



Session Three

THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF THANKSGIVING

There is a level of life we can reach where we practice thanksgiving as a lifestyle—a place where we remember our answered prayers. When difficulty comes along, we have a huge inventory of blessings instantly accessible to bring us into God’s presence as well as the joy and delight He has over us. That is a reality far greater than any accusation, crisis, or conflict that could come our way. When we learn to live in this realm, nothing can deflect us from our purpose. We even make the enemy help us get it done. From Heaven’s perspective, it is reasonable to give thanks “in everything”!

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 THESSALONIANS 5:16–18).



Week 3

VIDEO LISTENING GUIDE

Any area of our lives where we have no _____
is under the influence of a lie.

Benefits of Thanksgiving

1. Thanksgiving keeps you in a place
of _____.
2. Thanksgiving keeps you in the _____ of what
God is doing.
3. Thanksgiving enables you to stay _____ of God,
His Presence, and His promise.
4. Thanksgiving gives you an _____
with the King.

In thanksgiving and praise, what we _____ is the
offering.

In worship, we _____ the offering.

1. Thanksgiving can supernaturally change
our _____.
2. Thanksgiving _____.
3. Thanksgiving continues, even when there
is _____.

Whenever there is death, loss, and destruction, you've seen the fingerprints of the _____.

Faith does not deny a problem's existence; it denies it a place of _____.

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving” (PSALM 100:4).

SUMMARY

Thanksgiving is absolutely vital to entering the gates of the Lord and receiving supernatural strength from His Presence. In fact, it is very difficult for us to move into the place of genuine praise apart from thanksgiving. While praise responds to the nature of God, thanksgiving celebrates the acts of God. Thanksgiving is intentional about parading before our minds the mighty acts, works, and miraculous exploits of the Lord—and responds to them with enthusiasm and gratitude. Thanksgiving is a strong and steady anchor for our hearts, as it keeps us ever mindful of what God *is doing* rather than buying into the lack-based perspective of an enemy who is always trying to get the people of God focused on what is supposedly *not* happening.

We strengthen ourselves in the Lord by choosing an attitude of thanksgiving, as this helps us to stay more aware of what God *is doing*, how God *is moving*, and what God *is bringing to pass* in our lives, rather than crumbling before the circumstances or impossibilities that seek to intimidate us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does thanksgiving keep us in a place of humility?
2. Explain how thanksgiving is part of the protocol for entering God's Presence.

3. Describe how living in a place of thanksgiving keeps you more mindful of God's work in *your* life.
4. Based on 1 Timothy 4:1-5, how can thanksgiving sanctify and cleanse?
5. Discuss some of the different benefits of thanksgiving.
6. What does it mean to offer up thanks, even in times of mystery?
7. What does the following statement mean to you: "Faith does not deny a problem's existence; it denies it the place of influence."
8. In this session, Pastor Bill taught about how thanksgiving disarms the devil and puts his weapon into *your hand*. Share a testimony of how thanksgiving turned your difficult circumstance around.

ACTIVATION EXERCISE: RECALIBRATE YOUR HEART WITH THANKSGIVING

Make a list of 1) what you are thankful for, and 2) circumstances you are presently dealing with that you will choose to be thankful in the *midst of*.

Goal: Learn to become more aware of what God has done and is doing in your life than the circumstances you are going through.

THANKSGIVING THAT AGREES WITH HEAVEN



“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (JAMES 1:17).

Thanksgiving is the only proper way to receive what God has given us because it honors our relationship with Him by expressing trust in His goodness, even if we don't yet understand what we've received.

Thanksgiving agrees with Heaven by acknowledging the truth that our lives are a gift from God and that He is sovereign over all. God is extravagantly generous, and the life He has given us to experience on this planet is not a life of survival but of abundance and blessing. But unless we properly recognize what we've been given, we won't be able to experience that life. That's the reality of receiving a gift. If we don't understand what we've been given, we won't understand its purpose and be able to experience its benefit.

Imagine Christmas morning. You've spent the last few months shopping and picking out unique gifts for each of your family members that show your intimate knowledge of their interests and desires. You have spared no expense to get gifts of the highest

quality that will be both enjoyable and beneficial to each person. But when your family comes to the Christmas tree, one person completely ignores the presents. Another person opens your gift, but starts using it for something other than what it was made for. Still another just holds the gift and refuses to unwrap it. And to make matters worse, none of them even acknowledge that their gifts are from you. Can you see how these responses are not only foolish, but are deeply harmful to the relationship?

Sadly, this is how many Christians respond to God's gifts. Thankfulness carries an attitude of humility. Thanksgiving is the only proper way to receive what God has given us because it honors our relationship with Him by expressing trust in His goodness, even if we don't yet understand what we've received. God gives us "every good and perfect gift" for two primary reasons. He gives to make us prosper so we can succeed in life, and He gives to demonstrate His love as an invitation to relationship. When we practice thanksgiving as a lifestyle, we recognize that the gifts we have received from the Lord came with these purposes. Thanksgiving sets us on a course to know God in relationship and discover the reasons for which He made us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God gives us good gifts? What do these reveal about who He is?

