

We are looking at areas of growth and maturity for a Jesus Follower.

Today, look at this piece of the puzzle:

### **A growing and maturing lifestyle of flexibility and thankfulness**

One thing can be said of life, "Constant change is here to stay." The fluid nature of life can throw a wrench in our plans and intentions. When things don't turn out the way we want we can become disillusioned, angry, and bitter if we haven't learned to be flexible because of a foundation of thankfulness in our hearts. When we have a biblical perspective of life, we can go with the flow with an attitude of thankfulness because we understand that God is ultimately in control of everything. Biblical discipleship equips people to see things through God's perspective and build a foundation of thankfulness that breeds flexibility.

We can take anything life throws us in stride because we know that God is in control and He is not fickle like we are. If things don't make sense to us, we can be thankful that He knows what is happening.

**Psalm 110:4** *The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind...*

We can embrace the challenges of life with a thankful heart when we realize that God is working for us and watching over us as we walk in His love.

**Romans 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

If we try to handle all of the challenges of life in our own power we will be crushed, despairing, abandoned and destroyed. If we allow God's power to work in us no matter what happens, we can be victorious.

**2 Corinthians 4:7-9** *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.*

We can be thankful no matter what happens in our lives because we serve a God who is not bound by circumstances. Even when the most horrible and unjust things happen in our lives, we can turn to the One who has the power to conform everything to the purpose of His will.

**Ephesians 1:11** *In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will*

As Jesus Followers, we have a responsibility to respond biblically to any situation that arises. Many Christians act as if they have the option to respond to life however they see fit. If we are having a good day, then we respond in a Christ-like manner, but if things aren't going our way, we respond in whatever way is convenient. God wants us to mature in a way that our default setting is one of obedience.

**Philippians 1:27** *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*

In our democratic society, we have the privilege to debate and voice our opposition to many things. Unfortunately, this has crept into the body of Christ, and many feel that they have the right to violate God's word through their attitudes and speech. Jesus Followers live by a different set of laws.

**Philippians 2:14** *Do everything without complaining or arguing,*

The true key to thankfulness is a matter of the heart. If our hearts are consumed by this world and the concerns of this world, it will be challenging to be thankful. If our hearts are consumed by Christ and ruled by His peace, then thankfulness becomes a natural byproduct.

**Colossians 3:15** *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-17** *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

### **Hale Pule Question**

**Meditate on the verses above. Which principles described in these verses are the most challenging for you to integrate into your life?**

**Ask the Father to show you ways to be more flexible and/or thankful in those areas.**

**Write out a prayer based on the verse that talks about each principle you listed above and pray that prayer on a consistent basis.**

**Feel free to share these prayers with a trust friend who is a Jesus Follower so they can pray for and with you.**