

Life Group Guide “Thankful”

November 26- December 1st 2018

Prep: This week, we will be focusing on the power of gratitude and thanksgiving in our lives. This is a topic that may sometimes feel overplayed in church circles, but we believe that gratitude can have the ability to shift spiritual atmospheres in peoples lives in a powerful way. We are coming out of the Thanksgiving holiday, and have a great opportunity to start a conversation with our groups. As leaders, make sure to spend some time with the Lord building up some authentic *gratitude* in your life before leading this discussion- it will position you for a better discussion!

Please make sure to review the material in the guide so you are prepared for the conversation in your Life Group.

Welcome:

Take a few minutes to reconnect with your group.

Video:

Show the video. It is about 3 minutes long. It will set up the conversation on thankfulness.

The Last Supper-Luke 22:7-22

7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. **8** Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.” **9** “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked. **10** He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, **11** and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ **12** He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.” **13** They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. **14** When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. **15** And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. **16** For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” **17** After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. **18** For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” **19** And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” **20** In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.[a] **21** But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. **22** The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed.

Reflection/Vision Statement Time

- We recommend taking about 4-5 minutes for people to reflect after the passage. But before you do, say something like:
 - “I encourage you to first take a couple minutes to reflect on this passage and the video, come up with any questions, connections, or what the passages says to you tonight.”

Questions for Discussion:

(Choose your favorites ahead of time that you think will benefit your group the most)

Question: What is the best memory of a Thanksgiving celebration you can remember? What made it so positive?

Question: Do you find Thanksgiving to be a spiritually impactful holiday? Why or why not?

Question: Where does Jesus give thanks in the scripture passage? Why does he do this when he does it?

Observation: Jesus was eating his last meal with his disciples and friends, knowing that he was going to die soon. Yet, he still gives thanks to God before the meal.

Question: Have you experienced gratitude more as an emotion, or as a decision (both are valid!)? Share some of these stories!

Observation: Gratitude is both an emotion *and* a choice. In the scripture, Jesus has to choose thankfulness to God, even when he is about to die. He does this not out of mere obligation, but because of the spiritual benefits of gratitude.

Question: When we *choose* gratitude, what kind of spiritual benefits/strengthening do we receive? What changes in our hearts and in our conversations with God?

Question: What is the benefit of practicing thankfulness when we don't feel like it? How do we do this authentically?

Observation: Giving thanks individually is an incredibly important thing. But in the scripture, Jesus is *incredibly* intentional in the people whom he shares his thanksgiving with.

Question: What is the value or power in giving thanks and practicing gratitude as a *community*? Who are the people who feel the most natural for you to do this with?

Observation: Jesus gives thanks not just in this circumstance, but in *many* passages in the gospels (Matthew 11, John 6 and 11)

Question: What does it look like for us to live a lifestyle of gratitude? What kind of doors does this open for us as Christians?

Prayer:

(LIFE GROUP LEADERS): Open up an opportunity for your group to express thanks to God in prayer. Also, open up an opportunity for anyone who may be in a season in which gratitude feels difficult to receive prayer for that as well.