



Small Group Discussion Resource – Thanksgiving 2022

For this discussion resource we will be examining two different Psalms that encourage us to be thankful.

Psalm 103

1. Read Psalm 103 two times together. Once in the Message paraphrase and then also in the NASB version. Share any highlights or impressions that immediately impact you.
2. Reflect on what that great preacher, C.H Spurgeon said about Psalm 103 – *“Here David begins to list his blessings received which he researches as themes for praise. He selects a few of the choicest pearls from the divine love, threads them on the string of memory, and hangs them on the neck of gratitude”*. C.H. Spurgeon
3. Think of why David is bursting with praise in this song by considering what C.S. Lewis says; “It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with” (C. S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms).
4. David urges us to *not forget* what God has done for us (*forget not his benefits*). Why are we so often prone to forgetting what he has done and continues to do for us?
5. David lists five benefits of God we are to remember. Reflect on each of these and share your thoughts and experiences.
 - **We are to thank God for the forgiveness we have through Christ**
Bless the Lord who pardons all your guilt.

Look at how David expresses his thoughts of this in verses 10-12

¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our guilty deeds. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. ¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our wrongdoings from us.

Question – how far is the east to the west?

- **We are to thank God for the health we experience in our lives**

Bless the Lord who heals all your diseases.

Does the Lord heal “all” of our diseases? We know that physical death is the result of our sin, but by virtue of our faith in Christ, we will be raised from the dead to live with the Lord forever. In that way, ultimately, all of us will experience spiritual and physical healing. But healing can take many other forms. Share some ways in which God has brought healing to your lives.

Reflect on this quote by George Matheson, the well-known blind preacher of Scotland: “*My God, I have never thanked Thee for my “thorn!” I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my “thorn;” I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my “thorn.” Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.*” (Moody Monthly, Tan, P. L. 1996).

- **We are to be thankful to God for how he has rescued us.**

Bless the Lord who redeems your life from the pit.

When you hear the word “pit” what comes to mind?

What were some of the “pits” that King David fell into over the course of his life?

Reflect on the opening lines of David’s song in Psalm 40,

I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. ² He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. ³ He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

Share a time when you had a similar experience.

- **We are to be thankful for his gracious kindness.**

Bless the Lord who crowns you with favor and compassion.

Reflect on what one pastor said ... *We deserve rejection, we get acceptance. We deserve wrath, we get mercy. We deserve hell, we get heaven. We deserve the adversary, we get the advocate.*

Reflect on Lamentations 3:22-23 - *Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

- **We are to be thankful for his constant provision and renewal**

Bless the Lord who satisfies your years with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

Reflect on Isaiah 40 - *Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

Share a few life stories of when God strengthened you.

How do you feel about this idea expressed by Brennan Manning? *–It is simply not possible to be simultaneously grateful and resentful.*

This week, read this quote from Chuck Swindoll and do a quick attitude check. *"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes"*

Spend some time praying together that God would give you an attitude of gratitude.

Psalm 69

1. Read the following excerpts from the Psalms in the ESV translation, what stands out from those passages?
 - a. Psalm 69:30-32
 - b. Psalm 34:3

2. Discuss this quote by R.C. Sproul on Thanksgiving:

“Do everything so that God might be magnified. If you have met the living Son of God, Jesus Christ, and have joined yourself to him in faith, then does not your heart say with Paul, “It is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not at all be ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be magnified in my body whether by life or by death”? Therefore, I say it is the mark of all God’s true children that they long to magnify the God of their salvation and his Son Jesus Christ.”

3. Search “Best Hubble Telescope Images” together. Everyone pick a favourite and talk about what is significant about it for you.
4. There are two meanings of the word magnify. One means to make something small appear bigger than it is. Like in the case of a microscope or magnifying glass. The other is to make something big appear as it truly is, like a telescope. When we’re called to magnify God – what does it mean for us?
5. There are three big reasons why we struggle to give thanks, discuss each of the following:
 - a. **We do not see:**
 - i. Read Romans 1:20-21 in the NIV – what stands out to you from that text? Can you relate to it? Have you seen this bear itself out in your life or in the lives of people you know?
 - ii. Discuss this quote from John Piper:
“Many of God’s greatest attributes and most awesome and loving deeds pass in one ear and out the other without causing the slightest ripple of emotion within our hearts. Seeing we do not see, and hearing we do not hear.”
 - b. **We forget:**
 - i. Read Psalm 77:11. How does this relate or reinforce to what you’ve already discussed from your discussion on Psalm 103?
 - c. **We’re too concerned with our glory instead of His:**

- i. Has there ever been a time in your life where you didn't want to give credit to someone else? Whether it was God, or another person, how did you work that out?
 - ii. Read Psalm 51:17 as well as this quote:
*“Jesus said: “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.” Jesus has nothing to do for those who insist they are well. But He demands something great from each of us: **that we admit we are not great.**”*
6. How do we avoid turning Thanksgiving just into “Turkey Day”, where we enjoy the tradition without engaging in the act of truly expressing gratitude to God?
 - a. Discuss as a group some ways that you can either as a group, or as families, or as individuals do something special to mark Thanksgiving as a moment of focus on the mercy of God in our lives.