

Building the Discipline of Gratitude

Exercise 1:

End of Day Examen

Suggested Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Take a few minutes to reflect back over your day. Then respond to the following questions:

- What are 3 – 5 people/things/events for which you are thankful?
- How did God impact you through those?
- Say a prayer of thankfulness for each.
- In what ways did you demonstrate your gratitude to those around you?
- How will you live differently tomorrow?

Exercise 2:

Prayer/Journaling Prompts

Keep a journal of gratitude is a great way to keep a record of how God has and is working in your life. Rereading entries every few months can serve as a good reminder of the faithfulness and generosity of God.

Here are a few suggested topics to get you going:

- What truth(s) about Jesus are you thankful for?
- What is something from your past for which you are thankful?
- What is something for which you are not thankful? Examine your perspective. In this situation, how can you see God working in and through you?
- Who is someone that is having a positive influence in your life?
- What skills and abilities have you been given that allow you to influence and serve others?
- Who is someone that accepts you right where you are?
- What difficult situation or experience are you able to look back on with gratitude?
- When did you experience forgiveness from someone else?
- What is the best gift you have ever been given?
- What is something about yourself for which you are thankful?
- What is the best gift you have ever given?

Other suggested exercises:

- **Write a gratitude letter.** *Sit down and write a letter to someone who God has used in order to exert a positive influence in your life. The letter doesn't have to be long, but make sure that you're specific about what the person did and how God used it to affect you.*
- **Table Thanks.** *At the dinner table or another time with family or friends (i.e. in the car), have each person say something or someone they are thankful for. Give everyone space and time to respond. (Variation: each person says what they are thankful for about the person on their left.)*
- **Set an Alarm:** *On your phone, set an alarm for various intervals of the day. When the alarm rings give thanks to God for whatever you are doing, whoever you are with, or wherever you are.*
- **Read Philippians 4:8.** *Respond to that scripture in prayer.*
- **Read James 1:17.** *What is something you see and have taken for granted that is a gift of God?*

Reflection Exercise

Consider the four obstacles to gratitude. Define each in your own words. Write a brief summary of how each is evident in your life. Then consider what actionable steps you can take to minimize each obstacle.

- Comparison
- Scarcity
- Expectations
- Busyness

