

Sermon audio is available online – be sure to listen to the message before engaging in this talksheet.
The sermon outline is available at the end of this talksheet.

OPEN WITH PRAYER

ICE BREAKERS...

- When do you grumble the most (in the car, paying bills, at work)? Why?
- For what are you most grateful? Would someone close to you say that you express this gratitude often?
- How can we show appreciation to others?

THE WORD OF GOD / DISCUSSION POINTS...



Read Ephesians 5:19b-20 and Colossians 3:15b-17

- In what ways does Paul say we should express our thankfulness to God?
- How do you personally practice this?
- Do you have struggles with thankfulness to God? Why or why not?



Read Philippians 2:14-16a

- How does God view our ingratitude (or grumbling)?
- Does anyone in the group need help to stop grumbling about something?

*More gratitude will not come from more acquisitions,
but from more awareness of God's presence and God's goodness*

- In what ways does the world contradict the above statement?
- Have you found this statement to be true? If so, share an example from your life.



Read I Thessalonians 5:16-18

- When are we to give thanks?
- This verse tells us to give thanks “in” all circumstances, not “for” all circumstances. Why do you think that is? What does this mean in practice?
- Restate the underlying idea in these verses.
- How do you react to this – is it familiar and comfortable, or something at which you will have to work?

The more I think I'm entitled to, the less I'll be grateful for.

Can you explain how the statement above is true?



Read Romans 8:28

I need to learn to be grateful for imperfect people and imperfect circumstances

Based on Romans 8:28, how is it that we can be thankful “in” all circumstances, even though the circumstance itself may be bad?

APPLICATION...

- How often each week do you actually give thanks to God?
- What stops us from being more grateful to God?
- What habits can we adopt to become more grateful to God?
- How can your small group pray for you to help your growth in gratitude?

CLOSE IN PRAYER...

Spend time thanking God, silently or aloud in a few words. Conclude with the Lord’s Prayer.

PERSONAL EXPERIMENTS / GOING DEEPER...

1. Write a gratitude letter to somebody who has made an impact on your life.

If possible, meet with them in person and read the letter to them, word for word, slowly – looking them in the eye and saying ‘this is why I’m grateful to God for you.’

2. Like the Jews, practice saying ‘benedictions’ (prayers of thanksgiving to God) when you wake up in the morning – thanking God for all sorts of blessings in your life.

3. In a journal or on a piece of paper, make a list of things and people you are thankful for today.

4. Take time at the end of the day to review your day with God.

Sit in silence. Take a few deep breaths to relax. Invite Jesus to be present with you. Thank Him for being with you as you review your day with Him. Reflect back in your mind to when you first woke up. Look at the scene as if on video. Notice what was going on for you. Begin a conversation with God about where you sensed Him being with you and where He seemed absent to you.

Continue through your day going from one scene to another, from one person to another, from one circumstance to another. Notice what your experience was in each of those situations... Gratitude? Regret? Sadness? Excitement? Again, talk with God (or journal your conversation in writing) about what was going on for you in each scene, noticing where you found Him to be present or absent to you. Perhaps you are led to confess some things about your own attitudes or actions. Maybe you’ll be prompted to go back to someone and apologize or take action in some other way.

Close your time with God in prayer, thanking Him for His love and mercy and grace towards you. Ask Him to give you a night of rest that will bring you to a new day to live with Him.

5. Read [The Practice of the Presence of God](#) by Brother Lawrence.



OUTLINE
'The 18'
I Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (I Thessalonians 5:16-18)

"Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:19-20)

"...And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:15-17)

***More gratitude will not come from more acquisitions,
but from more awareness of God's presence and God's goodness***

Gratitude Will Always Involve a...

1. Benefit

"Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things..." (Psalm 103:2-5)

2. Benefactor

"Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..." (James 1:16-17)

3. Beneficiary

The more I think I'm entitled to, the less I'll be grateful for

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile..." (Romans 1:21)

"And do not grumble, as some of them did - and were killed by the destroying angel." (I Corinthians 10:10)

The Shema

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

The 18 Benedictions - 'Shemoneh Esrei'

"One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer - at three in the afternoon." (Acts 3:1)

"...Lord, teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1)

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." (Matthew 6:9)

"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it." (Psalm 24:1)

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take it; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it." (Mark 14:22-23)

***I need to learn to be grateful for
imperfect people and imperfect circumstances***

*"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God..."
(Romans 8:28)*

Link to the 18 Benedictions: <http://tzion.org/articles/EighteenBenedictions.htm>