

Study Series: The 4 Wills of God

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Lesson Title: “God’s Will: Give Thanks in Everything”

(pp. 80-92)

Session 7

July 17, 2022

The main point of this lesson is: God wills that people give thanks in everything.

Focus on this goal: To help adults more faithfully give thanks to God in every situation of life

Key Bible Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Before the Session

Continue displaying the poster you created for Session 5.

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask if participants are familiar with home decor wooden signs that declare: “In This House We . . .” and if so, state ways that phrase is often completed. (Samples: forgive, laugh really loud, do hugs.) Ask how that phrase might be completed if that sign was in their home (don’t be too serious, have fun with it).

State one valuable way to complete that statement is “give thanks in everything.” Draw attention to the B.A.G.S. acronym on the poster. Note that believing in Jesus is the absolute starting point for knowing and doing God’s will, but the rest of the universal wills do not follow any specific order. Today’s session skips the “A” and addresses the “G”—God wills we give thanks in everything.

Step 2. Give Thanks for the Good Things

Invite a volunteer to read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Ask: Of all the many important issues that are certainly God’s will, why would God choose giving thanks in everything to be one of the four that are specifically mentioned in Scripture? What does giving thanks in everything have to do with knowing the specific will of God?

Discuss the Day One pull quote (p. 80). Invite a volunteer to read Luke 17:11-19. Consider how believers are often like the nine. Note we must ask ourselves “if we neglect giving thanks for the things that are obviously good” (p. 80).

Discuss Day One, activity 2 (p. 81). Explore what can happen when we act on   
1 Thessalonians 5:18 and regularly give thanks to God for what we have.

Step 3. Give Thanks in the Bad

Ask what Paul meant by “everything” in 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Note the Day Two title, “Give Thanks in the Bad,” and the first subtitle “Give Thanks for the Unseen Good.” Ask: How could identifying situations as the unseen good rather than bad help us give thanks in all things?

Discuss Day Two, activity 1 (pp. 82-83). Assess what the author’s friend, Sam, meant by calling 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Paul’s “Golden Rule for Losing.” Ask a volunteer to read the Day Two paragraph (p. 83) beginning with “You can’t tell whether . . . .” Ask: How can recognizing that God’s not done yet help us do God’s will of giving thanks in everything?

Relate the Day Two illustration (pp. 83-84) of the Ugandan worship service. Consider why the absence of good should trigger praise.

Consider the author’s question: “How do we give thanks amid horrendous circumstances and loathsome people?” (p. 84). Discuss Day Two, activity 2 (p. 84) and the Day Two pull quote (p. 84).

Step 4. Give Thanks for False Alarms

Explain what the author means by saying we should give thanks for false alarms (p. 85). Invite volunteers to read Isaiah 65:24 and Matthew 6:8. Invite responses to Day Three, activity 1 (pp. 85-86).

Ask: How can living by 1 Thessalonians 5:18 revolutionize our perspective about daily events, good and bad? Recall the “giant highlighter” illustration from Day One (p. 82). Ask: How would our family relationships be revolutionized if we lived by the declaration, “In this house we highlight gratitude”? How can we highlight gratitude in our homes?

Discuss the Day Three pull quote (p. 87).

Step 5. The Miracle of Giving Thanks

Relate the illustration of Ron and Sue from Day Four (p. 87-89). Ask: What might it have looked and sounded like for them to thank God for the challenge they were facing? What might it look and sound like for you to thank God for a challenge you’re facing?

Encourage adults “though none of us will give thanks perfectly, we can be less imperfect” (Day One, p. 80). Consider whether, like Ron and Sue, we will always experience an amazing miracle after giving thanks.

Discuss Day Four, activity 2 (p. 89). Invite volunteers to share how they have experienced the miracle of peace that passes understanding after praying with thanksgiving.

Step 6. A Sacrifice of Thanksgiving

Invite volunteers to read Hebrews 13:15 and Psalm 50:23. Analyze what it means to offer a sacrifice of praise or thanksgiving. Discuss Day Five, activity 1 (p. 90).

Recall how the author’s wife, Sarah, modeled the practice of offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God (p. 90). Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and Colossians 2:6-7 and declare that overflowing gratitude should be a sign of every believer’s life.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Invite responses to Day Five, activity 2 (p. 90), encouraging participants to record specific steps they can begin to take today to live by 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Remark one specific action is to list things for which they are grateful.

Guide the group to discuss Day Three, activity 2 (p. 87). Invite volunteers to voice sentence prayers of thanksgiving to God for the good and unseen good things in life.

