

SIFAH LECTURE SERIES

The Grateful Servant: Two Du'as That Can Reshape Your Life

A practical lecture — knowledge you can act on

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SIFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

The Grateful Servant: Two Du'as That Can Reshape Your Life

A single du'a of gratitude that Allah placed on two tongues — a king's and yours — and what it teaches us about a thankful heart.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A Du'a So Precious Allah Said It Twice

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me begin with something that should stop us in our tracks. There is a supplication in the Book of Allah so precious, so central to what it means to be alive, that Allah did not record it only once. He placed it on *two separate tongues*, in two separate surahs, across the entire span of a human life. Once He put it on the lips of one of the mightiest men who ever walked the earth, a Prophet who was also a king. And once He gave it, almost word for word, to the ordinary believer at a very ordinary moment, when he turns forty.

Think about what that repetition is telling us. When Allah gives the same words to the wealthiest, most powerful man in history and to the average person sitting in traffic on a Tuesday morning, He is saying something unmistakable: **this lesson is for every single one of us, no matter our station.** Whether you own an empire or you are counting your last few coins until payday, the du'a is the same, because the disease it treats lives in every human heart. That disease is ingratitude, and the cure is a kind of thankfulness so deep it reshapes how you walk through the world.

So this morning I want us to sit together with these two du'as. I want us to slow down, to taste every word, and by the end I want you to walk away not just knowing what gratitude is, but actually feeling the pull to become a grateful servant of Allah. Because I promise you, my brothers and sisters, there are few things that will change your life more completely than truly learning to say thank you to the One who gave you everything.

Sulayman and the Valley of Ants

Let me take you back thousands of years, to the reign of Sulayman, 'alayhi as-salam. Allah had given this man a kingdom the likes of which no one else has ever been given. The wind obeyed his command. The jinn laboured for him. He understood the speech of the birds and the beasts. Imagine, for a moment, the sheer scale of that power. If any human being ever had reason to walk with his chest out and his chin high, it was Sulayman.

And then comes one of the most tender scenes in the entire Qur'an. Sulayman is marching at the head of his vast armies, an ocean of soldiers, jinn, and animals, and they pass through a valley of ants. A single tiny ant, seeing this overwhelming force approaching, cries out a warning to her people to hurry into their homes so they are not crushed underfoot without Sulayman and his soldiers even noticing them. Now, my dear brother, watch the heart of this man. A lesser soul would have swelled with pride, hearing even the ants tremble at his approach. But Sulayman? He smiled at her words, and then he turned instantly, humbly, to his Lord.

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى
وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي
عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous servants.

Surah An-Naml (27:19)

Do you see it? At the peak of his power, surrounded by an army that shakes the earth, the thing Sulayman is most anxious about is not losing his kingdom. It is losing his gratitude. His deepest fear is

that all this blessing might make him forget the One who gave it. That, my brothers and sisters, is the mark of a truly great heart.

ONE WORD THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

He Didn't Say 'Let Me Thank You' — He Said 'Awzi'ni'

I want you to look closely at the very first word of Sulayman's request, because the scholars of the Arabic language say something beautiful about it. He said *awzi'ni*. Now, the simple meaning is 'enable me' or 'inspire me.' But the word carries more than that. It means to instill within someone a constant, driving, relentless urge, an appetite that never switches off. Sulayman was not asking merely for the ability to say the words 'thank you, Allah.' He was asking Allah to plant gratitude so deep in his chest that it becomes part of who he is, a gratitude that does not fade with time, does not dull with comfort, does not evaporate the moment life gets easy.

And why would a Prophet of Allah, of all people, feel the need to ask for this so urgently? Because Sulayman understood a truth that most of us learn far too late: **wealth and power are more dangerous to the soul than poverty and hardship.** How many people do you know who were beautiful, humble, God-conscious believers when they had little, and then Allah opened the doors of the world to them, and slowly, quietly, they changed? The prayers got shorter. The heart got harder. The gratitude got thinner. Ease undid what difficulty never could.

