

A VIEW OF GRATITUDE



A THOUGHT ON GRATITUDE

Do you recall those moments as children, when our parents or grandparents taught us to say "thank you" whenever we received something? At the time, it seemed like a lesson in good manners, an essential part of polite interaction - and indeed, it was. But numerous authors in the books of the Bible, even Jesus himself, suggest that there's more to gratitude than just polite etiquette. Having a consistent attitude of gratitude - or a 'View of Gratitude' - can be a transformative life experience.

The way we perceive the world, the lens through which we interpret life's highs, lows, and everything in between, can change everything. This season's practice, "A View of Gratitude", is an invitation to dive into this concept. It's about reconsidering how we see life, events, and the people around us.

So, join us on this exploration. Is saying "thank you" more frequently merely good conversation, or can it become a fundamental shift in our life's paradigm, helping us to mirror Jesus' teachings and actions more closely? Let's discover together how this 'View of Gratitude' can ignite powerful changes and guide us towards living a life that resonates more deeply with the wisdom and love that Jesus embodied.

Viewing Life with Godly Gratitude

KEY VERSES

Psalm 100

1 Thessalonians 5

Colossians 3:12-17

Ephesians 5:1-20

Philippians 4:4-9

Colossians 4:2-6

EXTENDED
READINGS

2 CORINTHIANS: 4

PSALM 107



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SMALL TABLES

TREKKING TOGETHER

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE

WE ENCOURAGE THESE PRACTICES TO BE PRACTISED TOGETHER. IF POSSIBLE, FIND A SMALL TRUSTED GROUP OF PEOPLE OR EVEN JUST ONE OTHER, THAT YOU JOURNEY & WRESTLE THESE IDEAS, BIBLE VERSES AND PRACTICES WITH.

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

WEEK 1 - A VIEW OF GRATITUDE

WATCH VIDEO PART 1 & READ/REFLECT ON **PSALM 107**

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

WHAT ARE THE MAIN THINGS YOU HAVE FOCUSED ON THIS WEEK?

WHO WERE THE MAIN PEOPLE THAT INFLUENCED THESE THINGS?

WHAT NARRATIVES ARE YOU LISTENING TO ABOVE JESUS?

(E.G. NEWS, FAMILY ADVICE, OWN EDUCATION, THE INTERNET)

HOW DOES GOD'S STORY INTERFERE WITH OR CHANGE YOUR STORY?

WEEK 2 - A THANKFUL MIND

WATCH VIDEO PART 2 & READ/REFLECT ON **PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9**

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

WHAT HAS OCCUPIED YOUR THOUGHTS THIS WEEK?

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR THOUGHTS?

IF YES, HOW SO? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO GUARD THEM?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU TO HAVE A MORE GRATEFUL THOUGHT LIFE?



SMALL TABLES

TREKKING TOGETHER

WEEK 3 - THANKFULNESS EMBODIED

WATCH VIDEO PART 3 & READ/REFLECT ON **COLOSSIANS 3:12-17**

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

HOW ARE YOU TRAVELLING WITH THIS PRACTICE?

DISCUSS 1 GREAT THING & 1 HARD THING ABOUT THIS PRACTICE.

HOW DO YOU THINK GRATITUDE CAN CHANGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS?

IS THERE AN ACTION YOU CAN TAKE THIS WEEK TOWARDS SOMEONE ELSE THAT CAN OVERFLOW FROM A VIEW OF GRATITUDE?

WEEK 4 - A THANKFUL SOUL

WATCH VIDEO PART 3 & READ/REFLECT ON **2 CORINTHIANS: 4**

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

HOW ARE YOU TRAVELLING WITH THIS PRACTICE?

WHAT CAN WE THANK GOD FOR EVERY DAY (EVEN ON BAD DAYS)?

WHAT DO YOU THINK CHANGES IN US IF WE ARE GRATEFUL TOWARDS GOD EVERY DAY?

