

## WEEK 10: CULTIVATING GRATITUDE

### Detailed Facilitator Guide with Notes and Questions

#### From Entitlement to Thankfulness

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#### OVERVIEW FOR FACILITATORS

**Week 10 Goal:** Help participants move from entitlement (belief they deserve special treatment) to gratitude (recognition that everything is gift).

**Phase IV Begins: SUSTAINING:** Weeks 1-9 focused on awakening, emptying, and rebuilding. Weeks 10-12 focus on sustaining these changes long-term. Gratitude is the foundation for sustainability because:

- It counters entitlement (narcissism's core attitude)
- It builds contentment (the opposite of narcissistic hunger)
- It creates joy (instead of resentment)
- It fosters connection (acknowledging others' contributions)

**Why This Week Is Critical:** Entitlement is narcissism's default operating system. The narcissist believes:

- "I deserve better than this"
- "I'm owed recognition, admiration, ease"
- "Others should accommodate my needs"
- "Life/God/people have shortchanged me"

Until participants dismantle entitlement and replace it with gratitude, they'll remain dissatisfied, resentful, and isolated—even if they've changed other behaviors.

**The Core Challenge:** Moving from:

- "I deserve this" → "I've been given this"

- "Why don't I have more?" → "Look what I have"
  - "They should..." → "They did..."
  - Scarcity mindset → Abundance mindset
  - Comparing (what others have that I don't) → Noticing (what I have that's unearned)
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## **UNDERSTANDING NARCISSISTIC ENTITLEMENT**

### **The Anatomy of Entitlement**

**What is entitlement?** The belief that you deserve special treatment, exceptional outcomes, or preferential consideration based on who you are (not what you've earned).

**Narcissistic entitlement manifests as:**

#### **Relational Entitlement:**

- "Others should understand me without me explaining"
- "People should prioritize my needs"
- "I shouldn't have to ask for what I need—they should just know"
- "They owe me their time/attention/service"

#### **Circumstantial Entitlement:**

- "I deserve better than this job/house/life"
- "This inconvenience shouldn't happen to me"
- "I should be exempt from normal hardships"
- "Life owes me ease, success, recognition"

#### **Spiritual Entitlement:**

- "God should answer my prayers the way I want"

- "I deserve blessings because I've been good"
- "Bad things shouldn't happen to me"
- "God owes me explanation/comfort/intervention"

### **Service Entitlement:**

- Dismissing servers, janitors, service workers as "beneath" notice
- Expecting special treatment in restaurants, stores, etc.
- Impatience with "incompetence"
- Anger when service isn't exceptional

### **Why Narcissists Are Entitled**

**Grandiose self-concept:** "I'm special, therefore normal rules don't apply"

**Compensation for shame:** "If I'm secretly worthless, I must demand external proof of worth"

**Zero-sum thinking:** "If others get good things, there's less for me"

**Comparative framework:** "I'm better than most, so I deserve more"

**Lack of awareness:** Genuinely don't see their own advantages/privileges

**Never learned gratitude:** Entitled from childhood (spoiled) or entitled as defense (deprived)

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## **GRATITUDE AS ANTIDOTE**

### **What Gratitude Does**

#### **Gratitude dismantles entitlement by:**

1. **Acknowledging dependence:** "I didn't earn this; I received it"
2. **Recognizing limitation:** "I can't do this alone"

3. **Seeing others' contributions:** "My life is made possible by countless people"
4. **Appreciating the ordinary:** "What I took for granted is actually gift"
5. **Fostering contentment:** "I have enough; in fact, I have abundance"

**Gratitude is not:**

- Toxic positivity ("just be grateful!")
- Denial of problems ("I can't complain")
- Performance ("look how grateful I am!")
- Obligation ("I should be grateful")

**Gratitude is:**

- Honest recognition of gift
- Appropriate response to generosity
- Voluntary acknowledgment (not forced)
- Both feeling AND practice

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**WHAT MAKES THIS WEEK DANGEROUS**

**Resistance Patterns to Expect**

**Intellectualizing Gratitude:**

- "I know I should be grateful"
- Understanding the concept without feeling it
- Listing gratitudes mechanically

**Performing Gratitude:**

- Exaggerated thankfulness to look spiritual

- Gratitude as new image to manage
- "I'm SO grateful" (still making it about them)

### **Comparative Gratitude:**

- "I'm grateful I'm not like THEM"
- Using gratitude to feel superior
- Thanking God they're better than others

### **Entitled Gratitude:**

- "I'm grateful for what I deserve"
- Only grateful for special blessings, not ordinary ones
- Resentful when blessings stop

### **Resisting the Practice:**

- "This feels fake"
- "I don't FEEL grateful"
- "Gratitude won't change my circumstances"
- "Some people have it better—why should I be grateful?"

