

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE | *Gratitude*

Today we want to engage in the practice of *Gratitude*. And to do this, you'll need a physical piece of paper – and something to write with. Feel free to press pause on the video player while you grab that if need be.

In our day-to-day lives, it can be easy to focus on whatever feels like it isn't going the way we want, and slip often into grumbling and complaining. And that behavior can have a very negative impact on our emotional and even physical well-being. The Bible urges us to **“Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”** (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Now that doesn't mean we are supposed to give thanks *for* every situation, but rather that in the midst of even the worst experiences, we can still find a reason to be thankful, especially when we remember that **“every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights”** (James 1:17). Perhaps this is why the German theologian and mystic Meister Eckhart once said, *“If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is ‘Thank You,’ that will be enough.”*

The practice and challenge for each of us today is to make an actual list of as many things as possible for which we can be grateful. And write small, so that you push yourself to write lots and lots of things, big things and small things. You might start off with some easy things: life, family, friends, basic health, etc. But after that, challenge yourself to get super specific. Some things will come to mind easily, for sure, but if you start to run out of ideas, simply look around. Every good thing is a gift, and God is the Giver. So what do you notice? And what can you remember?

This is a list that can never be “finished”, thankfully! But as you pause, take a moment and look at your list as a whole: how does it make you feel? Has this practice affected your mood or perspective at all even just in these couple minutes?

This week, consider setting a repeating “gratitude” alarm in your phone. (You can set it to go off as frequently as is reasonable, whether hourly, or just a few times throughout the day.) Whenever it goes off, pause, look around you, and find something new to be thankful for. Then, express your appreciation to God.