Let me ask you honestly, my dear sister, my dear brother: when was the last time you made du'a to Allah asking Him to make you grateful? We ask Him for the new job, the healthy child, the bigger home, the marriage, the money. But how often do we stop and say, 'Ya Allah, You have already given me so much. Please, just help me not to take it for granted.' Sulayman shows us that this itself is one of the most important du'as a person can make.

A TEST, NOT A TROPHY

The Throne That Appeared in an Instant

This same lesson appears again in Sulayman's life, at the absolute summit of his miraculous power. He wished to bring the throne of the Queen of Sheba across an enormous distance. One of his people, someone who had knowledge of the Book, said he could bring it before the blink of an eye. And in an instant, the mighty throne of a distant queen stood right there in Sulayman's court.

Now stop and imagine this. Imagine what would swell inside the chest of an ordinary king witnessing such a marvel of his own kingdom. The pride. The self-congratulation. 'Look at what my court can do. Look at what I command.' But watch, again, the heart of a true servant of Allah. The moment that throne settled before him, Sulayman did not read it as a trophy proving his greatness. He read it as something else entirely.

فَلَمَّا رَأَاهُ مُسْتَقَرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي
أَلَشَّكْرُ أَمْ أَلْكُفْرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ
كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ

*Then when he saw it placed before him, he said: This is from the favour of my Lord **to test me, whether I am grateful or ungrateful.** And whoever is grateful, his gratitude is only for his own benefit; and whoever is ungrateful, then indeed my Lord is free of need and generous.*

Surah An-Naml (27:40)

'This is from the favour of my Lord, to test me, whether I am grateful or ungrateful.' My dear brothers and sisters, memorise that line and let it live in your heart. Because it is not just true of a miraculous throne, it is true of every single blessing in your life. Your salary is a test: will you be grateful or heedless? Your health is a test. Your children are a test. Your marriage, your home, your intelligence, even the air filling your lungs right now, all of it, a test to see how you will respond.

And look at the mercy hidden in the words that follow: 'whoever is grateful, his gratitude is only for his own benefit.' Allah gains nothing from your thanks. He is *al-Ghani*, utterly free of all need. When you thank Him, the entire benefit loops back to **you**: more blessings, a lighter heart, a soul at peace. Subhan Allah, think about what this means. Allah commands us to be grateful not because He needs it, but because we do. Gratitude is a gift He gives us disguised as a command.

The Door Through Which Blessings Grow

So why did Sulayman, of all the requests a king could make, place gratitude above everything else? Because Allah has tied the very increase of His blessings to the gratitude of His servants. This is not a vague hope, my brothers and sisters. It is a firm, unbreakable promise of the Qur'an, as certain as any law in this universe.

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ
إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

And remember when your Lord proclaimed: if you are grateful, I will surely increase you; but if you deny, indeed My punishment is severe.

Surah Ibrahim (14:7)

I want you to notice something exquisite about how Allah phrases this. He says, 'if you are grateful, I will surely increase you.' And then He stops. He does not say 'I will increase your wealth.' He does not say 'your health' or 'your knowledge.' He leaves it open, unspecified, boundless. Why? So that the grateful believer may hope for increase in *every good thing imaginable*. Increase in provision, yes, but also in faith, in peace, in family, in guidance, in the sweetness of worship. The door swings open in every direction.

But then watch what happens on the other side. When Allah speaks of ingratitude, He does not say 'I will decrease you.' He says something far heavier: 'My punishment is severe.' Because to deny the favours of Allah is not a small oversight, my dear brother. It is a kind of theft. It is taking the gift and forgetting the Giver, taking the sunlight and cursing the sun. The great scholar as-Sa'di, may Allah have mercy on him, explained it perfectly: gratitude preserves the blessings you already have and pulls new ones toward you, while ingratitude exposes everything you own to being taken away. So the grateful heart lives in a rising tide of mercy, and the ungrateful heart lives always at risk of the tide going out.