### **Spiritual Bypassing:**

- "I'm grateful to God" (while ignoring people)
- Thanking God as excuse not to thank humans
- Gratitude as performance for God

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## **OPENING SESSION (Day 1)**

### **Transition to Phase IV: Sustaining (15 minutes)**

#### **Facilitator Script:**

"For nine weeks, you've been doing intensive transformation work:

- Weeks 1-3: Awakening—seeing patterns, facing harm, letting false self die
- Weeks 4-6: Emptying—facing emptiness, releasing control, learning to listen
- Weeks 7-9: Rebuilding—practicing humility, empathy, authentic relationships

Now we enter the final phase: **Sustaining**. How do you maintain these changes? How do you prevent relapse? How do you build a life that sustains recovery?

### **Week 10: Cultivating Gratitude—the foundation for sustainable change.**

Why gratitude? Because **entitlement is the root attitude of narcissism**. The narcissist believes:

- 'I deserve better'
- 'Life owes me'
- 'Others should accommodate me'
- 'I'm special, therefore exempt from normal limits'

**Gratitude is the opposite**. It says:

- 'I've been given more than I deserve'
- 'Everything is gift'
- 'I'm dependent on others'
- 'I'm ordinary, and that means I receive grace like everyone else'

1 Thessalonians 5:18: 'In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'

**Not: 'Be thankful FOR everything' (trauma, abuse, evil are not gifts) But: 'IN everything, find space for gratitude'—even in hardship, there are gifts.**

### **This week, you're learning:**

- To see what you've been given
- To acknowledge dependence
- To thank people specifically
- To replace entitlement with recognition of gift
- To move from scarcity ('I don't have enough') to abundance ('I've been given so much')

**Gratitude isn't just nice. It's necessary.** It's the antidote to the poison of entitlement that's been killing your relationships, your peace, your joy."

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### **Opening Check-In (Go Around Circle)**

**Question:** *"On a scale of 1-10, how entitled do you feel in daily life? Where does entitlement show up most?"*

**Facilitator Note:** Most will underestimate their entitlement. That's okay—this week will reveal it. Listen for honesty vs. defensiveness.

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### **SCRIPTURE FOUNDATION EXPLORATION (40 minutes)**

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:18 - "In Everything Give Thanks"**

**Read aloud:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

**Focus on verse 18:** "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

**Facilitator Teaching** (12 minutes):

"Paul gives three commands in rapid succession:

**Verse 16:** 'Rejoice always' **Verse 17:** 'Pray without ceasing'

**Verse 18:** 'In everything give thanks'

These aren't suggestions. They're God's will for you in Christ.

**'In everything give thanks'** (*en panti eucharisteite*):

**Critical distinction:**

- NOT: 'Give thanks FOR everything' (that would make God author of evil)
- BUT: 'IN everything—in every circumstance—find space for thanksgiving'

**Even in hardship, there are gifts:**

- You're still breathing
- You're not alone
- God is present
- You have strength for today
- Others are helping

**'For this is God's will for you':**

People obsess over 'finding God's will'—should I take this job? Marry this person?

Paul says: Here's God's will—**give thanks**.

**Why is gratitude God's will?**

Because gratitude:

- Acknowledges God as giver
- Recognizes your dependence
- Frees you from entitlement
- Opens your eyes to abundance
- Connects you to others



**For the narcissist:** You've been focused on what you DON'T have, what you DESERVE, what others HAVE that you don't.

**Paul says:** Stop. Look at what you HAVE been given. Give thanks. That's the path to life."

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### Discussion Questions:

1. "Paul says 'in everything give thanks.' What makes that hard for you?"
  2. "What's the difference between thanking God FOR suffering vs. finding gratitude IN suffering?"
  3. "Paul says this is 'God's will for you.' Why do you think gratitude is so important to God?"
  4. "When you're entitled, you're focused on what you don't have. When you're grateful, you notice what you do have. Which describes you more?"
  5. "In the hardest season of your life, what could you have been grateful for?"
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### James 1:17 - "Every Good Gift"

**Read aloud:** James 1:12-18

**Focus on verse 17:** "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

**Facilitator Teaching** (12 minutes):

"James makes an absolute statement: **EVERY** good thing is from above.

