Your Coronavirus Survival Guide - April 5th
Living Grateful in a Pandemic - Troy Knight and Clay Weed

Key Scriptures from the Message:
Philippians 4:8
1 Thessalonians 5:18
Proverbs 3:5-6 MSG
Psalms 145:4-7

Start reading

Philippians 4:8 NLT
And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT
Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is Gods will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 3:5-6 MSG
Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.

Psalms 145:4-7 NLT
Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power. I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness. Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- During this pandemic, do you find yourself more like Thomas Carlyle (bellyaching and complaining) or more like Fanny Crosby (turning lemons into lemonade)?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Why is it so important to God that we have a grateful heart?
- Read Philippians 4:8. During this time when many of us are challenged to not become idle, on what are you fixing your thoughts?
- In 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 Paul gives advice relevant to our present circumstances. Troy shared from verse 18. Read the other verses and consider how you are stifling the Holy Spirit. How will you urge the lazy around you and encourage the timid?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Why is it easier to be negative than it is to be grateful?
- Were you a complainer, but now find it easier to be grateful? What brought about the change?
- Not really thinking about it, say the first thing that comes to mind...What are you grateful for right now?
- Clay shared the story behind the writing of the song "It Is Well". When you heard that story what were your initial thoughts? Did you feel convicted because of your own complaining? How can we be grateful like this? What song (hymn, contemporary) lyrics remind you to be grateful?
- Read Psalm 145:4-7. Troy asked the question, "Why does David make such a big deal of speaking gratitude and praise?" Why do you think David did this?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- There are many ways be grateful vs negative. What is something you can commit to doing out of the list below?
  - Start a journal and every day write what you are grateful for that day.
  - Start a "Grateful Jar" with your family and every day each person writes something they are grateful for on a piece of paper and puts it in the jar. Chose a date to sit down as a family and read all of the papers together.
  - If you don't have one, choose a song that helps point you toward gratitude.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank you for all of the blessings you have poured on us. Help us to be focused on being grateful vs negative during this time where it is so easy to only see the negative. Forgive us for not seeing the good things over the bad. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article on the back and discuss it.

Question: "What does the Bible say about thankfulness/gratitude?"

Answer: Thankfulness is a prominent Bible theme. First Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” Did you catch that? Give thanks in all circumstances. Thankfulness should be a way of life for us, naturally flowing from our hearts and mouths.

Digging into the Scriptures a little more deeply, we understand why we should be thankful and also how to have gratitude in different circumstances.

Psalm 136:1 says, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.” Here we have two reasons to be thankful: God’s constant goodness and His steadfast love. When we recognize the nature of our depravity and understand that, apart from God, there is only death (John 10:10; Romans 7:5), our natural response is to be grateful for the life He gives.

Psalm 30 gives praise to God for His deliverance. David writes, “I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. O Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit. . . . You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever” (Psalm 30:1-12). Here David gives thanks to God following an obviously difficult circumstance. This psalm of thanksgiving not only praises God in the moment but remembers God’s past faithfulness. It is a statement of God’s character, which is so wonderful that praise is the only appropriate response.

We also have examples of being thankful in the midst of hard circumstances. Psalm 28, for example, depicts David’s distress. It is a cry to God for mercy, protection, and justice. After David cries out to God, he writes, “Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy, and I will give thanks to him in song” (Psalm 28:6-7). In the midst of hardship, David remembers who God is and, as a result of knowing and trusting God, gives thanks. Job had a similar attitude of praise, even in the face of death: “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised” (Job 1:21).

There are examples of believers’ thankfulness in the New Testament as well. Paul was heavily persecuted, yet he wrote, “Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him” (2 Corinthians 2:14). The writer of Hebrews says, “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe” (Hebrews 12:28). Peter gives a reason to be thankful for “grief and all kinds of trials,” saying that, through the hardships, our faith “may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:6-7).

The people of God are thankful people, for they realize how much they have been given. One of the characteristics of the last days is a lack of thanksgiving, according to 2 Timothy 3:2. Wicked people will be “ungrateful.”

We should be thankful because God is worthy of our thanksgiving. It is only right to credit Him for “every good and perfect gift” He gives (James 1:17). When we are thankful, our focus moves off selfish desires and off the pain of current circumstances. Expressing thankfulness helps us remember that God is in control. Thankfulness, then, is not only appropriate; it is actually healthy and beneficial to us. It reminds us of the bigger picture, that we belong to God, and that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). Truly, we have an abundant life (John 10:10), and gratefulness is fitting.

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