Not a Feeling, Not a Word — a Whole Life

Now here we must be very careful, because most people badly misunderstand what gratitude actually is. Many of us imagine gratitude is a feeling, a warm little glow that visits the heart now and then when something nice happens. Or we think it is a word: we say 'alhamdulillah' when the food arrives or the test comes back positive, and we consider our thanks complete. But true *shukr* in Islam is so much larger than a passing feeling or a phrase on the tongue. Listen to how Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, gathered its full meaning into one breathtaking definition that scholars have treasured ever since.

الشُّكْرُ ظُهُورُ أَثَرِ نِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ عَلَى لِسَانِ عَبْدِهِ ثَنَاءً
وَأَعْتِرَافًا، وَعَلَى قَلْبِهِ شُحُودًا وَمَحَبَّةً، وَعَلَى جَوَارِحِهِ
انْقِيَادًا وَطَاعَةً

*Gratitude is the appearance of the effect of Allah's blessing upon the **tongue** of His servant in praise and acknowledgement, upon his **heart** in witnessing and love, and upon his **limbs** in submission and obedience.*

Source: Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Madarij as-Salikin · **Authenticity:** Scholarly statement

Look at how complete this is, my brothers and sisters. Gratitude has three homes. It has a home on the **tongue**, that you actually speak of the blessing and praise the One who gave it. It has a home in the **heart**, that you inwardly witness, deep down, that every single good thing came from Allah alone, and that you love Him for it. And it has a home in the **limbs**, that you use the blessing in obedience to the One who gave it, and never in disobedience to Him. Tongue, heart, and hands, all pointing to Allah at once. That is real shukr.

And this is exactly the gratitude Sulayman asked for. Notice his du'a did not stop at 'let me thank You.' He immediately joined it to action: 'and to do righteousness of which You approve.' Because gratitude

that never moves the limbs is only half a gratitude. The truest way to thank Allah for a blessing is to use that blessing in a way that pleases Him. You thank Allah for your wealth by keeping it lawful and giving from it to the poor. You thank Him for your health by carrying your body to the masjid and into the service of others. You thank Him for your knowledge by acting on it and passing it on. Gratitude is active, my dear sister, never passive. It is a verb before it is ever a feeling.

THE COMMAND TO WORK

'Work, O Family of Dawud, in Gratitude'

This was the way of all the Prophets. They were the most grateful people who ever lived precisely because their gratitude moved their limbs, not just their lips. Look at how Allah commanded the household of Dawud, 'alayhi as-salam, with a single, striking word.

اعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُودَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ ج

Work, O family of Dawud, in gratitude. *And few of My servants are truly grateful.*

Surah Saba (34:13)

'Work, in gratitude.' He did not say 'feel grateful.' He said 'work in gratitude,' making thankfulness itself a kind of labour, a doing and not merely an emotion. And then Allah seals the verse with a line that should make every one of us pause and examine our own heart: 'and few of My servants are truly grateful.' Few. The grateful are the minority, my brothers and sisters. Most people, when given a thousand blessings and denied just one, will spend all their energy talking about the one they were denied. Give a person perfect health and a headache, and they will complain about the headache. The believer trains himself to be one of the few, the ones who see the thousand and thank the One who gave them.

The Advice Muhammad ﷺ Gave Out of Love

So central is this du'a of gratitude that the Prophet ﷺ taught it, in a form of its own, to one of the Companions he loved most dearly. Mu'adh ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took him by the hand, and imagine this scene, the Prophet ﷺ holding your hand, and then said:

يَا مُعَاذُ، وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأُحِبُّكَ، فَلَا تَدَعَنَّ فِي دُبُرِ كُلِّ
صَلَاةٍ أَنْ تَقُولَ: اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ
وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

O Mu'adh, by Allah, I truly love you, so never fail to say at the end of every prayer: O Allah, help me to remember You, to thank You, and to worship You in the best way.

