

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

GIVING THANKS

Scripture: Luke 17

Pastor Mickey Stonier – 29 Nov 2015

This week each campus had their own message about Giving Thanks. At Point Loma, Pastor Mickey discussed the 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus - but only 1 returned to give thanks to Jesus; and he was a Samaritan - a foreigner. Leprosy is a disease that still occurs today in some undeveloped countries. In biblical times, if you had leprosy you were required to separate yourself from others. Just as leprosy separated those who were afflicted with it from the rest of society, we all can have a spiritual sense of leprosy that separates us from God. The thankful leper was grateful for who Jesus was. When we walk in obedience, it puts us in the greatest position to receive all God wants for us.

MEMORY VERSE

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Luke 17:17-18

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Jesus makes a point to call out the fact that it was a foreigner who thanked Him. What does that tell you about the other 9? Who were they? What was their focus on?
2. Share about a time when you were not thanked for something. How did it make you feel? What can keep us from expressing gratitude toward another more often?
3. Give an example of how we can show that we are truly thankful in what we do (action) besides expressing gratitude with words.



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. By a show of hands, how many have or *used to* have a view of God as an angry, vengeful judge? Or how many have ever felt that "If I try harder, then God will like me." What do these scriptures have in common?
Psalm 103:8, Isaiah 41:10, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Hebrews 13:5, 1 John 4:16
2. Share what this means to you: We can't be loved or accepted any more by God. If we are in Christ, we can't be loved any less either.
3. Pastor Mickey reported that in most churches, typically only 10% of the members participate above and beyond simply attending and/or tithing. (Much like 9 out of the 10 healed lepers who did not give thanks to Jesus) What are some reasons we don't see a greater participation amongst those who attend the church? What can we do to help?

4. ACTIVITY: Look up the definitions of **affirmation**, **gratitude** and **praise**. For Christians, there is a very important difference: **ONLY** Jesus deserves **praise**. When we express affirmation to others, we lift God up by describing an observation we see God doing in or through them. By expressing **gratitude**, we are sharing a feeling or acknowledging what someone did.

If we give someone **praise**, we turn the focus towards the individual and their performance, whereas we run into the danger of "puffing them up".

*** With this in mind, partner up and turn to the partner and share an affirmation or express something you are grateful to them about. Then switch roles and repeat.

For these questions, recommend breaking into groups of 2- 3 or 4.

5. In **Luke 17:13** Jesus didn't challenge them or judge them - He just said go show yourself to priest.

Share what cleansing in your life would you like to have?

6. Pastor Mickey shared some thoughts from dying patients in hospice about their regrets including words unsaid or deeds undone. Share in the smaller group one of those that would apply today. How can we pray for you to overcome the hesitation that has prevented the unsaid words or the undone action?

7. **People of action** express specifics.
People of inaction express generalities.

What would it take right now to get right with the Lord or improve your relationship with Him?



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What does this mean to you?

The Church doesn't want anything *from* you... they want all that God has *for* you, so you are more grateful.

TAKE IT HOME!

Four main points from the message:

1. Make a commitment to say Thanks or appreciate someone as many times as you can.
2. Show you are thankful: **Love** is an **emotion** and the **action** in what we do - not just words.
3. Be faithful. Happy people have an attitude of gratitude and live thankfully.
4. Worship with thankfulness.

