



# GRATITUDE

## Being Thankful Changes Everything

In difficult situations, we long more for a change of circumstances than we do a change in ourselves. Surprisingly, changing what's inside of us by choosing gratitude changes our perspective even if circumstances remain undesirable. That's why God tells us to be grateful in all circumstances. Practicing thankfulness is more powerful than we think. In this study, we'll learn how God uses gratitude to change our lives for the better.

## 1 - So Much to be Grateful For

### Read

*“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.” - Psalm 95:1-3*

### Reflect/Discuss

- Do you ever feel like you have nothing to be grateful for?
- How has knowing God changed your heart and life?

### Consider

When great things happen, it is easy to be grateful. But sometimes, we look at our life and find it hard to give thanks. Our life may seem to be defined by a loss or lack. In actuality, we have an overwhelming reason to be grateful because of what Jesus has done for us. If we never receive another blessing from God for the rest of our lives we would still be indebted to Jesus for the precious gift that He has already given to us.

Jesus gave His very life for us. He gave us the gift of eternal life. But on top of rescuing us from death, He also gave us access to the throne of God and a loving relationship with our Creator. He gave us a place to belong in the family of God. He gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit - a comforter, counselor, and ever-present friend. He took worthless sinners and set us free from the prison of sin. Gratitude begins with realizing that Jesus is the “Rock of our Salvation.” Apart from Jesus, our destiny is one of failure, sin and death. With Jesus we are destined to live in hope, victory, and to have eternal life! Gratitude becomes the natural position of our hearts when we realize the magnitude of what God has done for us.

### Act

- Write out your own prayer of thanksgiving to God.
- Spend some time thinking about your testimony. What has God done in your life?

### Go Deeper

[Gratitude - Our Response to God's Grace](#)

## 2 - Grateful in all Circumstances

### Read

*“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

*- 1 Thessalonians 5:18*

### Reflect/Discuss

- Do you ever wonder what God’s will is for your life?
- When is it important to show gratitude?

### Consider

Have you ever wished that you knew, for certain, God’s will for your life? This verse is so encouraging because it gives us a simple command and a sure way to know that we are following God’s will. We are to give thanks in all circumstances. It is a simple command but that doesn’t make it any easier to follow.

It is difficult to have a grateful heart when we are mistreated, in need, or suffering. However, we know that if God commands us to do something, then He will give us the strength we need to be obedient. We can choose gratitude even when we do not naturally feel grateful. When we make this choice, it allows the Holy Spirit to work in our minds and hearts and develop gratitude in us, making us more and more like Jesus. This is God’s ultimate purpose for us.

### Act

- What is an area of your life where you find yourself often complaining? Choose to acknowledge God’s sovereignty in your life by thanking Him for the opportunity to rest in Him when you are tempted to complain.
- Find a way to show thanks to someone in your life this week - a coworker, friend, or family member.

### Go Deeper

- [Ingratitude is a Sin!](#)

## 3 - Gratitude: The Enemy of Despair

### Read

*“Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me...I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.” - Psalm 69:1-2, 30*

### Reflect/Discuss

- Do you ever struggle with feeling hopeless?
- How does thankfulness change your perspective?

### Consider

Have you ever felt like everything is going wrong at once? It is difficult to be grateful when we feel that all around us is suffering, division, and hopelessness. In Psalms chapter 69 we see a man who is in incredibly difficult circumstances. He describes himself as sinking in the “miry depths.” This is something like deep mud, or sinking sand that traps and swallows up anyone in it. That is despair - the feeling of being swallowed up by the difficulties of our life and seeing no way out.

This chapter of Psalms, though it begins in despair, ends specifically in praise and thanks to God. David, the author of this Psalm, shows us an important example. We are to give thanks to God in all circumstances, especially in our most difficult ones. This is how we overcome despair - with gratitude. When we focus on thanking and praising God, we remind ourselves who he is: our protection, our provider, and our salvation!

### Act

- Write out a list of specific things God has done for you. Refer to that list in times of trouble.
- Share your testimony with someone this week.