**'Every good thing given'** (*pasa dosis agathē*):

- Every act of giving
- Every gift received
- All generosity, all good

**'Every perfect gift'** (*pan dōrēma teleion*):

- Every complete, mature, whole gift
- Not just spiritual gifts, but ALL gifts—breath, food, relationships, health, beauty, joy

**'Is from above, coming down from the Father of lights':**

James is saying: **You didn't generate these goods yourself. They came DOWN to you.**

**The narcissist believes:** 'I earned this. I achieved this. I made this happen.'

**James says:** No. It came down from the Father. You received it.

**'With whom there is no variation or shifting shadow':**

God is consistent in His giving. He's not moody, hot/cold, giving/withholding based on your performance.

**His character is steady generosity.**

**Context** (verse 13-15): James just addressed evil's origin (our own desires, not God).

Then verse 17: But good? That's all from God.

**For us:** Everything good in your life—your talents, your opportunities, your relationships, your health, your very life—is **gift**. You didn't earn it. You received it.

**That dismantles entitlement completely.**

**1 Corinthians 4:7:** 'What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?'

**Answer: Nothing. You have nothing you didn't receive.**

**Therefore: No room for entitlement. Only room for gratitude."**

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**Discussion Questions:**

1. **"James says EVERY good thing is from God. Can you think of anything good in your life you generated entirely yourself?"**
  2. **"What gifts have you been treating as earned rather than received?"**
    - Talents, intelligence, opportunities, family, health
  3. **"If everything good is gift, what does that mean for your sense of entitlement?"**
  4. **"The narcissist boasts as if they didn't receive. Where do you do this?"**
  5. **"How does recognizing 'every good gift' as from God change how you see your life?"**
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**1 Corinthians 4:7 - "What Do You Have That You Did Not Receive?"**

**Read aloud:** 1 Corinthians 4:1-7

**Focus on verse 7:** "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

**Facilitator Teaching** (12 minutes):

"Paul is addressing the Corinthians' arrogance—they're puffed up, comparing apostles, boasting in their spiritual status.

**Paul asks three devastating questions:**

**Question 1:** 'Who regards you as superior?'

Answer: Maybe people do, but that doesn't make you actually superior. It's opinion, not reality.

**Question 2:** 'What do you have that you did not receive?'

This is the key question. **List everything you have:**

- Intelligence? Received (genetic + education you didn't provide yourself)
- Talents? Received (wiring + opportunities)
- Achievements? Received (built on others' work, opportunities, support)
- Character? Received (formed by grace, teaching, Spirit)
- Life itself? Received (you didn't ask to be born)

**Paul's answer:** NOTHING. You have NOTHING you didn't receive.

**Question 3:** 'If you received it, why boast as if you had not received it?'

**This is the narcissist's posture:** Acting like you're self-made. Boasting in what was given to you.

**It's absurd.** It's like a trust-fund kid boasting about their wealth while ignoring they inherited it.

**For the narcissist:**

You've been boasting in:

- Your intelligence (received)
- Your achievements (built on gifts received)
- Your spiritual insights (given by the Spirit)
- Your strengths (genetic, environmental, God-given)

**Paul says:** You received all of it. **Why are you boasting as if you didn't?**

**The appropriate response:** Gratitude. Not boasting. Not entitlement. Not comparison. **Thankfulness that you've been given so much."**

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### **Discussion Questions:**

1. **"Paul asks: 'What do you have that you did not receive?' Take 2 minutes and try to list something. Anything."**
    - *Let them struggle with this. The answer is: nothing.*
  2. **"Why is it so hard to admit that everything—even your 'earned' achievements—was received?"**
  3. **"Paul asks: 'Why boast as if you had not received it?' Where do you boast in gifts as if you generated them?"**
  4. **"If you truly believed you've received everything, how would your attitude change?"**
  5. **"What's the connection between recognizing 'everything is received' and dismantling narcissistic entitlement?"**
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### **DAILY PRACTICES INSTRUCTION**

#### **Morning Practice: Gratitude for the Unearned (Days 1-7)**

#### **Detailed Instructions for Participants:**

"Each morning, before getting out of bed, list 10 things you didn't earn but were given.

