

Discussion Questions



Introduction

This guide is based on a sermon exploring what it truly means to give thanks. Using the story of Noah as a foundation, we examined how genuine thanksgiving is not just a seasonal feeling or a holiday tradition, but an act of worship directed toward God. The goal of this discussion is to move beyond simply being aware that we could be thankful and to actually become people who are thankful, every day, in every season.

Key Takeaways

- Thanksgiving is not just a holiday or a feeling. At its core, it is an act of worship directed toward God.
- Noah's very first act after leaving the ark was not to address urgent needs or tasks. It was to build an altar and worship God.
- Gratitude deepens when we recognize that everything we have is a gift of grace, not something we have earned or are entitled to.
- Real thanksgiving does not depend on favorable circumstances. It can and should be practiced in ordinary and even difficult seasons of life.
- Genuine thanks is not only expressed in words but also through renewed commitment to God in how we live.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. What is one Thanksgiving tradition your family has, and what makes it meaningful to you? Is there anything about that tradition that connects to worship or gratitude toward God?

Exploring the Sermon

2. Noah's first act after 375 days in the ark was to build an altar and worship God, before addressing any of the urgent practical needs around him. Why do you think worship came first for Noah? What does that tell us about his relationship with God?
3. The sermon drew a distinction between being aware that we could be thankful and actually being thankful. What is the difference between those two things in your own life? Can you think of a time when you were aware of a blessing but never stopped to genuinely thank God for it?
4. Genesis 6:5 describes the depth of human wickedness that led to the flood, yet Noah found favor with God. How does understanding God's mercy in that story shape the way you think about the mercy God has shown in your own life?
5. The sermon mentioned that Noah's offering was both a gift of thanks and a recommitment to God. Why is it important that thanksgiving and commitment go together? What happens to our gratitude when areas of our lives remain uncommitted to God?
6. The sermon challenged us not to let thanksgiving depend on circumstances. How do you personally find it difficult to be thankful during seasons of waiting, grief, or uncertainty? What would it look like to practice worship in those moments?

Going Deeper

7. Think back on your life and identify a moment when you realized God had protected or spared you, whether from something dangerous, a destructive choice, or a situation beyond your control. How did you respond in that moment? Did it lead to worship?
8. The sermon suggested that gratitude shapes not only how we feel but how we live and how we treat others. Can you think of a specific way that a deeper sense of gratitude toward God has changed or could change the way you relate to the people around you?
9. The five practical points from the sermon were: put worship first, remember that mercy is undeserved, look back at close calls and quiet protection, do not let thanksgiving depend on circumstances, and let thanks lead to renewed commitment. Which of these five is the most challenging for you personally, and why?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice individually or as a group this week.

Daily Worship Before Anything Else Before reaching for your phone or beginning your morning routine, spend two minutes giving God thanks out loud. Do this every morning for the next seven days and notice how it shapes the rest of your day.

Name What You Did Not Earn Write down three things in your life that you did not earn, things like family, health, the country you were born in, or your salvation. Pray over each one by name every day this week, thanking God specifically for each.

Share a Testimony Think of one moment in your life when God protected or spared you. Share that story with someone this week, whether a family member, a friend, or someone in this group, as an act of worship and a witness to God's faithfulness.

Practice Thanksgiving on an Ordinary Day At the end of each day this week, name one ordinary mercy from that day. Say it out loud or write it down. Pay attention to how your awareness of God's presence grows as you make this a habit.

Identify What Needs to Be Recommitted Spend time in prayer asking God what area of your life needs to be recommitted to Him. It might be a habit of prayer, generosity, serving others, or reconciling a relationship. Take one concrete step toward that recommitment before the group meets again.

Closing Reflection

Noah did not wait until his circumstances were comfortable or his future was certain before he worshiped. He stepped off the ark into an empty, unfamiliar world and the first thing he did was turn toward God. That is the kind of thanksgiving that goes beyond a holiday. It is a posture of the heart that says, no matter what is around me, I know where every good thing in my life comes from.

As your group closes in prayer, take a moment for each person to name one specific thing they are genuinely thankful for today, not just aware of, but truly grateful for, and offer it to God together.