



Building Better Community Skills

Skill 4 – Practicing Gratitude

We sometimes fall into a pattern of seeing problems rather than blessings. We may focus on what we don't have rather than what we do. We might wish for better situations rather than thanking God for what He has given to us. When Paul speaks of sharing our prayer requests and anxieties with God in Philippians 4:6, he reminds us to do it *"with thanksgiving."* In fact, practicing gratitude – filling our hearts, minds, and mouths with thanksgiving – is one of the most powerful things we can do to build better community and better mental health! Psalms 9:1-2 reads,

*¹ I will give thanks to the Lord with my **whole** heart; I will recount **all** of your wonderful deeds.*

² I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 5:18 reads,

*¹⁸ give thanks in **all** circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (ESV)*

Let's practice gratitude together to build better community!

Exercise:

- *"As we begin, let's do an exercise called 'Practicing Gratitude.'"*
- Read the above paragraph.
- *"How many of us can relate to sometimes focusing on the negative?"*
- *"Today, let's turn that around by spending 10 minutes in prayer thanking God for whatever He puts on our hearts."*
- *"Simply pray out loud by completing this sentence. 'Thank you, God, for....'"*
- *"As you share, you might reflect on circumstances or situations from this past week."*
- *"Let's pray."*
- Begin by giving a few one-sentence examples of your own prayers.
- At the end of ten minutes,
 - *"Father God, continue to stretch our hearts to practice gratitude! Amen."*

At Home this week:

Practice this skill by ending each day with a time of *"gratitude prayers."* Have those in your home simply finish the sentence, *"Thank you, God, for..."* (Make sure to allow enough time to get past the "normal" prayers of day, weather, food, family, etc.)