

WEEK 8: Building A Resilient Faith | Gratitude + Celebration

Discuss the first two questions before watching the video.

- What is one of the things you are most grateful for in your life?
- Share if you have a story about an exceptional celebration that was meaningful to you.

Play the Teaching Video for Week 8.

- Share reflections from the video. Watch the [video here](#).
- [Here is the link](#) to the YouTube Playlist

Discussion Questions

Select a few questions to discuss as a group.

- Do you believe practicing gratitude is essential to your spiritual growth? Why?
- What is the difference between *feeling* grateful and *being* grateful?
- [1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#) and [John 16:33](#). Practicing gratitude does not mean we should ignore or deny the pain and stress of a negative experience. But when we find reasons to be grateful regarding that experience—whether it is because of what we learned from it, how it ended up strengthening us, that it could have been worse, that we have other advantages, that someone came to our aid, that it led to other opportunities, and so on—we are choosing to transform an obstacle, adversity, or suffering into an opportunity for fresh growth. Share with the group if you have experienced this.
- Has your Christian life included healthy fun and celebration, or has it been more of a stick-in-the-mud experience like Diana mentioned? How do you prefer to celebrate?

Application

- As you end this study, talk as a group, having them share what was a new practice for them. What one surprised them? Which ones do they want build into

their lives? Part of this week's Going Deeper is to create a plan for moving forward.

- Read [Psalm 118:24](#). Repeat this verse together out loud. Diana shared that making a regular practice of starting each day declaring these words transformed her outlook and heart. Write down the verse and put it where you will see it first thing in the morning. See if it does the same for you.
- Leviticus 23 lays out instructions for seven different celebrations the ancient Israelites were to observe together. Bible scholars believe each celebration carries significance related to the accomplishments of Jesus the Messiah. Now we have a new celebration: Christ in us. Read [John 15:9-12](#). God's will is that we experience overflowing joy; something to celebrate constantly in our hearts! What do you think it means to "remain in his love"? How do we accomplish that?

Prayer

Have everyone share one way to pray for them this week.

Consider splitting into groups of 2-3 and praying for each other. Alternatively, close the group by praying for your group and God's direction this week.

Going Deeper | Put Into Practice

These activities are designed for you to explore gratitude on your own this week. A life filled with gratitude will bring you to joy and celebration.

1. Create a personal spiritual practices plan. Spend time reflecting on the spiritual practices we explored in this study. Write them down and schedule them on your calendar. Consider pairing up with someone for accountability.
 - What do you want to incorporate daily?
 - What will you do weekly?
 - What will you do monthly?
2. Gratitude exercises:
 - Set aside some quiet time to sit with God. Take a deep breath. Consider thoughtfully and give thanks for the following things: the immediate environment you live in; the people who are close to you; the abilities you have; the opportunities you have experienced and have now; the good things you have learned. Tell God how thankful you are for all he has given you.
 - Express thanks to people in your life for who they are, what they are like, and what you are thankful for in your relationship.

- Start a gratitude journal. Reflect on the past day, few days, or week, focusing on things, people, and events you are grateful for.

3. Gratitude reframing:

Think of an unpleasant experience you've had, big or small. Consider:

- What is there to learn from this experience?
- Did the experience draw abilities out of you, strengthen you, or open up opportunities or relationships that surprised you?
- Are there things you can be thankful for about it now, though you might not have been at the time it occurred?
- Where can you see God with you surrounding this experience?