Gratitude or Gratuity?

Gratitude: Not found in the scriptures under the specific spelling. However, it is a concept expressed throughout the scriptures. Defined, “An emotion of the heart, excited by a favor or benefit received; a sentiment of kindness or good will towards a benefactor; thankfulness. Gratitude is an agreeable emotion, consisting in or accompanied with goodwill to a benefactor, and a disposition to make a suitable return of benefits or services, or when no return can be made, with a desire to see the benefactor prosperous and happy. Gratitude is a virtue of the highest excellence, as it implies a feeling and generous heart, and a proper sense of duty. The love of God is the sublimest gratitude” (Paley).

Gratitude, in the scriptures, is seen in the word “thanks” (Rom. 1:21); thanksgiving, “Oh that men would praise Jehovah for his lovingkindness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! and let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving and declare his works with singing” (Psa. 107:21-22); thankful, “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15).

Jesus experienced both sides of the thankful: “And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?” (Lk. 17:12-18). Both sides: one Samaritan that turned back and gave “him thanks”; the other nine, not so much.

Due gratitude should be a no-brainer. The scriptures identify the many things for which mankind should be grateful: “The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things…” (Acts 17:24-25). Life and breath is significant. “And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave

you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17): rains, fruitful seasons, food and gladness is significant. What was it God told Israel? "And ye shall serve Jehovah your God, and he will bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee" (Exod. 23:25). The omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, omnibenevolence is manifested in all that God provided through the gift of his Son.

All-in-all, it would do mankind well to recognize their indebtedness to our God, Creator, and Savior, lest we be in danger, as was Israel, who might "vaunt themselves against me (God, ret), saying, Mine own hand hath saved me" (Judg. 7:2).

How do you view your blessings in life, with a heart of gratitude, or a heart of gratuity? ret