

# Choosing Gratitude Study Guide

## Introduction

1. What is your “ingratitude quotient”? As you think about your words and thoughts, how ungrateful do you think you are?
2. What manifestations of ingratitude are present in your life? Fretting, complaining, resenting, bitterness, self-pity, broken relationships, anxiety, discouragement, etc?
3. Can you think of an ungrateful person in your life? What characterizes this person? How much do you enjoy being around this person? Are there any of these same traits in you?
4. In your circumstances right now, where do you see the hand of God at work?
5. Pay attention to your thoughts and words for the week. How much ungratefulness do you see?

## Chapter One

1. Where does gratitude rank in your list of priorities for Christians?
2. What role do you think gratitude plays in faith, love, serving, worship?
3. Are you a whiner or a worshiper?
4. Why can't you be a whiner AND a worshiper?
5. Who in your life exudes gratefulness? How do you see the gospel evident in their life?

6. Has anyone ever thanked you in a way that really impacted you? who?
7. What area of life are you most prone to complain about?
8. How do you show ungratefulness (see page 27-28)?

“Gratitude is a lifestyle. A hard-fought, grace-infused biblical lifestyle.” In light of Ephesians 4:22-24, the put-off, renew your mind, put-on command of sanctification, what specifically in regards to unthankfulness do you need to actively put off through repentance?

## Chapter Two

1. What is the basic reason for our gratitude to God? Define Eucharist.
2. Explain the connection between **guilt, grace, gifts, gratitude**.
3. Is the gratitude that flows out of your life as abounding as the grace that has flowed into your life?
4. What’s the difference between “me-first” thankfulness and Christian gratitude?
5. How does grace beget giving? How does giving beget gratitude?
6. What passages of scripture/biblical truths lead you to give thanks to God? Write down a few to share.

“Imagine the impact in a world characterized by isolation, selfishness, and fractured relationships, if we were to adorn the gospel we profess we believe, with a culture of mutual care, concern, generosity, and sacrifice. The truth we proclaim would become believable. And God would be glorified.” In step two of Ephesians 4:22-24, spend some time renewing your mind in the scriptures you chose in question six.

## Chapter Three

1. Think of a time or situation when you have not been thanked for something you have done. What did you think about it? How did it feel? How do you think God feels and thinks about your ingratitude for what He has done for you?
2. How is leprosy a picture of sin? What does this say about ingratitude?
3. How did the nine unthankful lepers reveal their hearts? What was their biggest problem?
4. "Ingratitude is the taproot out of which grows a host of other sins." (page 51) Do you agree? How can ingratitude be the first step away from God? Have you seen this in your own life? How?
5. Nancy Leigh Demoss mentions *unrealistic expectations, forgetfulness, entitlement, comparison, and blindness to God's grace*. Which one of these is your biggest problem right now? Write out three verses that address this topic and read them daily.
6. There is a prayer of repentance on page 58. Write out your own naming specific circumstances and areas of life where you have failed to give thanks. Take some time to list out what you can be thankful for in these areas of life, even though they are hard.
7. Can you honestly say, "God knew all the paths my life could take and chose this path because He desires my good and His glory. He chose this circumstance for me, because it is the best one for me, to conform me to the image of Christ and draw me closer to Him." What would it look like to live like you truly trust this statement? Do you know it (head knowledge), believe it (think it is true for others), or trust it (live daily with awareness of God's purpose and give Him thanks)?

8. Read the story of the lepers in Luke 17 and the warnings in Romans 1 about failing to give thanks.

## Chapter Four

### Eight Reasons To Give Thanks!

1. Gratitude is an act of obedience
2. Gratitude draws us close to God
3. Gratitude is a path to peace
4. Gratitude is a gauge of the heart
5. Gratitude is the will of God
6. Gratitude is evidence of being filled with the Spirit
7. Gratitude reflects the heart of Jesus
8. Gratitude gets us ready for heaven.

1. Which two of these gives you the most encouragement to focus on gratitude? Write out scripture that shows those two areas.

2. Think about the opposite of these blessings that are the result of ingratitude. How have you seen unthankfulness draw you away from God, cause anxiety or unrest, or lead your heart to be hardened?

3. How did Jesus show thankfulness in the face of suffering? What are you suffering right now that you need to surrender to God and say "Father I willingly surrender myself to Your calling for my life, whatever the cost." Write out a prayer, if you can, repenting of your ingratitude and thanking God for what He has done for you and what He is doing through this situation.

4. Write out Psalm 50:14, 105:1, 107:8, Colossians 3:17, Psalm 100:4, Psalm 95:2

## Chapter Five

1. Why can't you be both a whiner and a worshiper? Think of someone you know in both categories. How do you feel when you are around each type of person?
2. How was Fanny Crosby able to give thanks even though she was blind and a doctor had caused it?
3. How do thankfulness and humility go together? Why does pride kill a grateful attitude?
4. Do you more often manifest a humble, grateful spirit, or a proud, self-sufficient, ungrateful heart?
5. When do you tend to focus on yourself - your needs, your hurts, your feelings, your desires?
6. Based on the circumstances from #5, how can you put more focus on God and others?
7. "Ungrateful people are much like a container that has a hole in it, leaking out every blessing that's been poured in, always needing something else, something new to consume for satisfaction fuel." Are you more prone to focus on what you wish you had (or didn't have) or on the blessings you do have that are far greater than you deserve? Do you have a full heart, or does your heart "leak out" the blessings God pours in, always needing something more to be satisfied?

