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# Being Thankful Makes Us Healthier

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

# Being Thankful Makes Us Healthier

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Can practicing thankfulness actually improve your health? Some seem to think so. I read about a study in which participants were asked to list the things for which they were thankful. They were instructed to time the writing of their gratitude list and sustain this exercise for exactly five minutes. Sounds a little like weightlifting, doesn't it?

The results of the study showed that those who practiced sustained gratitude for just five minutes experienced a sharp rise in their disease-fighting antibodies. These antibodies remained elevated for several hours!

Being thankful can improve our mental health as well. The Bible teaches us that a thankful heart is also a joyful heart. Joy comes when we spend time with Jesus: "You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence" (Acts 2:28 NIV).

The Greek word for "joy" in this particular verse, *euphrosune*, comes from two words that mean "good" and "mind." In other words, a sound mind. Joy springs from a healthy mind when we're connected to Jesus. Just spending time in His presence can be healing. Such good news!

When we practice being thankful, we also become more aware of Jesus and all His blessings. This naturally (and supernaturally) increases our joy. And who doesn't want more joy? It's a language anyone can understand.

The story is told of missionaries who went to a tiny village in a faraway place. Even before they became fluent in the native language, some villagers approached them wanting to hear more about "this Jesus" after hearing the sounds of joyful laughter coming from the missionaries' tent.

So today, let's exercise our "thank you muscles." This, in turn, will help us be filled with joy. Let's pray now that thirsty people—especially those who may not even know what they're thirsty for—will be drawn to our joy.

Above all, let's pray they are drawn to our Jesus who gives us this joy!

[by Marilyn Chadwick, founder, SEEDS of Hope, Charlotte, NC]