

# Thankful to God (Biblical Thankfulness – Lesson 1)

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 ministry-to-children.com/biblical-thankfulness-1

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Where does true thankfulness come from? Can we be thankful even when we face trials? “Thankful to God (Biblical Thankfulness – Lesson 1)” is the first of three lessons helping children understand the ultimate reason we should be thankful. Also, children will learn that we can be thankful even when we face hard times. Click here for [lesson 2](#) and [lesson 3](#).

TARGET AGES: 10-14

OBJECTIVE: To understand that true thankfulness comes from knowing Jesus Christ as our Savior.

MAIN IDEA: Thankfulness comes from having a relationship with Jesus and understanding God’s love for us. We should choose thankfulness even in difficult situations because we already have victory through Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES: *Colossians 2:6-7, Psalm 136:1, and 1 Corinthians 15:57, 2 Corinthians 11:24-28, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

MATERIAL(S): white board or poster board, paper, writing utensils, markers, stickers

MORE IDEAS: Don’t miss our large collection of [Thanksgiving ideas for children’s ministry](#). You’ll find many more lesson ideas and [free thanksgiving coloring pages](#).

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## **Introduction** (10 minutes)

Say, "When you think about the holiday we call Thanksgiving what comes to mind? Today we are going to talk about true thanksgiving. First, let's start by listing things we are thankful for on the board." Allow a few minutes for the students to comment. Afterward, emphasize that today's lesson will teach us what the bible says about thankfulness.

OPENING PRAYER: "God, thank you for your son, Jesus, who died for our sins. And thank you for the many blessings you give us. Give us understanding today as we learn what your word says about thankfulness. Amen."

## **Lesson** (20 minutes)

1. Comment, "The bible tells us what we should be most thankful for." Read *Colossians 2:6-7*. Explain that true thankfulness comes from knowing Jesus Christ! Say, "When we are faithful to God and choose to obey his commands then we will experience true thankfulness." Share about a time when you were overwhelmed with thankfulness for your relationship to Jesus Christ. Then briefly outline the gospel message and invite students to come into a relationship with Christ if they do not already know him. Lastly, write "knowing Jesus" on the board.
2. Next read *Psalms 136:1*. Ask, "According to this verse, why should we be thankful to God (because his love endures forever)? How do we know this promise is true (because he sent us Jesus and shows his love by taking care of us)?" Ask a volunteer to share about a time in their life when God took care of them. Then add "God's love endures forever" on the board.
3. Say, "We should also be thankful because God gives us victory through Jesus!" Read *1 Corinthians 15:57*. Explain that God does more than provide salvation and take care of us – he gives us daily victory over life's trials. Comment, "Because we are victors, we never have to wonder if God will help us through our troubles. We have confidence that he will always be with us, and that should make us extremely thankful." Write, "We have victory through Jesus" on the board.
4. Lastly, admit that it can be hard to be thankful in the midst of difficulties. Say, "Paul faced many trials, so we're going to discover how he remained thankful even when life was hard." Read *2 Corinthians 11:24-28* and *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*. Emphasize that Paul remained thankful because he chose obedience and faithfulness no matter what happened. Ask the students to come up with their own examples of when it could be hard to be thankful. Comment, "No matter what we go through, prayer and rejoicing in God will help us be thankful. Paul faced incredible struggles, so we should strive to follow his example of faithful perseverance when we find ourselves in difficult situations."

## **Letters of Thankfulness** (10 minutes)

Pass out the paper and craft supplies. Say, "We are going to spend the rest of our time today writing letters of thankfulness to God. This is not something we are going to share with one another, but it is a serious time of reflection. Please remain quiet as you work." Allow the students to decorate their letters when they finish writing. Encourage them to keep the letters in a place where they can read it often as reminders to be thankful to God.

**Conclusion** (5 minutes)

RECAP: True thankfulness comes from knowing Jesus as our Savior and experiencing God's eternal love. No matter what we face, we can choose thankfulness because we have victory in Jesus Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER: "Lord, thank you for our salvation and your love. Remind us to be thankful this week no matter what we face. Amen."

# Thankful for Others (Biblical Thankfulness – Lesson 2)

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Is it enough to only express thankfulness to God? Why and how should we take the time to say, “thank you” to others? In part 2 of “Biblical Thankfulness,” children will learn that real thankfulness to God will lead to thankfulness for others. Our words and actions must work together if we are serious about being thankful. Click here for [lesson 1](#) or [lesson 3](#).

TARGET AGES: 10-14

OBJECTIVE: To learn that true thankfulness to God leads to showing thankfulness to others.

MAIN IDEA: If we are truly thankful to God for our relationship to Christ, then we will also show thankfulness to fellow believers who obediently strive to fulfill God’s will.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES: *2 Corinthians 11:24-28 (review), 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (review), Romans 1:8, Romans 6:17, Colossians 1:3-4, Philemon 1:3-5, 2 Corinthians 9:1-2, James 2:26*

MATERIAL(S): Construction paper, markers, stickers, and other various craft supplies, white board or poster board

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## **Introduction** (5 minutes)

OPENING PRAYER: "God, we are thankful for your son, Jesus. Help us to understand the importance of also showing thankfulness to others. Amen."

LESSON REVIEW: Ask, "Why should we be thankful to God (for his salvation, provision, protection, creation, etc)? Can we still be thankful even when we're in a hard situation?" Review that Paul faced many hardships (*2 Corinthians 11:24-28*), but he was still thankful to God (*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*).

