

Small Group Notes for Thanksgiving 2016

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- This week let's talk about giving thanks. Is this an overflow from our circumstances to our heart, or a spiritual discipline that affects our circumstances?
 - Which way is the flow? Outside in or inside out? Some of each?
 - Pastor Mike said, "Thankfulness is not just a feeling based on your circumstances; it's a spiritual discipline that helps you overcome your circumstances." What do you think of that?
- Read **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**.
- More "easier said than done" stuff here! But it is God's will for you!
 - Is it possible to take the Bible too literally?
 - Pastor Mike's response, "Short answer: no. Long answer: yes, if you misinterpret."
- So, how do we interpret 1 Thess 5:16-18?
 - V16: Don't lose your joy. Don't let the darkness of this world become darkness in your heart. Fight to keep faith and love.
 - Can you be sad, devastated, etc? Sure, but keep your joy.
 - V17: Be a person of prayer and don't stop being a person of prayer.
 - The 24/7 idea is just weird and impossible.
 - V18: Be a thankful person whatever your circumstances are.
 - Was Jesus thankful for everything?
 - How about the money changers in the Temple? **John 2:13-16**
 - Jesus saw an injustice and he fought it. He didn't give thanks for it and call it a blessing in disguise. How would you respond to a situation like that?
 - But, did Jesus stop being a thankful person? Certainly not.
- To help us answer our first questions let's ask: What did Jesus give thanks for?
 - Combining NIV, NKJV, and NASB there are basically 4 situations; 6 total references to Jesus giving thanks. Let's look at those situations and ask these three questions:
 - When did Jesus give thanks?
 - What did he give thanks for?
 - What was the result?
 - 1st: feeding the 4,000 and the 5,000. **Matthew 14:15-21** (among other accounts)
 - 2nd: Lazarus' tomb. **John 11:38-44**
 - 3rd: Evaluating his disciples. **Luke 10:17-21** (also Matthew 11:25)
 - 4th: The last supper. **Matthew 26:26-30**.
- What challenges are you facing?
 - When do you give thanks?
 - What do you give thanks for?
 - What will the result be? The miracle power of thankfulness!
 - Giving thanks is a spiritual discipline that will change your circumstances! Keep it up!!!
- If you are not being thankful, what are your other options?
 - Being unthankful, despairing, covetous, greedy, entitled, discontent, blaming, etc.
 - Don't combine thankfulness and unthankfulness: **Romans 12:14**
 - Be thankful and don't curse what you have!
- Pray for each other before you finish up!