

Thanksgiving

Lesson 03 of the series, "Teach us to pray."

I. It is good to have a balanced, authentic prayer life.

Adoration - paying honor, expressing fervent and devoted love.

Confession – acknowledging sinfulness, admitting guilt.

Thanksgiving - expressing gratitude.

Supplication – asking for something earnestly and humbly.

II. Thanksgiving is a vital part of authentic prayer.

a. Thanksgiving celebrates God's goodness.

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever." Psalm 136:1 (NLT) (see also 1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 106:1,107:1,118:1,29)

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation." Psalm 100:4-5 (NLT)

b. Thanksgiving reminds us that everything we have comes from God, NOT ourselves.

"Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the LORD your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be careful! Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' Remember the LORD your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath." Deuteronomy 8:11-18 (NLT)

c. Thanksgiving is a powerful remedy for negative thinking.

"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT)

Note: We are to be thankful in all circumstances not for all circumstances.

- Thank you, God that your purposes that are bigger than my problems.

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT)

- Thank you, God for giving me the power to overcome my problems.

"God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."
Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

- Thank you, God for growing and maturing me through my problems.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4 (NIV)

d. Thanksgiving reminds us of all that God has already done for us.

"Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's!" Psalm 103:2-5 (NLT)

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

- e. Thanksgiving is good for us.

“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to the Most High.” Psalm 92:1 (NLT)

“The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.” Psalm 28:7 (NLT)

“A joyful heart is good medicine...” Proverbs 17:22 (NASB77)

III. Five tips for meaningful prayers of thanksgiving.

- a. We can make a list of things for which we are grateful to God. (count our blessings).
- b. We can thank God for these things by speaking to him or singing to him. (We must do more than just think about them.)
- c. We can thank God throughout the day as we recognize his blessings, provision, and guidance. (It's never too late to say thank you!)
- d. We can thank others whom God has used to help, bless or encourage us.
- e. We can thank God with others regularly. (meals, before bedtime, after safe trips, etc.)

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Connect Group Questions

1. What is your favorite Thanksgiving food, and who makes it?
2. What is something that reminds you to be thankful? How do you demonstrate thankfulness?
3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Why do you think people struggle with being truly thankful in all circumstances?
4. Read Philippians 4:4-7. What steps does Paul give in these verses to help us have peace? What step is hard for you personally?
5. Read Philippians 4:10-13. What secret did Paul learn that allowed him to be content? How has relying on Christ's strength helped you to be thankful in a tough situation?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-13. Do you really believe that generosity can lead to thankfulness? How have you seen this happen? What are some ways people can be generous during the holidays?
7. Read Psalm 7:17; 9:1; 95:2-3; 100:4; & 107:8-9. List reasons why we should give thanks to God.
8. Are there areas in your life right now where it's difficult to be thankful? (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Thanksgiving Checklist

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." Psalm 107:1-2 (NIV)

Thank you Lord for relationships:

Spouse, children, parents, siblings, extended family, friends, neighbors, coaches, coworkers, etc.

Thank you Lord for resources:

House, car(s), clothes, food, appliances, furniture, paycheck, savings, insurance, etc.

Thank you Lord for answered prayers:

Rescue, healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, new start, courage, wisdom, love, direction, etc.

Thank you Lord for opportunities:

Job/career, school, neighborhood, clubs/organizations, leadership, church, etc.

Thank you Lord for blessings:

Health, freedom, strength, sound mind, pets, vacations, gifts, skills, laughter, memories, etc.

Thank you Lord for Your promises:

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
1 John 1:9 (NIV)

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28 (NLT)

"I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." Psalm 32:8 (NLT)

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies..." John 11:25 (NIV)

"God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT)

"God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." Philippians 2:13 (NLT)