

Experiencing Gratitude

Journaling Prompts

Gratitude:

- comes through experiencing that you are not alone.
- comes through embracing how God made you.
- is an awareness and acceptance that God created us to need each other and Him.

As we need and receive help from others and God, we find out that we are not alone; this is where gratitude begins. This gratitude leads to:

- Appreciating what and who we have in our lives.
- Feeling hopeful about today and future days.
- Expecting good experiences to come because we can remember what has happened in the past.
- Having faith that good things will happen in spite of the troubles that may surround us.

We are emotional and spiritual creatures who cannot stop seeking to belong and matter; that is how we are created. Therefore, we seek to find fulfillment through emotional and spiritual connection with others and God. This connection joins us with others, and gratitude is birthed, continued, and grown through relationship. However, in life, we experience much loss, failure, heartache, and heartbreak. If we attempt to hide our hearts and run from being emotionally and spiritually connected to others and God, we end up experiencing "aloneness" or what becomes a lack of gratitude.

Without gratitude we do not see, experience, or remember the goodness of life.

Using a journal, notebook, or just sheets of paper, respond to these simple following prompts.

You may want to respond to one prompt at a time for a few weeks or respond to them all in one day. Do whatever works for you. Remember that you can save, share, or shred your journaling experience.

Spend time writing about:

- a specific person or several people who have helped you in your life.
- someone who has cared about you with a word, a hope, a touch, or time.
- where have you seen God's "fingerprints" in your life.
- someone who you have laughed with and cried with. Describe the times of laughter and tears.
- someone you have shared your hopes and fears with. Describe the times you have spent together.
- an emotional risk you have taken in your life that turned out well.
- three things you have accomplished in the past few days, and the past few years.
- a time when you were overwhelmed by nature's beauty. Describe where you were and how it impacted you.
- a person who has told you how much you matter to them. Describe how this made you feel.
- who God says you are to Him. Describe how this awareness impacts you.
- 3 songs that make you smile.
- what you did/do well.
- a dream that you are glad you have.
- 3 people whom you love.
- 3 things that you are glad happened in your life.
- a person you remember in elementary school who helped you feel cared about.
- a person you spent time caring about even though they couldn't advance your social standing or work advancement.
- 3 people who stepped into your life and helped you when you couldn't help yourself.
- a time when you witnessed God show up in your life, and you still can't turn it into a "coincidence."
- 3 people you can risk sharing your heart's aches and heart's joys with. What qualities do they have that make you feel safe?
- An experience or conversation you had with a disadvantaged peer that awakened you to compassion.
- how your own natural presence blessed someone and you didn't know it until they told you later.
- a time when you gave a gift to someone anonymously just because you wanted to bless them
- a time when you extended care to someone only to realize later that you were blessed even more than they were.
- what you experience inside you when someone greets you with a smile and says your name.
- what helps you feel like you belong and matter. How could you help others feel as though they belong and matter?
- a time when you needed forgiveness and a "new beginning." Describe how this forgiveness aroused a sense of gratitude in your heart.