Revive Our Hearts™

5-Day Leader Gratitude Challenge

WELCOME TO THE 5-DAY LEADER GRATITUDE CHALLENGE!

We're thrilled that you've accepted this 5-Day Gratitude Challenge! As you embark on a treasure hunt of finding a blessing from God each day, your heart and mind will begin to fill with greater joy as well—impacting both your life and the lives of those around you!

Each day you'll be challenged to grow in gratitude through devotionals adapted from *Choosing Gratitude* by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth. We encourage you to keep track of what God does in your heart. Cultivating a heart of gratitude is the beginning of your journey to joy!

Your Challenge:

Discover a blessing from God each day, and express gratitude to Him and to someone else for it. As your *gratitude* increases, watch your *gladness* grow by leaps and bounds!

Get ready, get set . . . get grateful!

Day 1

What's Your Gratitude Quotient?

"And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." —Colossians 3:17

Your Challenge:

Discover a blessing from God each day, and express gratitude to Him and to someone else for it. As your *gratitude* increases, watch your *gladness* grow by leaps and bounds!

I've often said that gratitude is learning to recognize and express appreciation for the benefits we have received from God and from others.

This means constantly being on the lookout for blessings, making each day a treasure hunt. It means being intentional about thanking God and others for the blessings that come our way.

Gratitude changes the way we start the day, spend the day, and look back on the day. It defines us as people who value our relationship with God and with those He's placed around us. By thanking Him and others throughout the day, we are expressing humility, realizing these "benefits" are all undeserved.

To discover what I call your Gratitude Quotient, see which of these statements is most true for you:

- I look at the world through grateful eyes and consistently express my gratitude to God and others.
- I know I've been greatly blessed, but I don't often stop to actually express my gratitude to God and others.
- To be honest, I haven't thought a lot about gratitude until starting this challenge. I've got a long way to go to develop a lifestyle of gratitude.
- I'm a whiner! I tend to focus on my problems and I frequently express them to others.

Heavenly Father, I confess my Gratitude Quotient is not what it should be. Please forgive me for my hardened heart and blinded eyes. During this challenge, cultivate in me a grateful heart that eagerly praises You for every blessing. I choose to thank You now for all You will do!

Gratitude in Action

If you have realized that your Gratitude Quotient is not what it should be, confess your ungrateful spirit to the Lord. Ask Him to forgive you and to transform you into a truly thankful person. Write a prayer asking the Lord to cultivate within you a more grateful heart over these next five days.

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:12–17

Day 2

Gratitude Draws You Close to Jesus

Your Challenge:

Discover a blessing from God each day, and express gratitude to Him and to someone else for it. As your *gratitude* increases, watch your *gladness* grow by leaps and bounds!

There's a passage from Luke 17 that records Jesus healing ten men of leprosy.

> But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud voice, gave glory to God. He fell facedown at his feet, thanking him. And he was a Samaritan. (vv. 15–16)

There is much we can learn from this man who returned to give thanks to the Lord for His blessing. *First, he came loudly.* He couldn't contain his gratitude. This occasion called for an unrestrained, extreme, public display of thanks.

Second, he came close. Verse 12 says the ten lepers "stood at a distance" from Jesus. Lepers were ceremonially defiled and weren't allowed to come close to those who were "clean." The healed leper, however, "fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks" (v. 16). He was the only one of the ten who ever got close to Jesus. Gratitude places us in close proximity to Christ, where we experience the fullness of His redeeming power and enjoy the blessing of His presence.

Third, he came from a distance. "He was a Samaritan" (v. 16). This man had never known the true God until Jesus came into his world and transformed his life. After being separated from Jesus by a religious, cultural, and physical gulf, he loved what he saw in Jesus. Gratitude will draw you close to Jesus.

God, I want to be like the one healed leper who returned to give thanks for what Jesus had done. You have worked in my life, healing my sin-stricken soul just as You healed the leper of his physical disease. I come back to You again, with loud praise for redeeming me and healing me. I draw close to You, fall at Your feet, and proclaim Your power and goodness over my life. Thank You!

Gratitude in Action

Look for an opportunity today to thank the Lord for what He has done in your life—aloud, and in the presence of others. You may feel a bit awkward if you're not accustomed to praise Him in this way. But think about how you express yourself when you are enthused or earnest about something in another realm of your life—like adopting a child, a promotion at work, or your favorite team's championship.

