heart and imparted to me the ability to appreciate the blessings of salvation and of this nation.

Let us not take these things for granted. Let us not be like the Israelites who sought God, and then half-heartedly, only after they had lost all. Let us take God at His Word to believe Him and be grateful for all that we have. Give thanks with a grateful heart for the blessings of Christ and of this nation.

Brent W. Doyle, Jr.  
Associate Pastor, Southtowns Christian Center