#### **Start with the most basic:**

1. I woke up (my heart beat all night without my effort)
2. I can breathe (lungs working without my command)
3. I can see (gift of sight)
4. I can hear (gift of hearing)
5. I can move (gift of mobility)

6. I have a bed (comfort I didn't create)
7. I have shelter (protection I benefit from)
8. I am loved by God (completely unearned)
9. I have [specific person in my life]
10. I have [specific opportunity, ability, possession]

**Then expand:**

- Abilities you were born with
- Opportunities that came to you
- People who invested in you
- Systems that support you (infrastructure, safety, etc.)
- Beauty you experience
- Simple pleasures (coffee, sunrise, music)

**The point:** Training your brain to see abundance instead of scarcity, gift instead of achievement.

**Say out loud:** 'I didn't earn these. I received them. Thank you.'

**Throughout the morning:** As you use things, notice them as gift. Running water. Electricity. Transportation.

**The goal:** Rewiring from entitlement to gratitude."

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**Throughout Day: Noticing and Replacing Entitlement (Days 1-7)**

**Instructions:**

"All day, notice entitlement thoughts—and replace them with gratitude.

**Common entitlement thoughts:**

**In traffic:** 'These idiots are in MY way'

- Replace: 'I'm fortunate to have a car and the ability to drive'

**At work:** 'They should recognize my contributions'

- Replace: 'I'm grateful to have work that uses my abilities'

**At home:** 'My spouse should do more'

- Replace: 'I'm grateful my spouse [specific thing they DO do]'

**In service situations:** 'This server is too slow'

- Replace: 'I'm grateful someone is serving me—I don't have to cook'

**With interruptions:** 'I shouldn't have to deal with this'

- Replace: 'I'm fortunate to have responsibilities that matter'

**With criticism:** 'They have no right to judge me'

- Replace: 'I'm grateful for feedback that helps me grow'

**The Pattern:**

1. **Notice** entitlement thought
2. **Name it:** 'There's entitlement'
3. **Pause:** Don't immediately obey the thought
4. **Replace:** Find something to be grateful for in the situation
5. **Feel it:** Don't just think gratitude—let yourself feel it

**Keep a tally:** How many entitlement thoughts? How many did you catch and replace?

**The goal:** Disrupting automatic entitlement and building gratitude reflexes."

**Evening Practice: 5 Specific Gratitudes (Days 1-7)**

**Instructions:**

"Each evening, write 5 specific gratitudes from the day. Focus on people and ordinary moments.

**NOT:**

- Generic ('I'm grateful for my family')
- Big things only ('I'm grateful for my job')
- Spiritual clichés ('I'm grateful for Jesus')

**BUT:**

- Specific ('I'm grateful Sarah listened to me vent at lunch')
- Ordinary moments ('I'm grateful for that perfect cup of coffee this morning')
- People's specific actions ('I'm grateful the janitor cleaned the bathroom—I benefited from their unseen labor')

**Categories to draw from:**

**People:**

- Who helped you today?
- Who showed you kindness?
- Who did unseen labor you benefited from?
- Who taught you something?
- Who made you laugh?

**Ordinary moments:**

- What simple pleasure did you experience?
- What beauty did you notice?
- What went right that you took for granted?
- What comfort did you enjoy?



### **Your own capacity:**

- What ability did you use today that's a gift?
- What strength did you have that you didn't generate?
- What opportunity came to you?

### **Write 5, every day:**

- Date each entry
- Be specific
- Focus on the feeling of gratitude as you write

**Over time:** You're training your brain to notice abundance. Research shows: After 3 weeks of gratitude journaling, people report higher life satisfaction, better sleep, more optimism.

**It works—but only if you do it."**

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## **THE ENTITLEMENT AUDIT (Days 2-4)**

### **Instructions for Participants**

#### **Facilitator Introduction (Day 2):**

"This week's major work: Your Entitlement Audit. You're going to map where you believe you deserve special treatment, where you're resentful about not having more, where you expect others to accommodate you.

**This will be uncomfortable.** Entitlement is so automatic you probably don't see it. This audit will reveal it."

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### **Part 1: Where Do I Expect Special Treatment? (Day 2)**

#### **Questions to answer honestly:**

#### **In Public Spaces:**

- Do I get impatient when service isn't fast enough?
- Do I expect to cut lines or receive exceptions?
- Do I dismiss service workers as beneath my notice?
- Do I complain when things don't go perfectly?
- Do I expect accommodations without asking?