Scripture Reading: Luke 17:11–19

Day 3

Gratitude Isn't Silent!

"We always thank God for all of you,
making mention of you constantly in our prayers." —1 Thessalonians 1:2

Your Challenge:

Discover a blessing from God each day, and express gratitude to Him and to someone else for it. As your *gratitude* increases, watch your *gladness* grow by leaps and bounds!

The apostle Paul was a grateful man. That's because he never forgot how greatly he had sinned against the holiness of God. And he never got over the wonder of the amazing grace of God that had reached down to him, undeserving as he was. His life is a great illustration of the principle that "guilt + grace ⇨ gratitude."

When you read Paul's New Testament letters, you can't help but notice he was thankful for others. Paul didn't just leave it at generalized expressions of gratitude—he often took time to identify specific individuals for whom he was grateful and then let them know how much he appreciated their contribution to his life and ministry.

People matter to God. And they should matter to us. It's important to take time to recognize and express appreciation for the contributions even little-known people make to His kingdom and to our lives.

Lord, I want to love people the way You showed us. Help me to express my gratitude to others for specific ways they have invested in me and enriched my life. Thank You for giving me people who love me and care for me. Open my eyes to every person who needs encouragement from me for how they have loved me. Thank You!

Gratitude in Action

Today, make a list of individuals who have blessed or touched your life in some way. Ask yourself, "Have I ever thanked this person for the way God has used him/her in my life?" In the next twenty-four hours, find a way to express your gratitude for his or her influence in your life. Then move to the next one . . . and the next.

Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:3–4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3

Day 4

Bless the Lord, O My Soul!

"My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all his benefits." —Psalm 103:2

Your Challenge:

Discover a blessing from God each day, and express gratitude to Him and to someone else for it. As your *gratitude* increases, watch your *gladness* grow by leaps and bounds!

When was the last time you considered the "benefits package" you have received from the Lord? I once interviewed a woman for our *Revive Our Hearts* broadcast who has faithfully memorized and meditated on Scripture for more than fifty years. I was amazed when she mentioned that she had never really been depressed.

She explained that whenever she finds herself becoming a bit down or blue, she begins to quote Psalm 103. At which point in the interview, she proceeded to recite the entire psalm—from memory, thoughtfully, with heartfelt expression.

It was a moving experience for all of us who were in the room listening. When she got to the end of the passage, there was a holy hush. The first thought that went through my mind was, *How in the world could anyone ever be overwhelmed with depression, and how in the world could I ever give in to discouragement, if all these blessings are ours—and they are!*

As we recognize and identify the specific blessings we have received from God and from others, we discover countless reasons for expressing gratitude. The psalmist took time to bless the Lord for specific benefits—he didn't want to forget even one of them! As you open your heart to Him in prayer today, ask God to reveal to you just how great your "benefits package" really is.

Heavenly Father, I thank You for the many gifts you have bestowed on me. You have been a generous and loving Father, giving me more than I deserve or even know. For all You've given, I now praise You and bless Your holy name. Thank You!

Gratitude in Action

Take some time to make a benefits list of your own, writing down every gift that comes to mind and thanking God for each item. You can begin with the blessings found in Psalm 103. Consider memorizing and meditating on at least the first five verses over the next week or so.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 103:1–5

Day 5

The Joy Hidden Behind Your Circumstances

"When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" —Psalm 56:3–4

Your Challenge:

Discover a blessing from God each day, and express gratitude to Him and to someone else for it. As your *gratitude* increases, watch your *gladness* grow by leaps and bounds!

Psalm 56 is a hymn of praise and trust, of confidence and strength, of worship and gratitude. This particular one was written in far less than ideal circumstances, however. David was on the run from King Saul, and when he was spotted and seized by the Philistines in the city of Gath, he faked insanity to avoid being detained.

Yet in the midst of intense, frightening hardship, he submitted himself to the Lord's protection and found within this relationship the ability to say, "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?" (vv. 3–4). He didn't deny the reality of what was happening to him, but he found reason to be grateful even for his sorrows.

Perhaps it's hard for you to find much to be thankful for today. Perhaps all you can see is what's wrong, what hurts, and what others are doing to you. But look above your circumstances, beyond your fears, and ask God to give you a heart of praise for Him.

God, will You open my eyes to see the joy that may be hidden under and behind the tough circumstances in life? You are always doing more than I can ever see or think or know. Help me to trust You are working so I can see beyond my circumstances and find joy. Thank You!

