



Cultivating a Thankful Heart

With Diana de Fouler, Central America Director
of Moms in Prayer International

To view the accompanying video, go to
MomsinPrayer.org/Cultivating-Thankful-Heart-Bible-Study/

Group Discussion Question: Does thanking someone come easily to you or do you sometimes find it difficult to give thanks?

1. Praise and Thanksgiving can be interconnected. For example, thanksgiving can be a form of praise. They are also distinctly different. At Moms in Prayer, we describe **praise as focusing on who God is**, and **thanksgiving as focusing on what He has done**. Look up the scripture below, and note how the psalmist says we should enter into God's presence.

Psalm 95:2

Psalm 100:4

2. In the video, Diana explains that "a thankful heart is one that recognizes the goodness of God." A thankful heart is also a humble heart which knows its position before the God of the universe, and bows in reverence, awe, wonder and gratitude. Our gratitude represents our understanding of how much God has given us and how much he has done for us, and how little we deserve it.

Read **Psalm 9:1**. Practice cultivating a thankful heart by setting a timer for two minutes, using the prompts below, and write down ways in which you are thankful.

Thank You, Lord, for blessing me by...

Thank You, Lord, that you have saved me...

Thank You, Lord, for the way you have transformed me...

Thank You, Lord, for how you answered my prayer of...

3. Diana tells the story of Jesus and the ten lepers from Luke 17:11-19.

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Do you think the nine lepers were also grateful they were healed? I'm sure they were, so why didn't they express their gratefulness to Jesus? From time to time, we all are like the nine lepers. What would you say is the most common reason you forget to express your thankfulness to God?

4. If you've ever run a marathon, you don't just wake up one morning and run 26.2 miles. You practice and train day after day. Some days are rainy, some sunny, some you have sore feet or legs, but you do it anyway. The same is true with cultivating gratitude on good days, busy days, frustrating days and days when life is just plain messy. Just as the runner is transformed to go the distance, as we cultivate a habit of offering thanks, we are being transformed. Our faith is being built up, we recognize answered prayers, we see who God is (protector, deliverer, provider etc.) and our attitudes are transformed to a joy-filled contentment.

Read Psalm 136 and note ways David thanks God.

5. A study on human thoughts from the National Science Foundation provided surprising results. They found that of the more than 12,000 thoughts per day of an average person, 80% were negative. This would imply that the tendencies of our minds seem to focus on the negative. However, when we offer thanks, we become transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). In her book, *Standing in the Gap for Your Children*, Fern Nichols, Moms in Prayer Founder, says:

“A benefit of giving thanks is that your attitude changes. Thanksgiving crowds out depression, cynicism, fear, self-pity and self-debasement. You begin to see the situation from a different perspective - from God’s. It brings the light of God’s presence into the situation.”

What have you complained about this week? What was something in that situation you could have given thanks for?

6. The Hebrew term for gratitude is *hakarat ha’tov*, which translates to: “recognizing the good.” So, when you see something good in your life, point it out. Thank God for it.

Occasionally we all complain, but practice responding to your own complaining by finding things to be thankful for. This helps to rewire your brain to be as proficient at recognizing the good in your life as you are at identifying the bad.

What helps you cultivate a thankful heart? A Gratitude Journal? Keeping a running ‘note’ on your phone? Memorizing Scripture? Setting a timer on your phone as a reminder? Offering prayers of thankfulness when you wake up, at meals or before you go to sleep?

Write a prayer below asking God to help you see things from a different perspective this week. One of thankfulness.



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