Source: Sunan Abi Dawud: 1522 · **Authenticity:** Sahih (graded Sahih by al-Albani)

Look closely at what the Prophet ﷺ is teaching, because it is the very same lesson as Sulayman's du'a. 'Help me to remember You, and to thank You, and to worship You well.' Just as Sulayman asked to be *enabled* to be grateful, the Prophet ﷺ taught us to ask for *help* to be grateful, because gratitude is not something we can sustain by our own strength alone. Subhan Allah, we need the help of Allah even to thank Allah, because the very ability to praise Him is itself one of His blessings that calls for more praise. It is a beautiful, endless loop of dependence on Him.

And notice where he placed thankfulness: right between remembering Allah and worshipping Him excellently. Gratitude sits at the very heart of a believer's whole relationship with his Lord. And notice, too, how the Prophet ﷺ tied this advice to his love. 'By Allah, I love you.' He wanted Mu'adh to treasure this du'a so much that he would never let it go. So let us take it as if it were said to us personally, my dear

brother, my dear sister. Let none of us leave a single prayer, from today onward, without whispering: 'Allahumma a'inni 'ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni 'ibadatik.'

GRATITUDE REACHING BACKWARD

Thank Allah — and Thank Your Parents

Now look again at Sulayman's du'a and notice something remarkable. He did not say, 'enable me to thank You for Your favour upon me.' He said, 'upon me **and upon my parents.**' He reached his gratitude backward, to the blessings Allah had poured upon those who came before him: the faith, the guidance, the care he inherited. Because a person does not simply arrive in this world out of nowhere, fully formed. Whatever good you carry, you received so much of it through your parents, through their sacrifice, their teaching, their sleepless nights, and the mercy Allah showed them before you were ever born.

This is why, in the second of our two du'as, Allah introduces the very same supplication by first reminding us of exactly what our mothers endured for our sake.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا
وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ۚ وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا

*And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. **His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his bearing and his weaning is thirty months.***

Surah Al-Ahqaf (46:15)

Before Allah even mentions the du'a of gratitude, He sets the hardship of your mother right before your eyes: the pain of carrying you, the pain of delivering you, the long exhausting months of nursing and care. Why place this here? Because a person cannot honestly thank Allah while forgetting the human beings through whom Allah's mercy first reached him. Ingratitude to parents and true gratitude to Allah

simply cannot live in the same heart. This is why, in another place, Allah joined the two commands in a single breath, leaving no gap between them at all.

أَنْ أَشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

Be grateful to Me and to your parents. *To Me is the final destination.*

Surah Luqman (31:14)

And the Prophet ﷺ made this crystal clear, that thanking people is not some minor side-branch of our faith but woven into the very meaning of gratitude to Allah Himself. Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated:

مَنْ لَا يَشْكُرُ النَّاسَ لَا يَشْكُرُ اللَّهَ

Whoever does not thank people has not thanked Allah.

Source: Sunan Abi Dawud: 4811 and Jami at-Tirmidhi: 1954 · **Authenticity:** Sahih (graded Sahih by al-Albani)

Let me ask you something that might sting a little. How many of us are quick to thank a stranger for holding a door, quick to leave a five-star review for a waiter, quick to send a thank-you message for a small favour, yet slow, so painfully slow, to thank the mother who gave us years of sleepless nights, or the father who wore his body out at work so we could sleep comfortably? Gratitude to Allah that does not soften your heart toward your own parents has not yet reached its root.

So let this lecture move you, today, to action. If your parents are still alive, go to them. Thank them in plain, direct words, do not assume they know. Serve them in their weakness the way they served you in yours. And if they have already passed on, then thank Allah for them by making du'a for them, by giving charity on their behalf, and by living righteously, because the righteousness of a child is among the greatest gifts that still reaches a parent lying in the grave.

