

GROWING IN GRATITUDE

PURSUING THANKFULNESS IN THE PAUSE

Thankfulness isn't always easy, I'd be more likely to say that thankfulness and gratitude are hard, really hard, especially when things are out of our control. A heart of gratitude to God is certainly easier when things are going well. But what about when you're going through a tough time? What about when a nation is crumbling, and you are living in a global pandemic with no real end in sight? Can you still be thankful?

"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."

-1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name" -Psalm 100:4.

It's important that when we are walking in unknown waters, that we keep ourselves looking to the Lord as our hope. Not to the government, a vaccine, or even our spouse or closest friends. True peace and comfort can only be found in the Lord. If you've struggled with this lately, if your home has been filled with more panic than peace, or if you're feeling like you're ready to hear God's heart for you personally in this season, than you're in the right place! With all the other things going on right now, why be thankful? Why do the scriptures ask us to give thanks in EVERYTHING?

THANKFULNESS CAN REPLACE THE SPIRIT OF FEAR.

Most likely, this season has brought more anxiousness or unease into your heart and home during the pandemic. Often, our anxious thoughts or worries are not reality, they are so powerful that they can create reality; even manifest in symptoms in your body. But did you know not one of those anxious thought or fears is from the heart of God? "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." -2 Timothy 1:7 One way to combat and replace the spirit of fear is by meditating on God's promises, trusting in the Lord and cultivating a heart of thankfulness, or an "attitude of gratitude".

THANKFULNESS REMINDS US THAT WE ARE NOT GOD

I don't know about you, but I would make a terrible savior. But isn't it true that so many days that is what we are trying to do? By trying to control the future, or being the god of our lives means we live without involving the Holy Spirit. If we're not seeking direction from the Lord and increasing our intimacy with Him through prayer, and His thoughts over us, we will live by our own ways and our own strength, instead of the Lord's ways and His strength.

THANKFULNESS ENERGIZES US

When you think of being thanked by your teenager, your toddler, spouse, friend or someone in your workplace (or zoom call), it's affirming to have someone acknowledge what you've done to help them. In the same way, the one who's saying, "Thank you", shows appreciation and recognition for another person's involvement. As we learn again and again to be grateful and thankful to others and to God, it energizes us and is life-giving. Not only that, but God delights in meeting us at the lowest points in our life; times where we want nothing more than to starfish on the floor like a toddler because we don't know the outcome, or the answer in this. The Lord meets us there, in order to raise us up higher with Him. When we experience that, we can say with Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). We can trust and know that the Lord is the one who sustains us, even when our attitudes are wrong, but the posture of our hearts are fixed on Him. There, and only there, can He energize and sustain our spirit to do His will.



- week one -

THE PAUSE CHALLENGE

JOIN US AS WE PURSUE GOD & EACH OTHER

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN -

Roots don't develop overnight, they take days, weeks, months of intentionality. For the next 21 days (3 weeks) we will be challenging you to focus on 3 specific areas in your walk with God. Join us and share your journey as we dive into week one.

PAUSE TO *pray*

Lord, thank you what you have given me to be grateful for. Show me any areas in my heart that have taken for granted your favor and protection over my life. When my heart is overwhelmed, or anxious, I pray that you would remind me of the promise in Psalm 18:2 that you are my shield and my place of safety. In Jesus' name, Amen,

WRITE YOUR OWN PRAYER OF GRATITUDE HERE:

PAUSE TO *praise*

What are 2 things the Lord showed you in this challenge or this week that filled your heart with gratitude, or new revelation?

PAUSE TO *plan*

Before bed for the next 7 days, write down (and share #thepausechallenge) things you are grateful for that day. The more we practice gratitude, the more natural it becomes in our everyday lives.

START HERE WITH THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR TODAY:
