

Study Guide: 11-9–25 GrateFull - Entitlement and Gratitude

Overview

This message explores the conflict between entitlement and gratitude, showing how gratitude opens our eyes to God's goodness while entitlement breeds negativity and cheapens grace. Drawing from everyday examples, Christian behaviors, and David's life (1 Samuel 16–17; 2 Samuel 12), it emphasizes that both attitudes stem from identity: seeing oneself as a victim fosters entitlement, while seeing oneself as God's cherished child cultivates gratitude. Key quote: "You cannot be grateful for what you feel entitled to" (Pastor Jonathan Pokluda). Grace is free but demands discipleship, and shifting to gratitude makes life worth living.

Reflection Questions

1. What am I grateful for right now? If it's hard to answer, why?
2. Where do I notice entitlement in my life (e.g., demanding favors, selective obedience to God)?
3. How has my upbringing or culture shaped my tendency toward negativity or gratitude?
4. Do I view challenges as problems or opportunities? How does this reflect my identity in Christ?
5. What "cheap grace" attitudes do I hold, expecting blessings without repentance or discipline?

Main Points

1. **Entitlement sees problems. Gratefulness sees opportunities.**
 - David wasn't invited to the sacrifice but returned to shepherding without complaint, embracing anointing as opportunity (1 Sam. 16:10–13).
 - Fix: Stop seeing yourself as a victim; see yourself as God's son/daughter.
2. **Entitlement is the response to lack. Gratefulness is the response to provision.**
 - Israel demanded a king out of perceived lack, leading to fear before Goliath (1 Sam. 8:4–20; 17:11).
 - David recalled God's past provision (lions/bears) and stepped into victory (1 Sam. 17:32–37).
 - Gratitude acknowledges God as source.
3. **Entitlement makes life worth loathing. Gratefulness makes life worth living.**
 - David's entitlement led to sin with Bathsheba and loathing (2 Sam. 12:1–12).
 - Remember pre-Christ state (Eph. 2:1); every gift is from God (1 Cor. 4:7).
 - Gratitude brings joy in provision.

Application

- **Daily Practice:** List 3 things you're grateful for each morning; thank God specifically (Heb. 13:15).
- **Identity Shift:** When facing lack/challenges, pray Romans 8 for Holy Spirit reminder of sonship.
- **Combat Entitlement:** Repent of "cheap grace" areas (e.g., selective obedience); practice small acts of kindness/obedience daily as opportunities.
- **In Hard Times:** "Count your blessings, not your problems." Share one gratitude with someone weekly.
- **Long-Term:** Model gratitude for others (family/church) to break cultural negativity cycles.

Group Discussion Prompts

1. Share an everyday or Christian example of entitlement from the message that resonates with you—why?
2. How did David's response to not being invited (1 Sam. 16) challenge your view of "problems" vs. opportunities?
3. Discuss Israel's demand for a king vs. David's trust in provision—what "lack" do we feel entitled to fix ourselves?
4. Where have you experienced "cheap grace" in your faith? How can gratitude replace it?
5. Brainstorm: What practical step can we take this week to cultivate gratitude and starve entitlement? Pray for each other.