**At Work:**

- Do I expect recognition for things others do without credit?
- Do I believe I deserve promotion/raise more than others?
- Do I get resentful when my ideas aren't implemented?
- Do I expect special flexibility not extended to others?
- Do I believe normal workplace frustrations shouldn't apply to me?

**In Relationships:**

- Do I expect others to prioritize my needs?
- Do I get angry when people don't accommodate my schedule/preferences?
- Do I believe I deserve better treatment than I give?
- Do I expect people to understand me without explaining?
- Do I feel owed time, attention, service from others?

**With God:**

- Do I expect God to answer prayers my way?
- Do I feel owed blessings because I've been "good"?
- Do I get resentful when life is hard?
- Do I believe bad things shouldn't happen to me?

- Do I expect special intervention unavailable to others?

**Write specifically:** 'I feel entitled to special treatment when \_\_\_\_\_. Examples: \_\_\_\_\_. What I expect that others don't get: \_\_\_\_\_.'

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## **Part 2: Where Am I Resentful? (Day 3)**

**Resentment reveals entitlement.** If you're resentful, it's often because you believe you deserved something you didn't get.

### **Questions:**

#### **What are you resentful about?**

- 'I should have [achievement, recognition, outcome] by now'
- 'Others have [thing you want] and I don't'
- 'I worked hard and didn't get what I deserved'
- 'They don't appreciate what I've done'
- 'Life has been harder for me than it should be'

#### **Where do you compare?**

- Whose life do you envy?
- What do they have that you "should" have?
- Where do you think "that should be me"?

#### **Where do you keep score?**

- Who "owes" you?
- What debts are you tracking?
- Where are you waiting for payback?

**Write:** 'I am resentful about: \_\_\_\_\_. This reveals I believe I'm entitled to: \_\_\_\_\_. The truth is: \_\_\_\_\_.'

**Example:** 'I am resentful that my colleague got promoted instead of me. This reveals I believe I'm entitled to recognition of my hard work and superiority over others. The truth is: I don't deserve anything just because I worked hard. Promotion is a gift, not a right. My colleague may have gifts I don't have. I've been given plenty I didn't earn—this job included.'

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### **Part 3: Where Do I Dismiss Others' Labor? (Day 3-4)**

**The entitled person doesn't see others' work**—especially unseen labor.

#### **Questions:**

##### **At home:**

- Whose labor do you benefit from but don't acknowledge? (Spouse? Parent? Roommate?)
- What tasks do you take for granted that someone does?
- Who maintains your comfort invisibly?

##### **At work:**

- Who supports your work behind the scenes?
- Whose "menial" labor makes your "important" work possible?
- Who do you walk past without noticing?

##### **In public:**

- Who cleaned the bathroom you used?
- Who prepared your food?
- Who built/maintains the infrastructure you use daily?
- Who provides safety, services, convenience you assume?

##### **In your past:**

- Who invested in you without recognition?

- Whose sacrifices made your opportunities possible?
- Who gave you advantages you assumed were normal?

**Write:** 'I have benefited from unseen labor by: \_\_\_\_\_. I take for granted: \_\_\_\_\_. I need to acknowledge: \_\_\_\_\_.'

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#### **Part 4: The Gratitude Replacement (Day 4)**

**For each entitlement, resentment, or dismissal you identified, write a gratitude:**

**Instead of:** 'I deserve better service' **Gratitude:** 'I'm grateful someone is serving me at all—they could be doing anything else but they're helping me'

**Instead of:** 'I should have gotten that promotion' **Gratitude:** 'I'm grateful to have a job that challenges me. I'm grateful for the gifts I do have. I'm grateful for what I've learned'

**Instead of:** 'They don't appreciate me' **Gratitude:** 'I'm grateful for the specific times they HAVE appreciated me: [list]. I'm grateful I have something to give'

**Instead of:** 'Life has been too hard' **Gratitude:** 'I'm grateful for the strength I've developed through hardship. I'm grateful for who walked with me: [list]. I'm grateful for what I learned'

**The goal:** For every entitlement, name three gratitudes. Train your brain to go to gratitude instead of resentment."

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#### **Group Processing (Day 5-6)**

##### **Discussion Questions:**

1. "What surprised you in your Entitlement Audit? Where was entitlement strongest?"
2. "Where do you expect special treatment? Why?"

