

FBC Small-Group Materials

Week of November 27th
Keys to Thankfulness!

"To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything he has given us – and he has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of his love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from him.... For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience."

Thomas Merton

For Small-Group Leaders

Dear Leaders,

Gratitude is one of life's core attitudes. It is as essential as the air we breathe. Gratitude has always had its detractors. Self-centered power hungry folk never have much use for it. Stalin was known to have said, "Gratitude is a sickness suffered by dogs." But we know better. And so should he. Without gratitude relationships are stilted and perspective disappears. With it, new life emerges. This week in your group time, you have a chance to lead your group in discussion about thankfulness and a gratitude practicum.

As a reminder, if you are a home group leader please plan on attending one of our Home Group Leaders Huddles coming up on Nov. 29th and Dec. 1st. The meetings are identical so pick the one that works best for your schedule. The meetings will be at the home of Scott and Kim Wieking, 3210 Morro Bay Ave., 7:00-8:30 pm. We have lots to catch up on. Have a great small group!

Scott

Discussion Starters (choose one or both or make up your own):

- Read Stalin's quote above (in the leader's box). Now read Thomas Merton's quote at the top of the page. Why did these two men have such different views on gratitude?
- Ask your group if anyone is willing to share something from their "Spiritual Life Notebook" regarding what God is teaching them. If group members don't yet have a notebook, have them share something that they are learning.

Discussion Questions:

1. Please read Colossians 3:15-17. Why does Paul mention thankfulness three times? What is he saying about its place in our lives as Christ-followers?
2. Ask group members to read the following verses on thankfulness:
 - *How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?* **1 Thessalonians. 3:9**
 - *But 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**
 - *Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!* **2 Corinthians 9:15**
 - *...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* **1 Thessalonians. 5:18**
 - *Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.* **Psalms 95:2**
 - *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* **Philippians. 4:6**
3. Why is thankfulness so central to our relationship with Christ?
4. Read Psalm 103:2. What are the consequences of ingratitude or forgetfulness of the Lord's goodness/benefits?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 again. Now read Romans 8:28. Why are we able to thank God in all circumstances?

Group Project:

Ask your group, "What can we do as a group to express our thankfulness?" Allow your group an opportunity to brainstorm ideas. Be creative. Ideas might include:

- Thanking a person or group in the church for their service.
- Thanking someone or some group in our community.
- Having a prayer time focused on thanking God for his goodness.

Leaders Note: A little preparation will facilitate this group project. If you bring paper, pens (and other supplies) people can write notes of thanks during your meeting time. Or perhaps your group wants to plan something in the future as a way of expressing thanks. One of our home groups recently decided to honor one of our children's ministry workers awhile back. They invited her and her husband to their home group, had dinner and honored her with flowers and a gift card.