



**Give Thanks in All Circumstances**  
**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024**

*'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.'*  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*"Reflect on your present blessings, on which every man has many, not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some."*

—Charles Dickens (M. Dickens, 1897, p. 45)

**Opener:**

What is something small that happened this week that you're thankful for?

Or

What is a gift or talent you're thankful for having? How has it impacted your life?

Read the verses above.

1. Why would Paul encourage the believers to give thanks in everything? How is this different from giving thanks for everything?
2. Why do you think this is the will of God for you? How can gratitude change our perspective in the midst of difficult circumstances?

*'Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.'*  
Psalm 100:4-5

Enter his gates is used as a powerful image to approach the presence of God (taken from worship at the temple in Jerusalem – the central place of worship)

3. Why do you think we are meant to enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise?
4. What reasons are given in the verses above for giving thanks?



*'do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'*  
*Philippians 4:6-7*

5. From these verses how might gratitude help anxiety and mental health?
6. What are some challenges to living a life of gratitude, especially in difficult situations? How can we overcome them?
7. Have each group member share a recent challenge and one thing they can be grateful for in that situation.
8. Pray together prayers of thanksgiving and praise.

Note: Some scientific research on gratitude:

Robert Emmons is a renowned gratitude researcher. Emmons found that gratitude improves well-being by fostering more positive emotions and reducing stress, potentially enhancing physical health, too. His work includes studies showing how gratitude can increase resilience, improve sleep quality, and support healthier behaviors like regular exercise and goal achievement. <https://bigthink.com/neuropsych/benefits-of-gratitude-robert-emmons/>

Individuals practicing gratitude have reported better sleep, more energy, and fewer physical symptoms. <https://emmons.faculty.ucdavis.edu/gratitude-and-well-being/> “A daily gratitude intervention (self-guided exercises) with young adults resulted in higher reported levels of the positive states of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy compared to a focus on hassles or a downward social comparison (ways in which participants thought they were better off than others).”

“Gratitude reduces a multitude of toxic emotions, from envy and resentment to frustration and regret. Writing in a gratitude journal improves sleep, according to one study.”

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7-scientificallly-proven-benefits-of-gratitude>