### Go Deeper

[Gratitude in All Circumstances](#)

## 4 - Gratitude: The Path to Peace

### Read

*“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

- Colossians 3:15-17

### Reflect/Discuss

- What do you think it looks like to have a peaceful heart?
- How are gratitude and peace connected?

### Consider

Does peace ever seem unattainable? With so much going on in the world, endless distractions and problems, a still and quiet heart and mind can seem like a distant dream. No matter how hard we try we can still struggle with anxiety and fear. This affects every part of our life, including our relationships. This passage in Colossians reminds us that we are called to peace, that it is to rule in our hearts. That means it has the final say. For the believer, peace is achievable, regardless of circumstance!

Peace is not something we can work hard to earn. Peace begins when we choose to have grateful hearts. As we tell about all that God has done for us - through songs, words, and actions - we magnify God instead of our problems. This helps us and others around us to trust God more and walk in his peace. Gratitude leads to a peace that is rooted in Christ and goes beyond our circumstances.

### Act

- Spend some time today quietly reflecting on who God is. You will experience peace in direct proportion to how regularly you practice this.
- Choose to let peace rule in your heart. When you feel anxious or troubled, think about God’s unlimited capacity and three specific things that God has done for you.

### Go Deeper

[The Joy of Gratitude](#)

## 5 - Gratitude: A Powerful Weapon

### Read

*“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” - II Corinthians 10:4-5*

### Reflect/Discuss

- Do you ever feel like your thoughts are out of your control?
- How can we stop negative thought patterns?

### Consider

Do you ever feel powerless against the evil going on in this world? Do you feel like your thoughts turn to fear, anger, jealousy, or hopelessness no matter how much you try to stay positive? It can seem like our thoughts are controlling us. The word of God promises us that we have power over our thoughts and minds and that we can have victory in our lives no matter our circumstances!

When we are trying to follow God, our enemy, Satan, will remind us of all that has gone wrong in our lives. Our minds focus on the “evidence” that God is not faithful, that He has let us down. We have a powerful weapon against these lies: gratitude! When we choose gratitude, we are making our thoughts obedient to Christ. This begins a cycle of gratitude that allows us to destroy negative thought patterns that trap us. We begin by thanking God daily (hourly if needed) for the simplest things, and we are empowered to trust God more, to see his faithfulness and feel even more gratitude towards Him.

### Act

- Memorize II Corinthians 10:4-5.
- When you are confronted with thoughts that cause you to doubt God’s faithfulness, begin a daily list of his gifts to you. Thank Him out loud and remind yourself of God’s goodness to you.

### Go Deeper

[What Real Thanksgiving Looks Like](#)

It's easy to be thankful when there is abundance and life is easy. But when things are difficult, this is when we need gratitude the most. God's word is full of instructions about showing gratitude and having thankful hearts, because that's how God changes us. Gratitude is what God calls us to in every situation and circumstance. When we choose gratitude, we are choosing God's transformational best for us.

Congratulations on completing this Bible study series. We would love to hear how this study went for you. If it has impacted your life, please share with us by emailing [info@guidelines.org](mailto:info@guidelines.org)

This Bible study series was provided by Guidelines International Ministries, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming lives with the message of Jesus. We do this through creating devotionals that are shared around the world with people who do not have access to the Word of God.

If you found this Bible study series helpful and want to go deeper, there are a few different ways:

**Subscribe to the Daily Devotional**

Sign up to have a short devotional emailed to you every morning, which you can read or listen to: [www.guidelines.org/guidelinesforliving](http://www.guidelines.org/guidelinesforliving)

**Share This With Your Friends**

Do you have friends who may find this Bible study series helpful? Email them this PDF or share this link with them: [www.guidelines.org/get/gratitude](http://www.guidelines.org/get/gratitude)

**Donate to Support This Ministry**

If you found this Bible study helpful and want it to impact others, please consider supporting this ministry by donating: [www.guidelines.org/donate/christian-resources](http://www.guidelines.org/donate/christian-resources)