

Growing Deeper
The Genius of Gratitude

Week One: *The Genius of Perspective*
Philippians 4:4-9

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. Take a moment to think about some of the best moments in your life. What was so great about these moments?
2. The Genius of Perspective is all about maintaining a certain point of view. Read Philippians 4:4-9. This text was written by the Apostle Paul. How would you describe Paul's perspective after reading this text?
3. When writing these words, Paul was actually in prison for his faith. How does that change your perspective when reading these words?
4. Paul seems to be writing with the type of mood that we might express in our best moments. How do you think Paul is able to maintain this type of mood in the midst of imprisonment?
5. Read Philippians 4:4-9 again. These words aren't simply Paul's perspective, but advice for us in maintaining a perspective of graciousness. Focus on which of these areas would benefit you most?
6. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray thanksgiving for the blessings God has given to you in your answer to #1 and pray for the areas you need help in based on your answer to #5.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

7. Stress and anxiety are big factors that can interfere with our perspective on a daily basis. What are some big sources of stress in your life right now?
8. How do you normally deal with life stresses? Does that work well for you or should you try a different strategy?
9. Read Matthew 6:25-34. What do these verses teach you about perspective?
10. Do you live as though you believe this? If not, how would your life change if you really took these verses to heart?
11. Even after reading this text, it can be easy to think, "Yes, I want this, but I don't know how." Reread Matthew 6:33-34. What two key ideas do these verses suggest?

12. What one thing could you put into practice today that would help move you toward a better perspective?

13. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God for forgiveness for the times you've been anxious and stressed unnecessarily. Pray for help in trusting God and keeping your perspective on His Kingdom.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

14. An unknown author penned this proverb: *“If you're being run out of town, get in front of the crowd and make it look like a parade.”* Do you think our perspective really has that much power? Why or why not?

15. The book of Proverbs is filled with wise sayings, many of which have to do with a proper life perspective. Read the following proverbs and summarize their teachings:

a. Proverbs 3:3-5

b. Proverbs 12:1

c. Proverbs 15:16-17

d. Proverbs 19:21

e. Proverbs 22:2

16. If you were to take the above perspectives to heart, do you think you would find more gratitude in life? Why or why not?

17. A key to finding perspective is a greater awareness of your life, the world and God's work in it all. In what ways do you think God is working in your life right now? What about the world as a whole?

18. Finish your FIFTEEN by praying some of these proverbs into your life. Pray for some of the things you wrote about in #17, and ask God to make you even more aware of His work in you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

19. When others have success, is it easy for you to rejoice with them or do you find yourself struggling with jealousy?

20. What are some of the dangers in comparing your life with others' lives?

21. In the Bible, the apostle Peter struggles in that very way. Read John 21:18-22. What is Peter's struggle?

22. How does Jesus respond to Peter's comparison?
23. What does this tell you about God's attitude toward our tendencies to compare and complain?
24. In verses 19 and 22, Jesus repeats a key phrase that will give Peter the perspective and focus he needs for life. What is that phrase? How could that help us in dealing with comparisons and jealousy?
25. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer and confession. Own up to the times where you've looked to others' success and accomplishment with jealousy. Ask for help in keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus and following what He wants for your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

26. Some of our favorite stories come from people who rose above difficult circumstances to become great. Do you have a favorite underdog story? What is it and why does it resonate with you?
27. When you think about your past, how would you describe it? 1) I loved it. 2) I'm trying to forget it. 3) Mixed feelings about it. 4) Something else. Explain.
28. Grateful people are able to look at the past with perspective and see the good things, even if things didn't seem that great at the time. Joseph did exactly that. He had every right to be upset with his brothers for selling him as a slave, but he took that situation and turned it into something great. Read Genesis 45:4-8 and highlight phrases that reflect Joseph's positive perspective.
29. What does this scripture tell you about how God can use even the worst of our circumstances?
30. Have you seen God do something like this in your life? Do you think with time and prayer, you could begin to see even difficult present circumstances in a different light?
31. God working in our lives to bring a positive perspective can be an example that changes people's lives. Who are some people in your life right now who could benefit from hearing how God is working in you?
32. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Thank God for the ways He has brought good to your life, even amidst bad circumstances. Pray for a healthy perspective and for the ability to share your story with those who need to hear it.