

A GUIDE TO PRACTICING

GRATITUDE



FOR FAMILIES

HEY PARENTS,

This guide is designed to help your family GROW in gratitude. Being **thankful** and living a life of **gratitude** takes practice. Don't expect to walk through this simple guide and see complete transformation in 5 days. Instead, our hope is for you to use this guide as a starting point to help develop habits and rhythms of practicing **gratitude** and **thankfulness** with your family.

-The Empowered Homes Team

WHAT'S IN THE GUIDE?

- 5 DAY GRATITUDE DEVOTIONAL
- GRATITUDE CONVERSATION STARTERS
- A THANKSGIVING PRAYER
- ROLLING IN GRATITUDE GAME
- THANKFUL, GRATEFUL, BLESSED ART PAGE

DAY 1

ACKNOWLEDGE ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

TALK ABOUT IT

Anxiety can cloud our minds or stir up confusion in our hearts, making it difficult to feel grateful. It may be easy to mistake anxiety for a poor attitude. Though, at times, we all may have a bad day or a poor attitude, we must be aware of any anxious thoughts causing us to feel ungrateful.

Talk as a family about any anxious thoughts, difficult situations or suffering you may be experiencing. Give time for everyone to share.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Pray for God to show you where He is working even in the midst of challenges and suffering or anxious times.

APPLY GOD'S WORD

Memorize or Read Aloud Philippians 4:6-7 to guide your mind toward gratitude and peace that transcends anxiousness and fear.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

End your time by letting your family know it is okay to acknowledge when they may feel anxious or scared. Awareness helps begin the process of taking captive those anxious thoughts and replacing them with prayer and thanksgiving.

DAY 2

UNCOVER THE UNGRATEFUL AREAS

TALK ABOUT IT

It is often easy to identify when others are ungrateful. Ungrateful people complain, have critical attitudes, don't show appreciation or have unreasonably negative expectations of others. We may be quick to point it out in others without being willing to uncover the ungrateful areas in our own lives. Take a few minutes in the section below to **talk** as a family about some areas you may be maintaining an ungrateful attitude.

Parents, here are a few tips to help guide your discussion:

Be an example. Be willing to uncover and be honest about areas where you have acted ungrateful or used ungrateful words.

Admit those areas to your family and commit to showing gratitude.

Invite each member of your family to admit areas where they have failed to show gratitude.

Don't shame anyone by badgering or sarcastically teasing them if they don't admit areas where you think they need improvement. Allow them to reflect and examine their own lives.

WHAT DOES GOD SAY? (READ ALOUD)

But know this: Hard times will come in the last days. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, demeaning, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

What does God say we should do about people who are ungrateful?

What areas of your life is God uncovering an ungrateful heart or attitude?

PRAY ABOUT IT

Pray and ask God to give you and your family members attitudes that reveal gratitude instead of a critical or ungrateful spirit. You may need to ask God to forgive you for an ungrateful spirit. Remember, God is gracious and always glad when His children come to Him and ask for His help!

DAY 3

ASK DEEPER QUESTIONS TO BUILD GRATITUDE

TALK ABOUT IT

Here are some questions to discuss or reflect on. Though asking questions like *what are you grateful for?* or *what can we thank God for?* can be simple and effective, the following questions are meant to expand our perspective on gratitude and uncover areas where we can build gratitude. (If you have small children, ask these questions in a simple way and spread out your discussion over the next few days.)

What abilities do you have that you are grateful for?

What life experiences (good or hard) are you grateful for?

Who is someone you appreciate? Why?

What is something fun you get to do in the future?

What in nature inspires you? Why?

What is one kind, or thoughtful thing, someone did for you recently?

What did you learn from a challenge or difficult situation?

WHAT DOES GOD SAY?

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

His love endures forever.

Psalms 136:1

PRAY ABOUT IT

Pray boldly for God to grow your gratitude, not just for positive blessings but in all circumstances. Pray that He would grow your ability to find gratitude even when you don't feel it.

