

# 8 THANKS GIVING



**Thanksgiving Week: November 18-24**

**Introduce Guests/Share Life:** *How has this week been going? Good? Bad? Ugly? Things to celebrate?*

**Open in Prayer:** *Include any prayer needs that came up while you were sharing life together.*

**Recall the Guidelines:** *Ask: "What is the purpose of the guidelines?" Answer: To be relational!*

**Share the Vision:** *As a small group, our primary focus is relational discipleship. Our goal is to learn how to live out discipleship together and to work together to reproduce discipleship with others.*

**Ask someone to retell last week's story (Mark 9:30-37).**

**Hook Question:** Who do you know that has every reason to be ungrateful in their life because of their difficult circumstance yet they are characterized by thanksgiving and gratitude anyways?

**Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:**

Offering thanksgiving to God is powerful. God loves to come through for His people. Every difficulty, every challenge, every hardship we face is an opportunity for us to learn to lean on God and be thankful.

Today's story takes place in Israel during the period of the kings. The kingdom of Israel was divided. There was a northern kingdom called Israel and a southern kingdom called Judah. No good kings ever ruled in the north, but there were some good kings who ruled in Judah in the south. Today's story happens during the reign of King Jehoshaphat, one of the good kings in Judah.

Imagine this together. One day, three armies created an alliance together and came up to wage war on Jehoshaphat and on the people of Judah. The army approached with little warning and there was not enough time for Jehoshaphat to prepare. Jehoshaphat was alarmed, but made a decision to trust in God. He called the people of Judah together to worship at the temple and to seek God together.

During their worship service, they expressed their trust and dependence on God in the midst of their circumstances. They declared, "We don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you." A prophet spoke up during the service and said, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you." With the battle scene set, this is where our story begins...

**Tell the story from 2 Chronicles 20:20-30:** *Use different storytellers. Teach people to share God's Word!*

**Rebuild the story:** *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*

**Read the entire story from 2 Chronicles 20:1-30:** *Ask the group to read these verses.*

**Discussion Questions: learn to talk about God's Word with others...**

Head  
Questions:  
Quicker  
tempo.

- What stands out to you in this story? Why?
  - Why do you think it is significant that the people went out to war with thanksgiving?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God?

Heart & Hand  
Questions:  
Slow down &  
wait!

- What do you think God is trying to show you right now?
  - How do you need to change?
- Who could retell the story for us right here one last time?

**Ask for a volunteer to tell the Bible story next week.**

**Close in prayer.**



## 1 Week Series: Thanksgiving

This week, we celebrate the America holiday called *Thanksgiving*. It is a day that was originally set aside for giving thanks to God for His goodness in our lives.

For many, this time of year inspires more pain and suffering than it does Thanksgiving. Loss of loved ones, changing seasons of life, separation from family, physical suffering, and personal tragedy are magnified during the holidays.

One of the greatest challenges in spiritual grow is helping a person release their focus on themselves and to broaden their view to the needs of others and the opportunities God is placing right in front of them. Jesus has called us to love. He has shown us how. He has called us to serve. He gave His life for us. He has called us to minister. He is our example. How do we help those we are discipling begin to develop this in their lives?

First, we help those we are discipling develop a heart for others by our example. It starts with you. Are you modeling the love of Jesus to your small group? Do they see you serving your church family, your household family, and others sacrificially? Can they look at your life and learn from your example of ministering to others?

Second, we help those we are discipling develop a heart for others by recruiting them and giving them assignments. Who is in the hospital that someone in your group could visit? Who is lonely around the holidays and needs someone to bring them food and just sit and talk? Who do you know that is struggling as a single parent and needs help with their kids? There are so many ways to serve. Some are small. Some require a lot. They all make us more like Jesus because through serving others we learn to let Him live His life through us.

Finally, we help those we are discipling develop a heart for others by giving them a vision to disciple others. Brandon Guindon once asked someone in his group, "James, have you reached a point in your life yet where you have embraced the reality that God's primary goal for your life is for you to be like Jesus to others?" We must learn to move the hearts of those we are discipling. God can use gentle challenges that are rooted in relationship and in love.

The tendency for many this time of year is to become more self-focused. Focused on our own households, focused on our traditions, focused on our budgets, and focused on our desires and plans. There is an incredible opportunity to grow more into the image of Jesus as we use this season to sacrificially love others.

Let's give thanks to God together this week. Let's give Him praise for what He has done. In all our thanksgiving, let's allow God to conform us more and more into the image of His Son.

Happy Thanksgiving!