



# The Power of GRATITUDE

■ by Joy Bocanegra, MA, LCPC

*“Is your glass half empty or is your glass half full?”*

This is a familiar saying referring to our perspective on life.

Have you ever considered how our outlook makes a difference in our overall satisfaction?

**W**e long for a problem free life and spend a lot of energy trying to figure out how to attain just that. The trouble is that no one is exempt from problems. John 16:33 says, “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” Jesus said we can expect trouble so expecting otherwise is not a realistic expectation. Gratitude, choosing to be thankful, can make life more manageable. Unrealistic expectations undermine gratitude and thereby sabotage our happiness. We want to be happy, right?

Now I'm not advocating ignoring problems or pretending you don't have them. Taking steps to make positive changes are important however, we need to accept what we are powerless over and focus on what is good. As the serenity prayer says, “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Practicing an attitude of gratitude is actively looking for what is good. It's treasure hunting in the rubble of our brokenness. It's asking yourself what you have to be thankful for. It is everything from a loving friend or family member to the ability to think, to the cup you drink your coffee from. It's the beautiful colors of autumn leaves, brilliant sunshine that lights the sky and a gentle breeze across your face. Connecting to what you have to be thankful for can bring you comfort, help you relax, and fill you with gladness. Being thankful can balance the scale, lighten your load and allow you to move forward joyfully. The more you intentionally look for what you can be thankful for the more positive your outlook will become. With practice you begin to see good more automatically. Here are some things you can do to cultivate gratitude:

- Keep a gratitude journal, pausing at the beginning or end of each day to name three or more things you are thankful for.
- Express appreciation and thanks to others, even for the little things.
- Write handwritten notes thanking those who are special in your life.
- Create visual reminders; place notes on your mirror, refrigerator or elsewhere to remind you to be thankful.
- Express thanks out loud. When we say something out loud it has more power. Speak about your thanks to yourself, others and in prayer.
- Create a Gratitude Book. Collect quotes, prayers, inspiring stories and pictures to remind you of all you are thankful for.

As you think more positively, your mood will improve and you can enjoy more of life. You may just find your glass filled to the brim.



All past newsletters/articles can be viewed on our website.  
<http://www.chicagochristiancounseling.org/newsletters.html>

Joy Bocanegra is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.  
She enjoys working with individuals, couples and families in our Orland Park location.

Article taken from the Nov | Dec 2013 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center  
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

[www.chicagochristiancounseling.org](http://www.chicagochristiancounseling.org)

800.361.6880 | [info@chicagochristiancounseling.org](mailto:info@chicagochristiancounseling.org)

[facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling](https://facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling) | Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list

*Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.*