**EXTRA! Ideas for Adults – God Deserves Our Thanks – Special Focus Session**

**God Deserves Our Thanks**

**The Point: We have so much to thank God for.**

**Get Into the Study**

*Share the following after discussing Question 1.*

One value many parents try to instill in their children is the duty of taking care of others, especially their family members. A young girl named[Amy protected her younger sister](https://www.dailywire.com/news/nashville-7-year-old-saves-younger-sister-when-their-grandfather-got-carjacked) during a carjacking in late October.

Convicted felon Elijah McDowell was on the run after carjacking, and wrecking, another vehicle in Nashville. He encountered Amy, her sister, and their grandfather, Luis Mena, while they were leaving the girls’ daycare. Mena said that McDowell tried to pull him out of his truck, and they began fighting. Mena was thrown to the ground and lost consciousness. He regained consciousness once he heard his granddaughters crying, saying that his worry over his girls being taken was his biggest worry. But as Mena and McDowell were fighting, Amy managed to pull her sister from the truck so that they would be safe.

While not all things parents teach their children will be displayed in such a fashion, the values parents teach should shape the way children interact with the world. Similarly, believers should have a worldview shaped by the values God teaches us through His word, and we should be thankful for His love in revealing them to us.

**Study the Bible**

*Share the following after discussing Question 4.*

The Bible tell us that we will face persecution in this world because we are not of this world ([John 15:19-20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15%3A19-20&version=CSB)). While there is some religious persecution in America, believers are blessed that they will most likely not be thrown in prison or executed for sharing their faith, unlike other believers around the world.

[Nepali pastor Keshab Raj Acharya was sentenced](https://www.christianpost.com/news/nepal-supreme-court-sentences-pastor-to-prison-for-proselytizing.html) to one year in prison and fined 10,000 Nepalese rupees ($75) for the crime of “proselytizing.” Pastor Acharya was originally sentenced for two years and fined 20,000 Nepalese rupees ($165) for [supposedly saying that prayer would heal COVID](https://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-in-nepal-sentenced-for-saying-prayer-can-heal-covid-19.html?clickType=link-related-articles), though a video of the incident shows him rebuking the virus in Jesuss’s name. This sentence was challenged and reduced during November 2021.

Pastor Acharya was officially sentenced for violating Nepal’s anti-proselytization law, which prohibits Christians from converting other people. Though the conviction came based on the testimony of one person with no corroborating witnesses, the Nepali Supreme Court rejected the pastor’s appeal, going as far to say that they would not discuss the case any further.

It can feel like Christians must walk a tightrope sometimes in the current American political climate, but believers are still protected by the laws of freedom of religion. It can be easy to take that safety for granted and forget to be thankful.

*EXTRA was written by Emily Duncan, a Southern California native currently living in West Georgia with her husband, daughter, and two dogs. She became a Christian when she was sixteen at a youth retreat. Now, she’s a self-described homemaker and semi-professional baker who dreams of eventually finishing all the projects in her workroom.*

**Additional Questions**

**Icebreaker**

* What blessing from God are you most prone to take for granted?
* What are some good habits your parents sought to instill in you?
* What’s at the top of your “I’m thankful for” list this week?
* What’s the most creative way someone has told you “Thank you”?

**Psalm 65:1-4**

* What freedom comes with admitting to ourselves the wrongs we do?
* What should we do differently to live a life in gratitude to God?
* What makes God’s forgiveness such a valuable gift? Why should we praise Him for it?
* How would you explain the concept of God forgiving our sins to someone totally unfamiliar with Scripture?

**Psalm 65:5-8**

* What has God’s power accomplished in your life that was impossible for you to do? How does this lead to thankfulness?
* Why are you grateful for God’s awe-inspiring greatness and power?
* Where do you see God’s power at work in the world today?
* Where do you see God’s greatness and power on display today?
* How can studying God’s deeds in the past give you hope for the future?

**Psalm 65:9-13**

* What is one thing you often take for granted that is a clear gift of God’s provision in your life?
* What practical steps can believers take in order to be content with God’s provision?
* What do you see that causes you to give thanks when you look around your life, this room, and your church?
* What are specific ways you have benefited from God’s provision?

**For Those in Your Group**

Send the following link to your group members as either a teaser before the group meets or as a follow-up thought:

[Coming Against One of Our Greatest Sins](https://lynnhpryor.com/2023/11/13/coming-against-one-of-our-greatest-sins/)

**Magazine Article**

[Sanctuary’s Work, Thanksgiving’s Reward](https://biblestudiesforlife.lifeway.com/god-deserves-out-thanks-special-focus-session-sanctuarys-work-thanksgivings-reward/)