

# What's The Good of Gratitude?

*In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* (1Thess. 5)

How can we give thanks when our world is falling apart around us? There are pressures in relationships, worries about finances and anxious thoughts about how to find enough money for food and rent for tomorrow. Sometimes there's guilt and shame around an addiction or a destructive habit or relationship. Life isn't what we thought it would be. The furniture is broken down. The kitchen is cluttered. The kids are acting up. There's no money for laundry. Home feels like a place to escape from rather than a place to settle and find comfort. How are we to give thanks in the middle of all that? What is there to be grateful for?

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.* (Phil. 4)

*We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.* (Romans 8)

What do we have? We have families, opportunities, health, knowledge of God's love and care, mentors and support programs, household furnishings, transportation options, temperate climate, freedom of speech and religion, democracy, hospitals and medical plans. We don't have widespread violence, devastating damage from floods and storms.

## Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What do I have to be thankful for today?
2. How does being thankful help me to live better?
3. What seems to get in the road of my being grateful?
4. What specific plan can I make to welcome gratitude into my life?

We have freedom to choose what we will eat today. We have sight, hearing and are able to walk. Our vital organs are functioning without being on life support machines. We have the strength to come here and be with each other to enjoy conversation and fellowship together. We will not be thrown in jail for being here. We have much to be grateful for. We need to remember and let it do good to us.

What difference does it make if we are grateful or not? When we are grateful we find new strength to enjoy the day and new courage to build something better in our lives. When we give thanks we fill our lives with joy and become more likeable. People tend to hang around positive people. Our circle of friends grow. When we give thanks, a positive outlook begins to grow in us and we become people who are more confident. Good things happen around people who work for and expect good things to happen. When we give thanks we remember how much God is really working on our behalf. Our faith and trust grow and we begin to live for our family and our community. We begin to experience the joy of being a part of community and a part of God's family. To give thanks is to give ourselves a new chance at life.

*Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His steadfast love endures forever. Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord or declare all his praise?* (Psalm 106)