2. What are some of the results of thanksgiving?

EMPOWERMENT PRAYER

Father God, thank You for everything You are doing in my life. I choose to focus on what You are doing, as You are active and working. [Take some time to give thanks for things that come to mind.] Change my mind, Holy Spirit. Help me to become much more mindful of all the good gifts You are constantly releasing into my life every single day! You are the giver of all good gifts, and I thank You for Your lovingkindness and generosity toward me.

Day Twelve

THANKSGIVING THAT SUPERNATURALLY SANCTIFIES



“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1 TIMOTHY 4:1–5).

When you give thanks, the weapon the enemy meant to use to dislodge you from your divine purpose is put into your hands and becomes the very thing that brings you more fully into that purpose.

Food was one of the biggest “disputable matters” that the early Church struggled with, particularly regarding the issue of eating food offered to idols. Jewish and Gentile believers alike feared that this food was defiled by having been dedicated to demonic spirits. False teachers of the time preyed upon this superstition and caused all kinds of bondage and division. Interestingly, in this passage Paul doesn’t debunk the superstition and say that dedicating food to idols is powerless. He simply says that combining thanksgiving with the Word and prayer is

powerful enough to de-authorize that dedication and create a stronger one—a dedication to the Lord. He is saying thanksgiving *sanctifies* whatever it touches.

When Paul says that thanksgiving sanctifies unclean food, he is saying that it sets it apart for God and His purposes. Thanksgiving actually changes the very nature of the food into something holy. This truth extends beyond unclean food. It extends to every situation in your life in which you find other powers at work besides the power of God. It's vital to remember that not everything that happens in life is His will. He didn't cause the crisis a nation or individual may be facing. He actually *can't* give things that are not good because He doesn't have them. Someone can only give what he has. God only gives good gifts, because He is good and has only good gifts to give.

So giving thanks in everything does not mean saying that the adversity came from God. But giving thanks in the midst of an adverse situation, a difficulty intended to undermine your faith and destroy you, enables you to take hold of that situation and set it apart to God and His purposes. When you give thanks, the weapon the enemy meant to use to dislodge you from your divine purpose is put into your hands and becomes the very thing that brings you more fully into that purpose. Jesus declared that He sends us out with the same assignment the Father gave to Him—to destroy the works of the devil (see 1 John 3:8). Thanksgiving accomplishes the divine justice of the Kingdom, where the enemy is destroyed by the very thing he intended to use for our destruction. Just knowing that we can participate in destroying the enemy's purposes should move us to give thanks!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does thanksgiving destroy the works of the devil?

2. What is one difficult situation you are currently facing that needs to be sanctified with thanksgiving?

EMPOWERMENT PRAYER

God, thank You for equipping me with tools that turn what the enemy intends for evil into something good and full of purpose. I want to acknowledge right now that You did not cause the difficult situation I am facing, and I choose to receive Your grace to walk through it victoriously. [Thank God for whatever is appropriate to give thanks for in your specific situation.] Thank You for Your love and commitment to me in every season! You are with me. You are for me. You are bringing me through, and You are arming me with a testimony of Your faithfulness!

Day Thirteen

THANKSGIVING THAT RELEASES JUSTICE



“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations” (PSALM 100:4-5).

We don’t engage battle by focusing on the devil. We keep our focus on the King and His Kingdom, and the devil cannot help but be unseated by God’s ever-increasing government released through our lives.

One of the clearest examples of divine justice in Scripture is found in the Book of Esther—the story of Haman, who was hung on the very gallows he built to destroy Mordecai. Later, this justice was made even more complete when Mordecai assumed Haman’s position in the king’s court.

The wonderful thing about this story is that Mordecai didn’t have to bring justice himself. He simply kept his focus on his duty to the heathen king and to his people. This is the nature of warfare in the Kingdom. We don’t battle by focusing on the devil. We keep our focus on the King and His Kingdom, and the devil cannot help but be unseated by God’s ever-increasing government released through our lives, which illustrates another reason why thanksgiving is powerful in times of adversity.

EMPOWERMENT PRAYER

Lord, I take time right now to enter into Your courts with thanksgiving. Thank You for Your mercy and grace. Thank You that You love me with an everlasting love and want to have a relationship with me. Thank You so much for the provision You made at the cross for me to live a full and abundant life. Thank You that You don't want me to just survive from day to day—You want me to flourish, grow, mature, and move from glory to glory!

Day Fourteen

THANKSGIVING INCREASES OUR
AWARENESS OF GOD'S GREATNESS



“For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. ... Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (PSALM 50:12,14-15).

