



The Struggle to Give Thanks

Lesson 1

Be Thankful that Thanksgiving...

- Is *more* than a *holiday*...
- Is *more* than a *season*...
- Can *become* a **LIFESTYLE!**

See Handout: ThanksLiving Assessment

Why Teach on Giving Thanks?

1. Giving Thanks Is Not EASILY Learned.

2. Once Learned, Giving Thanks Is Easily FORGOTTEN.

"If in His gifts and benefits [God] were more sparing and close-handed, we should learn to be thankful... The greater God's gifts and works, the less they are regarded." – Martin Luther, Table Talk

- OT Israel – Exodus 13:3; Deuteronomy 8:11-16
- NT Church – 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 4:17; Romans 15:15; 2 Timothy 1:6; 2:14; Titus 3:1; 2 Peter 1:12; Jude 5

3. Not Giving Thanks Has SERIOUS Consequences.

"The person who has stopped being thankful has fallen asleep in life." – Robert Louis Stevenson

- Physical consequences
- Spiritual consequences – Romans 1:18-23

4. We Can OVERFLOW with Giving Thanks from the Heart.

*Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and **overflowing with gratitude.**" Colossians 2:6-7*

Why Is Giving Thanks God's Way Such a Struggle?

1. It Humbles Our PROUD Hearts.

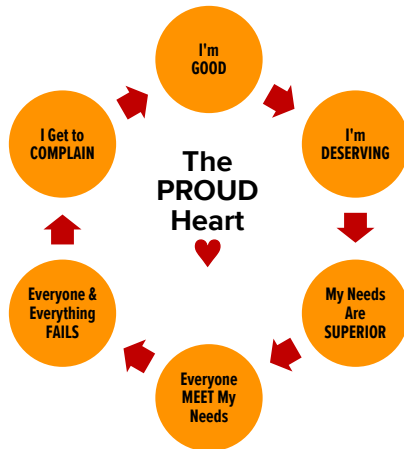
- Our hearts are **HARDWIRED** for giving thanks to God. Psalm 8

"Thanksgiving Is the message of creation." – Paul Tripp

- Our pride **REBELS** against giving thanks to God. *Romans 1:20-23*

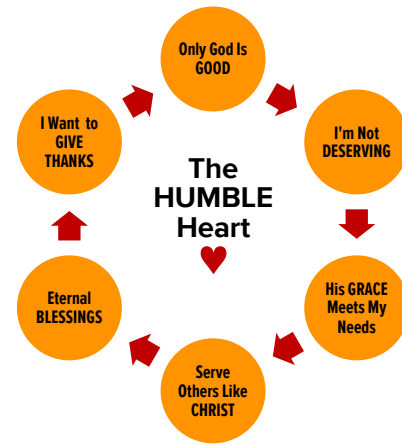
"Proud people don't give thanks!"

The proud are complainers who think they are **DESERVING**.



PROUD HEARTS HATE the MESSAGE of CREATION and REJECT the REDEMPTION in CHRIST JESUS.

The humble give thanks knowing they are **UNDERSERVING**.



HUMBLE HEARTS REPENT before their CREATOR and GIVE THANKS to HIM through CHRIST JESUS.

2. It's a Spiritual **SACRIFICE** of Worship.

"A bad moment for an atheist is when he feels grateful and has no one to thank"

- Our hope for learning to give thanks God's way is the **GOSPEL**.

"O Thou who hast given us so much, mercifully grant us one more thing—a grateful heart." – George Herbert

Gospel Truths that Get to the Heart of ThanksLiving

1. We are utterly **DEPENDENT** creatures.
 2. We are totally **DEPRAVED** sinners.
 3. We are eternally **DELIGHTED** saints.
- Our hearts are **MADE NEW** to overflow with thankfulness in Christ Jesus.
Colossians 2:6-7 Ephesians 5:17-21

Where to Begin Giving Thanks God's Way?

Know your **CREATOR** to know **YOURSELF** and **GROW** in thankfulness.

- Be **humbled** before your Creator: *He's God and you're not. Psalm 8:3-4*
- Be **dependent** on your Creator: *He's the Giver and you're the receiver. Acts 17:25; Psalm 50:10-13*
- Be **thankful** to your Creator: *Giving thanks is the #1 response to Him.*

"If I cannot add to His glory, then I must honor His glory." – John Piper

"Through [Christ] then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Hebrews 13:15-16

Overflow with ThanksLiving Every Day Not Just Occasionally or Seasonally.

The greatness of your Creator deserves it and the goodness of your Redeemer provides it as a free gift!



ThanksLiving Assessment

How thankful am I? Use these 13 questions to reflect on whether you live a thankful life. Don't rush through them just to "check off" a religious activity. Be intentional before God, asking Him to search your heart.

When we're honest with ourselves, with God, and with others, we'll discover that we're *more arrogant, demanding, and entitled* than we think.

Proud people don't say thanks. But don't be afraid of what God will reveal as you honestly answer these questions. God has already forgiven every repenter in Christ entirely on the Cross! When we cry out for help, He supplies abundant and life-transforming grace to deliver us from a lifestyle of complaining and welcome us into a lifestyle of gratitude.

1. Would the people who live nearest to you *characterize you* as a complaining person or a thankful person?
2. When was the last time you sat down to *literally count* your blessings?
3. When was the last time you spent time *grumbling, moaning, and complaining* about life?
4. When you look at your world, are you *pessimistic* about everything that's going wrong?
5. When you look at your world, do find yourself *celebrating* God's common grace?
6. Do you view yourself as one who has been *constantly short-changed and neglected*?
7. Do you view yourself as one who has been *unfairly showered* with blessings?
8. How often do you fill in the blank with *grumbling*, like "If only I had _____" or "I wish _____ was different"?
9. How often do you fill in the blank with *gratitude*, like "I can't believe God has given me _____"?
10. In your relationships, are you encouraging friends and family to *continue* their grumbling?
11. In your relationships, are you encouraging friends and family to *find reasons* to give thanks to God?
12. In your relationships, do you *frequently tearing* others down?
13. In your relationships, do you *frequently building* others up?

Adapted from Paul Tripp



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