The Believer at Forty

And now we come to the most striking difference between our two du'as. The first was made by a Prophet-King at the height of his power. The second, almost identical, is placed by Allah on the tongue of the ordinary believer at one very particular, very tender moment in life: when he reaches the age of forty. And Allah completes this second du'a with a request that Sulayman's did not contain, a request that reaches not backward to the parents, but forward, to the generations still to come.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ
 أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ
 وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي
 إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Until, when he reaches full maturity and reaches the age of forty, he says: My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do righteousness of which You approve, and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have turned to You in repentance, and indeed I am among the Muslims.

Surah Al-Ahqaf (46:15)

Why did Allah choose forty for this du'a? Because by forty, a person has reached the fullness of his strength and understanding. Life has largely taken its shape. The ambitions you had at twenty have either been achieved or quietly slipped away, and the soul stands at a turning point. It is the age when a wise person stops asking only 'what will I gain?' and begins asking 'what will I leave behind, and what will I

carry back to my Lord?' So Allah teaches the believer: this is the moment to turn fully to Him, to take honest stock, to be grateful for all that came before, and to set your face toward your ending.

And look at the two new pieces this du'a contains. First: 'make righteous for me my offspring,' a plea that the gift of faith and guidance the believer received from his own parents will continue flowing through his children after he is gone, so the chain of guidance is never broken. And second: 'indeed, I have turned to You in repentance,' because a truly grateful heart is also a returning heart, one that is deeply aware of its own shortcomings and keeps running back to Allah.

What a complete and beautiful vision of a human life. At forty, the believer looks in three directions at once. He looks *backward* with gratitude, to his parents and all who came before. He looks at *himself* with repentance, turning to Allah from his sins. And he looks *forward* with hope, begging Allah to make his children righteous so the good he was given outlives him. This is how a Muslim is meant to grow older, my brothers and sisters: not chasing the fading pleasures of youth, but deepening in thankfulness, in repentance, and in care for the generation coming after. And though Allah named forty, do not wait for it. If you are younger, begin this posture now. If you are past it, adopt it today. The door is never, ever closed.

RAISING THE NEXT CHAIN

The Hardest Du'a of Our Time

Take that second plea very seriously, my dear parents: 'make righteous for me my offspring.' In our time, I believe this has become one of the hardest du'as to see answered, because we are raising children in an age that pulls at their hearts from every direction, often through the very glowing screens we place in their small hands. Let me be honest with you. It is not enough to provide for our children, to pay for the food and the clothes and the school, and then hand them over to be spiritually raised by whatever the algorithm decides to stream into their eyes.

Gratitude to Allah for the gift of a child is expressed by **guarding** that gift. By sitting with them. By teaching them the names of their Lord. By praying beside them so they see what worship looks like on a living face. And notice something profound: the believer at forty did not only ask Allah to make his children righteous, he turned to Allah in repentance in the very same breath. Why? Because he understood that the surest path to righteous children is to be a righteous parent whom Allah blesses. Our children are watching us far more than they are listening to us. So let our homes become places where Allah is remembered and thanked out loud, where the children hear their parents say 'alhamdulillah'

when the food comes and 'inna lillah' when trouble comes, where they see us rise for prayer. The gratitude we model today is the faith they will carry tomorrow, long after we are gone.

THE MOST GRATEFUL HEART

Why the Prophet ﷺ Prayed Until His Feet Cracked

If we want to see this gratitude not as words on a page but as a living, breathing example, we need only look to our own beloved Prophet ﷺ, who was, without question, the most grateful servant Allah ever created. Here is a man whom Allah had already forgiven completely, all that came before and all that would ever come. His place in the highest Paradise was guaranteed. And yet, he would stand in prayer through the depths of the night, so long, so devoted, that his blessed feet would become swollen and cracked.

'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, watching this, could not understand it. She asked him, gently, why he burdened himself so severely when Allah had already forgiven all his sins. What need was there for such exhausting worship? And his answer is one every believer should engrave on the walls of their heart.