WHAT ONGOING ACTIONS ARE YOU ADOPTING FROM THIS PRACTICE?

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR SMALL TABLES

TO START SMALL TABLES EACH WEEK, ASK EVERYONE TO NAME ONE THING THEY ARE THANKFUL FOR THAT WEEK.

PUTTING "GRATITUDE" INTO PRACTICE

A Grateful Mind

Cultivating a grateful mind is about developing a mindset that consistently recognizes and appreciates life's blessings. It involves training our minds to focus on the positive and what we have rather than what we lack. We all experience difficult times, and this isn't about ignoring those challenges. Rather, it's about acknowledging the surrounding goodness and the help we receive, especially during those hard seasons.

Practices for cultivating a grateful mind:

- Maintain a daily gratitude journal, noting the big or small things you're thankful for.
- Set reminders throughout the day to pause and reflect on something you appreciate. (If needed, set an alarm on your phone to train your mind.)
- Meditate or pray with a focus on gratitude, avoiding treating prayer as just a 'shopping list'.
- Guard your thought life, replacing negative thoughts with grateful ones as they arise. This isn't about always being positive but processing your negative thoughts through a lens of gratitude. Guard your heart and mind.

PUTTING "GRATITUDE" INTO PRACTICE

Embodying Gratitude

Embodying gratitude emerges from the outflow of a thankful heart. What does it look like to express our thanks openly and generously? It involves integrating gratitude into our interactions with others, sharing our appreciation, and nurturing our relationships through acts of kindness.

Practices for Embodying Gratitude:

- Write thank-you notes or hand-written letters to people who have positively impacted your life.
- Verbally express your gratitude to others when they do something kind.
- Carry out random acts of kindness as a way of expressing your gratitude to the world, through thoughtful gifts or actions.
- Share your experiences with gratitude, encouraging others to reflect on their own thankfulness and inviting them to join in your view of gratitude.

REMEMBER, our journey into "A View of Gratitude" is not driven by guilt or a bid for divine favour. These practices serve as guides, helping us open our hearts to the Holy Spirit's transformative work. They are about growing in the likeness of Jesus, not earning spiritual 'clout'. As we explore gratitude, let's do so with an eager spirit, not out of obligation.

A Grateful Soul

Cultivating a grateful soul involves nurturing a profound sense of thankfulness that permeates our entire being. It's about allowing gratitude to shape our relationship with God and influence our view of all aspects of life. This practice sees every circumstance and interaction as an opportunity for gratitude.

Practices for a Grateful Soul:

- Reflect and meditate on scriptures that encourage gratitude, letting them guide your worldview.
- During prayer, express your thanks to God for blessings and guidance during challenges and for the people in your life, even the difficult ones.
- Create art, music, or other expressions that symbolize your gratitude toward God.
- Engage in collective praise and worship activities, like communion. Don't approach these with a performance mindset, but with a heartfelt focus on God, His life-giving provisions, and His work in your life. Respond by permitting yourself to worship, to praise, and to offer your genuine self in the process.

PUTTING "GRATITUDE" INTO PRACTICE

In Psalm 107, the Psalmist reshapes the narratives of God's people by expressing gratitude for how God addresses their concerns. Use this passage as a tool for reflection on God's involvement in your life, fostering a greater sense of Gratitude.

***Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.***

*2 Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, 3 those he gathered
from the lands, from east and west, from north and south. 4 Some
wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle. 5 They were
hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. 6 Then they cried
out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their
distress. 7 He led them by a straight way
to a city where they could settle.*

*8 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his
wonderful deeds for mankind, 9 for he satisfies the thirsty and fills
the hungry with good things. 10 Some sat in darkness, in utter
darkness, prisoners suffering in iron chains, 11 because they
rebelled against God's commands and despised the plans of the
Most High. 12 So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled,
and there was no one to help. 13 Then they cried to the Lord in
their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. 14 He brought
them out of darkness, the utter darkness,
and broke away their chains.*

