

WORRY-GO-ROUND

Gratitude or Grumbling? Pastor Craig Smith • May 3, 2020

Icebreaker: In the opening song, "His Mercy is More," name a situation in life in which were granted mercy.

Perhaps one of the greatest weapons against worry and anxiety is gratitude...

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7) How does anxiety shift your eyes off God and what He has done?

Anxiety and worry rob our gratitude and fuel some strong spiritual temptations...

- **Present-day grumbling** – "In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron." (*Exodus 16:2a*) When do you grumble? What was the last thing you grumbled about? Do you notice what happens to others around you when you grumble?
- **Rear-view living** – "The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.'" (*Exodus 16:2b-4*) What would the Hebrew's life been like while in slavery in Egypt? How would that have been better? Do you suffer from "Rear-view living," and if so, how do you over-glamorize the past?

Gratitude is...

- **My choice** – "O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever." (*Psalms 30:12b*) How hard of a discipline is it to make yourself be grateful in the times you want to be a grumbler?

Sometimes its necessary to hunt for hidden joys – "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (*Ephesians 5:19b-20*) Take a minute to think about some hidden joys you may have overlooked in recent days.

- **God's will** – "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (*1 Thes. 5:16-18*) What does gratitude say about God? What does it say about me?
- **A celebration of God's gracious work in my life** – "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that He considered me faithful, appointing me to His service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man... The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." (*1 Tim. 1:12-14*) Name one way in which God's work in you in recent days is a cause for celebration.
- **A celebration of God's gracious work in the lives of others** – "We ought to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing." (*2 Thes. 1:3*) Who do you notice whose life is being change by God?

...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (*Colossians 1:12-14*)

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What can be changed this week in light of the contents of this study? Pray about that and then assess how it went and how you felt.