



Sharing God's Abundance in Love!

CtK exists to connect all people to the life-giving message of Jesus, as we experience God, find freedom, discover purpose, and make a difference in our world.

Day 4—Wednesday, January 10, 2018

**Prayer Focus—Crux (Middle School-High School Youth Ministry)
Abundant Gratitude**

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:17-21 (ESV)

That's an intense list! When a verse starts with "therefore", we know it's the application of a great piece of advice from God! God's command comes at the beginning of chapter 5, verse 1, 8 and 16 and it's this: Imitate God – Walk in love – Be wise. Therefore – (here's how you do it!)

Don't be foolish with your time and resources. Everything you have and encounter has a purpose. Seek to understand its purpose. Use it wisely so it's not wasted.

Understand God's will – imitate him, walk in love, and be wise.

Don't participate in excessive indulgences of sensual pleasure – be filled with the Holy Spirit. God provides resources – time, talents, energy. Don't be selfish and wasteful, instead, let the Holy Spirit be in charge of your resources. When he's in charge, good and true things happen and God's kingdom becomes a little bigger.

Talk to one another in psalms and spiritual songs – encourage each other with words of life!

Sing and make melody to the Lord – praise the Lord, even if you couldn't carry a tune if it was taped to your forehead! You can let your soul sing and dance in the joy that comes when you are right where God wants you to be, doing the things he wants you to do.

Give thanks always for everything – this life isn't easy or smooth. It is not brownies, roses and sunshine 24/7. It's tough and challenging and intense. Give thanks to God for working out his purpose in you, no matter how you feel. He's got you.

Submit to one another to honor Jesus – Accept that God is at work in others just as he is in you. Honor one another by going second. Put yourself aside and making space for others. Don't walk all over someone to achieve your selfish goals. Build each other up. When one is strong, we all become stronger.

What does all this have to do with abundant gratitude? For me, I have abundant gratitude for the freedom in knowing my purpose. It's pretty simple. God wants me to be a piece of his kingdom on earth by using my life to bring a little more love, joy, gentleness, kindness, understanding, and patience into this world, so that others can connect with Jesus and their lives can be purposeful and beautiful, too! Jesus was the ultimate "kingdom" on earth – he brought the ultimate love to earth. He's no longer physically present on this earth, but he's spiritually present in all Christians, and it's through him in us, his kingdom lives.

Father, you know we can't serve you on our own. Thank you for being good, strong, and in control of our lives. Because of you, we live in freedom, not fear, for we are your children. Thank you for your love and guidance as we live our lives in your purpose. Please guide the Crux ministry of our church. As the middle school and high school youth discover your purpose in their lives.

Anna Herendeen

