Commands in the Bible to be grateful – based on God’s work for us.


Witherington – Philippians 245 "Note that rejoicing is not optional for a Christian, it is commanded." "emphatically commanded" - repeated. "A Christian habit or discipline... not an occasional or sporadic outburst of emotion - the verb is in the present continual tense."

Branson 46 "Gratitude is not just a fleeting emotion - it is foundational. As a response to God's gracious initiatives, gratitude changes us at our very core." Not emotions, but a stance. "The absence of gratitude is a primary sign that persons have turned away from God - that God’s presence and initiatives are being rejected." Rom. 1:18, 21 - wrath of God against those who do not honor or thank God.

Branson 51 Jesus healing the 10 lepers - Luke 17:12. "Thankfulness is a direct indication of underlying faith."

Appreciation being helpful to leading to change – Branson 54 Paul begins letters with thanksgiving which “provide the context for corrections and instructions about the changes that will be sought.” Paul “notes their own positive narratives... seeks a change... and ends with an expression of confidence.”

Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, p. 53. Poetic principle - Whatever we focus on grows – Philippians passage “Whatever is true...”

Importance of story & images


Narrative principle. Stories are powerful – Bible is stories.

Branson. Inquire into stories. Paul encouraged people to remember certain narratives (Eph. 2:4-5). (56) Create shared images. 61 Jesus used metaphors and parables. Visions in the prophets.

Importance of community and how we influence each other.


Communal rejoicing - Psalms, command in Philippians

Inter-faith dialogue – examples in AI books

*Appreciative Inquiry and the Catholic Church* p. 11 Value and inter-connectedness of all members
Find story from AI book about interfaith dialogue

Watkins and Mohr *Appreciative Inquiry* p. 234-235 worked with Episcopal Church on search process

**Not ignoring problems, incorporating them. Example of Psalms.**

Psalms as a model for expressing both joy and problems.

Psalms demonstrate expressing thanksgiving in spite of problems.

Branson 45 Doesn't begin with problems but thanksgiving. Understand commands for fixing problems in context of gratitude. (Reason for fixing problems.)

Branson 47 Brueggemann - psalms of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. Psalms in each category include praise and thanksgiving. Psalm 6. Psalm 22.

Brueggeman – *The Message of the Psalms* 57 Movement from pleas to praise.

Branson 52 Appreciative Inquiry writings do not include lament and confession. "Easy for organizational conversations to become mired in negative, repetitious analysis that leads to blame and defensiveness, there is little confidence in the role that might be played by these social-spiritual practices... The framework of gratitude can create an environment in which lament and confession can be properly generative. I also believe that genuine lament and confession will lead to gratitude."

"Sorrow apart from God's grace can lead to despair; guilt realized apart from God is debilitating." But God's grace can make these things sources of joy because we have found the answer to them. [Quote from Paul about what was weakness is now strength.]

Branson 53 Psalm 74 – corporate lament. [Examples of losses in theological higher ed, society because of recession]

Branson 58 “Reforming of... conversations along positive lines is not avoidance but reorientation.”

**Theology provides a basis for joy in the midst of darkness.**

Include example of Seble’s experience. Finding hope in midst of despair.

Branson 52-53 “Christian faith lives fully in reality – facing the darkness of any age, knowing our own weaknesses and sins and follies, resigning from any ideas about saving ourselves or generating our own hopes. When we enter God's grace with gratitude we can be honest about our circumstances and ourselves. Gratitude alters our perceptions so we can see and receive more of God.” Can recognize sins, confess and find restoration. Experience gratitude as a result.
Other:

Theology of depravity - there is still good in the world even though it is fallen. Also there is hope for redemption, and we are to participate in the redemptive work. A hopeless or resigned attitude is counter to this. [Find support for these ideas?]