

Practicing Gratitude

Practicing Prayer

Week Two

Joan Kelley says, “Gratitude is a sacred space where the grit of life and the grace of God meet face to face in a glorious and messy intersection.” The practice of gratitude deepens our awareness of God’s presence and activity in our life. It is more than an isolated thank you or counting three blessings a day. The Lord shapes us in the practice of gratitude so that we might be soaked in gratitude no matter what is happening because we personally know God’s great love for us.

Reconnect

Come together using a safe and inclusive question

- Do you have any family Thanksgiving traditions about expressing gratitude?
- When do you find it easy to express gratitude to God? When is it hard to be thankful?
- What do you find yourself especially grateful for today?

Opening Prayer

Lord, we confess that sometimes it is hard to be grateful. When the pain and anxiety of life presses in, thank you for your presence. When success comes our way, we see your hand in our joy. We acknowledge every good and perfect gift comes from you. *(Invite the group in the midst of prayer to name in one or two words something they are grateful for today.)* Lord, for each and every one of these gifts we say, “Thank you.” Amen.

Intercession Teaching and Practice

1. Watch the introduction video together.
2. Listen to the audio teaching and guide together.
3. Use the following guide to facilitate discussion.

Choose Your Discussion & Application Questions

Roots of gratitude.

- » How have you experienced the two roots of gratitude mentioned by Joan, God's presence and God's deep love for you in your life?
- » Does gratitude typically come naturally for you, or has it been a struggle?

The practice of gratitude.

- » How did you experience the practice?
- » What connected for you as you expressed gratitude to God?
- » What was hard for you?

Continuing the practice.

- » Are you willing to continue this practice throughout the week?
- » What obstacles might you face, and how can you plan today to be intentional about practicing gratitude this week?

Digging Deeper

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 aloud and then discuss the questions.

1. What word or phrase stands out to you in this passage?
2. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you in this passage today?
3. How is God prompting you to respond? This week, would you consider using the guide to practice prayers of gratitude?

Next Step

This week, would you consider using the guide to practice prayers of gratitude?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for your presence and your love. Thank you for meeting us where we are and inviting us into a deeper relationship with you. Guide us this week as we notice your presence and activity and give thanks to you in all circumstances. Amen.