

## Merry Mindset: Gratitude

### Community Group Questions

1. What was a bad situation that came into your life that you learned lessons from?
2. Is there anything that you want that has become almost an obsession for you?
3. Do you stop and take time to thank God for what you have?
4. Do you ever think about what you “have in Christ”?

In our first message in this series we are going to deal with having a Mindset of Gratitude. I believe this is a great starting point because the truth is, if we are unappreciative of what we have and our life situations we will be miserable people. But when we learn how to have a *Mindset of Gratitude* we will be a blessing to the people around us.

In other words...When we have a *Mindset of Gratitude* it will impact how we interact with others.

So how do we change our thinking and have a mindset of gratitude? I believe there are four things that we need to continually remember...

The first is one of the biggest roadblocks to having a mindset of gratitude...Bad situations that arising in our lives.

**Remember...Bad situations are opportunities for growth.**

Obviously no one wants bad situations to come into their lives, so when they do our natural tendency may be to curse God, question God, blame others or just become depressed, bitter or angry.

Listen to what Paul said while he was in jail for telling other people about Jesus...**Philippians 4:11-13** What Paul is communicating is that he is not going to let his life situation change his outlook on who God is and what He has done in his life. He is not going to let his situation dictate his degree of faith or how he handles himself because the

bottom line is that no matter what the situation, Paul looks to gain strength from Jesus *"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength"*

What are you going through right now that is difficult? What are you learning from it? What do you think God is trying to teach you? What do you think God wants to change about you?

Let me tell you two things that you can count on...

-God allowed that bad situation because He knows that if you handle it the right way you will grow.

-God will give you the strength to handle it.

You probably have heard people say *"God will not give you more than you can handle"*. But the Scriptures actually teach something a bit different and that is...*God will allow things that you can't handle to come into to your life so you learn how to rely on Him to handle it.*

You and I can't handle much but Jesus can handle anything...nothing is impossible with Him.

*Billy Graham "Suffering is part of the human condition, and it comes to us all. The key is how we react to it, either turning away from God in anger and bitterness or growing closer to Him in trust and confidence."*

So our response should be *Mindset of Gratitude*

Thank you God that I can learn and grow from the things that are going on in my life, and thank you God that you can give me strength to handle it.

So we start to have a *Mindset of Gratitude* by remembering that bad situations come into our lives are opportunities to grow...the next thing we need to do is...

**Remember...Not to obsess over what we do not have.** *Ecclesiastes 6:9 "Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind."*

We can always find something to complain about, the desire for more and better will always be there. I remember for the first 6 months I had my drivers license I did not have a car. I had friends that had cars and sometimes they would complain about their cars and my response was "at least you have a car."

So here is what happens...we get caught in the rut of thinking the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

Maybe you are looking at your life and saying...

-I need a better house-I need a better car-I need a better phone-I need a better wardrobe-I need better kids-I need better parents-I need a better spouse -I need a better job- more, more, more, better, better, better...I will not be satisfied until I have\_\_\_\_\_

What I have is not that good, I need something better and the obsession starts, and you start to do and say things that are not pleasing to God, helpful to you or other people. Now it is all about getting what you don't have. Then when you do not get that it makes you upset, frustrated or angry.

When you do get what you obsessed over it does not bring the satisfaction you expected so you are not thankful or you end up in the cycle of just wanting more.

*Nic Vujicic (Voy Chich) "You can either be angry for what you don't have or thankful for what you do have."*

Which brings us to our next point...

**Remember...What we have is from God. James 1:17**

When we look at our lives we need to realize every blessing, everything good and everything that has value is a gift from God. The Bible teaches that this is Common Grace...meaning that even people that do not know God or reject God are still recipients of good things and God is the one that brings those things...not luck or chance. God gives to all good gifts so they wake up and ask where did this come from.

If that is you...wake up every good thing comes from God and He wants to get your attention by showing you how good He is....The GOSPEL shows us how good He is  
Sometimes as Christians when life is not going very well and you do not feel like you have many good things to be thankful for we get discouraged...Truth be told many times when we think of what we "have" we are thinking of possessions and life situations.

But as Christians we have much to be thankful for that has nothing to do with possessions or life situations...it has to do with our position in Christ or what we have in Christ.

Let me tell you what you have in Jesus...based on Ephesians 1  
You are forgiven, you are adopted into His family, you were chosen by Him, you received the riches of His grace, you have an eternal inheritance, you are loved, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit

These are things we have in Christ... and no one can ever take them away.

But you know what...we also have possessions and life situations that are good and they are from God. I believe that when you learn to focus on what we have in Christ we become thankful for our possessions and life situations. Why? Because we start realize that the things I have or situations I find myself in were never designed to

bring me satisfaction but they were just given to me or brought into my life to be used to remind me how good He is and the possessions and situations I am in can be used to bring Him glory.

So I can go home and look at what the Lord blessed me with and thank Him...

God I don't have the best car...but thank you I have car

God I don't have the best house...but thank you I have a house

God I don't have the best food...but thank you I have food

God I don't have the best clothes...but thank you I have clothes

God I don't have a spouse...but thank you I do not have marital problems

How do we practice thanking Him?

**Remember...Praise God for what we have.** *Psalm 86:12 "I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever."*

We need to praise God for what we have in Jesus and for the possessions and life situations.

When we don't praise Him for the possessions and life situations we become prideful or entitled.

-*Prideful* because we think that WE have everything to do with where we are in life. It is true that we have responded and we may have worked hard, like Paul said in 1 Cor 15:10 but we have to continually remember to praise Him for what is going on in our lives...it keeps us humble, it keeps us grounded and it brings Him glory

-*Entitled* because we think we are deserving and God owes us good things, He does not owe us anything

When we feel prideful or entitled we look down on other people and when we are looking down we neglect to look up.

Jesus wants us to look up at Him and give him thanks and the more we do that the more we cultivate a *Mindset of Gratitude* and will be a blessing to the people around us.