

Thanksgiving Lesson - Ten Lepers

Parent Devo & Bible Study

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 17:11-17

STORY POINT: Everything in our lives comes from God. We often forget to offer Him thanks and praise, but we should remember to always lift our eyes to the Lord and be grateful. It's also important to say thank you to important people in our lives who help us along the way.

PARENT BIBLE STUDY

The story of Jesus healing the ten lepers contains several important insights. For kids, one obvious takeaway is the value of gratitude and saying thank you— both to people and especially to God.

This story also includes a message of the mercy of Christ. He healed the stricken men, and even though only one returned to say thank you, He did not punish those who neglected to do so.

Another interesting note is that the man who did come back was a Samaritan, typically looked down on in Jewish culture. This lesson focuses largely on the element of thanksgiving, but feel free to use whatever methods and emphasis you prefer to communicate the Scripture.

Lesson focus: Everything in our lives comes from God. We often forget to offer Him thanks and praise, but we should remember to always lift our eyes to the Lord and be grateful. It's also important to say thank you to important people in our lives who help us along the way.

Passage: Luke 17:11-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:6-7

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Luke 17:11-17

On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers,[f] who stood at a distance 13 and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." -Luke 17:11-13

Briefly explain how, in the time of Christ, having a sickness was often seen as a sign of sin. These men are begging for mercy, recognizing that only God could heal them. They had probably heard of what Jesus had done for people, and sought His help with faith that He could provide. So what did Jesus do?

When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; 16 and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. -Luke 17:14-16

Tell kids about a couple more cultural customs. When a person was healed from illness, they were supposed to go to the temple and show themselves to the priest. Jesus told these guys to do so even before they were healed. But they had faith that God would heal them, so they followed Christ's instructions. Imagine being physically ill, cast out, and considered "unclean", and then being made new! Surely those guys must have been incredibly excited and grateful. How do you think you would react if that happened to you?

Well, note in the story, how many of those who were healed came to tell Jesus "thank you"? Only one out of ten! And this passage mentions that the man who came back to Jesus was a Samaritan. That meant he was from out of town, and usually considered not as pure or important in Jewish society. Yet he was the only one who came to give Jesus praise and thank Him for His healing.

Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."[-Luke 17:17-19

It sounds like Jesus might have been a little disappointed that more of those men who received healing did not come back and give thanks. Could He have called down fire from heaven and punished the other men? Sure. But Jesus demonstrated ever-flowing grace and mercy. He told this man to go on His way, and was surely glad that at least someone demonstrated appreciation. And you know, we might hear this story and think that the 9 "ungrateful" lepers seem just terrible. But think about it a little...do we always give thanks to God? Do we remember how much He gives us every day? Do we recognize His constant hand in our lives and praise Him always? Well....maybe not always, huh? We might have to admit that we, too, often neglect gratitude and forget to give God thanks for His blessings. And you know what else? Remind kids that God is not only good when things go our way. He is always present, allowing all things for His will. So we can give thanks and pray not only when things seem to go our way, but ALL of the time!

Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. -1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

And when we do so, a great promise is given:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:6-7

Close with prayer and thank God for giving us all that we have. Ask Him to help us serve and thank him always, even when things are difficult.