Lesson 22

Gratitude

**Principle 7**: Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

**Step 11**: We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

*“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)*

**Introduction**

Tonight we are going to focus our attention outward rather than inward. We have taken many steps on our road to recovery. Our first step was to admit that we were (and are) powerless. Our second step led us to choose, once and for all, a power by which to live. We took our third and most important step when we chose to turn our lives and wills over to the only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ.

As we continue our journey, we grow in our conscious contact with God and He begins to unfold in our lives. And, as we begin to grow in our understanding of Him, we begin to live out the decision we made in Principle 3. We keep walking now, in peace, as we maintain inventories on a regular basis and as we continue to deepen our relationship with Christ. The way we do this according to Principle 7, is to “reserve a daily time with God.” During this time we focus on Him by praying and meditating.

Prayer is talking to God. Meditation is listening to God on a daily basis. When I meditate I don’t get into some yoga-type position or murmur, “om, om, om.” I simply focus on and think about God or a certain Scripture verse or maybe even just one or two words. This morning I spent ten or fifteen minutes just trying to focus on one word: *gratitude*.

I need to meditate every morning, but I don’t. Some mornings my mind wanders and I find it very difficult to concentrate. Those old familiar friends will come back. You know, that old familiar committee of past dysfunction. The committee will try to do everything it can to interrupt my quiet time with God. Through daily working the principles to the best of my ability, however, I’ve learned to shut them up most of the time.

I’ve learned to listen to God, who tells me that I have great worth. And He will say the same to you — if you will listen.

When I start my day with Principle 7 and end it by doing my daily inventory, I have a pretty good day — a reasonably happy day. This is one way I choose to live “one day at a time” and one way I can prevent relapse.

Another way to prevent relapse, especially during the holidays, is by maintaining an attitude of gratitude.

**Gratitude**

This week, the week before we celebrate Thanksgiving, I suggest that your prayers be focused on your gratitude in four areas of your life: toward God, others, your recovery, and your church. I’m going to ask you to write them down on your “gratitude list.” This is an interactive lesson.

**Teacher’s note:** Make copies and hand out the “Gratitude List” found in Appendix 10. After you present each of the four areas on the list, pause and give the participants a couple of minutes to complete each of the sections.

We are going to take some time now for you to build your gratitude list for this Thanksgiving.

First, for what are you thankful to *God*? Offer prayers of gratitude to your Creator.

In Philippians 4:4-6, we’re told, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Psalm 107:1 encourages us to “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”

What wonderful deeds they are! What are at least two areas of your life in which you can see God’s work and that you are thankful for this holiday season?

You can reflect on the last eleven months or on what God has done for you this week or even today. Then take a moment to list just a few of the special things for which you are thankful to your Higher Power.

The next area is to list the individuals whom God has placed in your life to walk alongside you on your road of recovery. We need to be thankful for *others*.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” (Colossians 3:15 – 16).

Who are you thankful for? Why? Take a moment to list them. The third area we can be thankful for is our *recovery*. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:1-3)

What are two recent growth areas of your recovery for which you are

thankful? Again, list them now.

The fourth and final area to be thankful for is your *church.* “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” (Psalm 100:4-5).

What are two things for which you are thankful to your church?

**Wrap-Up**

Take your “gratitude list” home with you tonight and put it in a place where you will see it often. It will remind you that you have made progress in your recovery and that you are not alone, that Jesus Christ is always with you.

Using your gratitude list, going to your recovery meetings and making them a priority, and getting involved in service in your church are the best ways I know to prevent relapse during the holidays.

Let’s close in prayer.

*Dear God, help me set aside all the hassles and noise of the world to focus and listen just to You for the next few minutes. Help me get to know You better. Help me to better understand Your plan, Your purpose for my life. Father, help me live within today, seeking Your will and living this day as You would have me.*

*It is my prayer to have others see me as Yours; not just in my words but more importantly, in my actions. Thank You for Your love, Your grace, Your perfect forgiveness. Thank You for all those You have placed in my life, for my program, my recovery, and my church family. Your will be done, not mine. In Your Son’s name I pray, Amen.*