

Small Group Ministry

Grateful/Gratitude

May 7, 2020 <https://zoom.us/j/223293539> Call in: 1-646-558-8656# ID 223293539

Opening Words

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

Schweitzer

Albert

Check-in/Sharing: How is it with you today?

Definitions

Gratitude, thankfulness, or gratefulness, from the Latin word *gratus* ‘pleasing, thankful’, is a feeling of appreciation felt by and/or similar positive response shown by the recipient of kindness, gifts, help, favors, or other types of generosity, towards the giver of such gifts.

[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gratitude)

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word **grateful** as “showing an appreciation of kindness.”

This is where the **difference** lies; being **thankful** is a feeling, and being **grateful** is an action. ... **Gratitude** is more than just the feeling of **thankfulness**.

Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.

Henry Van Dyke

Reflection on the quotes: Please read the quotes (before the session, if possible and select a few to high light).

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow” — *Melody Beattie*

Who can make an accounting of gratitude? For the universe we give thanks, an expanse of life to stretch us with wonder...For the earth we give thanks, fragment of the stars that is our home...For life we give thanks, the burning of stars ordered and tempered here allowing us life and breath...For growth we give thanks, for the heritage of the spirit, for all the forces past our knowing, power past our control...For the ages which follow us, for the eternity of days, in which life is ever renewed and fulfilled, we give thanks.

adapted from Kenneth Patton, *Hymns for the Celebration of Life*

We are constituted so that simple acts of kindness, such as giving to charity or expressing gratitude, have a positive effect on our long-term moods. The key to the happy life, it seems, is the good life: a life with sustained relationships, challenging work, and connections to community.

Paul Bloom

Perhaps nothing helps us make the movement from our little selves to a larger world than remembering God in gratitude. Such a perspective puts God in view in all of life, not just in the moments we set aside for worship or spiritual disciplines. Not just in the moments when life seems easy.

Henri Nouwen

The dominant characteristic of an authentic spiritual life is the gratitude that flows from trust - not only for all the gifts that I receive from God, but gratitude for all the suffering. Because in that purifying experience, suffering has often been the shortest path to intimacy with God.

Brennan Manning

Have gratitude for the things you're discarding. By giving gratitude, you're giving closure to the relationship with that object, and by doing so, it becomes a lot easier to let go.

Marie Kondo

Often people ask how I manage to be happy despite having no arms and no legs. The quick answer is that I have a choice. I can be angry about not having limbs, or I can be thankful that I have a purpose. I chose gratitude.

Nick Vujicic

I truly believe we can either see the connections, celebrate them, and express gratitude for our blessings, or we can see life as a string of coincidences that have no meaning or connection. For me, I'm going to believe in miracles, celebrate life, rejoice in the views of eternity, and hope my choices will create a positive ripple effect in the lives of others. This is my choice.

Mike Ericksen

How do I wear gratitude? If I say that I am thankful that our troubles are not the same as someone else's, maybe I should move toward empathy and compassion.

I find someone noting suggestions of my blessings when I am really down as nagging. Maybe I don't want to be grateful, maybe another feeling is getting in the way. May I become more aware of how I am wearing my attitude of gratitude. HZ

SHARING ABOUT GRATITUDE:

Please share whatever you would like the group to know about how you make room in your life for gratitude. Use the following questions as a guide, if you wish.

- What does gratitude feel like?
- How do we stay aware of that in life which is sheer blessing?
- What gets in the way of experiencing gratitude?
- How do you cultivate a thankful heart?
- Gratitude is about keeping an open mind. It is about not having your mind so set on an apple, that you can't be grateful when given a luscious pear. How have you found ways to be grateful for the ways that life turned out, rather than the ways you expected it to be? Have you found ways to be grateful for difficult people or circumstances?
- As you go about a day with a grateful attitude, what small things do you notice that you might have missed?

Check out: Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

CLOSING WORDS

For the sun and the dawn which we did not create;

For the moon and the evening which we did not make;

For food which we plant but cannot grow;

For friends and loved ones we have not earned and cannot buy;

For this gathered company which welcomes us as we are, from wherever we have come;

For all our free churches that keep us human and encourage us in our quest for beauty, truth & love;

For all things which come to us as gifts of being from sources beyond ourselves;

Gifts of life and love and friendship we lift up our hearts in thanks this day.

- Richard M. Fewkes