8. If you tend to look for something more to be satisfied, what is that “something”? How does that show up in your life?

9. As a rule, are you easily contented with what God provides, or do you find yourself resenting difficult circumstances or people and becoming demanding or depressed when others fail to meet your expectations?

10. Do you spend more time counting and recounting your blessings or your problems? Spend a few days listening to your speech and thought patterns, which do you hear more of - thankfulness or complaining?

11. What impact does your spirit have on those around you? Are they refreshed and encouraged by your thankful spirit? Or are they weighed down by your negative, ungrateful words and attitude?

Ask your family what they think?

12. Write out 1 Timothy 6:17, Deut 8:11-14,

Chapter Six

Write out Psalm 57:9, 35:18, Hebrews 13:15

Nancy Leigh Demoss talks about several ways to express thanks. For each one, write specifically what you can do to increase your gratitude being expressed to God and others. For each one, write a scripture that reminds you the importance of each expression of thanksgiving.

A. Speak Up

B. Sing Out

C. Kneel Down

D. Privately

E. Publicly

F. Holidays

G. Morning and Evening

H. Three times a day

I. Middle of the night

J. Continually

Challenge: Write out 3 times each day that you express thanksgiving to God and others.

## Chapter Seven

1. Why is it important to know and think about God when giving thanks? How is it different from a non-believer giving thanks at a Thanksgiving meal or saying “thank-you” for a gift given to them?

2. Page 113 “If we take it all for granted, if we think life just shows up with this stuff already in place, if we trick ourselves into believing that everyday household items come from the grocery store rather than from a gracious God, we walk right past countless reasons for worship without even knowing it.” How guilty are you of taking common, household items for granted? Take time to list out things every day this week as you use them and focus on the Giver of these common graces.

3. List out **at least** 20 spiritual blessings you have as a child of God. (Go to Ephesians 1 - 3 if you need help getting started.) List a scripture that shows this promise.

4. List out at least 20 people who either have been or continue to bless your life in relationship. Take a moment and write one letter to one of them sharing how thankful God placed them in your life. Mail it!

5. Write out Ephesians 5:20, James 1:17

## Chapter Eight

1. Think of those who “endure the worst life has to offer and still come up thankful. Not unscarred, not unmoved, not functioning out of reality like robots, but still spotting reasons for hope and promise. They seem to know that the only thing more debilitating than what they are going through would be going through it ungratefully”. When you look at the trials in your life, are you going through them gratefully or ungratefully? What would it look like to be grateful amidst your suffering?

2. Helen Roseveare ‘heard’ God question in her heart,”Can you thank ME for trusting you with this experience, even if I never tell you why?” Do you insist on knowing ‘why’ you go through every trial or are you willing to trust God that He has a plan and it is good even if you don’t understand it. Look up Deuteronomy 29:29. How does this relate to the unknown of trials.

3. List 3 trials, sufferings, hardships, “thorns” that God has given you over the course of your life. As you look back, what can you be truly thankful to God for in these difficult circumstances.

4. What do you need to surrender right now and sacrifice to give thanks? Is it your “right” to life as you want it? Is it a relationship? Is it security for the future? ????? Are you willing to offer God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and faith? Are you willing to give Him thanks for bringing these circumstances into your life because you trust Him and know that He is good even if you don’t understand the why.

5. Page 139 “The choice is before you and me today: Do we only give glory to God for the part of our life that’s going the way we want? Or do we worship Him, trust Him, and give Him thanks, just because He is God - regardless of the dark, painful, incomprehensible places we encounter

in our journey?”... *“Regardless of how I may feel, anything that makes me need God is a blessing!”*

6. Write out Psalm 34:1, Job 1:21, 1 Thess 5:18

## Chapter Nine

Changing your mindset....

1. Write out a statement of surrender that is personal and true for you. Sign your name to it and commit to read it and affirm it every morning for 30 days.

2. Create a plan for 30 days to meditate and study and put into practice gratitude. There is a guide in the back of the book for bible reading and focus on thankfulness from scripture. You can choose to do this or create your own.

3. Create a plan to express thanks to those in your life who make a difference to you. Will you commit to saying “thanks” once a day, once a week. Plan to record what you do so you can stay accountable.

4. Create a plan to send “thank you” notes to people. Again, to stay accountable, are you willing to commit to send one a week, a couple a month? Not just for gifts received, but when you are blessed by someone and can share gratitude and give glory to God for His grace in placing them in your life.

5. Corporate thanksgiving - how can we as a group grow in thankfulness? What can we do to stay accountable to each other and grow in sharing our gratitude about life with each other. (I think we already do this to a great extent, but we can always grow more! :) )