



Family Study Guides

**THANKSGIVING**

# THANKSGIVING

## Family Study Guide

### Objectives:

- Understand that being thankful involves more than just saying “thank you.”
- Understand that when we put God first in our lives, we don’t need to worry because God will take care of us and our needs.
- Explore things that God has done in your family’s lives and learn the importance of thanking our Heavenly Father no matter what happens in life.

**Memory Verse:** *“Give thanks no matter what happens”* **1 Thessalonians 5:18** (NIRV).

**Message:** In all things give thanks.

**Discuss:** How do we know what another person would like as a gift?

### Introduction:

Let’s read a story in the New Testament about Christ in **Luke 17:12-19 [NLT]:**

*V12 As Jesus entered a village there, ten lepers stood at a distance, 13 crying out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 He looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. 15 One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God!" 16 He fell to the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you."*

Here are ten men who had much to be thankful to Christ for. But after they got through the hard time and were healed, only one returned and told Jesus thanks. What about you? When you receive a blessing or answered prayer from God, will you be like the nine who never came back to tell Jesus thank you, or are you going to be like the one who went back to thank Jesus for what he had done? How do you think that made Christ feel when only one man out of ten bothered to come back to give thanks?

We all know that it is important to say thank you, but there are different levels in which we can express our gratitude. **Gratitude is an attitude that comes out of the habit of giving thanks.**

- ✓ Are we truly grateful for everything God gives us or do we take His gifts for granted, mumble an insincere prayer of thanks, and then quickly move on to other activities?

God wants us to be thankful because He knows that our thankfulness will keep us close to Him. When we are thankful, it shows that we love and respect Him.

**Read together Acts 14:17:** *"He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."*

God is a wonderful God and He cares for us very much. God provides everything we need to live (food, air, safety etc.). Trust Him, work hard and enjoy His blessings. Maybe we feel that we don’t have enough of whatever we want. Be thankful for what we do have and take time every day to “give thanks” to God no matter what was happening around us.

**Read Matthew 6:25-34 - Do Not Worry**

**Matthew 6:25** (NCV) *"So I tell you, don't worry about the food or drink you need to live, or about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothes. 26 Look at the birds in the air. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. And you know that you are worth much more than the birds. 27 You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it. 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? Look at how the lilies in the field grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. 29 But I tell you that even Solomon with his riches was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. 30 God clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today but tomorrow is thrown into the fire. So you can be even more sure that God will clothe you. Don't have so little faith! 31 Don't worry and say, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' 32 The people who don't know God keep trying to get these things, and your Father in heaven knows you need them. 33 The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants. Then all these other things you need will be given to you. 34 So don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will have its own worries. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

- ✓ What things does the Bible tell us not to worry about? (Having something to eat, drink, clothes to wear, etc.)
- ✓ How can we be sure God will provide enough food for us? (Because we are valuable to Him, and He says He will take care of us. We need to have faith in His word.)

We should have an attitude like King David when he said, *"You have changed my sadness into a joyful dance; you have taken away my sorrow and surrounded me with joy. So I will not be silent; I will sing praise to you. Lord, you are my God; I will give you thanks forever"* **Psalms 30:11-12** (GNT).

**What do these verses tell us about when we should be thankful?**

**1 Thessalonians 5: 18** (NIRV) *"Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank Him because you believe in Christ Jesus."*

**Ephesians 5:20** (AMP) *"At all times and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."*

- ✓ Discuss things to be thankful for. Have each member make their own list or make one together.
- ✓ What kind of circumstances may make it difficult to be thankful?
- ✓ What does this verse tell us about when we should be thankful? (We should always be thankful to God, in any circumstance or situation because it is God's will for us) **Romans 8:28**.

**What commandments might we break by not being thankful for what we have?**

- No other Gods
- No graven images
- Don't steal
- Don't covet

We can do amazing things for God because of the blessings he gives us (i.e. living a life He is pleased with, serving at church services, singing in a choir, or helping out when others are in need). Not only can these be blessings to us, but they can also be blessings that God gives to others. Remember to put God first in our lives so that we do not need to worry about anything. God will take care of us. Always be thankful to God for all the many things He does for us. Thank God today for His many blessings especially as we get ready to celebrate Thanksgiving.

<b>Family Discussion or Activities:</b>
---

**1. Being Thankful Discussion**

Here are four ways to show God that we are truly thankful for what He has provided for us:

1. How we look.
2. The way we act.
3. What we say to others.
4. The way we feel inside.

The same thing is true if we do not appreciate God's blessings in our lives and if we do not thank Him. It is also easy for others to see by:

1. How we look.
2. The way we act.
3. What we say to others.
4. The way we feel inside.

Talk about both scenarios. Make up brief scenarios to illustrate these points. Have your children practice the "how we look" and "what we say" parts. Talk about the "how we act" in both of the scenarios.

