

# Gathering

## GRATITUDE

*Captain Allison Bethel, Buffalo Kensington corps*

**H**ave you ever experienced a situation that was so challenging it stopped you in your tracks and took the breath right out of you? You may have found yourself saying, “*I don’t know how to go on.*” The book of James is written to a Christian Church that is facing this type of intense persecution. James tells them to “*consider it pure joy*” when they face trials (*James 1:2*).

When we face trials, we respond in different ways. We may find ourselves paralyzed by fear and uncertainty. We may blame God and be tempted to turn away from Him. We may cling tighter to Jesus and see our faith perfected. Sometimes, we respond in all these ways.

In the midst of their trials, James reminded the early Church of God’s goodness and faithfulness. He wrote:

*“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17 NIV).*

How we handle the trials in our lives comes down to one thing: mindset. We can be so focused on what we have lost that we become angry and bitter, or we can focus on God’s goodness and faithfulness and find strength and healing. How can we move from a negative to a positive mindset? The key is gratitude, saying thank you to God for who He is and what He has done. When we do this, our entire focus shifts from what is lost to what is gained in Christ, and we are able to keep going.

After reading the Scripture, consider these questions:

- In the past, how have you responded to trials in your life? Where was your focus?
- How have you seen growth in your life because of trials and hardships?
- What good and perfect gifts are you thankful for in your life right now?
- What is one aspect of God’s character that you need to be reminded of today?

*Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.*

**James 1:17 NIV**



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Gratitude has the power to change our mindset. It shifts our focus from what is lacking to all that God has given us, from what is lost to what is gained in Christ.

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**READ: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18**

**CONSIDER:** The words “*all circumstances*” are used in this verse. Are there certain circumstances in which you find it more difficult to be thankful? What do you need to help you give thanks in those circumstances?

**READ: HEBREWS 12:1-3**

**CONSIDER:** We have a Savior, who knows what it means to endure hardship and opposition. What comfort do you gain from considering all that He has done for you?



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