

Book Discussion Guide

The Grateful Heart

Living the Christian Message

by Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon Au

Chapter 1: Gratitude as a Life-Giving Practice

The field of positive psychology has caught up with the belief of all major religions that gratitude benefits both individuals and society.

Discuss both the religious implications of gratitude as well as those in the field of popular psychology. What is the difference between gratitude and gratefulness?

Chapter 2: Gratitude as the Echo of Grace

Gratitude is a central theme of the Spiritual Exercises. A grateful life is rooted in a deep appreciation for the gift of our life and a love of self that turns us to God. Where are you challenged to grow in self-acceptance?

Chapter 4: Secret to Gratitude-The Eye of the Beholder

Scriptural lenses can enhance grateful living by helping us detect the presence and action of God in ordinary life. Did any of the scriptural events explored and following reflective questions particularly capture a time in your life?

Chapter 5: Obstacles to Gratitude

Envy and gratitude, narcissistic entitlement, and the fact that consumerism fuels perpetual dissatisfaction impede our ability to live gratefully. What fills your life to the extent that God is crowded out?

Chapter 5: Clearing the Way to Grateful Living

Regrets and resentment hinder gratitude. Forgiveness of those people or situations that prevent us from a grateful life is a path explored by the authors. Are there people in your life that you need to forgive?

Chapter 6: Gateways to Gratitude

Deepening our appreciation for the blessings of each day and telling our life's story as a grace-filled tale are important steps towards living more gratefully. In what ways in your life have you experienced the giving and receiving of love, affirmation, forgiveness, healing, and freedom?

Chapter 7: Ordinary Mysticism and Gratefulness

Faith is not our way to God on our terms, but God's way to us on God's terms. God is not more present during times when we use contemplative practices to expand our awareness, it is we who are more present to the presence of God in our daily lives. Think over your day and discuss ways that you felt God's presence today.

Now thank we all our God

With heart and hands and voices;

Who wondrous things have done,

In Whom this world rejoices.

Who from our mother's arms,

Has blessed us on our way.

With countless gifts of love,

And still is ours today.

Martin Rinkart (c.1636)