The enemy lies to us to make us think problems are bigger than the solutions we carry.

I have purposed to try to live in such a way that nothing ever gets bigger than my consciousness of God's presence. Sometimes conflict can be as simple as bad news on TV. If it starts to weigh on my heart and grow bigger than my awareness of God, I consciously turn my affection toward Him to become more aware of His presence.

If that doesn't work, I turn off the TV or leave the room to redirect my focus until my awareness of Him is bigger than that which weighs heavily on my heart. I can't just know in my head that He's bigger; I have to have my entire being in a position where I am aware of His presence and expect His world to invade my life and circumstances. If I don't sustain this expectation, I will expect other forces to be the prime movers in my life and will begin to live defensively instead of offensively.

When I stay close to the presence of God through thanksgiving, I not only become aware of His absolute ability to invade the impossible, I sense His radical love and delight in me! As I give thanks for the good gifts He's put in my life, I present convincing evidence that He is my Father, He is for me, and His opinion pretty much cancels out all the others.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think it is an unhealthy idea to focus *more* on the problems in our lives and in the world than the goodness of God? How does turning this perspective around—going from focusing on the negative to focusing on the work of God—strengthen us in the Lord?

2. Can you notice when your awareness of circumstances grows bigger than your awareness of God? What are some examples of what that looks like in your life—when your awareness of problems becomes greater than your awareness of God? Next time that happens, what can you do to increase your awareness of God?

EMPOWERMENT PRAYER

Thank You Father for Your ability to invade every impossible situation in my life. I'm thankful that You have given me the ability to focus on what You are doing and not be discouraged by problems. Help me to continually look to Your perspective—then I will always be looking at circumstances from the vantage point of Your victory!

Day Fifteen

DO THE MATH!



“Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (NEHEMIAH 8:10 NASB).

It becomes really hard to stay depressed about your circumstances when you’re filled with the awareness of the love and goodness of God that surrounds and infuses your life.

The wonderful thing is that when we simply begin to give thanks, even when it seems difficult to remember one answered prayer, it isn’t too long before our *focus* on the good in our lives creates an opening for the Lord’s joy. And it’s the joy of the Lord that is our strength.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials (JAMES 1:2).

I believe that James was talking about giving thanks when he said to *count* it all joy in trials, because giving thanks usually includes taking an inventory of God’s gifts in your life. Do the math! If you want to discover the ability of thankfulness to bring you strength in difficulty, you need to keep *counting* these things *until* you come to the conclusion—it’s time to rejoice! It becomes really hard to stay depressed about your circumstances when

you're filled with the awareness of the love and goodness of God that surrounds and infuses your life.

There is a level of life we can reach where we practice thanksgiving as a lifestyle—a place where we remember our answered prayers. When difficulty comes along, we have a huge inventory of blessings instantly accessible to bring us into His presence as well as the joy and delight He has over us. That is a reality far greater than any accusation, crisis, or conflict that could come our way. When we learn to live in this realm, nothing can deflect us from our purpose. We even make the enemy help us get it done. From Heaven's perspective, it is reasonable to give thanks “in everything”!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Explain how there is power in remembering God's blessings. How does *remembering* release thanksgiving?

2. How is it possible to “*count it all joy*” when you are going through difficulty and trials (based on James 1:2)?

EMPOWERMENT PRAYER

Jesus, You give me joy in exchange for sadness as I remember the good things You have done for me. So Lord, I choose—right now—to be mindful of the good things You have done and are doing. I don't pretend my problems away; I simply refuse to believe that they have more power than You do! You are the mighty One. You have come through in my life, time after time. The Bible is my written record of Your faithfulness... throughout history. You have moved, and You will move again. You have saved, and You will save again. You have healed, and You will heal again. I choose to stay mindful of Your works and offer up Thanksgiving because You are the same—yesterday, today, and forever!

FOR DEEPER STUDY...

Apostolic Admonition <https://shop.ibethel.org/products/apostolic-admonition-11-00am-october-31-2010>

Wondrous Ways of War <https://shop.ibethel.org/products/wondrous-ways-of-war-8-30am-february-20-2011>

The Place of Strength <https://shop.ibethel.org/products/the-place-of-strength-11-00am-october-14-2012>

OTHER BETHEL RESOURCES

The Supernatural Power of Thanksgiving by Chris Overstreet <https://shop.ibethel.org/products/the-supernatural-power-of-thanksgiving>

One of Those Days by Danny Silk <https://shop.ibethel.org/products/one-of-those-days-8-30am-april-29-2012>

Your Voice by Eric Johnson <https://shop.ibethel.org/products/your-voice-8-30am-august-28-2011>

The Creative Power of Thanksgiving by Bishop Joseph Garlington <https://shop.ibethel.org/products/the-creative-power-of-thanksgiving-10-30am-march-03-2013>