

Bible Study Guide: A Grateful Heart – Raising Your Ebenezer

(Thanksgiving Message)

 Source Transcript:

Big Idea

Gratitude is not just a seasonal response—it is a spiritual posture that transforms pain into praise and reminds us of God’s faithfulness.

Theme

Even in seasons of loss and hardship, gratitude helps us recognize God’s presence and build a life marked by remembrance and trust.

Core Scripture

1 Samuel 7:12

“Then Samuel took a stone and set it up... He named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us.’”

Philippians 4:6–7

“In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God...”

Introduction: More Than a Holiday

Thanksgiving is often:

- A meal
- A gathering

- A tradition

But Scripture teaches:

Key Insight:

“Thanksgiving is not a day—it is a way of life.”

Gratitude is:

- A form of worship
 - A posture of the heart
 - A response to God’s faithfulness
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Main Point 1: Gratitude is a Spiritual Posture

Explanation

Thanksgiving is not limited to:

- Good circumstances
- Easy seasons

It is a choice to:

- Focus on God
- Trust His goodness
- Recognize His presence

“Gratitude turns our eyes from what is broken to a God who heals.”

Spiritual Insight

Gratitude shifts:

- Perspective
- Focus
- Faith

Application

- What is currently shaping my attitude—circumstances or God?

- How can I intentionally practice gratitude daily?

Sticky Quote:

“Gratitude doesn’t ignore brokenness—it redirects your focus to God.”

Main Point 2: Gratitude Can Be Difficult in Painful Seasons

Explanation

There are times when gratitude feels:

- Forced
- Difficult
- Nearly impossible

The transcript describes:

- Seasons of loss
- Emotional brokenness
- Spiritual confusion

“Sometimes it’s hard to find things to be thankful for.”

Spiritual Truth

Even in pain:

- God is present
- God is working
- God is drawing us closer

Personal Practice

Start small:

- Thank God for a new day
- Thank God for breath
- Thank God for His presence

Application

- What small things can I thank God for today?
- How can gratitude draw me closer to God in hardship?

Sticky Quote:

“Gratitude often begins with the smallest ‘thank you.’”

Main Point 3: The Ichabod Moment – When It Feels Like God is Gone

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 4:19–22

Explanation

“Ichabod” means:

- “The glory has departed”

It represents:

- Loss
- Defeat
- Spiritual emptiness

“We’ve all had an Ichabod moment.”

Spiritual Insight

Ichabod seasons:

- Reveal our dependence on God
- Expose hardened hearts
- Invite repentance

Application

- Where in my life does it feel like God is absent?
- What has led me to that place?

Sticky Quote:

“Ichabod moments are not the end of the story.”

Main Point 4: The Turning Point – Repentance and Surrender

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 7:3–6

Explanation

The Israelites:

- Turned away from idols
- Confessed their sin
- Returned to God

Spiritual Truth

Victory came not from:

- Strength
- Strategy

But from:

- Surrender
- Repentance
- Dependence on God

“They won because they surrendered.”

Application

- What do I need to surrender to God today?
- What distractions or idols need to be removed?

Sticky Quote:

“Breakthrough begins where surrender starts.”

Main Point 5: The Ebenezer Moment – Remembering God’s Faithfulness

Explanation

An **Ebenezer** means:

- “Stone of help”
- A reminder of God’s faithfulness

“Thus far the Lord has helped us.”

Spiritual Contrast

- **Ichabod** = despair
- **Ebenezer** = deliverance

Powerful Truth

The Ebenezer was set:

- In the same place as defeat

Spiritual Insight

God can:

- Redeem painful places
- Rewrite broken stories
- Transform sorrow into testimony

Application

- What are my “Ebenezer moments”?
- How has God helped me in the past?

Sticky Quote:

“God turns places of defeat into monuments of victory.”

Main Point 6: Gratitude Transforms Our Story

Explanation

Gratitude:

- Reframes pain

- Reveals purpose
- Restores hope

“It turns pain into places of praise.”

Illustration

Like stained glass:

- Broken pieces become beauty
- Light shines through the cracks

Spiritual Truth

God uses:

- Brokenness
- Hardship
- Struggles

To create:

- Beauty
- Testimony
- Transformation

Application

- How is God using my brokenness?
- What story is He writing through my life?

Sticky Quote:

“God shines His light through broken places.”

Main Point 7: Gratitude Builds Faith for the Future

Explanation

Every act of thanksgiving:

- Strengthens trust

- Builds faith
- Anchors hope

Spiritual Insight

Remembering the past:

- Fuels faith for the future

Application Idea

Create your own “Ebenezer stones”:

- Write down moments of God’s faithfulness
- Keep reminders visible

Application

- What reminders of God’s faithfulness can I create?
- How can I practice daily remembrance?

Sticky Quote:

“Every ‘thank you’ becomes a stone of remembrance.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does gratitude look like in your current season?
 2. Have you experienced an “Ichabod moment”? What did it teach you?
 3. How has God shown His faithfulness in your life?
 4. What would it look like to “raise an Ebenezer” today?
 5. How can gratitude change your perspective on current struggles?
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Practical Application Steps

1. Practice Daily Gratitude

- Start each day by thanking God for something specific

2. Identify Your Ebenezers

- Write down key moments where God helped you

3. Shift Your Focus

- Replace complaints with thanksgiving

4. Surrender Fully

- Let go of control and trust God

5. Share Your Story

- Encourage others by sharing your testimony

Closing Prayer

Father,
Thank You for Your faithfulness in every season—
in our victories and in our struggles.

Help us to cultivate grateful hearts,
to remember Your goodness,
and to trust You even when life is hard.

Teach us to raise our Ebenezer daily,
declaring that You have helped us
and will continue to guide us.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Takeaway

Gratitude doesn't deny your pain—it declares that God is still faithful in the middle of it.