

Small Group Leader Notes, November 19, 2006

Sunday Message: *The Discipline of Giving Thanks - 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 - "I THANK GOD FOR YOU"*

To open this week, ask people to share names of people that have blessed them with spiritual blessings. Allow some testimonies of how God has used people to bless others. Encourage your group to go to God in a prayer of thanks for people God has placed in their lives and write a thank you note of encouragement. Help your group continue to cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

Open in a time of prayer. Start by thanking God for specific individuals that have blessed you and then go around the room letting others thank God for individuals that have blessed them.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 100:5 - For the Lord is good, his love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations.*

One of the many good things God does in His enduring love and faithfulness is that He not only saves us but he continues to bless us by placing brothers and sisters around us to care for us, pray for us, teach us, and bless us with every spiritual blessing. He did this in the days of King David. He did this in the days of the Apostle Paul. And He does this in our current day as well.

Daily Personal Reading Schedule:

Day 1 - Psalm 116

Day 2 - Psalm 103

Day 3 - Psalm 147

Day 4 - Psalm 100

Day 5 - Psalm 84

Small Group Study: Psalm 116

Questions:

1. As you read Psalm 116, what is the psalmist grateful about? **He is grateful for mercy; the Lord saved him! This is the ultimate point of Thanksgiving. In recent years the Thanksgiving holiday has become a time for family, parades, football and lots of food. It is good to enjoy life, celebrate together with the ones we love and to enjoy God's gift of the harvest. But Psalm 116 reminds us that in our celebration, we should never fail to celebrate the greatest gift of all, mercy!**
2. What is the Lord's response to our cry for mercy? **When we cry out to the Lord, He turns His ear to us and saves us. He is good to us. He delivers us from death, from tears, from stumbling. Because of His great mercy, we are free!**
3. What should our response be in return? **In this Psalm, we see several responses to the Lord's mercy.**
 - Verse 2 says, "I will call on him as long as I live." We learn we are to go to him in prayer and praise as a response to His mercy.

- Verse 7 says that we can "be at rest once more" because of He saved those in great need.
- Verse 13 says, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord." This reminds me that I will remember the work of Jesus Christ!
- Verse 14 says, "I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of His people." As a confessed follower of Christ. My response to His mercy is to take up my cross and follow Him.
- Verse 17 says, "I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord." In this verse we learn that a sacrifice of thanks is a response to God's mercy and it is always done in the name of the Lord.
- Finally, verse 19 ends with the simple words, "Praise the Lord!" When I reflect on God's mercy, I will praise the Lord!

This Thanksgiving, we recommend that you pray through *Psalms 65* as a Thanksgiving Prayer to celebrate God's goodness for us. Let this day of thanks go beyond the food and festival and let the thanks go to the Lord for His great mercy.

An EVC Family Thanksgiving Prayer:

Father, thank You for providing for every need in our lives. Thank You Father for letting us enjoy your wonderful creation and experience Your power and majesty through the work of Your hand. Thank You for providing food to our tables; for giving shelter to our families. Thank You for the blessing of our children and their children. Thank You for our spouses. Thank You for our love for one another. Thank You for parents and grandparents. Thank You Father, for using them to mold our lives. Thank You for placing love into the hearts of our Christian brothers and sisters around us and letting us share in love for one another. Thank You Father for caring about our every need. Thank You for hearing our prayers. Thank You for the promise to draw near to us and never leave us or forsake us. Thank You for healing sickness. Thank You for mending relationships. Thank You Father for pursuing a love relationship with us. Thank You for Your wonderful plan of salvation. Thank You for sending Jesus to the cross for the sins of the world. Thank You for drawing us to You. Thank You Father, for turning an ear to us and hearing and answering our cry for mercy. Thank You for claiming us and calling us Your children. We thank You and give You all the praise in Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN.

God Bless You,
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