

MIND ♦ *body* ♦ spirit

By mixing the ingredients of attitude and action, we can change the flavor of our own lives. Learn to nurture your body and soul to lead a more balanced life.

INTEGRATING **GRATITUDE** and **MINDFULNESS**

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.” —MELODY BEATTIE

I BELIEVE GRATITUDE IS ONE of the essential virtues of moral excellence. Being thankful for the smallest detail is a daily decision that can transform the heart, change the atmosphere, and help one believe the impossible. A spirit of gratitude requires one to focus on what you have instead of what you don't have. Gratitude is a form of worship and keeps us connected to God. It is the difference between bearing the fruit of joy and momentary, fleeting happiness.

Mindfulness requires you to slow down and use the five senses — sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch — to take in the world around you is the key to living in the moment. Gratitude integrated with mindfulness is being thankful for the here and now ... seeing what's possible with what is right in front of you. Together, gratitude and mindfulness balance being aware of your blessings when you don't feel blessed, being thankful in difficult times, and light in the darkest circumstances.

Many of us take the time to say a quick blessing before sharing a meal but imagine having a disposition of gratitude from meal preparation to consumption. For example, as you prepare your next meal, look at how the sun streams through your kitchen windows. Listen to the sounds of preparation as you peel, chop, sauté, and stir. Inhale the intoxicating aromas of a savory dish. Taste the nostalgia in your favorite traditional family recipe. Intentionally lift your voice in appreciation for those seated around the table; feel the warmth of the hands that you hold in an unbroken circle of fellowship. Be thankful that God has kept you from dangers seen and unseen and the grace that brought you safely to that very moment.

As you walk through this simple exercise, let go of any negative distractions, the minor offenses of the day that steal your joy. Instead, celebrate the rhythms and rituals of life. Faith, family, friendship, and fellowship are precious in the days and times of so much loss, grief, and division. Stay intentional, diligent, aware, and mindful of things that help maintain a heart of gratitude! 🍷



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