3. **"What are you most resentful about? What does that reveal about what you think you're entitled to?"**
  4. **"Whose unseen labor do you benefit from but haven't acknowledged?"**
  5. **"Was it hard to replace entitlement with gratitude? Why?"**
  6. **"How would your life change if you released entitlement completely?"**
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## **PRACTICING SPECIFIC GRATITUDE TO PEOPLE (Days 3-6)**

### **Part A: Thanking People for Unseen Labor (Days 3-5)**

#### **Instructions:**

"This week, thank at least 5 people for unseen labor—work they do that you benefit from but rarely acknowledge.

#### **Who to thank:**

- Janitors, custodians, housekeepers
- Servers, baristas, cooks
- Delivery people, mail carriers
- Customer service workers
- IT support, administrative staff
- The person who does tasks at home you take for granted

#### **How to thank them:**

- **Specifically:** Not 'thanks for everything' but 'thank you for cleaning this bathroom—I appreciate that I get to use a clean space'
- **Personally:** Look them in the eye, use their name if you know it
- **Genuinely:** Mean it—feel the gratitude

**Examples:**

To janitor: 'I just wanted to say thank you for keeping this building clean. I benefit from your work every day and I don't usually notice it. I appreciate you.'

To server: 'Thank you for serving us tonight. I know this work is hard and often thankless. I appreciate your care.'

To spouse: 'Thank you for [specific thing they do regularly]. I take it for granted but it makes my life better. I see you.'

**What you'll notice:**

- Most are surprised (rarely thanked for unseen work)
- Many are moved (feeling seen matters)
- You feel different too (gratitude creates connection)

**Journal:** Who did I thank? How did they respond? How did it feel?"

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**Part B: Writing 5 Thank-You Notes (Days 4-6)****Instructions:**

"Write 5 hand-written thank-you notes to people who shaped you. Mail or deliver them.

**Who to write to:**

- Teacher who believed in you
- Mentor who invested in you
- Friend who was there in a hard season
- Family member who sacrificed for you
- Someone who gave you an opportunity

**What to include:**

1. **Specific thing they did:** 'You [specific action]'
2. **Impact it had:** 'Because of that, I [specific result]'
3. **Gratitude:** 'Thank you. I wouldn't be here without you.'

**What NOT to include:**

- Updates about yourself (this isn't about you)
- Explaining why you didn't thank them before
- Anything that makes it about you

**Keep it short, specific, grateful.**

**Example:**

'Dear Mr. Johnson,

I wanted to thank you for believing in me in 3rd grade when I was struggling with reading. You stayed after school to help me, told me I was smart even though I felt stupid, and celebrated every small win. Because of you, I learned I could learn. I'm a [profession] now, and I use reading every day. Thank you. You changed my life.

Gratefully, [Your name]'

**Why hand-written?** It costs you more (time, effort). That's the point. Gratitude that costs you something is more real.

**The goal:** Acknowledging debt. You didn't get here alone. Thank the people who helped."

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**Group Processing (Day 6-7)**

1. "Who did you thank for unseen labor? How did they respond?"
2. "What was it like to write thank-you notes? Which one was hardest? Why?"



3. "Did anyone respond to your thank-you note? What did they say?"
  4. "How did practicing specific gratitude to people change how you see your life?"
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## **STUDYING PSALM 103**

### **Reading and Meditation (Days 4-5)**

**Assignment:** Read Psalm 103 daily. Meditate on David's gratitude.

**Group Discussion** (Day 5 or 6):

**Facilitator Teaching** (10 minutes):

"Psalm 103 is David's gratitude psalm—one of the most beautiful expressions of thanksgiving in Scripture.

**Verses 1-2:** 'Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits.'

David commands his own soul to bless God. **Gratitude is a choice**, not just a feeling.

'Forget none of His benefits'—David's going to list them.

**Verses 3-5:** David lists benefits:

- Forgives all your iniquities
- Heals all your diseases
- Redeems your life from the pit
- Crowns you with lovingkindness
- Satisfies your years with good things
- Renews your youth like the eagle

**Notice:** All of these are things GOD does. David didn't earn them. He received them.

**Verses 8-10:** 'The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.'

**This is the heart of gratitude:** God has been MORE generous than we deserve. We haven't gotten what we earned (punishment). We've gotten what we didn't earn (grace).

**Verses 11-12:** 'For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness... As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.'

Immeasurable grace. Infinite forgiveness.

