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SESSION 2 | Gratitude: A Liberating Command for the Weary Christian

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

–1 Thessalonians 5:18’

“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe”

–Hebrews 12:28

“The Holy Spirit is the sum of all happiness; without him, there is not happiness. With him, there is all happiness; and he is the efficient cause of it.”

–Jonathan Edwards

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Why this topic?

- Desire without foundation
- What should you anticipate?
 - Joy that is genuine and sustainable
 - “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”
–Psalm 16:11

II. AWARENESS - KNOWING GOD'S GOODNESS

A. Transformed understanding of reality

- "From him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" –Romans 11:36
- "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." –James 1:17
- "In all of our thankfulness, we should have God ultimately in mind as the giver and sustainer and the providential guide in every good that happens to us — indeed, in every *bad* thing that happens to us, which God turns for good if we're Christians." –John Piper

B. Renewed eyes of worship

- "Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them." –Psalm 111:2
- "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." –Psalm 19:1
- "Worship matters because God is the only being worthy of our worship, and He has revealed how He is to be worshiped in His Word." –Bob Kauflin

III. ATTITUDE – FEELING GOD'S GRACE

A. Foundation of gratitude is the gospel

- "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we

were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” –Ephesians 2:1–10

- "I have a great need for Christ: I have a great Christ for my need."
–Charles Spurgeon
- “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.” –Colossians 3:15

B. Gratitude is a response to God’s provision, sovereignty, and salvation

- “When you go through a trial, the sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which you lay your head.” –Charles Spurgeon
- “I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. *And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.*” –Jeremiah 33:7–9

IV. ACTION – EMBRACING GOD’S CALL TO BE GRATEFUL

A. Towards God

- “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” –Colossians 4:2
- “I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.” –Psalm 9:1

- “The climax of God's happiness is the delight he takes in the echoes of his excellence in the praises of his people” –John Piper
- “Giving thanks **always and for everything** to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” –Ephesians 5:20
- “I want to keep better track of the many mini-deliverances in my life. I can look back on days when there was too much work, too much pain, too many expenses, too little wisdom; and I can see how God delivered me.” –Ed Welch

B. Towards Others

- “I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.” –Isaiah 63:7
- “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” –1 Thessalonians 5:11
- “God should always be, in my mind, the ultimate giver, and he gets thanks in everything, for everything. But the role of instruments in his hands is an amazing role, and I am put in debt to that instrument as well as to God. If something good happens to me because of another person's instrumentality in the hand of God, I am glad, and the mixture of gladness and a sense of indebtedness is what I call *thankfulness*.” –John Piper

C. On Guard

- Against discontentment, comparison, distrust
 - “It may be that you are planted where you get but little, you are put there by the loving Husbandman, because only in that situation will you bring forth fruit unto perfection. Remember this, had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, divine love would have put you there.” –Charles Spurgeon

- “Fruitless remembering - that is a good way to describe one place it is easy to get stuck when you've been done deep wrong. A whirlpool of excruciating details is an easy place to drown.”
–David Powlison

D. Receive your reward and commendation

- “Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. *Then each one will receive his commendation from God.*” –1 Cor. 4:5
- “And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” –1 Peter 5:4
- “But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’” –1 Corinthians 2:9