



GETTING STARTED

> *As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.*

Conversation Starters/Questions

How was your Thanksgiving celebration? Does anyone have a funny story? How did you thank Jesus on that day?

How has being in a LifeGroup this semester affected your life and your walk with God?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:

How was this Thanksgiving different from last year? Have these sermons helped?

VIDEO NOTES >[Play Video](#)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18

1) Why do we often only give thanks to God for the good circumstances in our lives? When should we thank Him?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION: What do you remember about our previous sermons or lessons that can influence your obedience to this command?

Read Deuteronomy 8:7-10

2) Thanking God is the most basic level of praise. What is the importance of giving thanks to God for your provisions? Why do you believe that is still hard to do sometimes?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

1. What might be some other levels of praise?
2. How can we encourage others to offer God both thanks and praise?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)

Read Exodus 14:29-31

3) Why is it so much easier to trust God when everything is going great?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: People can only see what is put before them. (*1 Samuel 16:7*) It takes a conscious choice to think about God and His things. (*Colossians 3:1*) It takes faith. (*2 Corinthians 5:7*)

Read Exodus 15:22-23

4) Have you ever disobeyed God and found yourself in a desert? How did you get in your desert and how did you get out?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: Deserts can result from two things: disobedience and obedience. There is no indication that the Israelites were in this predicament due to sin. It was a time of testing. If the desert results from sin, one can confess and accept God's forgiveness. (*1 John 1:9 and Revelation 1:5b*) If the desert is a time of testing and pruning (*John 15:2*), we continue, by faith, in prayer, Bible study, worship, etc. We must continue to abide in Christ and His love.. (*John 15: 1-11*)

Read Exodus 15:24-25

5) Have you ever found yourself grumbling? Did anyone grumble on Thanksgiving Day? Have you grumbled about family members, friends, bosses, or leadership at church? How about God?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

Everyone sins. Grumbling is a sin. (*1 Corinthians 10:10; James 5:9; Jude 16*) Some are more prone to grumbling than others. Jesus' message was "Repent and believe in the Gospel." (*Mark 1:15*) The Gospel offers blessings to those who repent and believe. (*Luke 2:10; Acts 20:32; 2 Cor 4:6; Romans 1:16; 2 Cor 3:12*)

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION: How can we help each other to be grateful and not grumble?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read Psalm 23:4**

6) Even if you are in a valley or desert, how can you make it without fear?

SUGGESTED EXERCISE:

Spend a few moments reflecting on Psalm 23. What can we learn about how David viewed his life with God as an *ongoing* relationship, rather than a list of do's and don'ts. What did God do? What did David do?

Read Romans 8:28-29

7) If God allows everything to happen in your life for a purpose, how does that change your perspective on life?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

1. How many of you have seen God turn something God work something for good?
2. Do all things turn out okay in this life?
3. This is a difficult topic. How will you investigate further? (You may want to check out the commentaries at www.gotquestions.org or www.studylight.org) With whom can you have an ongoing discussion of the ramifications of this topic?

SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)

- ⇒ Grown-up Christians give thanks to God even in the midst of struggle.
- ⇒ Understanding the Gospel is essential to thanking God in all things.
- ⇒ Grateful people don't grumble.

WORK OUT (This Week's Assignments)

- Has our LIFEgroup been missional by reaching out to others? Plan a serve-together for the holidays as a LifeGroup
- Plan to serve together at "Christmas in the Square", Sat., Dec. 16th.
- Plan a LifeGroup Christmas party
- Have you grown in discipleship by being a part of the LIFEgroup?
- Who in this group would like to multiply our group by going and starting a new group?

MY NEXT STEPS

1. This week, I will remember all that God has done for me rather than looking at what I might lack.
2. This week, I will express my thanks to God in all circumstances.
3. This week, I will tell a friend why I am thankful for God.
4. This week, I will memorize *1 Thessalonians 5:18*, "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

HOW MY GROUP CAN PRAY FOR ME THIS WEEK

> Record Group Prayer Request Here:



COMMENTARY

Question 1.

1 Thessalonians 5:18. The next command requires trust in the sovereignty of Christ: **give thanks in all circumstances.** It recognizes God's eminence in all events. A thankful spirit does not come naturally to most of us. Certainly it pushes us beyond our natural capacities when difficult or painful situations invade our life. This command to be thankful, no matter what happens, is possible only by God's grace. For those who wonder about God's will, here it is emphatically stated: **this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.** There is no need for searching, seminars, books, or "fleeces." God's will is that we are to be joyful, prayerful, and thankful because we are his children. (Knute Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, vol. 9, Holman New Testament Commentary [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

Exodus: In many ways the book of Exodus is the foundation stone upon which the rest of the Bible stands. Its laws established the outlines of Israel's social life and provided the authoritative basis for the religious practices that informed Israelite culture for more than a thousand years.

