



“Now Thank We All Our God”

Luke 17:11-19

Icebreaker:

What are some bad Thanksgiving jokes? (You can use Google.)

The Study:

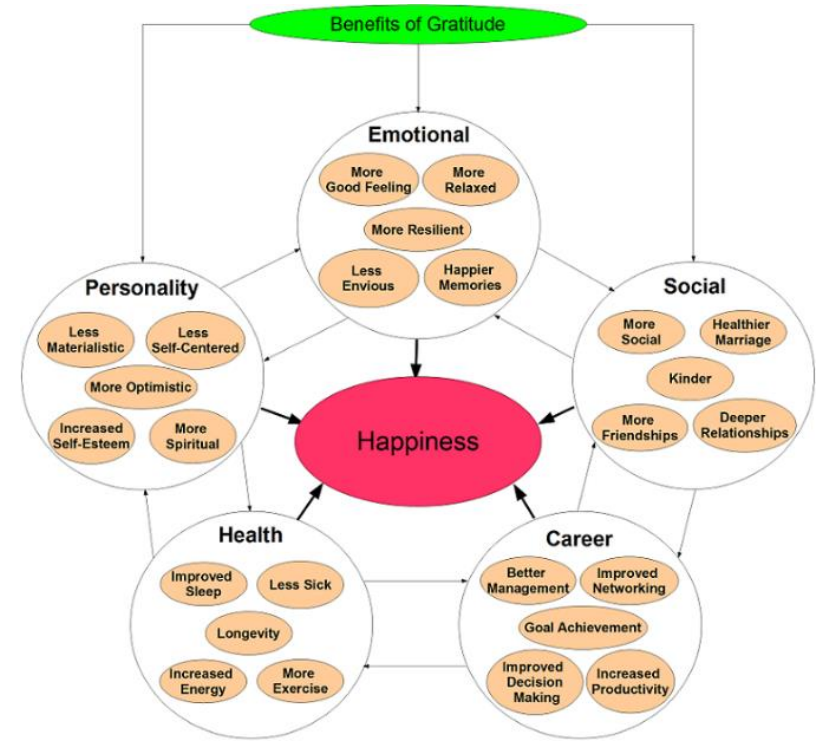
There’s no better way to prepare for Advent and Christmas than with our celebration of Thanksgiving. The Bible tells us we are to “Enter his gates with thanksgiving” (Ps.100:4), meaning the first order of business when we come before God is to thank him. In this study we unpack three reasons why striving to be a thankful person is a good spiritual practice.



Practicing gratitude improves your health and relationships.

“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” – Proverbs 17:22

1. The power of gratitude has been studied endlessly in recent years. Study the following chart for a few moments, then identify three of the top reasons for being thankful that are of interest to you. Share why these caught your attention.



Practicing gratitude helps you face and overcome hardship.

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” – James 1:2-3

2. Why are Christians to “count it all joy” when we suffer?

➤ Because we don’t suffer alone.

Read John 14:23 and 16:33 (which are part of the same sermon). What are you hearing Jesus say in these words? Have you ever sensed Jesus near in a time of suffering?

- Because when we suffer, we can grow.

Read Romans 5:3-4. How can suffering help us to grow in endurance, and character and hope?

- Because the suffering, whatever it is, cannot defeat us or destroy us.

Read Romans 8:37-38. If we only live for *this life*, then suffering can defeat us, and will destroy us. But once we factor in eternity – the *next life* – all that changes. How so?

3. *“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you,”* says 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

The passage doesn’t say “for” all things, but “in”. If we get our preposition right, we’ll get our position right. Why is this important to understand?

4. John Wesley, the great 18th-century British evangelist, who founded Methodism, returned home from a preaching tour once, and found that his house had burned down. The first words out of his mouth? “The Lord’s house has burned. One less burden for me.” How could he speak this way?

Practicing gratitude helps you avoid the death spiral of bitterness.

“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.” – Hebrews 12:15

5. What’s the difference between *feeling* bitterness when suffering comes, and *becoming* a bitter person? And what are some signs that this is happening to you?

6. Discuss this quote from the sermon:

What can snap us out of this death spiral? Only gratitude. *“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God.”* The Greek word for *grace* is *charis*, and the primary Greek word used for the word “thankful” is *eucharistia*. The word “grace” is imbedded within the word for thanksgiving. And when you make the choice to live thankfully, then grace comes like a warm spring rain, to soften your heart, and bring light to your eyes. Thanksgiving is a radical decision that I make to bathe in, even leap into, the pools of the grace of God.

7. Brainstorm 3-5 ways that we can grow in the discipline of gratitude.

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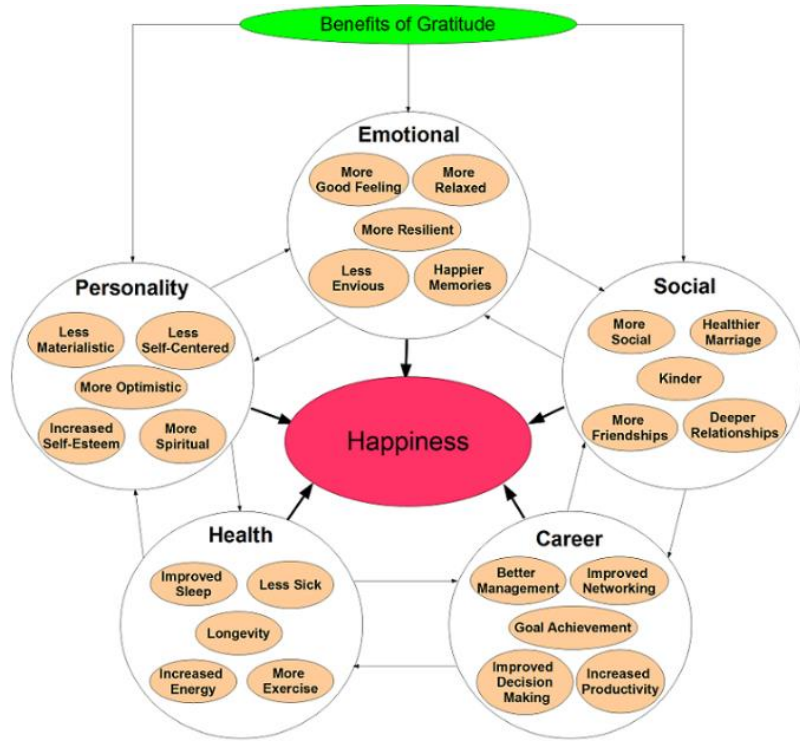
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