



Dgroup Discussion Guide for May 6, 2018 **Beware of Entitlement: Be Grateful**

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

BEWARE OF ENTITLE – ITIS

Many people today have an entitlement mentality. We think and behave like the world and others owe us certain privileges, rights and benefits. We are afflicted with “entitle-itis”, a spiritual disease which makes one believe that privileges are rights, and benefits are to be expected as a matter of rights.

The more successful we are, the more prone we are to entitle-it is. There may be times we tend to think that rules do not apply to us; we think we should be given special treatment; or we become demanding as if we are the center of the universe. Some other symptoms of entitle-it is include laziness, and having a mentality of *I want it now, I want it because everyone else has it, I expect others to fix my problems, I want happiness my way, etc*

The cure to entitle-itis is being grateful and thankful. Gratefulness is the attitude of the heart and thankfulness is the expression of that gratitude. Survey says that people who are thankful are often the happiest while those who act entitled are oftentimes miserable.

BE GRATEFUL

We can develop the attitude of gratefulness through the practice of CPR. Since it is a heart issue, the remedy needed to cure a person spiritually infected by entitle-itis are the following:

- C** – Count your blessings
- P** – Positive perspective
- R** – Recipient of grace

Count your blessings; Do not compare

We should always give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for us in Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Ephesians 5:20). To give thanks to the Lord also means to express our gratitude publicly (Psalm 35:18). Thanking Him should not be kept in private but should be declared to everyone who would listen. We can practice this with our family, friends and colleagues. Out of the thankfulness of our heart, they will see our lives overflowing with joy as we make it as a privilege to declare our thanksgiving to God.

To be grateful also means to not compare ourselves with others. Doing so will only rob our joy. Oftentimes, it is easy for us to empathize and to weep with those who weep. But when others are in a better situation than us, we feel that it is us who should be in their place instead of just being grateful where we are right now. So rejoicing with those who rejoice becomes more difficult for us. To diffuse entitle-itis, we need to develop a mindset that avoids comparison.

In every situation, we should have the right perspective. We should focus on the good things. This means increasing our appreciation while decreasing our expectations. Because our expectations from others eventually turn into rights, we will end up demanding it as obligations from them. But any relationship, whether marriage, parenting, or discipleship, can become legalistic if it is based on expectations and obligations and so it is doomed to fail. Studies show that the key to happy and long lasting relationship is a sustained appreciation of one another.

Recipient of Grace, Surrender Rights

Instead of saying “I deserve this”, we should learn to surrender our rights. To begin with, God does not owe us anything. Everything we have, including our salvation, is a gift from God. By having the right theology, we will not demand for our rights, instead we will be thankful for whatever it is we receive from God. The earlier we realize that God does not owe us anything, the lesser is the chance of getting ourselves afflicted with entitle-itis.

THE PARABLE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The parable in Matthew 20:1-16 which Jesus taught, illustrates for us an example of people’s entitlement mentality. The verse before this parable is a lesson about first becoming the last and the last becoming the first. This is the same lesson towards the end of the story.

The parable gives two perspective: the laborers’ and the land owner’s. the laborers who worked for longer hours grumbled that they should be paid more than those who worked less (v 11 – 12). Their case will seem reasonable until one sees the perspective of the land owner (v 13-14). Notice that the landowner actually did not wrong to the workers considering that before they started to work for him they agreed to receive a denarius. It is when they started to compare themselves with other workers that they demanded for more and they forgot that before the owner hired them, they were jobless.

Many of us like the workers in the Parable. Because we worked longer, we expect God to do something more for us. Eventually we make our expectations into our rights and it becomes God’s obligations to us. This is why it is critical for us to have the right perspective to be able to diffuse an entitlement mentality. Keep in mind God is sovereign. He owns everything and He does not owe us anything. He can do whatever He wishes to do it. But like the landowner, God is generous and gracious. He can give the last workers less, but he can prefer to give them more.

Remember life is a gift from God. Every day is a blessing. The best cure to entitle-itis is to be grateful and give thanks to God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do we suffer from *Entitle-itis*? What are the things that you consider you have a “right to”?
2. How are we in the area of giving thanks? Do we have an attitude of gratitude?
3. Are we sharing our gratefulness to others? Or do we fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others?
4. How do we tell others of God’s grace and faithfulness?

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.