From a NT perspective, this book is used in three main ways. First, it prefigures the life and ministry of Christ, especially in His role as our sacrificial lamb (*Heb 9:12; 1 Pt 1:19; Rv 5:8-9*). Second, it provides examples that illustrate the Christian life. Finally, it presents the moral and ethical framework to guide Christians in their decision making. (Ted Cabal et al., *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007])

The Exodus: Historically and theologically this is the most important event in the OT. More than a hundred times in all parts of the OT except the Wisdom Literature, Yahweh is proclaimed as "the one who brought you up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Israel remembered the exodus as God's mighty redemptive act. She celebrated it in her creeds (*Deut. 26:5-9; 1 Sam. 12:6-8*). She sang of it in worship (*Psalms 78; 105; 106; 114; 135; 136*). The prophets constantly reminded Israel that election and covenant were closely related to the exodus (*Isa. 11:16; Jer. 2:6; 7:22-25; Ezek. 20:6, 10; Hos. 2:15; 11:1; Amos 2:10; 3:1; Mic. 6:4; Hag. 2:5*). The exodus in the OT was to Israel what the death and resurrection of Christ was to Christians in the NT. Just as Israel commemorated her deliverance from Egyptian bondage in the feast of Passover, Christians celebrate their redemption from sin in the observance of the Lord's Supper (*Luke 22:1-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26*). (Eric Mitchell with Smith Ralph L., "Exodus," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003])

Question 2.

Deuteronomy 8:7-9. The people of Israel were being led by the Lord their God to a land beautiful, luxuriant, fruitful. Evidently, at the time Moses uttered the words before us, the people had not reached that land; though they were expecting shortly to do so. In view thereof, Moses bids them (ver. 10) bless the Lord their God for the good land he had given them. (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Deuteronomy*, The Pulpit Commentary [London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909])

Question 3.

Exodus 14:29-31. What was important for Israel was not merely that they were safe and the Egyptians were not; what mattered was that faith saves, and God had shown them how faith in him could pay off to their lasting benefit. Many of them at this early point understood very little of who Yahweh was and what he expected of them. But they had now seen one final, awesome act of deliverance from Egypt, and it prompted their fear and trust. (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006])

COMMENTARY

Question 4.

Exodus 15: 22-23. From a human point of view, it is entirely understandable that the Israelites would have begun to worry about water by the third day without finding any. Accordingly, finding foul water at Marah was not merely a disappointment but a cause of panic. Their question, “What are we to drink?” was not in itself outrageous or even unfair. Their sin manifested itself rather in their *attitude*, which is suggested in the statement at the beginning of v. 24, “So the people grumbled against Moses.” (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006])

Question 5.

Exodus 15:24-25. Nothing in the text suggests that the tree symbolized anything in particular (such as the tree of life or the like). Rather, Moses’ faith in being willing to do what God commanded him, without understanding why or how it would work, is what is implicitly commended here. God gave a law intended to provide a general understanding for his people of his policies and principles. What v. 26 called for was loyalty and obedience. God’s expectation was sweeping. His people must give him full, not partial, loyalty and obedience. If he wanted it, they were to do it. (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006])

Question 6.

Psalms 23:4. David’s authorship, asserted in the title, is highly probable; but we cannot fix the poem to any special period in his lifetime; we can only say that he is beyond the days of boyhood, having already enemies (ver. 5), and that he has known what it is to be in danger of death (ver. 4). His thoughts are happy thoughts—he lacks nothing; he has no fear; God’s mercy and goodness are with him; and he feels assured that they will continue with him all the days of his life (ver. 6); he has but one desire for the future, viz. to dwell in the house of God—*i.e.* in the presence of God—for ever. (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Psalms*, vol. 1, The Pulpit Commentary [London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909])

Question 7.

Romans 8: 28-29. God directs the affairs of life in such a way that, for those who love him, the outcome is always beneficial. The “good” of which Paul spoke is not necessarily what we think is best, but as the following verse implies, the good is conformity to the likeness of Christ. With this in mind it is easier to see how our difficulties are part of God’s total plan for changing us from what we are by nature to what he intends us to be. Moral advance utilizes hardship more often than not.

Not only is God continually at work, but those for whom he works are steadfast in their love for him. A person’s salvation is not something that took place sometime in the past with little or no impact in the present. By definition, a relationship is a continuing affair. A vital ongoing love for God is the necessary prerequisite for his active intervention in the affairs of our life. (Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995])

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