

Study G: Practicing Thanksgiving

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thess. 5:18

Why: Reasons for the study

- We are generally characterized as an "ungrateful" people. Yet, thanksgiving should be a significant characteristic of the true follower of Christ.
- Although we may be grateful for the things we see as "good" in our lives, God calls us to be grateful for even the difficult things in life.
- One of the most powerful, offensive weapons the Christian has in his arsenal against Satan's influence is to offer sacrificial thanks and praises when experiencing crises, affliction, persecution and loss.

What: Principles to grasp

- You are commanded to give thanks for all things – even the things you do not view as "good."
- Your practice of thanksgiving, or the lack of it, reveals your view of God.
- We give thanks for even the difficulties of life because they are ordained by a sovereign, loving God who has allowed them in our lives for our good and His glory.
- The act of thanksgiving for irritations, losses and difficulties, focuses you on the reality of who is in control of your life and your hope in Him who endured the cross on your behalf.
- God often uses the practice of thanksgiving for trials as the bridge to bring you from a position of railing against His will for your life to an acceptance and surrender to His will, which includes the form(s) of suffering you are experiencing.

How: Path to a changed life

- To help your disciple establish the reasons they should be a thankful person
- To encourage a heart of gratefulness and a lifestyle of thanksgiving
- To practice giving thanks for the difficulties in life as they happen

Helpful ideas:

- Go over the list of the many things for which they can be grateful.
- Be sure to discuss the checklist of reasons why they don't give thanks.
- Give your disciples the assignment to practice renewing their minds with giving thanks.
- Your disciples' lack of thanksgiving may be an indication that they are railing against God.
- Be sure to discuss the *Bridge of Thanksgiving* diagram at the end of the study.
- Ask them to write a "blessings list."

Tools and additional resources:

- Use *Daily Log* to record blessings each day. (ctousa.org/tools/resources/charts and outlines)
- This study is also included in *God's Call To Brokenness* (CTO), which includes a discussion guide on this topic.