



Thankfulness

the path of joy and peace

Start Here

Recall a special gift you have received. Who was it from and when did you receive it? How did you feel? What did you do and say when you received it?

Discuss

Thankfulness is a powerful tool in our spiritual journey – one that doesn't always come naturally. We must practice.

- Why do we sometimes fail to give thanks?
- What are the benefits of being grateful?

Come up with seven things for which you are grateful to God.

Main Idea

Thankfulness reminds our hearts of who God is, the many benefits he pours out on us, and the work he is doing in our lives. As a result, we experience more of Christ's joy and peace.

Read Psalm 107:1-2

By actively giving thanks, we bring into focus that our God is good and loving. We also see our own lives in perspective. Our wants and needs can often overwhelm us – intentional thanksgiving reminds us that our greatest needs have already been met, and that we serve a good Father whom we can trust for the rest. Whenever we express genuine gratitude, joy is stirred up in us whatever the circumstance.

Discuss

Read Philippians 4:4-7.

- Why do you think thanksgiving calms our anxiety and leads to peace?
- Come up with seven more things for which to be thankful – this time focus on who God is, not what he does.
- What are different ways we can express gratitude to God?

Explore the Word

We've looked at **why** we give thanks, and considered different ways we can do so. Let's look at the '**when**' and the '**what**.' Read Ephesians 5:20

When do we give thanks: _

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- Throughout our day, we can practice being aware of God's goodness to us and give thanks. Continual thanksgiving will keep our perspective clear.

For what do we give thanks: _

- Paul teaches us to give thanks for everything. But what about all the difficult moments of our life? How do we give thanks even when we experience hardship and pain?

Read James 1:2-4.

Some experiences can be very painful indeed, but even in that, we can be thankful because God is using those moments to shape us and make us complete.

- What can someone going through a financial challenge be grateful for?
- What can someone in the middle of a difficult relationship be grateful for?
- What can someone suffering physically be grateful for?

Even the hard things in life are worked out for our good when we trust God. Yes, we can give thanks in everything and experience the joy of the Lord.

Practice Together Now

- Let's keep going! Add at least seven more things for which you are grateful to God. Try to include one area for which you have never yet thanked God.
- Together express your gratitude to God for all the things you've listed today, asking him to increase joy and to guard your heart with his peace.
- Now, take a moment to consider each other. What are you thankful for? Take two minutes to share why you are grateful for each other.

Review your Practice Daily

- Every morning in your personal time of devotion ask the Holy Spirit to give you a humble and grateful heart. Use these verses to guide your prayer:
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
 - Colossians 3:15-17
 - Ephesians 5:15-21
- Is there a situation in which you struggle to be thankful? Tell your Father how hard this is for you to be grateful. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see how he is working this for your good. Then start by simply thanking God that he is trustworthy in this situation.
- Every day, thank God for at least three things.
- During this week, think of three people that you are grateful for, and then tell them why you are thankful for them.