**Verses 15-18:** Human life is brief ('As for man, his days are like grass... the wind passes over it and it is gone'). But God's lovingkindness is 'from everlasting to everlasting.'

**David's posture:** Humble, grateful, aware of his mortality and God's generosity.

**For us:** When did you last 'forget none of His benefits'? When did you list what God has done?"

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### **Discussion Questions:**

1. "David tells his soul to 'bless the LORD.' Why does gratitude require command sometimes?"
2. "David says 'forget none of His benefits.' What benefits have you forgotten?"
3. "Verse 10 says God hasn't dealt with us according to our sins. What does that mean for entitlement?"
4. "David is aware of human frailty ('like grass'). How does remembering your mortality affect gratitude?"

5. "If you wrote your own Psalm 103—listing God's benefits—what would you include?"
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## THEOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL DEEPENING

### Robert Emmons Quote Discussion

**"Gratitude is the antidote to narcissism. It acknowledges our dependence, our limitations, and our profound debt to others." — Robert Emmons, *Thanks!***

### Facilitator Teaching (15 minutes):

"Emmons is a psychologist who's researched gratitude for decades.

He makes a bold claim: **Gratitude is the antidote to narcissism.**

**Why?** Because gratitude and narcissism are incompatible states.

### Narcissism says:

- I'm self-sufficient
- I earned what I have
- I owe nothing to anyone
- I'm special, therefore entitled
- Others should acknowledge my superiority

### Gratitude says:

- I'm dependent
- I received what I have
- I owe everything to many
- I'm ordinary, therefore blessed
- I acknowledge others' contributions

### **Emmons says gratitude 'acknowledges our dependence':**

The narcissist cannot tolerate dependence. It feels like weakness.

But **we ARE dependent**—on God, on others, on systems, on grace.

Gratitude embraces this truth instead of fighting it.

### **'Our limitations':**

The narcissist resists limits. The grateful person accepts them.

'I'm human, not God. I'm finite. I have limits. And that's okay.'

### **'Our profound debt to others':**

The narcissist believes: 'I owe nothing. Others owe me.'

The grateful person sees: 'I owe everything to countless people—parents, teachers, friends, strangers, ancestors.'

### **Emmons's research shows:** Grateful people are:

- Happier
- Healthier
- More socially connected
- Less depressed
- More generous
- Better sleepers
- More resilient

### **And less narcissistic.**

**For recovery:** Practice gratitude daily. It literally rewires your brain away from entitlement toward contentment."

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### **Discussion Questions:**

1. "Emmons says gratitude 'acknowledges dependence.' Why is dependence so hard for narcissists?"
  2. "How does gratitude acknowledge your limitations? Why is that important?"
  3. "Emmons says we have 'profound debt to others.' Do you feel indebted or entitled?"
  4. "If gratitude is the antidote, what happens when you stop practicing it?"
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### **David Benner Quote Discussion**

**"The narcissist lives in a world of scarcity—never enough admiration, never enough recognition. Gratitude opens the door to abundance—you have been given more than you could ever repay." — David Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself***

### **Facilitator Teaching (15 minutes):**

"Benner, a Christian psychologist, identifies the narcissist's core experience: **scarcity**.

### **The narcissist lives in scarcity:**

- Never enough admiration (always needing more)
- Never enough recognition (others don't see how special you are)
- Never enough love (conditional, performance-based)
- Never enough success (always comparing to those ahead)

**It's exhausting.** You're constantly chasing something always just out of reach.

### **Benner says gratitude opens the door to abundance:**

### **Abundance mindset:**

- I have been given so much

- More than I earned
- More than I could ever repay
- Enough, and then some

**This isn't denying problems.** It's seeing reality accurately: You HAVE been given abundance.

**'More than you could ever repay':**

This is key. The narcissist keeps score: 'I did X, so you owe me Y.'

**But life isn't scorekeeping.** You've received immeasurably more than you've given.

**You can never repay:**

- Your parents for your life
- Your teachers for your education
- Your friends for their presence
- God for His grace

**So stop trying to repay. Just give freely out of gratitude.**

**From scarcity to abundance:**

**Scarcity:** 'I don't have enough, I need more, others have what I deserve'

**Abundance:** 'I have been given more than enough, I can give freely, others' blessings don't diminish mine'

**For recovery:** The shift from scarcity to abundance is the shift from narcissism to health."

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**Discussion Questions:**

1. **"Benner says narcissists live in scarcity. Do you experience life as scarcity or abundance?"**

2. **"Where do you feel 'never enough'—admiration, recognition, success?"**
  3. **"Benner says you've been given 'more than you could ever repay.' Does that feel true?"**
  4. **"How does gratitude shift you from scarcity to abundance?"**
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## **CREATING A LIFELONG GRATITUDE PRACTICE**

### **Ongoing Disciplines (Days 6-7)**

#### **Instructions:**

"Gratitude must become a daily practice—not a one-week exercise.