أَفَلَا أَكُونُ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا

Should I not then be a grateful servant?

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 1130 and Sahih Muslim: 2820 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Reflect on this deeply, my brothers and sisters. The Prophet ﷺ did not worship out of fear of punishment alone, because he had been given the ultimate assurance. He worshipped out of *gratitude*. His prayer was a love letter, a response of a heart overwhelmed by a Lord who had blessed him beyond measure. He understood that worship is the very highest form of thanks, that when Allah has given you absolutely everything, the only fitting reply is to give Him your nights, your bowing, your tears.

This should turn our whole understanding of prayer on its head. So many of us treat our salah like a bill we grudgingly pay, a debt to be cleared as quickly as possible. But the grateful servant treats prayer like a gift he gladly offers, a precious chance to say thank you to the One who gave him his very next breath. So

the next time you stand to pray, my dear brother, my dear sister, do not stand like someone paying a fine. Stand like someone saying, from the bottom of their heart, thank You.

THE WING OF PATIENCE

Why the Believer Can Never Lose

And here is the secret that sets the believer apart from every other person on earth: gratitude is not only for the good days. Together with its twin, patience, it turns literally every single condition of your life into pure profit. The Prophet ﷺ described this in words of pure wonder.

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ، إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ، وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ
لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ، إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا
لَهُ، وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

*How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for **all of his affair is good**, and that is for no one except the believer. If ease comes to him, he is grateful, and that is good for him; and if hardship comes to him, he is patient, and that is good for him.*

Source: Sahih Muslim: 2999 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

See how the believer simply cannot lose, my brothers and sisters. When good comes to him, he meets it with gratitude, and his gratitude transforms that blessing into reward and even more increase. When difficulty comes to him, he meets it with patience, and his patience transforms that very trial into reward and a raising of his rank. Gratitude and patience are the two wings by which the believer soars through every season of his life. Clear skies or violent storm, the one who has both wings is always, always gaining altitude. This is precisely why the people of gratitude are the people of deep inner peace: they have trained themselves to see the hand of Allah in everything that reaches them, and to answer it with the response He loves.

And when gratitude truly takes hold of a heart, it refuses to stay private. It overflows into how you treat the creation of Allah. The one who is genuinely grateful that Allah fed him cannot bear to watch his neighbour go hungry. The one who is grateful that Allah sheltered him is moved to shelter others. Look at Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, the wealthiest of the Companions, who did not hoard what Allah gave him but poured it out, freeing slaves and feeding the poor until he had given away almost everything he owned. That was his gratitude, made visible in his hands. So when Allah raises your station or widens your provision, ask yourself: who else does Allah intend to reach *through me*? Because a blessing held selfishly is a blessing whose thanks has not yet been completed.

THE THIEF IN YOUR POCKET

Gratitude in an Age of Endless Comparison

Now let me bring all of this crashing down into the world we actually live in, because we have been placed in an age that is, in many ways, engineered to make us ungrateful. We each carry in our pockets a small glowing window into the curated lives of millions of other people. And through that window, hour after hour, scroll after scroll, we are shown one thing above all: what we do not have. The houses we do not own. The holidays we did not take. The weddings, the bodies, the careers, the vacations that are not ours. And slowly, quietly, without us even noticing, the heart grows bitter, and the thousand blessings we actually possess fade completely from view behind the one or two things we lack.

This endless comparison, my dear brother, is a thief. It is stealing your gratitude in broad daylight, and it is making an entire generation feel miserable in the middle of unprecedented plenty. And here is the trap: the cure is not *more*. Because the one who is not grateful for a little will never be grateful for much. Give an ungrateful heart a mansion and it will want two. The cure is to lift your eyes up from the screen, away from what everyone else supposedly has, and to start counting what Allah has already placed in your hands.

