

Prayer, Week 3  
An adult lesson  
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Categories

1. Times are bad (Help me!)
2. We've been bad (Sorry!) **LAST WEEK**
3. Times are good, thanksgiving (YAY!) **THIS WEEK**
4. Peaceful communication with God

When times are good, thanksgiving (YAY!)

When you thank God, what are some of the things you are thankful for?

JUST READ THESE VERSES TO GET US ALL THINKING ABOUT THANKING.

Psalm 95:2-3

Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

2 Corinthians 9:11-12

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

1 Timothy 4:4-5

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

1 Chronicles 16:34

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Psalm 7:17

I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

Psalm 28:7

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

Psalm 106:1

Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Colossians 3:17 (KEY VERSE)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

2 Thessalonians 5:18 (KEY)

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

Psalms 30:11-12

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise you forever.

Everyone knows the saying that it is better to give than to receive.

WHY DO PEOPLE SAY THAT? LET THEM ANSWER.

I remember hearing that when I was a kid. I'm sure I heard it a lot of times, but I remember hearing it at Christmas. It's better to give than to receive.

When we give someone a gift, what do we do? We watch them don't we? We watch their eyes, their facial expression, their smile. We always want to be watching when someone opens a gift. We're always focused on their reaction.

I remember Christmases where the whole house was filled with a chaos of people opening presents. One of the kids would always get the assignment to pass out gifts, which they would do, until they came to one of their own, then the whole process would derail while they opened their present and in our family, all the order would usually go out of the process at that point and there would be people opening presents everywhere.

But in that confusion of paper being ripped and parents trying to manage their kids, the person who took the time to pick out the gift wanted to see through all the other things going on, to watch the face of someone else *opening* the gift they'd picked just for them.

What kind of reaction are we looking for? LET THEM ANSWER

- Gratitude
- Recognition of our effort
- Appreciation
- Shared joy in something we both appreciate
- Happiness, we want people we love to be happy

I imagine God packaging gifts for us. Through all the chaos and busyness of our day, I imagine Him watching us. He doesn't have to read our face, or watch our smile. He sees right into us.

I think He must feel what we feel if we just open one of His gifts, look at it for a minute and then start looking under the tree for the next one.

He gives, and *sometimes*, we thank Him. But it's not always is it? We don't *always* notice. Sometimes we're busy and we just take it for granted.

Today though, I don't want us to talk about the sad side of what's going on with these different aspects of prayer. I'd like to stay focused on the joy of the MADE connection with God. Focus on the way we feel when we get it RIGHT.

As we do, ask yourself "What has God picked just for me?" and just keep that in mind as we go today.

Luke 17:15-18

As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

We tend to think of how sad Jesus may have felt that nine of the lepers didn't even come back to say thanks. We can feel that hurt ourselves just reading that. Right? Each of you have done things for people and given gifts to people only to watch them take the gifts without showing gratitude.

We all know how that feels. We all know that when that happens, it really doesn't feel like it is more blessed to give than to receive. We don't feel blessed by giving to someone that's not grateful in any way.

Definitely, it's heart-breaking to imagine Jesus standing there with only one leper coming back to say thanks.

But what about the one?

Do you think that if we watched those ten men throughout the *remaining* years of their lives, we would see a difference between the nine and the one?

What do you think we would see? LET THEM ANSWER.

It's possible that those nine men lived long, unremarkable lives. We know that Jesus healed their physical problem. He cleansed them to reveal His glory and power to the priests and thousands of years later, to us.

But of all of these men, maybe only one of them was truly made *well* in more than the immediate, the physical sense.

"Then he said to him, 'Rise and go; your faith has made you well'."

Think of how different the lives of these men must have been.

The nine, went out thinking of their blessings without the connection to God that comes to us from our thanksgiving.

The one would go into the world, healed and connected to God. He'd see God in every wonderful thing wouldn't he?

And every sunrise he saw with his family beside him, he'd feel thankful and grateful and honored to receive it. You can imagine that his joy would be irrepressible, that it would show on his face, in the way he described everything else that happened.

He'd be looking for blessings in everything and over time, I think those ten men who started out all looking the *same*, all lepers. Who all received the *same* physical blessing, the healing of their disease.

I think in the years *after* that those men wouldn't look the same to anyone. I think the grateful man, would have built a loving and happy family who heard his joy in everything he saw around him and felt his gratitude for every day he was given and he'd draw people to him like a magnet, with his enthusiasm and joy.

And the other nine men would be otherwise unremarkable. Just another one of the people we see around us, while anyone who knows the *one* man sees him set apart in his faith.

When we look at God, amidst the chaos, like kids on Christmas morning. It doesn't matter, does it – what's going on. We know that when we look up after opening His gift, we're going to see Him staring right at us, waiting to see what we do next.

Will we be like the nine, or like the one?

When we're like the one, we...

Show our gratitude

When we think of all we have to be grateful for, when we're really tuned into just how much we have that's awesome, don't we just feel like our heart could fly up out of our chest and into the air? When we see beautiful mountains, and clouds, and smell flowers and see sparkling lakes, or we see the people that we love thriving and happy. I think God's watching us to see if we look up from the gift and meet His eyes and say "WOW God. Thank you".

Recognize and appreciate God

What can we really ever offer back to God? He made everything. What do we have to give back that He didn't give us, or give us the ability to create? We *can* give him the joy of our thankfulness and be the one that comes back and takes the time to show that we know just where our blessing came from.

Shared joy

No matter how hard any moment of our life might be, if we look at the *whole* of our life, the blessing of our families and friends, of getting THIS far. Is there anyone who could say the scales aren't tipped to the floor in our favor?

None of us could. I'm the world's worst at something that I believe makes people the most attractive, meaning they attract us to them, joy enthusiasm. When I see someone who just reacts positively to everything that happens to them, I just want to be like them.

Our outlook is one of the hardest things in the world to change, but when I see someone whose outlook is sunny, I really want to be like them. I feel like those people have a stronger connection to God than I do. It has to be true right? If we know that the scales are so tipped in our favor, our outlook *should* be sunny and hopeful.

In those moments, we come close to sharing God's joy. I've felt it holding a baby. I've felt it standing on top of mountains. I've felt it watching summer lightning storms. I feel God's awesome power and the blessing He has made of my life.

Happiness, we want people we love to be happy

One of the reasons we give gifts is that we want people that we love to be happy. God does too. He loves us. He gives us thousands of gifts and He watches us open them, through the chaos of the day around us and when we look up and smile, He must feel the same way we do when someone opens a gift we've given them. What *else* do we *have* to give him, but that pleasure?

What kind of reaction are we looking for? (REPEAT)

- Gratitude
- Recognition of our effort
- Appreciation
- Shared joy in something we both appreciate
- Happiness, we want people we love to be happy

What's God looking for?

Psalm 28:7

The LORD is my strength and my shield; *my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.*