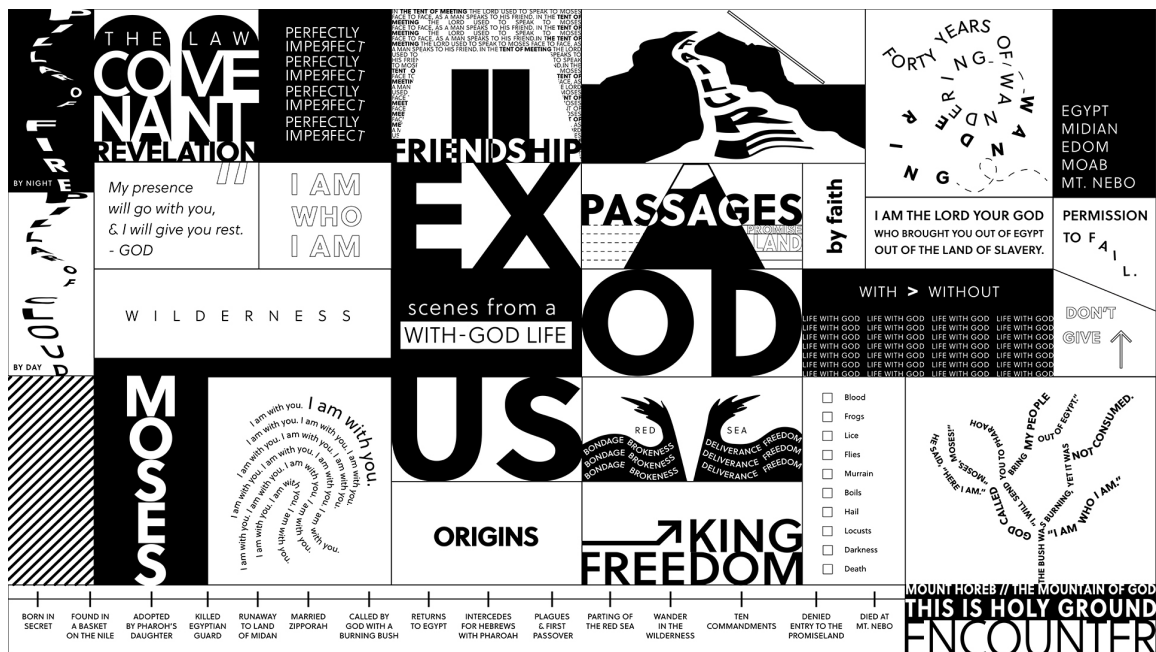




**Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!** If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

**NEW this year:** These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

**LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE**  
for the Sermon given on November 20, 2022  
by Pastor Rachel Keeler  
"GRATITUDE SUNDAY" - Deuteronomy 8:10-18



Question: How does living with a thankful heart change how we live?

Bottom Line: Gratitude is the bridge between receiving grace and extending grace to others.

If this is your first time back, welcome to the new ministry year and if you took a break this summer, welcome back to this Life Group (new year, new name :)

Our church has so much to thank God for over the last year! Through our digital ministry we have been able to reach more people than ever before, our campuses are seeing increasing

attendance at Sunday services, and our middle and high school ministries have new leadership and meeting time for students. This is but a few of the many great blessings we are grateful for. Looking back over this last year, what are you most grateful for?

In our sermon series Exodus: *Scenes from a With-God Life*, we examined the relationship between God and Moses, from the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt to the end of 40 years of wandering in the desert. Now, as they stand at the doorstep of the Promised Land, Moses has one final message of giving thanks (to God) and **thanksgiving** (giving back to God and blessing others).

We are excited to try to something a little new this year, and that is utilize some of the gifting and passion of talented and experienced group leaders and so much of this study has been created by one of our seasoned Life Group Leaders. Thank you for being here today.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

### **Main Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 8:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup> Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. <sup>12</sup> Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>15</sup> He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. <sup>16</sup> He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. <sup>17</sup> **You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."** <sup>18</sup> **But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth,** and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. Looking back on this year, what are 3 things that you are most grateful for at this moment in your life?
2. According to Pastor Rachel, Moses warned the Israelites "don't forget to thank God, or you'll think you did it all yourself" (Deut. 8:12-14). We have seen how Israel became proud, arrogant, and unteachable. Why do we forget to give God thanks? Have you experienced or witnessed people becoming hard-hearted?
3. Not only is gratitude something God desires for us, Pastor Rachel mentions that living with a grateful attitude can have beneficial effects on physical, mental and spiritual aspects of our lives. Have you experienced this in your own life or in the lives of others?

