

# Living Grateful

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## **Colossians 3:12–15 NLT**

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body, you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

## **Thankfulness vs Gratitude**

*Thankfulness is an emotion; gratitude is a cultivated posture.*

*Thankfulness is reactive; gratitude is proactive.*

*Thankfulness is situational; gratitude is relational.*

*Thankfulness is momentary; gratitude is enduring.*

*Thankfulness acknowledges a gift; gratitude leads to action.*

- 1. Gratitude is a cultivated posture of the heart that shapes how we perceive life and respond to God and others.**

## **Psalms 100 NLT**

Shout with joy (*shout out, raise the war cry*) to the Lord, all the earth! Worship (*do the work of worship*) the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing (*a song accompanied by music*) with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving (*todah – sacrificial song of thanksgiving*); go into his courts with praise (*tehillah – song of praise*). Give thanks (*ydh – confess*) to him and praise (*brk – bless*) his name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

**2. Worship, specifically songs of thanksgiving, opens us up to seeing God's goodness around us and fosters a posture of gratitude.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 NLT**

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 4:4–7 NLT**

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then 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.

**3. Prayer is telling God what we need *and* thanking Him for all He has done.**

# Small Group Guide: Living Grateful

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## Opening Question

Would you say you're more of a "glass half full" or "glass half empty" person? Can you share a recent example that shows why?

## Gratitude: A Way of Life

It's the proverbial question: *Is the glass half empty or half full?* Why is it that we tend to take such a negative view of our circumstances?

Even though our brains are wired to spot problems and threats, Scripture calls us to something higher—a life of intentional gratitude. Gratitude goes beyond having a good attitude - it's a command, a spiritual discipline, and a lifestyle that transforms how we see God, others, and ourselves.

In Colossians 3:12–15, the Apostle Paul encourages believers to "clothe yourselves" with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. He then says, "And always be thankful." More than a passing emotion, this is a continual posture of the heart.

## What's the difference between thankfulness and gratitude?

- **Thankfulness** is a reaction: you feel thankful when something good happens.
- **Gratitude** is a decision: it's choosing to see and acknowledge God's goodness—even when life is hard or routine.

Gratitude rewires our focus away from fear, entitlement, or frustration and instead roots us in God's faithfulness. It opens our hearts to peace (Colossians 3:15), it softens relationships through forgiveness (verse 13), and it binds everything together in love (verse 14). Most importantly, it keeps us aware of God's presence and activity in our lives.

## Why does gratitude matter?

- It draws us into God's peace.
- It deepens our spiritual maturity.
- It helps us align our perspective with God's truth, not our feelings.
- It shapes a healthy, joyful community of faith.

When we choose gratitude daily, we aren't denying life's challenges—we're declaring that God is greater than them.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How would you describe the difference between thankfulness and gratitude in your own words? Which do you think comes more naturally to you?
2. Read Colossians 3:12–15. Why do you think Paul includes “always be thankful” alongside things like compassion and forgiveness? What connection do you see between gratitude and peace?
3. What are some practical ways you can cultivate gratitude as a spiritual habit—not just when you feel it, but when you don't?