DAY 4

BUILD A FAMILY GRATITUDE WALL

PREPARE

Gather Supplies - Poster board, markers, sticky notes + additional decorations if you would like to decorate your board.

(Tip: provide each person a different color sticky note)

Decorate your poster board and hang it near your dining table or a room where you spend family time. Your poster can be simple or elaborate, it's up to you. Write a heading on the board like "We are thankful!" or "We thank God for..." or "Gratitude + Thanksgiving". You get the idea...be creative or simple!

BUILD IT TOGETHER

Provide each member of your family with a small stack of sticky notes & a marker.

Encourage each family member to write down people, places or things (or draw pictures) they are thankful for and stick them on the poster board. Every time you sit down for dinner or gather together as a family add to your wall.

REFLECT + PRAY

Plan a day and time to read through each note. Thank God for each contribution to the wall. Encourage each family member to share with others what they are grateful for.

Bonus: Keep the gratitude wall up all year long and watch your gratitude grow!

DAY 5

SCHEDULE DEVICE FREE GRATITUDE WALKS, TALKS, OR DRIVES

TALK ABOUT IT

Growing in gratitude takes patience and practice. It will also require us to remove distractions and be aware of the people, places and things around us. Though we can be thankful for the advancement of technology, if we are being honest, we can admit that our many devices and screens distract us from connecting with the people and world around us. **Talk** as a family about ways you can grow in your connection with others and ultimately grow in practicing gratitude.

SCHEDULE IT

Get the family calendar out and schedule some walks, talks and/or drives. Be clear about the purpose of those times. Use the questions from Day 3 to help leverage meaningful reflection.

GET OUT AND GO

Gather the whole family and head out for a walk, drive or find a place to sit and talk.

Leave the devices at home!

Walk slowly, at a comfortable pace, or **choose** a sitting place free of distraction or a **drive** on a road that's easy to navigate.

Take turns sharing about things, people or situations you are grateful for.

Be patient. It may take a few walks (talks or drives) to get into the habit.

KEEP PRACTICING ALL YEAR LONG!

GRATITUDE CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use these questions in any space where you gather with others to break the ice, help build conversation and encourage people to grow in gratitude.

In what ways have you been pleasantly surprised recently?

What challenges did you overcome this week?

When is the best day to start listening to Christmas music?

What abilities do you have that you are grateful for?

What life experiences (good or hard) are you grateful for?

Name someone you appreciate. Why?

Which flavor do you like more Pumpkin Spice or Caramel Apple?

What is something fun you get to do in the future?

What sport makes no sense to you?

What in this world inspires you? Why?

What would you like to do more of this next year?

What is one kind or thoughtful thing someone did for you recently?

If you could only celebrate one holiday for the rest of your life which would it be and why?

If you could design a float for the Thanksgiving Day Parade, what would you design?

What have you learned from a challenge or difficult season?

Do you prefer Thanksgiving Pie or Thanksgiving sides?

Would you rather cook a meal or clean up after a meal?

What would you name a pet turkey?

A THANKSGIVING PRAYER

From the Book of Common Prayer; 2007 edition.

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things.

Amen.

ROLLING IN GRATITUDE GAME

How to Play: Grab a pair of dice & use this page as the guide. Go around the table (or room) and take turns rolling. Add up the numbers on the dice and match the sum with the directions below and follow the prompt.

- 1** Name a FRIEND you are thankful for.
- 2** Say an activity that you appreciate doing.
- 3** Name a SONG you are thankful for (sing it for bonus fun).
- 4** Name a SKILL you are thankful for.
- 5** Name a FOOD you are thankful for.
- 6** Name a FAMILY TRADITION that sparks gratitude.
- 7** Name a HOLIDAY you are grateful for.
- 8** Name RESTAURANT you are thankful for.
- 9** Name a PLACE you are thankful for.
- 10** Name a SCENT you are thankful for.
- 11** Name a POSSESSION you are grateful for.
- 12** Say SOMETHING SOMEONE ELSE IS GOOD AT that you appreciate.





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