Scripture Reading: Psalm 56

Congratulations! You've completed the 5-Day Gratitude Challenge! Would you like to round out the week with two more devotionals? Here are bonus resources to grow your gratitude even more and continue on the journey to joy!

Day 6

When You Think You Deserve More

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." —1 Timothy 6:6

Your Challenge:

Discover a blessing from God each day, and express gratitude to Him and to someone else for it. As your *gratitude* increases, watch your *gladness* grow by leaps and bounds!

Andrew Carnegie, the wealthy industrialist whose fortune rivaled that of any other contemporary at the time of his death in 1919, left a million dollars to one of his relatives, who in return became angry and bitter toward his generous benefactor because Mr. Carnegie had also left $365 million dollars to charitable causes.

On its face, we can hardly believe this. How can a person have a million reasons to be grateful yet find it hundreds of millions short of being adequate?

But don't we all, in some way, possess this sense of entitlement toward God? So often our expectation or demand for more towers over the plenty we already possess. That's because we forget God doesn't owe us anything. We are debtors. *We* are the ones who owe. We think we deserve more (or different, or better) than we have, and we forget or minimize the blessings God has already given and continues to give.

Not content with food, clothing, and a roof over our heads, we whine if we don't have a certain kind of house, a certain kind of car, a certain kind of ministry, a certain kind of marriage, and certain kinds of friends living in a certain kind of neighborhood and income bracket. It's time we let gratitude be our ticket to freedom.

Lord, remind me of Your high call to seek Your kingdom above earthly things. Show me where I have confused my wants with my needs, and teach me to be grateful for all I already have. Thank You!

Gratitude in Action

What kinds of "wants" are you defining as "needs"? Ask God to show you any ways you may have become blinded to His grace. Confess them and trade them in on the bounty He promises to the grateful.

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 6:6–10

Day 7

Your Top Ten Blessings

"Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!" —Romans 11:33

Your Challenge:

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Robertson McQuilkin, former president of Columbia International University, tells of a time when, following his wife's diagnosis with Alzheimer's and the death of his eldest son, he retreated alone to a mountain hideaway. He wanted time to reorient his heart and recapture a love for God that had slowly evaporated in the heat of personal, tragic loss.

After a day devoted to prayer and fasting, he began writing God a love letter, enumerating the gifts he had received from the Lord's hand. He identified ten particular blessings from God that absolutely exceeded his imagination, things he could hardly find words to express how invaluable they were, how impossible life would be without them.

Robertson found his heart renewed by what he called "the reflex action of thanksgiving. My love flamed up from the dying embers and my spirit soared. I discovered that ingratitude impoverishes—but that a heavy heart lifts on the wings of praise."[1]

God, because of You, I have every spiritual blessing I need. Thank You for rescuing me from the domain of darkness, transferring me into Your kingdom, redeeming me, and forgiving me. Even in the worst of times, what You have done for me is beyond comprehension! Thank You.

Gratitude in Action

Even in the worst of circumstances, God's hand is generous in blessing. Follow Robertson's lead and identify your top ten blessings. The next time your mind is troubled by sad or worrisome thoughts, pull out your top ten and consciously transfer your focus from whatever is weighing you down to the things on your list and begin to give thanks.

Scripture Reading: Romans 11:33–36

[1] R.J. Morgan, *Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes*, electronic ed (Nashvilled: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 814.

THANKS FOR COMPLETING THE 5-DAY GRATITUDE CHALLENGE!

We began by assessing our Gratitude Quotient. Review your answers to the four questions found in Day 1. How have you grown in your gratitude attitude? Since gratitude is more effectively caught than taught, how contagious are you, especially at home and in ministry?

Do the people around you hear you express gratitude to the Lord and to others for both little and big things throughout the day? Conversely, do they hear you grumble when ministry doesn't go your way, or when you get a flat tire, or the weather is less than ideal?

No matter who is in your family or your circle, make sure your gratitude attitude is worth catching. Remember that it's contagious either way!

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth has touched the lives of millions of women through two nationally syndicated radio programs heard each day—*Revive Our Hearts* and *Seeking Him*. Her books have sold more than five million copies. Through her writing, podcasts, and events, Nancy is reaching the hearts of women around the world, calling them to freedom, fullness, and fruitfulness in Christ.

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