Design your ongoing gratitude practice using these components:

#### **Daily (Choose 2-3):**

- Morning gratitude list (10 unearned gifts)
- Notice and replace entitlement thoughts
- Evening gratitude journal (5 specifics)
- Thank one person each day specifically
- Gratitude prayer before meals
- Bedtime gratitude review

#### **Weekly:**

- Write one thank-you note
- Thank someone for unseen labor
- Gratitude sharing with family/friend group
- Read Psalm 103 or similar gratitude text

#### **Monthly:**

- Review gratitude journal—notice patterns
- Do an entitlement audit—where is it creeping back?
- Make a gratitude list for one area (work, relationships, health, etc.)
- Give financially out of gratitude

**Quarterly:**

- Write letters to people who've shaped you
- Do an 'abundance inventory'—all you've been given
- Adjust practices if they're becoming rote

**When you notice entitlement returning:**

- Do a daily 10-minute gratitude meditation
- Increase noticing/replacing practice
- Return to this week's exercises

**The key:** Consistency. Daily practice. Over time, gratitude becomes your default instead of entitlement."

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**FACILITATOR SELF-CARE**

**This week might seem "lighter" but touches core attitudes.**

**Watch for:**

- Participants who perform gratitude without feeling it
- Comparative gratitude ('I'm better than those ungrateful people')
- Using gratitude to avoid legitimate complaints
- Your own entitlement patterns being triggered

**Remember:**



- Model authentic gratitude
- Don't force gratitude feelings (practice can precede feeling)
- Address entitlement gently but directly
- Process your own gratitude/entitlement in supervision

### **Self-care:**

- Practice your own daily gratitude
- Notice where you feel entitled
- Thank people who support your facilitation
- Stay grounded in abundance mindset

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## **CLOSING THE WEEK (Day 7)**

### **Final Reflection Questions**

1. **"Complete this sentence: This week, I learned that gratitude..."**
2. **"What surprised you in your Entitlement Audit? Where was entitlement strongest?"**
3. **"What changed when you started thanking people specifically?"**
4. **"How has your view shifted from scarcity to abundance (if at all)?"**
5. **"What gratitude practices are you committing to continue?"**

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### **Facilitator Closing Words**

"You've done important work this week—confronting entitlement, cultivating gratitude, learning to see abundance.

### **What you've practiced:**

- Daily gratitude for unearned gifts

- Noticing and replacing entitlement
- Thanking people for unseen labor
- Writing thank-you notes
- Entitlement auditing
- Studying grateful hearts (Psalm 103)

**What you've learned:**

- Everything you have is gift
- Entitlement creates scarcity; gratitude creates abundance
- You owe more than you can repay—and that's okay
- Gratitude is the antidote to narcissism
- Thankfulness is God's will—and the path to joy

**The challenge:** Make gratitude daily. Not a one-week project, but a lifelong orientation.

**Next two weeks:** We complete the program. Week 11—Service and Self-Forgetfulness. Week 12—The Long Obedience (sustaining recovery lifelong).

You're almost there. Ten weeks of hard work. Two more to go.

Let's close:

'God, You have given us more than we could ever repay. Every breath, every gift, every good thing—unearned, undeserved, freely given. Forgive our entitlement. Open our eyes to abundance. Teach us gratitude—not as performance, but as reality. Help us see what we've been given and respond with thankful hearts. Make us people of gratitude. Amen.'

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**END WEEK 10**

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## RESOURCES FOR DEEPER STUDY

### On Gratitude:

- Robert Emmons, *Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*
- Ann Voskamp, *One Thousand Gifts*
- Nancy Leigh DeMoss, *Choosing Gratitude*

### Devotional:

- Daily gratitude apps/journals
- Psalm 103, 104, 105, 107, 136 (gratitude psalms)

### Clinical:

- Research on gratitude and well-being
- Gratitude interventions for mental health