So here is your training. Begin exactly where Sulayman began, by asking Allah Himself to make you grateful. Make Mu'adh's du'a a fixed companion after every prayer. And then, look honestly at your own life and start naming the blessings out loud. The breath filling your chest that came without you asking for it. The sight in your eyes reading these words. The roof over your head tonight. The food that will be in front of you today. The faith in your heart, the single greatest gift of all, that Allah did not give to so, so many others. The one who scrolls past a hundred images of what he lacks and never once stops to thank Allah for what he has, has allowed a device to starve his soul. So flip it around. Let the very sight of

someone else's blessing become your reminder to thank Allah for your own, and to make du'a that Allah blesses them too. Because envy and gratitude, my brothers and sisters, can never share a single heart.

A REMINDER CARRIED HOME

When Did You Last Truly Say Thank You?

So as you prepare to leave and step back into your week, let me leave you with the whole picture. Gratitude is not a feeling that visits and leaves. It is a decision you make with your tongue, your heart, and your hands, all at once and every single day. It reaches backward to the parents who carried you, and forward to the children you are raising. It joins hands with patience so that no season of your life is ever wasted. And it turns your worship from a grudging bill into a joyful thank-you letter to your Lord.

Let your gratitude take the shape Allah loves, moving always from the heart to the limbs. Thank Him for your wealth by keeping it lawful and giving from it. Thank Him for your health by carrying it to His worship and the service of others. Thank Him for your children by raising them upon faith. Thank Him for your parents by serving them while you still can. And thank Him for the gift of Islam, above every other gift, by actually living it and by being, as the verse said, 'among the Muslims.'

So let me ask you one honest question before we close, and I want you to sit with it. When was the last time you **truly** thanked Allah? Not with a passing word thrown out while your mind was somewhere else, but with your heart present, your tongue speaking, and your hands moving in obedience, all at the same time? If you cannot remember, my dear brother, my dear sister, then let today, this very day, be the day it changes. May Allah, al-Ghani al-Karim, make us all among the few of whom He said they are truly grateful.

☰ Your Action Plan: Become a Grateful Servant

Don't just read — choose what you will act on this week.

1 Never leave a prayer without Mu'adh's du'a

After every single salah, say: 'Allahumma a'inni 'ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni 'ibadatik' — O Allah, help me to remember You, to thank You, and to worship You in the best way. Ask Allah to make you grateful, exactly as Sulayman did.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

2 Thank your parents in plain words

Go to your parents, or call them, and thank them directly and specifically for something they sacrificed for you. If they have passed, make du'a for them and give a small charity on their behalf.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

3 Fight the scroll with shukr

Every time comparison bites and you see what someone else has, immediately stop and name three blessings Allah has given you, and make du'a that Allah blesses that person too. Turn the thief of envy into a trigger for gratitude.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

4 Make your worship a thank-you

Pray at least one prayer this week the way the Prophet ﷺ prayed — slowly, present, standing not as one paying a fine but as one saying thank you. Add a few extra units of night prayer as pure gratitude.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

🚩 The 7-Day Gratitude Challenge

For the next seven nights, before you sleep, write down three specific blessings from that day and one way you actually used a blessing in obedience to Allah — money you gave, worship you offered, kindness you showed. On the seventh night, read the full list back to yourself. You will see a pattern of mercy you had been scrolling right past. Do not stop at seven days: let this become a lifelong habit, a nightly conversation with the One who gave you everything, until you die with a grateful heart on your tongue.

Make it stick – and make it last

- ✓ **Write it down.** Put your chosen action on a sticky note on your mirror, desk, or fridge – somewhere you cannot miss it.
- ✓ **Print this plan** and tick each action off as you do it.
- ✓ **Set a daily reminder** on your phone or calendar so it never slips your mind.
- ✓ **Keep a one-line journal** each night – did I do it today? how did it go? – and watch your streak grow.

Don't aim for one good day or week – aim to keep it for life. A habit only counts once it outlives the challenge.