## **Lesson** (20 minutes)

1. Explain to the students that we are certainly supposed to be thankful to others for "earthly things," such as our parents' care for us, but we also need to remember to be thankful for spiritual things. Say, "Because we understand what it means to be thankful to God, we can be thankful to others. Today we'll discuss spiritual reasons why we should thank others." Read the following passages:

*Romans 1:8* – When someone's faith leads you and others to Jesus.

*Romans 6:17* – When obedience to God is evident.

*Colossians 1:3-4, Philemon 1:3-5* – When a person's faith and love points others to Christ.

*2 Corinthians 9:1-2* – When their generosity and eagerness to serve leads others to obedience.

2. Ask, "So why do you think it's important to thank one another for spiritual things (to encourage, strengthen, and affirm one another)?" Add that the main reason we thank one another is to give glory to God for what he is doing through his believers. Ask, "Do you think it's enough to say we're thankful and not show it in our actions? What can we do to show thankfulness?" Allow time for students to answer, and then look up *James 2:26* (faith without deeds is dead/useless). Remind them that true thankfulness in our hearts is shown through our actions. And if our hearts aren't thankful, then we can't truly serve God or others!

## **More Letters of Thankfulness** (15 minutes)

Ask, "Who is the leader of our church (the pastor)? What are his responsibilities (to preach, teach, guide, protect, visiting the sick, etc)? We're going to list some specific things our pastor does in obedience to God's calling on his life." Make a list of responsibilities on the board and be sure to add actions the students may not know about (such as taking care of the church building, spending long days preparing for sermons, etc). Then pass out the paper and craft supplies. Say, "We are going to use the list we created to make cards and thank our pastor for all the ways he serves our church. This is a great way to encourage him, and an easy way for us to practice thankfulness." When the students have completed their cards ask them to personally give the cards to the pastor before they leave church for the day.

## **Conclusion** (5 minutes)

RECAP: Thankfulness to God and others must be shown through our actions. When we humble ourselves and are obedient to God then we will be willing to express thankfulness to others.

CLOSING PRAYER: "Lord, thank you for those who teach us more about you. Continue showing us how to be thankful to others this week. Amen."

# Thankful for Service (Biblical Thankfulness – Lesson 3)

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This third and final lesson on biblical thankfulness, “Thankful for Service,” will help kids understand that we should be thankful to God for the service opportunities he gives us. While thankfulness and service don’t seem to be discussed together very often, it’s important for kids to make the connection between the heart’s motives (thankfulness) and our actions (service). True servants are thankful, so by discussing Jesus’ washing of his disciples’ feet the kids will learn how humility, thankfulness, and service all work together to give God glory. Click here for [lesson 1](#) and [lesson 2](#).

TARGET AGES: 10-14

OBJECTIVE: To learn that thankfulness to God and others leads to thankfulness through service.

MAIN IDEA: We can be thankful as we serve because it is a privilege to represent Jesus and follow his example.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES: *John 13:1-17*

MATERIAL(S): activity sheets ([download here](#)), writing utensils, dry erase board or poster board, [Wreath of Thanks craft](#), hot glue gun, permanent markers

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## **Introduction** (15 minutes)

OPENING PRAYER: "Lord, please use our actions to show our thankfulness to you. Help us to humbly serve others and be thankful as we serve. Amen."

LESSON REVIEW/ACTIVITY SHEETS (Attachment): Say, "Over the last two weeks we've talked about how being thankful glorifies God through his working in our lives. Today we're going to start by doing the Thankfulness Activity Sheet to remember what we've talked about." Remind the students that our actions have to show our thankfulness and not just our words (James 2:26)! Take time to complete the worksheet as a class.

## **Lesson** (10 minutes)

1. Say, "Today we are going to read the passage of Jesus' last example of humble service to his disciples before he was betrayed by Judas Iscariot and taken to be crucified." Ask the students to turn to *John 13:1-11*. Ask, "What did Jesus do to serve his disciples (wash their feet)? Why did he do this (to be an example of humble service)?" Draw attention to *verse 7* (where Jesus said, "*What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this*"). Ask, "What had to happen before the disciples would really understand everything Jesus had done (his death and resurrection)? How is it similar for us (because we don't understand everything either, but more will be revealed in heaven)?" Finish the passage by reading Jesus' response to the event in *verses 12-17*. Ask, "So why do we serve (because Jesus served)? How can we show thankfulness for Jesus' example (through humble service)?" Add that it is a privilege to serve Christ, so thankfulness through service is a great way to honor him.
2. Finish the discussion by once again listing reasons to be thankful on the board. Start with the reasons found throughout the lesson series: our relationships to Christ, others who serve us, and the opportunity to serve as God's representatives. Then allow the students to add more to the list. Help them to focus on spiritual blessings as well as physical blessings.

## **Wreath of Thankfulness Craft** (15 minutes)

Finish the discussion by creating Wreaths of Thanks. Say, "When writing what you are thankful for on the leaves, start with what is the most important to you (e.g. salvation). You may use the list we created on the board for ideas. Then hang these wreaths somewhere to remind you to be thankful."

## **Conclusion** (5 minutes)

RECAP: We have a lot of reasons to be thankful! God gave us salvation through Jesus Christ and also gave us the bible to learn more about him. In addition, he provides for the physical needs in our lives. Thankfulness is a big part of our lives because God has lovingly given us so many blessings.



CLOSING PRAYER: "God, we thank you for everything you've done for us. Without you there would be no hope, but you provided Jesus to die for our sins so we can have a relationship with you and spend eternity in Heaven. With all our hearts we thank you! Amen."