



# CHRIST'S COMMISSION FELLOWSHIP

## Los Angeles

Dgroup Discussion Guide  
November 30, 2014

### **Give Thanks as God continues to Transform Us (Thanksgiving Message)**

Word:

#### **Always Give Thanks.**

#### ***1 Thessalonians 5:8 In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.***

Most often we fall into the trap of remembering to give thanks and remembering to count our blessings only during Thanksgiving. . . then forgetting about it for the rest of the year. But giving thanks should not be limited to just one day in a year. . . As Christians, we have to remember to constantly give thanks. Unfortunately though the sad reality is that even though we have been taught in the Bible to give thanks in everything, we really do not. Or maybe we only remember to give thanks when we are recipients of abundance blessings . . . and then when things are no longer going our way we resort to complaining and grumbling.

Paul says in his letter to the Thessalonians that we should give thanks in EVERYTHING. And when we say everything we refer to both the blessings and the trials that we come across. We should be thankful not because we have much but because we are capable of having at all. Our focus should not be on the gifts but rather our eyes should remain focused on the Giver. The reason why we are commanded to give thanks is because God knows that we tend to focus on the gifts and He wants to change that in us.

*Warren Wiersbe said If life is to have meaning, and if God's will is to be done, all of us have to accept who we are and what we are, give it back to God, and thank Him for the way He made us. What I am is God's gift to me; what I do with it is my gift to Him.*

God wants us to know Him as Him . . . as the God He is, as the Creator, as our Maker, and as our Father. It is His will for us to be constantly giving thanks to Him for every little thing that happens in our life – whether it be a high or a low, a success or a failure, an achievement or a loss. He wants us to know that in whatever circumstance we are in we have to give thanks because He is also there with us. But we can only do this if we know Him. If we do not know Him, then how can we know of His faithfulness, of His love, of His constancy and His grace.

#### **God's Plan is for our Transformation.**

#### ***Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.***

God has a specific purpose for each one of us – that each of us be conformed to the image of His Son. There is a condition -- that we have to love and know Him. It is only when we have accepted His gift of Salvation in Christ Jesus and have made Him Lord over every aspect of our lives that we allow Him to work in us.

This verse in Romans reminds us the process through which we are transformed into the image of Christ is not easy but if we know God and we are confident in His promises then we can believe that no matter what happens God causes all things to work together for our good. That everything that we experience is part and parcel of our process of transformation into Christlikeness.

When we are told that God causes all things to work together for our good – this means that every little experience, every little thought, every little event – the good and the bad, the elating and the depressing, the joyous and the hurting -- everything is orchestrated to come together to bring us to the good that God has in store for us. When God works in our life, He works not only for one circumstance, or one prayer or one petition. . . He sees the big picture and piece by piece He is putting us together. We may not completely understand or appreciate what His bigger plans are for us. . . but if we know Him then we can find solace in His promise in Romans 8:28 that He will continue to work for our good as He continues to conform us and transform us into the likeness of His Son.

## **Humility is a prerequisite.**

**1 Peter 5: 5 Clothe yourself in humility to one another, for God is opposed to the proud and gives grace to the humble.**

The only way though for God to work for our good is when we humble ourselves – to strip ourselves of our pride and self-sufficiency and put on humility and God-sufficiency. When we are humble then we can witness and experience God’s wonders in our life. We can stand in awe as we watch Him transform our lives from desolation to triumphant glory in His name. It is when we allow our pride and selfishness die that we can begin to experience all the good that God has planned for our lives. If we persist in our self sufficiency and pride, we will never see God’s work in our life.

When we bask in our pride it becomes very difficult for us to have an attitude of gratitude. *Henry Ward Beecher said Pride slays thanksgiving, but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grows. A proud man is seldom grateful, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves.* When we are proud we tend to have an attitude of entitlement – believing that we are entitled to more and therefore when we do not get what we think we should, we grumble and complain. But a humble heart is contented with what he has and can sing praises and thanks even for the little things.

Christ Himself taught us how important humility is – He humbled Himself and took on the form of a bond servant. Paul reminds us in Philippians 2: 1-11 of how Christ emptied Himself to die for us. He reminds us that in order for us to become like Christ we have to be selfless and humble.

### **How do we translate this to our everyday life?**

Knowledge of God and humility are prerequisites in order for us to experience God’s transforming power in our life. When we know God then we know that He constantly works for our good and when we are humble then we can allow God to transform us so that we can become more Christlike with each new experience.

Why is this so important to us Christians? Our transformation should not stop in us. . . we are compelled by the Great Commission to become witnesses to others of God’s love and grace. As we are transformed into Christlike-ness we are compelled to share this to others – by teaching them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded. . . this is the discipleship relationship.

It is a great gift to us that God has called us, has set us apart, has chosen us to be witness of His great love and grace. But to be effective witnesses, we must first know the God who has chosen us. We must be willing to be molded and conformed into His Son Jesus Christ, who is our model of humility and selflessness. It is during the transformation from who we are to God’s masterpieces that we can influence other to follow our footsteps – this is our testimony. This is how we can disciple others – to share our experiences as God works for our good because we love Him.

### **Works: Journaling task**

1. What are you thankful for in your life?
2. How often do you remember to give thanks?
3. Romans 8:28. What are the things that God is transforming in me?
4. 1 Peter 5:5. What are the things that hinder me from humbling myself before God?