4. Are you someone who frequently thanks God and others in your life, or do you more often find yourself complaining when things don't go your way?
5. Pastor Rachel shares "when we cultivate a consistent attitude of appreciation, we become more generous people." She observes there is a correlation between gratitude and generosity, describing "gratitude [as] the bridge between receiving grace and living with grace." How has gratitude led you towards generous living?
6. What are some practices that can help you to develop a more thankful attitude?
7. God has blessed us abundantly so that we can share the love to Christ by becoming a blessing to others. What are specific steps you can take to give of your time, talent, or treasure to any of our GC ministries, or to the people in your life? How can we as a group keep each other accountable?

### Take Home Message:

Gratitude is the bridge between receiving God's blessings and *becoming a blessing to others*. It allows the grace we receive to become the grace we extend. It is a gift that makes us more generous, soft-hearted people. Gratitude may begin as an inner disposition, but it almost always leads to outward behavior.

### Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

*We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

### Let's Pray

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**Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).**

**Teaching Points:**

- The danger in failing to express gratitude isn't that God will take away what we have, it is that we will become hard-hearted people
- Recent research has demonstrated that expressing gratitude, whether to God or to another person leads to positive effects on our physical, mental and emotional well-being
- An attitude of thankfulness makes us look at the world and ask, "*How have I been given so much?*" instead of "Why does someone else have more?"
- How do we give thanks in ALL circumstances, even when we don't feel grateful?
  - During trials and tribulations, gratitude is more of a decision than an emotion – it is a choice to believe that despite our present situation, we are deeply loved and chosen, and that God who makes all things new is right there with us
  - When we intentionally cultivate a posture of gratitude throughout our lives, it allows us to find something to give thanks for, no matter the circumstance.
- How can we cultivate a *daily habit* of gratitude?
  - Ask God to give you the gift of gratitude
  - Start and end each day with a prayer of thanks
  - Keep a gratitude journal
  - Write a thank you note, make a thank you call, send a thank you text
  - Give a portion back of what you have been given
- Read "One Thousand Gifts" by Ann Voskamp
  - [https://www.amazon.com/dp/0785253653/ref=redir\\_mobile\\_desktop?encoding=UTF8&aaxitk=de049d515b7e9e2f0b4ec3aca8b0a335&content-id=amzn1.sym.552bcbb2-81a1-4e8b-b868-3fba7d5af42a%3Aamzn1.sym.552bcbb2-81a1-4e8b-b868-3fba7d5af42a&hsa\\_cr\\_id=5825382290401&pd\\_rd\\_plhdr=t&pd\\_rd\\_r=4da557e5-68e6-4796-8186-54f3e13c9077&pd\\_rd\\_w=XdzQF&pd\\_rd\\_wg=ukRcp&qid=1669004437&ref=sbx\\_be\\_s\\_sparkle\\_mcd\\_asin\\_1\\_img&sr=1-2-9e67e56a-6f64-441f-a281-df67fc737124](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0785253653/ref=redir_mobile_desktop?encoding=UTF8&aaxitk=de049d515b7e9e2f0b4ec3aca8b0a335&content-id=amzn1.sym.552bcbb2-81a1-4e8b-b868-3fba7d5af42a%3Aamzn1.sym.552bcbb2-81a1-4e8b-b868-3fba7d5af42a&hsa_cr_id=5825382290401&pd_rd_plhdr=t&pd_rd_r=4da557e5-68e6-4796-8186-54f3e13c9077&pd_rd_w=XdzQF&pd_rd_wg=ukRcp&qid=1669004437&ref=sbx_be_s_sparkle_mcd_asin_1_img&sr=1-2-9e67e56a-6f64-441f-a281-df67fc737124)

**For Further Biblical Study:**

James 1:17

<sup>17</sup> **Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.**

Psalms 118:29

**Give thanks to the LORD**, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

Psalms 100:4-5

<sup>4</sup> **Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.**

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6

<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God.

Colossians 3:15,17

<sup>15</sup> Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. **And be thankful.**

<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Psalms 116:12

<sup>12</sup> **What shall I return to the LORD**  
for all his goodness to me?

Deuteronomy 26:1-2; 10-11

**26** When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, <sup>2</sup> **take some of the first fruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket.**

<sup>10</sup> and now I bring the first fruits of the soil that you, LORD, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. <sup>11</sup> Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

<sup>6</sup> Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, **not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.** <sup>8</sup> **And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.**

### **How to Use These Study Guides:**

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.

- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.