Hope City

Discussion Guide

November 8, 2026

Thank You, Jesus

Grateful Not Grumpy | Week 2

Pastor Brandon Barber

Main Idea

There's a difference between being thankful for something good that happens and living with a heart of gratitude regardless of our circumstances. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul encourages believers to give thanks in all circumstances, while Colossians 2:6–7 describes a growing, deeply rooted faith that overflows with gratitude. Thankfulness often responds to what God has done, but gratitude reflects a deeper trust in who God is, even when life is difficult. As we mature in our relationship with Jesus, we're challenged to move beyond occasional expressions of thanks and develop a consistent posture of gratitude that shapes our perspective, strengthens our faith, and brings peace into our everyday lives.

Anchor Verse: *"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus"* (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV).

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1. Thankful Receives the Gift, Grateful Returns to the Giver

When Jesus healed ten men suffering from leprosy, only one returned to praise God and personally thank Jesus. His response reminds us that genuine gratitude goes beyond appreciating what we've received; it intentionally acknowledges the One who provided it, taking time to worship God rather than becoming too busy to recognize His goodness.

Scripture: Luke 17:11–13, 15–16

Discussion: Think about a time when God answered a prayer or blessed you in an unexpected way. How did you respond, and what might it look like to move beyond simply appreciating the blessing to intentionally honoring God as the giver? Our schedules can become so full that we barely stop to recognize what God is doing. What distractions or responsibilities most often keep you from slowing down to express genuine gratitude, and what could you change to create more space for it?

2. Thankful Gets You By, Grateful Keeps You Peaceful

A grateful heart helps us experience God's peace even when life is far from perfect. Philippians 4:8–9 encourages us to focus on what is good and worthy of praise and to put God's truth into practice, reminding us that gratitude grows as we remember what God has done, remain connected to environments that strengthen our faith, hold on to His Word, and learn from the testimonies of others.

Scripture: Philippians 4:8–9; Proverbs 11:25

Discussion: Philippians 4 encourages us to focus our thoughts on what is good and worthy of praise. When you're facing stress, disappointment, or uncertainty, what tends to dominate your thoughts, and how could intentionally practicing gratitude change your perspective? Pastor Brandon shared four keys to staying grateful: what we've learned, received, heard, and seen. Which of these has been most influential in strengthening your faith, and which one could you be more intentional about practicing in your current season?

3. Thankfulness Lives on the Move, Grateful Lives in the Middle

Thankfulness often comes when circumstances improve, but a mature heart of gratitude learns to recognize God's faithfulness even in the middle of difficult seasons. By remembering His past goodness, forgiveness, healing, and provision, we can continue giving thanks while we're still waiting for answers, trusting that God remains faithful regardless of our present circumstances.

Scripture: Psalm 103:2–5

Discussion: It's often easier to thank God after a difficult season has ended than while we're still going through it. What makes gratitude challenging when you're in the middle of an unanswered prayer or ongoing struggle, and how might remembering God's past faithfulness help? Psalm 103 reminds us not to forget the good things God has done. What are some specific moments of His faithfulness that you can look back on, and how could those memories help you approach your current circumstances with greater trust and gratitude?

SUMMARY

Growing from thankful to grateful is an important part of spiritual maturity. Thankfulness recognizes the blessings we receive, but gratitude develops a deeper awareness of God's goodness that isn't dependent on favorable circumstances. Like the one man who returned to thank Jesus, we're called to move beyond receiving God's gifts to intentionally honoring the Giver. As we remember His faithfulness, focus on what is good, encourage one another, and give thanks even in life's difficult seasons, our hearts become more rooted in Him. Gratitude doesn't require a perfect life; it grows from

trusting a faithful God. May we never become so distracted by what we're waiting for that we forget to thank Jesus for what He's already done.

CALL TO ACTION

Create Your Gratitude Timeline: Set aside time this week to write down five specific moments when you experienced God's faithfulness, provision, healing, or guidance. Revisit those memories throughout the week and personally thank Jesus for each one.

Practice Gratitude in the Middle: Identify one ongoing challenge or unanswered prayer. Each day, bring that need honestly before God, then thank Him for something that remains true about His character, even as you wait for your circumstances to change.

Refresh Someone with Gratitude: Proverbs 11:25 reminds us of the blessing of refreshing others. Choose two people this week who have positively impacted your life. Contact them personally and express specific appreciation for what they've done and how God has used them to encourage you.

GROUP LEADER RESOURCE

The Gratitude Emoji Challenge

Instructions:

Invite participants to choose one of the following emojis that best describes their current attitude toward life.

😑	🙂	🥹
The Flatline	The Polite Smile	Holding Back Tears
😁	😭	😩
The Big Grin	The Ugly Cry	The Complainer

Have each person share which emoji they chose and, if comfortable, briefly explain why. Encourage some humor and honesty without pressuring anyone to share something too personal.

Then ask participants to share one thing they're genuinely grateful for this week, regardless of which emoji they selected.

Connection to the Sermon:

Our emotions and circumstances may change from day to day, but genuine gratitude is more than a temporary feeling. As our faith matures, we learn to recognize God's goodness whether we're experiencing a mountaintop moment or walking through a difficult valley.

Transition Question: What's the difference between feeling thankful because something good happened and choosing to live gratefully even when life isn't going the way you hoped?