

November 2021 Connection Guide

GRATITUDE

Icebreakers

Tell your group a favorite Thanksgiving tradition.

A starting place on Gratitude

As a group, watch the video in the link below: What does the Bible say about thankfulness / gratitude?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMDl-VxaZP4>

Gratitude Changes Attitudes

Philippians 4: New Century Version (NCV)

⁴ Be full of joy in the Lord always. I will say again, be full of joy. ⁵ Let everyone see that you are gentle and kind. The Lord is coming soon. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks. ⁷ And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Brothers and sisters, think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Discussion Questions

- How was Paul able to write Philippians 4:4-8 while he was in Prison?
- Do you think Paul continued to be grateful in spite of not being released from Prison?
- What circumstances are you currently facing? What can you give thanks to God for in spite of your circumstances?

Gratitude doesn't mean you can't acknowledge pain / loss

(The following is taken from Carmen Joy Imesh's "*Misconceptions About Lament*")

"How can we lament when the Bible urges us to 'give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18)? Doesn't thankfulness preclude lament? One might think so, but again Scripture shows us that lament and gratitude go hand in hand.

We need not fear that lament will shut out our gratitude. For reasons I'll explain further below, lament and gratitude actually depend on one another. Some of us don't want to lament for fear of becoming bitter old souls. We don't want to get stuck. But on the contrary, it is our refusal to lament that leads to bitterness and despair. When we try to carry the grief on our own or manage our own solutions to life's deepest problems, the pressure is too much to bear.

Emmanuel Katongole explains,

"Pain . . . has the ability to destroy language, to reduce the victim to silence. This silence is a form of powerlessness, a paralyzing form of despair. Therefore, the ability to voice grief, to find words to speak the unspeakable and to name pain, is a form of resistance to the paralyzing silence." (Born from Lament: The Theology and Politics of Hope in Africa)

The pathway to joy requires us to pass through the gateway of lament -- acknowledging that all is not well in the world and that we believe our God is able to do something about it. Until we look our pain and loss directly in the face, we will be unable to let it go.

Discussion Questions

- Are you lamenting something in this month of "Thanksgiving"? Take time to pray for each other.
- How does God fit lament and gratitude together? How do joy and sorrow work together?

Seeing blessings and giving thanks

Mathew 3:54-58 New Century Version (NCV)

⁵⁴ He went to his hometown and taught the people in the synagogue, and they were amazed. They said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and this power to do miracles?" ⁵⁵ He is just the son of a carpenter. His mother is Mary, and his brothers are James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. ⁵⁶ And all his sisters are here with us. Where then does this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷ So the people were upset with Jesus. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown and in his own home." ⁵⁸ So he did not do many miracles there because they had no faith.

Jackson Garrell, author of Circle Devotions comments on the above scripture when he says,

"Jesus was in His hometown. He should have been welcomed as a hero. There should have been lines of people ready to experience His power and listen to His wisdom. Instead, the people in Jesus's own hometown did not get to receive all He had to offer because they were blind to who He really was."

God in flesh was right there, and they missed it. Don't be blind to your blessings. And here's the kicker: Your blessings are often right in front of you. Gratitude will change your entire attitude.

Don't be blind. Take a good, hard look around you. Take an honest inventory of all the blessings you have in your life. You will see that the list is near endless. If we aren't thankful, then we aren't paying attention.

It's not happy people who are thankful. It's thankful people who are happy. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. ⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had."

Discussion Questions

- Go around the group and list some of your blessings.
- How can we keep ourselves from becoming blind to our blessings?
- What can you do to embrace gratitude this week? (See Practice Gratitude in "So What Now")

So What Now? Next Right Steps of Gratitude...

10 days of Gratitude in the Bible: Read one scripture a day and embrace gratitude:

John 3:16-17, Luke 7:36-50, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 2:11-14, Psalm 105:1-3,
Hebrews 4:14-16, James 1:2-4, Romans 8:26-30, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Psalm 34:1-3

Practice Gratitude – <https://mightifier.com/5-ideas-for-practicing-gratitude/>

A 2 minute story about gratitude – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3cpV_dnN_I

And now for something completely different – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwaxNPY5nIY>

Questions for the Pastors and Staff?

If you would like contact from one of our pastors or staff, we invite you to reach out to any or all of us.

Shaun McNay: shaun@qfmc.org / 509-723-8294

Andrew Royer: andrew@qfmc.org / 509-289-0911

Daniel Castillo: daniel@qfmc.org / 509-237-1187

Chrissy Massey: chrissy@qfmc.org / 509-398-2201

Ryan Massey: ryan@qfmc.org / 509-794-9077

Vonna Harris: vonna@qfmc.org / 509-787-4491

