

This 2-week series will explore the obligation of gratitude for a disciple of Jesus. Regardless of life circumstances - whether good or bad - fully devoted disciples are expected to maintain and mature in gratefulness (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Philippians 4:8-9). Join the discussion to assess your own mindset and learn ways to grow your gratitude.

Part 1: The Power of Gratitude

Goal: Defining gratitude, understanding what the Bible says about its role and benefits while introducing ways to express gratitude in our lives.

Define Gratitude

Gratitude is defined as the “state of being grateful”. Grateful means both an “appreciation of benefits received” and “expressing gratitude”. Gratitude is not simply an *attitude* but also *action*.

Is Gratitude Really an Obligation?

1 Thess 5:18 NLT “Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

Gratitude Changes Our Perspective

Gratitude helps to adjust our view of God. He is not the cause of problems... He is our Hope!

Philippians 4:4-7 NLT “Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! ⁵Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. ⁶Don’t worry about anything; *instead*, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”

Psalms 100:1-5

A Psalm of Thanksgiving.

¹Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.

²Serve the Lord with gladness *and* delight;

Come before His presence with joyful singing.

³Know *and* fully recognize with gratitude that the Lord Himself is God;

It is He who has made us, not we ourselves [and we are His].

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

⁴Enter His gates with a song of thanksgiving

And His courts with praise.

Be thankful to Him, bless *and* praise His name.

⁵For the Lord is good;

His mercy *and* lovingkindness are everlasting,

His faithfulness [endures] to all generations.

Benefits of Gratitude

What areas of life are benefited by a state of gratefulness? Mental Health, Intimacy with God, and Relationships with others.

Philippians 4:6-9 NLT “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷Then you will experience

God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

⁸And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. ⁹Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Recognizing Dependencies

When we trust in ourselves or circumstances we have reason to be anxious. Trusting in God brings peace.

James 1:17 ESV Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Expression of Gratitude

Identify the good, set reminders to take notice, schedule a time of reflection.

Gratitude strengthens our relationships with others. A heartfelt thank you. Reminds you of your dependence or at the very least contribution of others in your life: "I thank God for you". This affects our prayers.

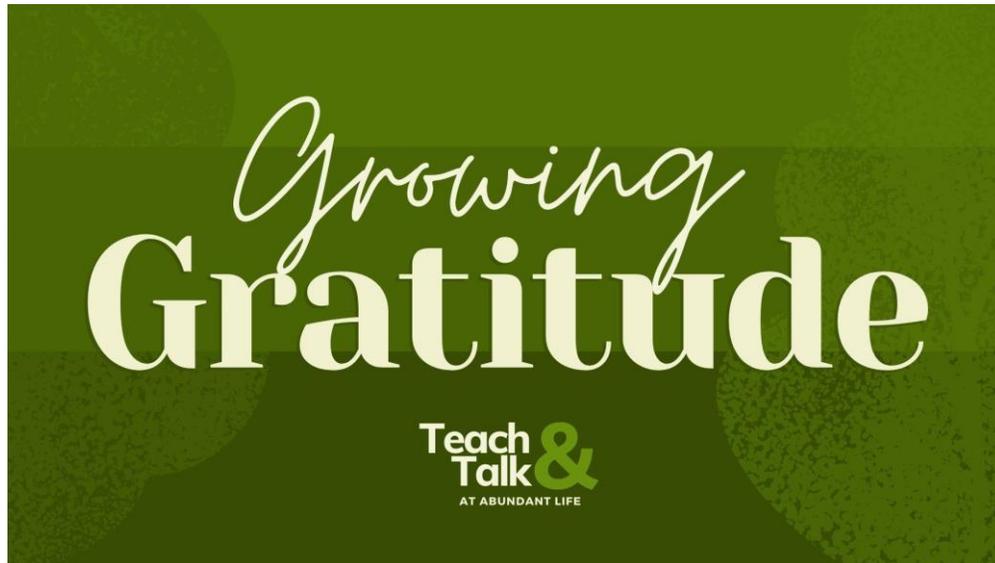
Philippians 1:3-4 "I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,"

Gratitude strengthens our relationship with Jesus.

HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

Find an alone place to worship God with music. Some members of the worship team have compiled songs of thanksgiving in a YouTube playlist: abundantlifebaltimore.com/playlist

+ [CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE WORSHIP PLAYLIST ON YOUTUBE](#) +



This 2-week series will explore the obligation of gratitude for a disciple of Jesus. Regardless of life circumstances - whether good or bad - fully devoted disciples are expected to maintain and mature in gratefulness (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Philippians 4:8-9). Join the discussion to assess your own mindset and learn ways to grow your gratitude.

Part 2: Growing your Gratitude

Goal: Uncover why we must grow our gratitude as we mature in our faith, identify barriers to doing so and how to overcome.

Commanded to be Thankful

Christ-followers are obligated to maintain gratitude regardless of our circumstances.

1 Thess 5:18 NLT “Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

Why it needs to "Grow"...

By default, we tend to focus on the negative / reasons to complain. Learning to notice the good takes practice.

Phil 4:11-13 I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Barriers to Gratitude

Comparison means you are looking at someone and judging whether you are better or worse.

Jealousy means you are expecting God to provide for you what was provided for them. This kills relationships - with God and others.

Thanksgiving as a Weapon against Spiritual Attack

When a spirit of heaviness tries to weigh you down, when worry and doubt overwhelm, when offense seeks its grip on your heart - choose to break its hold by giving thanks to God.

The enemy has a hard time defeating someone who is grateful!

Replace the thoughts with a prayer of gratitude.

Phil 4:8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Practice because it's not always obvious

Practice gratitude in the "small" miracles. Simply waiting for the obvious miracle to be grateful is a default.

In Mark 6:37-44 we see that when Jesus expressed gratitude for the small portion of bread and fish, it turned into a miracle. What wasn't enough became more than enough because it was in Jesus' hands, prepared with Thanksgiving.

Habits to practice Gratitude

Identify current hardship, pray honestly even complaints, consider what can be gained by the circumstance (knowledge, perseverance, faith), search for the gifts from God around you.

Philippians 4:11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. ¹²I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.