

gracepoint

A M E T H O D I S T C H U R C H

Homegroup material



I. Introductory Discussion Questions

1. What do you understand by the terms “gratitude” and “thanksgiving”?
2. What would you say are the opposites of gratitude and thanksgiving?
3. Why do you think God wants us to be grateful and to give Him thanks?
4. What are the three things for which you are most grateful right now?
5. Read and reflect on the following Scriptures. What do you think they reveal about thanksgiving?

- **Colossians 2 vs 6-8:**

“Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving. See to it, then, that no one enslaves you by means of the worthless deceit of human wisdom, which comes from the teachings handed down by human beings and from the ruling spirits of the universe, and not from Christ.

- **Hebrews 12 vs 28:**

“We should be grateful that we were given a kingdom that cannot be shaken. And in this kingdom we please God by worshiping him and by showing him great honor and respect.”

- **Psalms 118 vs 1:**

“O give thanks to the LORD; for *He is* good; because His love *endures* forever.”

- **Colossians 4 vs 2:**

“Never give up praying. And when you pray, keep alert and be thankful.”

II. Why is gratitude so important?

1. Why do you think gratitude is such an important aspect of our faith and our relationships with God?

2. Psalm 100 vs 4 says that we must “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and enter His courts with praise...” This verse paints a picture of entering the temple and moving closer to the Holy of Holies, the place God’s presence dwells, by engaging in acts of gratitude and praise. Why do you think thanksgiving moves us closer to God?
3. How do you think being grateful changes your perspective? Do you think it helps you to see things from God’s perspective? How?
4. Read the following passage and discuss what relationship you think exists between humility and gratitude:

- **2 Chronicles 32 vs 24-26:**

“About this time King Hezekiah became sick and almost died. He prayed, and the LORD gave him a sign that he would recover. But Hezekiah was too proud to show gratitude for what the LORD had done for him, and Judah and Jerusalem suffered for it. Finally, however, Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem humbled themselves, and so the LORD did not punish the people until after Hezekiah's death.

5. According to Philippians 4 vs 6, gratitude and prayer are antidotes for worry and anxiety. Why do you think this is so?

iii. What are the barriers to gratitude in our lives?

Read the account of Jesus healing the 10 lepers in Luke 17 vs 11-19:

- **Luke 17 vs 11-19:**

“As Jesus made his way to Jerusalem, he went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. He was going into a village when he was met by ten men suffering from a dreaded skin disease. They stood at a distance and shouted, “Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!” Jesus saw them and said to them, “Go and let the priests examine you.” On the way they were made clean. When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself to the ground at Jesus' feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. Jesus spoke up, “There were ten who were healed; where are the other nine? Why is this foreigner the only one who came back to give thanks to God?” And Jesus said to him, “Get up and go; your faith has made you well.”

1. It is interesting to note that although Jesus transformed the lives of ten lepers, only one came back to say thank you. What are some of the things that prevent us from being thankful for all that God has done for us (or from being grateful people in general)?
2. What do you think is personally your greatest barrier to gratitude?
3. How do you think you can practically cultivate a more grateful heart?
4. One of the major barriers to gratitude is simply that we become distracted, busy or nonchalant and fail to remember all that God has done for us. How do you think we can live with a better sense of remembrance of Who He is and what He has done?
5. Read and reflect on the following quote by Adam Clarke:

“Where are the numbers that from time to time have been converted to God? Are they still found praising him, with their faces on the dust, as they did at first? Alas! how many are turned back to perdition! and how many are again mingled with the world! Reader! art thou of this number?”

IV. The sacrifice of thanksgiving

1. The Scriptures refer to a “sacrifice of thanksgiving”. Read and reflect on the following Scriptures and discuss why you think this term is used.
 - **Psalm 107 vs 22:**
“And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing!”
 - **Psalm 116 vs 17:**
“I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call on the name of the LORD.”
 - **Jonah 2 vs 10:**
“...but I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will fulfill that which I have vowed. Salvation belongs to the LORD! And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out on the dry land.
 - **Hebrews 13 vs 15:**
“By Him, then, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing His name.”

2. Why do you think God wants us to make the sacrifice required to thank Him in difficult circumstances?
3. 1 Thessalonians 5 vs 18 says “In everything, give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Do you think it is possible to give thanks in all situations?
4. If it is God’s will that we give thanks in all circumstances, how do we balance being genuine and sharing our feelings and suffering with God with trying to have a grateful heart?
5. How do you think we can get to a place of continual thanksgiving, even when things aren’t going well?

V. Call to action

Discussion:

1. What will we do with what we have discovered in this session?
2. How will we hold each other accountable to this?

Suggestion for action:

- Encourage your group members to write down 5 things for which they are thankful each day for the next week. When you meet again, discuss some of the things people wrote down and experienced. Did thinking about things for which to be thankful change your perspective in any way?
- It is important to be thankful to God, but it is also important to express our gratitude to others. Challenge each person in your group to thank someone they are grateful for in a special way this week.