

LIFE GROUP GUIDE: GRATITUDE

WEEK of November 26-Dec 2

PREPARE:

Before your group arrives, make sure you take a few minutes to review the Life Group video and the Life Group Guide.

- Remember, the best life group leaders have questions highlighted and a direction for where they are taking people for the discussion for the evening. The less you can look to the guide for conversation, the better.
- Test your video display option to make sure it is working before your Life Group members arrive. For those in the auditorium, it will start automatically for you.
- Pray for a powerful gathering just before members show up.

WELCOME:

Take a few minutes to welcome Life Group members.

- Opening question idea: Tell us the best part of Thanksgiving for you.

VIDEO:

Watch the video together. Pastor Jonathan will be setting up the discussion on Thankfulness.

SCRIPTURE:

Read Phillipians 4:4-9 together.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all

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understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

¶ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ¶ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

REFLECTION:

Provide a couple of minutes for quiet reflection on the passage, so your Life Group members can collect their thoughts.

QUESTION: What does this passage have to say about the concept of gratitude?

OBSERVATION: This passage encourages us to rejoice (give thanks) in the Lord *always*. This includes the times in which it is easy, but also the times of scarcity and trial.

QUESTION: How does your process for expressing gratitude look different when you are in a season of want versus when you are in a season of joy?

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QUESTION: Why do you think the Bible is so adamant that we would continue to rejoice and give thanks even in seasons where we might not feel like it?

OBSERVATION: Sometimes we don't feel like the blessing of God is on our lives. In times like these, we remind ourselves of the *faithful* acts God has done in the past. Sometimes the best gratitude we can bring is a prayer of faith that we will see the goodness of God *again*.

OBSERVATION: Gratitude doesn't just glorify God- it combats our pride, our self-reliance, and our bitterness. When we give thanks to God, our hearts are reminded of the *goodness* of God, and we see Him as He really is. Verse 6 also says that gratitude can be the key to battling restlessness and anxiety.

QUESTION: When was a time that expressing gratitude helped elevate you from a tough place, or reconnected your heart to God when you had felt distant?

OBSERVATION: In verse 5, the passage encourages believers to let the fruit of their rejoicing (gentleness) be evident to *all*. Gratitude is something that we are called to not only *feel*, but to *express!*

QUESTION: Does gratitude need to be spoken to be genuine? Why or why not? What are the benefits of outwardly expressing our gratitude?

OBSERVATION: Even in secular circles, practicing gratitude (especially during the Holidays) is viewed as being a spiritually helpful thing. For believers, we go the extra step

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and give thanks to *the person who is responsible for the blessing on our lives*. There is spiritual power in actively thanking God for what he has done, and thanking him in advance for what he has yet to do.

PRAYER:

Offer prayer for anyone who would like it. Take a special time for your group to practice gratitude tonight. If members are comfortable, open up a time for people to actively thank God for His goodness in their lives this year.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING IN THIS ROLE!
WE APPRECIATE YOU!