

Spiritual Practices during a Pandemic

A 5 week study offered for adults at Unity Presbyterian Church

Week 3: Gratitude

[Psalm 136:1-9](#)

Time for gratitude

Give yourself time for gratitude. Think of what you can be thankful for, and linger on those thoughts.

Gratitude leads you to think more clearly, to sleep more peacefully, to act with positive intention and resourcefulness. Give your life the benefit of its good and gentle power.

Those times when gratitude doesn't seem warranted, are precisely the times when it will be most beneficial. Look for the gift in the situation, and persist until you uncover it.

Envision your time for gratitude as a pleasant place of refuge and renewal. Go there often, and stay for a while.

You'll empower yourself with a new measure of positive, purposeful energy. You'll open your awareness to valuable possibilities you never considered before.

Spend time in a sustained experience of gratitude, and learn to treasure the feeling it brings you. That feeling is real, and will spread its goodness to every part of your life.

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Originally published in "The Daily Motivator" at www.greatday.com

Experience:

Watch this [beautiful short video](#) that reminds us that today is a gift and our only response can be gratefulness:

Listen to this the first 25.25 minutes of [this interview](#) with David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk and founder and senior advisor for A Network for Grateful Living:

Want to read more or start a practice of gratitude? There are more blog posts and resources for the practice here, including tips for starting a gratitude journal: <https://gratefulness.org/>

Check out this app, which provides daily gratitude prompts: <https://365gratitudejournal.com/>

Reflect & Discuss:

1. The theme of the film, "Happiness Reflected" is that, "Today is a gift... the one day that's been given to you... and the only appropriate response is gratefulness." When is it easy to remember that? When is it hard?
2. The narrator in the film, "Happiness Reflected" says, "Begin by opening your eyes." What do you see to be grateful for when you really open your eyes?

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May 2020

3. Brother David in the “On Being” podcast says, “The real joy comes with quality, not quantity.” How have you experienced this during the pandemic?
4. Brother David describes the practice of gratefulness as, “Stop. Look. Go.” What makes it difficult to practice this?
5. Brother David in the “On Being” podcast says, “Not for everything can you be grateful, but in every moment you can be grateful.” Can you relate and if so, how?
6. What are your favorite Psalms of gratitude? How is the gratitude wrapped among other emotions? How are they “not a reaction to the present moment... but a chosen response”?
7. In the “On Being” podcast, Krista Tippett quotes Maya Angelou as saying “This is a wonderful day. I’ve never seen this one before.” How can the uniqueness of each day turn you toward gratitude?
8. In the “On Being” podcast, Krista Tippett and Brother David discuss that fact that gratitude is connected to belonging. How is gratitude a response to your knowledge that you belong to God?
9. For what are you grateful today?