

“The Gratitude Effect”
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(Leader’s Guide)

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Main Idea: This week, we have a special message called “The Gratitude Effect.” We’ll learn what happens when we choose to live our lives with gratitude.

Opening Discussion: Think of a time when someone was very grateful towards you for something you had done for them. How did their gratitude make you feel?

Read: Matthew 26:17-30

1. **Jesus’ disciples had no plans for the Passover meal, but Jesus had already worked out a solution to their problem, and to our problem of sin. How does this passage show us that God is always involved in the solutions to our problems?**
 - a. As followers of Jesus we must be intentional about practicing gratitude- not just in the good times but also in the more mundane and difficult moments.
 - b. God has made preparations for your problem before you are even aware they exist!
 - c. Just because you aren’t prepared doesn’t mean that God isn’t prepared.
 - d. God always has solutions to obstacles (Mark 10:27)
 - e. It’s important to trust in God, no matter your circumstances. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
 - f. When you are grateful, you’ll begin to express love.
 - g. The Passover is still practiced by Jewish people today- they look back and give God thanks, because there was a time where their people were enslaved for 400 years, but God stepped in and set them free. After God stepped in and set them free, he gave the Jewish people a command- that once a year they would celebrate the Passover feast to remember how God set them free. That you will take a moment out of the year to remember God’s goodness and express your gratitude to Him.
 - h. Hundreds of years later, as Jesus is celebrating the Passover meal with his disciples, **HE IS BRINGING A WHOLE NEW MEANING TO THIS HOLIDAY DINNER.**
 - i. **PASSOVER IS ABOUT THE JEWS FINDING PHYSICAL FREEDOM. BUT THE LAST SUPPER IS ABOUT HUMANITY FINDING SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.**
 - j. Jesus is saying, “I am the one who will set you free, not from physical bondage, but from spiritual bondage when I lay my life down for you on the cross.”
 - k. When he laid his life down on a cross, he paid for the debt of our sin, and the gap / separation we had with God from our sin was bridged!
 - l. JESUS says: “Take the bread and remember this is my body that will be broken for you. Take the cup and remember this is my blood that will be shed for you!”
 - m. We have a reason to be grateful, because Jesus solved our biggest problem of all! (Colossians 2:13-15; John 3:16)

2. At the Passover meal, Jesus knew who was going to betray him. What can we learn from His reactions and His conduct under those dire circumstances?

- a. The grace of Jesus is inexhaustible- Jesus is sitting and eating His last meal with someone He knows will betray Him. (2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Timothy 2:1)
- b. After the meal, He still calls Judas “friend.”
- c. Jesus calls you and me friends, even in the midst of our worst crimes. (John 15:12-17)
- d. We should be full of gratitude because: God chose us (John 15:16); He loved us first (1 John 4:19); He died for us (John 3:16); He forgives us and offers us a new start (1 John 1:9); He has a purpose for us (Jeremiah 29:11).
- e. If Jesus never does another thing for me again, He’s already done enough when he stretched out his arms on the cross and paid for my sin.
- f. Even as He faced a terrible death on the cross, Jesus expressed His gratitude to the Father- He gave thanks for the meal they were about to receive. (Matthew 26:26)
- g. He’s teaching us that we, too, should still be thankful, even during life’s most difficult moments. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

3. How can having gratitude protect your perspective?

- a. Sometimes, we’re looking at life through a broken, shattered, or toxic lens.
- b. But when I choose to live with gratitude, it reframes what I’m looking at and puts it into a proper perspective- an eternal perspective.
- c. When you’re grateful, it reminds you that you’re a part of something much bigger than yourself, because you’re connected to others.
- d. When you choose to be grateful, you’re reminded that it's because of God and people around you that you are where you are.
- e. Every good and perfect gift is from above. (James 1:17-18)
- f. The good in our lives comes from God’s grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

4. How does gratitude generate a spirit of Generosity?

- a. Grateful people are always generous people. Grateful people gravitate towards generosity.
- b. Generosity opens a door for you to walk into a bigger world.
- c. The way I handle small stuff determines if God will give me big stuff to handle. (Luke 16:10-11; Matthew 25:14-30)
- d. Generosity: Giving more than what’s required. (Matthew 5:38-42)
- e. Generosity is an attitude, a way of being. (Proverbs 11:25; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8)
- f. Generous people know that it all comes from God anyway! (1 Chronicles 29:14-16)

5. How does an Attitude of Gratitude help attract the right kind of attention?

- a. *Answers will vary*
- b. Being consistently grateful in the small moments or in difficult circumstances lets others see what you're really like.

- c. If you can have an attitude of gratitude daily, you will be unforgettable. (Matthew 5:16)
- d. Live your life in such a way that you are unforgettable to your spouse, your kids, your coworkers, your family. HOW? By being grateful!
- e. LOOK at the people you do life with and tell them - I love you, and I'm so grateful for you- my life is better because of you.
- f. Gratitude is counter-cultural. Unfortunately, it's not all that common today.
- g. When you live life with gratitude towards God, you get the attention of heaven, and God starts to bless the person who is grateful.

Next Steps: *These questions are designed to help you move towards action. With this week's message "The Gratitude Effect" in mind:*

1. How can we **CONNECT** to God, His Church, and each other?
2. How can we **GROW** more in our faith in God, His Word and in His Church?
3. How can we **GO** love, serve, and help others?