



# Life Is Complicated. We Can Help.

## Gratitude

#nplifeiscomplicated

Week 11

November 22, 2020

**Bottom Line:** Gratitude leads to wholeness.

**Icebreaker:** Are you a thank-you note writer? What's your favorite way to show gratitude? Share a time someone showed gratitude to you, and it really mattered and encouraged you.

**Key Verse:** *In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV

Psychologists say that gratitude is the healthiest human emotion. Maybe that is why there are so many people with health issues, sickness, and depression. Across hundreds of studies, practicing gratitude has been found to increase positive emotions, reduce the risk of depression, heighten relationship satisfaction, and increase resilience in the face of stressful life events, among other benefits. Yet gratitude does not come to us naturally. Ingratitude is rooted in the demonic, and leads us down a path away from God. A heart filled with gratitude will change everything, however. It changes the perspective and kills pride, self-sufficiency, and entitlement. Paul tells Timothy to rejoice, to thank God in the midst of all things. This is radical gratitude. How do you always rejoice, constantly pray with thanksgiving, and in everything give thanks? **Affirm the goodness in your life.** It is hard to be grateful and stressed at the same time. Gratitude gets your eyes off yourself and on to others. **Acknowledge where goodness comes from.** Learning to be grateful to God puts us in a constant awareness of the source of all good things in our lives, always reminding us of our deep need, which God met through Christ. What is the source of the good things I experience in my life? Acknowledging that good comes from God positions me to experience God. **To honor God and maximize His potential for you, you'll need to learn and live, embrace and cultivate the life-changing value of gratitude.** Gratitude is what sustains hope when everything seems uncertain. Gratitude leads us to wholeness. Greed's ugly stepsister is ungratefulness. Greed always wants more. When we are greedy, we are never satisfied. Whatever we receive from others, we conclude we deserve. No matter how much it is, it is never enough. Lack of gratitude signifies an abundance of greed. Perpetual brokenness is defined by a lack of gratitude. Gratitude is the key to the path of wholeness. Whatever else we may need, whatever support systems might be helpful to us, whatever insights or truths may aid us in the journey, nothing will heal us if we are ungrateful. Gratitude unlocks the healing power of love. Gratitude leads to wholeness (giving more than you take), which comes from one source, Jesus Christ. When gratitude, the healthiest human emotion, does its greatest work within us, we are able to celebrate who we are becoming even through experiences we would wish on no one.

### THINK IT OVER >>>

There is something in all of us that tends to look at what we don't have instead of what we have, but a heart that is not filled with gratitude leads us down a path where we entertain corrupt and foolish thoughts about what God is like. Our hearts become misguided and steeped in moral darkness. How have you seen this to be true?

"Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in all things." – Kay Warren  
Reflect and discuss.

Joy is a choice. Why is this hard for most to believe? Why do we think it is tethered to our circumstances?

Gratitude leads to peace. When you're giving thanks, you are overcoming depression. Do you have a personal testimony for this?

What is different about giving thanks IN all things, not FOR all things?

### LOOK IT OVER <<<

Gratitude doesn't deny the struggle. But gratitude affirms the goodness around you. How might that impact our general attitude toward 2020?

Learning to be grateful to God puts us in a constant awareness of the source of all good things in our lives, always reminding us of our need, which God met through Christ. Rather than demanding that God serve our wishes, gratitude puts us in our rightful place—eternally indebted to the One who gave us life. Gratitude positions you to experience God moment by moment in the present, depending on Him daily. Gratitude places you in a posture of worship, ready to give praise to God for every good thing He will do in your future. How do you see gratitude as essential to your growth and satisfaction spiritually?

Perpetual brokenness is defined by a lack of gratitude. Nothing will heal us if we are ungrateful. Gratitude nurtures wholeness. Whom do you see in the Bible who illustrates this? Whom do you know in your life?

# NEXT STEPS

1. Before Thanksgiving is over, make a list of at least 50 things for which you are grateful.
2. Either by yourself or within your family, come up with one dozen COVID-19 blessings.
3. If you do not already, begin every morning by saying “thank you” to God and at least one person.

## EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

**Bottom Line:** Gratitude leads to wholeness.

|   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|----|
| Rate yourself from 1 to 10<br>1 (never), 10 (always)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |  | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Why did you give yourself this rating?  |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |    |
| What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |    |
| Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?                 |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |    |
| What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?  |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |    |
| At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week? |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |    |

## PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

## DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at [newpointe.org/daily](http://newpointe.org/daily):

Monday: Psalm 118:24

Tuesday: Colossians 2:7

Wednesday: Psalm 103:1-5

Thursday: Hebrews 12:28-29

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 5:18-19

***Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.***

*(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)*