

14-18

SEASONS OF GIVING 1: Giving Thanks

With the Christmas season around the corner, we are going to use the next few weeks to think about the real meaning of Christmas and how important it is to give thanks, give what God has given us back to Him and the beauty of giving.

In this session we are thinking about how often in our busy lives we stop and give thanks to God. Sometimes it's easy to take everything we have for granted. If we live with gratitude (feeling grateful), it can make a massive difference not just in our life's, but to people around us.

ACTIVITY 1

In the Bible we can find many examples of people who gave thanks to God about different situations. The Bible is full of thankfulness. We are going to look at one of the many stories, where someone was thankful to Jesus.

Read Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy[Ⓜ] met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

1. Which of the lepers are you more like, the nine or the one?
2. Why do you think the other ten didn't say thanks to Jesus?
3. Have you ever done something kind and no one said thank you? How did it make you feel?
4. Do you think you often forget to say thank you to others? Why?

Like in this story, there are moments in our life that we will forget to say thank you to people that we know and to God. It's easy to forget being thankful, but Jesus reminds us in that every perfect gift comes from Him.

ACTIVITY 2

There are many different things we can thank God for. The Bible is full of thanksgiving. There were many people who thank God for loads of different reasons. Let's look at just some of them.

Read

- 1 Chronicles 16:34 (Thanks for His goodness)
*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever*
- Mathew 15:36 (Thanks for providing for us)
Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.
- Psalm 139:14 (Thanks for creating us)

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.*

- Psalm 107:8 (Thanks for everything God has done for us)
*Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind*
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 (Thanks for giving His son – Jesus)
But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What does each verse teach us about ‘thanks’ and how we can be thankful to God for what he is to us and what he does?

ACTIVITY 3

Read

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1. What does it mean to give thanks in everything?
2. What are some common things that can get in the way of us feeling thankful and joyful?
3. How easy do you find giving thanks when things are tough?
4. What can help us to stay grateful and find joy when we don't feel like it?

It is easy to give thanks when life is running smoothly. However, God said that we shouldn't be giving thanks only when things are easy. But we are to give thanks in everything. We can celebrate thanksgiving in times of joy and in times of pain.

When things get tough in our lives, it can become a little hard to be thankful. We tend to focus on the bad stuff instead of the good stuff. And sometimes, things are just going to be hard. Things in life are going to get pretty bad every now and then, but that doesn't mean the thankfulness should stop. God remains good yesterday, today and forever.

ACTIVITY 4

Spend some time going through your bible or using the verses you have already looked at today. Find the verses that stand out to you as encouragement to thank God, even when things are tough. Maybe write these down, bookmark them in your bible, stick them up in your bedroom or what about sending verses to each other or your friends as encouragement.

ACTIVITY 5

Do you let others know that you appreciate them and are thankful for them? There are lots of people in our life that we often forget to say thanks for. We don't always have to say thank you with our words, as often actions speak louder than our words. Let's think of ways we can show our thankfulness to others and let's do it.

How often do you say thank you to others or show your thankfulness to them? If not, often, why not?

Think of people in your life that have been kind to you and done a lot for you (e.g. parents, teachers, a friend etc.)

Do something to show that you are thankful to them for who they are and what they have done for you

Here are a couple of suggestions you can do:

1. Write a letter or a card to them
2. Send a nice message to them
3. Make breakfast or dinner for your parents and tell them how grateful you are for them

ACTIVITY 6

Watch the following video from open doors Australia

If you were to wake up tomorrow, with only the things you thanked God for today, what would you have?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfdwcOTOJHc&feature=youtu.be>

PRAY

Spend some time in prayer saying thank you to God for everything he has given you. Ask God to help you not take people and things for granted and to remember to be grateful for the small blessings as well as the big thing. Thank God for those people around you who you are grateful for and ask him to help you find ways to show them how grateful you are to them.