**Reminder:** we need God's blessings in our lives, and this starts with a thankful heart. Discuss why it is important to have a thankful heart.

2. What kinds of things can we be thankful for? Have each member make their own list or make one together. You can add pictures.
3. Why do you think it is important to have a thankful heart? Write about it.
4. Why do you think God wants to give us the things we need? Discuss together.
5. Discuss how to be thankful, even when things are not going so well. How do you pray to God when things aren't so good? How do you pray for others who have bad things happening to them?
6. Write a letter of thanks to God. Tell Him all the things you are thankful for that He has done for your family.
7. As a family, discuss things you are thankful for as you prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving. How can you include others who are not as fortunate as your family?

### Possible Class Activities:

1. **"Be Thankful" Flower:** (these could be used for Thanksgiving centerpieces, as gifts or decoration for November.)
  - **Supplies needed:** cardstock paper, crayons/colored markers, glue sticks, scissors (optional), towels for cleanup, etc., and a place for this activity.
  - Before class, print enough handout pages with the phrase "Don't worry, be thankful," and the Bible verse so each child will have one copy of each.
  - Cut the flower center and petals out of construction paper. Older children can cut their own.
  - Have the children color the phrase "Don't worry, be thankful," cut it out, and glue onto the top of their green card stock.
  - Next cut out the verse and paste it at the very bottom of the green card stock.
  - Write on the petals the things for which they are thankful.
  - Then glue the petals onto the cardstock paper. (See example below.)



As the children are working on this craft activity, refer to Matthew 6:25-34 from the lesson. God takes care of us in such wonderful ways. We sometimes forget about all the beauty and majesty that He has prepared for us. Take time to see all that God has given us for our enjoyment. We have a God who cares for the little things. We need to remember that He cares about us and that He will take care of our every need.

2. Here is a link to other activities to help teach thankfulness and gratitude:  
[Free being thankful kid activities](#)



### 3. **God's Many Blessings Activity:**

Things you will need:

A water glass (about 2 1/2" in diameter), a pitcher of water, a spoon, some Cheerios®, and 10 to 20 marbles or large coins for blessings.

You will need to practice this a few times before the class. During class, ask a volunteer to pour water into the empty glass, and to make it as full as possible. Then you will float a Cheerio and watch it move to the side of the glass. Then you will drop blessings (objects) into the glass of water one by one until the water swells over the top, but stop before it runs over. Then you will float another Cheerio, and it will stay in the center of the glass. (This works because of surface tension. When the water is first poured in, the surface of the water is shaped like a flattened "u" and the Cheerio wants to go the highest place it can find which is toward the side of the glass. After adding the blessings, the surface of the water is shaped like a flattened "n". Now the highest place is in the center.)

As you do this activity talk about these things:

In **Psalm 23:5-6** King David said his cup was overflowing, not just full but more than full. Why does God give us so many blessings? Is it so we can be happy? (Yes) Is it so we can be safe and comfortable? (Yes) It is also so we can serve Him and do things for others.

Let me show you what I mean. Here I have an empty glass, and a pitcher of water. I need a volunteer to pour the water carefully into the glass, as full as possible. (The child will fill the glass, but will normally stop before it begins to overflow—some coaching may be needed.) We now have a glass that looks full. Now, can we make this Cheerio float in the center of the glass? Let's try. (Drop the Cheerio onto the surface and watch as it moves to the edge of the glass.) Look, it goes to the edge of the glass.

What would happen if we add blessings? Let's pretend these marbles are blessings. (Add marbles one by one and as you do, give an example of a blessing. Watch as the water rises over the brim and stop before it pours over the edge.)

Discuss examples of blessings: The clean air we breathe, food to make us full, a loving God, people who care for us, a place to worship God, good friends, rain to keep things green, good health, teachers to teach us, ice cream and other yummy treats.

Because God gives us so many blessings, our cup is more than full. Let's see what happens now. (Drop another Cheerio into the cup.) Look! Now it stays right in the center.

## **MY THANKFUL LIST**

The best weapons against covetousness are love and being thankful for what we already have. List ten things you are thankful for and list five ways you can show love to the people who are around you daily. Talk about how these can keep us out of the coveting trap.

### **I'm Thankful for...**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

### **I Show My Love to Others By...**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.