

Thankfulness Lesson Twelve

Focal Text: Psalm 100; 103; Luke 17:11-19

Background: Psalm 100; 103; Luke 17:11-19

Teaching Aim: To lead members to determine how to enrich their experiences of worship by identifying specific reasons for worship.

Connect with Life: Begin with a responsive reading based on Psalm 100. Divide the class into two groups. Ask group one to read vv. 1-2 and group two to read v. 3. Then ask group one to read v. 4 and group two to read v. 5. Share with members that this Psalm reminds us of the importance of entering our times of worship with a spirit of joy and thanksgiving. It also reminds us of the reasons for our joy and thanksgiving which are:

1. God created us for his purpose.
2. God is good all the time.

Ask members to recall times in their worship experiences when they were filled with true joy and gladness. Ask them to share some of the reasons they can remember that caused their joy. Then lead them to determine if any of these reasons can be related to the fact that God created us for his purpose.

Ask members to recall times in their worship experiences when they were filled with feelings of thankfulness to God. Ask them to recall reasons for these feelings. Then lead them to determine if any of these reasons can be related to the fact that God is good all the time.

Challenge members to allow this study of Psalm 103 to enrich their times of worship as we identify continued reasons for and examples of meaningful worship.

Guide Bible Study: Ask group one to read vv. 1-2a as an additional call to worship. Ask members to determine who was being called to worship in Psalm 100 and who is being called to worship in Psalm 103. (“All the earth” in Psalm 100 and the individual believer in Psalm 103.) “The expression ‘all that is within me’ refers to all my inward parts. For the individual to bless Yahweh requires the totality of the personality.”

Then ask members to determine who is being called to worship in Psalm 103:20-22. (All the heavenly hosts.) This includes us, if we are Christians, and relates to our eternity in heaven. Challenge members to realize that we are being prepared for eternal worship as we experience worship in this life. This should bring added emphasis to the importance of our study for today.

Then read Psalm 103:2b which says, “...and forget not all his benefits.” Ask members to help you identify these benefits as found in the remaining verses in Psalm 103. Write each benefit on the board and lead members to discuss the meaning of each benefit. For example:

1. The benefit of salvation (vv. 3-4). The psalmist began with a focus on spiritual blessings rather than material blessings. “The strength of renewal is close to the ‘born again’ image of the New Testament.” Ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s salvation through Jesus Christ.
2. The benefit of life’s blessings (v. 5). “These describe the work of God’s grace in our lives. Also, God’s actions lead to renewal of youthfulness.” The blessings of God will be demonstrated in many ways but his greatest blessings will be related to our physical needs. Ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s healing mercy.
3. The benefit of help during times of suffering (v. 6). We can be certain that God’s purpose for our lives will always be accomplished even when it looks as though everything is hopeless. God’s will and God’s justice will always overcome sin and its consequences. Ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s ministry to each of us.
4. The benefit of revelation (v. 7). God has always made his ways known to his people. God continues to reveal himself to each of us today as we maintain a right relationship with him through prayer and Bible study. Ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s continued revelation to each of us.
5. The benefit of grace (vv. 8-14). “This section focuses on relationships within the community of faith. It tells of God’s acts of grace on behalf of God’s people.” These verses present a beautiful picture of God’s grace to us. Ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving that we do not get what we deserve.
6. The benefit of covenant relationship (vv. 15-18). God allowed the children of Israel to enter into a covenant relationship based on His grace and their obedience. Our covenant relationship is based on His grace through Jesus Christ and our obedience to the Lordship of Christ in our lives. “The psalmist broadened his perspective even more. He began with himself and expanded to include the faith community. Beyond that, God has blessed the totality of created humanity.” Ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God for having created us for holiness.
7. The benefit of heaven (v. 19). All of these previous benefits will ultimately point us to the reality of heaven and will better prepare us for our eternity with God. “God’s throne stands firm in the heavens, from which the whole of creation is governed.” Ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the certainty of heaven for us and our loved ones.
8. The benefit of obedience (v. 20-22). Everyone is challenged to show their praise for God through obedience and adherence to His Word. This includes the angels, the heavenly hosts, and his servants (us). This also includes all of creation.

Then enlist someone to read Luke 17:11-19 as members reflect on the following question: “What did the lepers do correctly and where did they go wrong?” Allow members to share their responses. (All of the lepers demonstrated faith in that they did what Christ told them to do. Only one returned to worship Jesus and express thanksgiving for his healing.) Then ask members to reflect on the following question: “Are we satisfied to be the recipients of God’s grace without thanking him?”

Encourage Application: Distribute copies of the following worship guide for members to use this week during their daily time of worship:

Call to Worship- Read Psalm 100 aloud.

Say aloud, “God is good all the time; all the time, God is good.”

Pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God for having created you and for giving purpose and meaning to your life. Focus on what he has called you to do and recommit yourself to that purpose.

Read Psalm 103:1-2 and ask God to help you focus on His benefits.

Each day pray a prayer related to one of the seven benefits discovered during this Bible study.

Close with a reading of Psalm 103:20-22.

Distribute these worship guides and challenge members to use them each day this next week. Ask members to be prepared to share a word of testimony related to their daily worship next Sunday.