

SERIES DISCUSSION GUIDE



SACRED
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If you would like to watch the message, visit rpc.me/messages.

MESSAGE RECAP

In week two of our *Sacred* series, we heard moving stories from people in our church who are living through deep pain yet choosing to practice gratitude. Not because life is easy—but because they've discovered the peace and strength that comes from thanking God in all circumstances.

Gratitude isn't just a nice idea; it's a powerful principle rooted in Scripture and affirmed by science. Studies show that gratitude improves mental, emotional, and physical health. But more importantly, the Bible says that giving thanks in all circumstances is God's will for us. Not because He needs it, but because *we* do. Their stories remind us that gratitude doesn't mean ignoring pain—it means inviting God into it.

WARM-UP QUESTION

- What's one small thing that made you smile recently? (*It could be a great cup of coffee, a good song, something kind someone did, or even a hilarious meme!*)
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the message or the stories shared this week?
2. When life gets hard, what do you naturally focus on?
3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. What are the three commands Paul gives in this passage? (*rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances*)

4. Which one of these is easiest for you to practice, and which one challenges you the most?
5. Why do you think God connects gratitude to His will for our lives (v.18)? (*It's not about what He needs—it's about what we need. Gratitude transforms us from the inside out. It has real healing effects on our hearts, minds, and even bodies.*)
6. Why do you think it's important to practice gratitude, even during difficult times? (*Gratitude doesn't mean we ignore or deny our struggles. It's about trusting that God is good and working even when we don't understand how [Romans 8:28].*)
7. Paul says to "pray without ceasing." What do you think that looks like in everyday life? (*Maintaining a constant connection with God – talking to Him throughout your day, seeking His guidance, strength, and presence, even in small ways.*)
8. Chad said, "Gratitude used to be a natural instinct, but because of sin, it's now something we have to practice." How have you seen that to be true in your own life?
9. What does it look like to practice gratitude when you don't feel it? (*Gratitude starts with a decision, not a feeling. It doesn't erase grief, pain, or loss, but it invites God into the situation and creates space for peace.*)
10. What are some practical ways you can build a habit of gratitude in your daily life? (Examples: Keep a gratitude journal, thank someone out loud, pray a short prayer of thanks—even if you don't feel it.)

APPLICATION QUESTION

- Where in your life do you need to shift your focus from what's wrong to what's good?

SUMMARY

- Gratitude is a gift, not a burden. God doesn't ask us to give thanks because He needs it – He invites us because we need it.
- You don't have to feel grateful to choose it. Gratitude begins with a decision.
- You can be thankful in your circumstances, even if you're not thankful for them.
- Gratitude doesn't erase grief, pain or loss – but it invites God into it and creates space for peace.

CLOSING PRAYER

Your closing prayer can include:

1. **Gratitude** – *Thank You, Lord, for this time together to reflect Your Word and Your goodness.*
2. **Acknowledgment of new insights** – *We are grateful for the wisdom You have given us today. Help it to take root in our hearts.*
3. **Request for guidance** – *As we go into our week, help us walk in gratitude – even when it's hard – and lean on You in every moment. Amen.*

LEADERS: TWO THINGS!

1. This is our **last week of the Sermon Discussion Guide**. If your group will continue meeting and you need group studies, email Melissa, Michael or Jaelyn!
2. **Serve Day is Saturday, April 5 from 8am to 12pm**. It's a simple and fun way for your group to come together, be a light in our community, and make a tangible difference in someone's life. Serve Day is open to all ages. Sign up at <https://www.rpc.me/event/global-serve-day/>.