*15 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,
16 for he breaks down gates of bronze
and cuts through bars of iron.*

PUTTING "GRATITUDE" INTO PRACTICE

*17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways
and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.*

18 They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.

*19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from
their distress. 20 He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued
them from the grave. 21 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his
unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. 22 Let them
sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.*

*23 Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the
mighty waters. 24 They saw the works of the Lord, his wonderful deeds
in the deep. 25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest
that lifted high the waves. 26 They mounted up to the heavens and
went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. 27
They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end.*

*28 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought
them out of their distress. 29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the
waves of the sea were hushed. 30 They were glad when it grew calm,
and he guided them to their desired haven. 31 Let them give thanks to
the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. 32
Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the
council of the elders. 33 He turned rivers into a desert,
flowing springs into thirsty ground, 34 and fruitful land into a salt
waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there. 35 He
turned the desert into pools of water
and the parched ground into flowing springs; 36 there he brought
the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle. 37
They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest;
38 he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did
not let their herds diminish. 39 Then their numbers decreased, and
they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow;*

*40 he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless
waste. 41 But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased
their families like flocks. 42 The upright see and rejoice, but all the
wicked shut their mouths.*

***43 Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving
deeds of the Lord.***

PSALM 107



FAMILY PRACTICE

Imagine this: you're sitting at the dinner table, the kids have finished arguing about who's got the bigger piece of chicken, and there's a moment of calm. Now, I've found this to be the perfect time to introduce a simple yet powerful practice: sharing gratitude.

In my family, we make a point of going around the table and having each person - from the toddlers to us adults - name one thing from the week they're thankful for. It could be anything - a good grade on a test, a fun day out, or even just a great joke they heard. It's not about the size of the gratitude, it's about recognizing that there's always something to appreciate.

And you know what, it's been a game-changer. It not only livens up our meals, but it encourages all of us, especially the little ones, to actively search for the good stuff in our everyday lives. The result? We all start seeing the world through a brighter, more optimistic lens.

And here's the kicker: this isn't a 'my family' thing. It's an 'anyone, anywhere' thing. Whether you're sitting down with your other half for a quiet dinner, sharing a pizza with housemates, or hanging out with a group of friends, it fits. Instead of chewing over the same old gripes, you're sharing a moment of positivity.

This isn't about denying the tough stuff we all deal with. Instead, it's about highlighting the good stuff that's always there, if we take a moment to look for it. We're taking an ordinary mealtime and turning it into a moment of appreciation - a moment that reminds us all of the God-given good in our lives.

A close-up photograph of several hands holding white ceramic mugs, suggesting a group gathering or a shared meal. The background is dark and out of focus.

DISCIPLESHIP TOOL

THE 3 Rs

Here is a basic conversation tool you can use for your discipleship relationships. Using the 3 Rs you can be a disciple that makes disciples.

RELATIONSHIP

As Jesus invited the disciples to walk with Him so we invite others into our lives. Sharing our life with one another grows deep connections for lasting change, by living vulnerably and authentically with one another.

Suggested Qs: How has your week been? What has been a high and low moment in your life recently? Where have you seen God at work lately?

REALIGN

Transformation in our lives happens best when we align our lives with God's good and perfect will. To become like Jesus we need to realign our minds to the truth of the Bible and be shaped by the Holy Spirit. This could be through a book, verse, or trek practice.

Suggested Qs: What do you think God is saying to you in this moment? What does scripture say about this? What do you find challenging/encouraging from this passage?

Helpful tool: Jesus had 3 core relationships that he made a priority. (His relationship with God the Father, His community and the Lost). Q. Which Relationship is God challenging you to make a priority at the moment?

RESPONSE

To be transformed we need to respond in obedience to Jesus' invitation to walk His way. We don't do this alone but can support one another through encouragement and prayer.

Suggested Qs: What are you going to do about what God is saying? What is your first step? How can we support and pray for each other?