Thanksgiving As A Way Of Life

Main Idea:

Thanksgiving, our response to who God is and what He's done for us, should define every aspect of our lives.

The Foundation for Thanksgiving:

God's _____ (love, mercy, faithfulness) and Jesus' work on our behalf (life, death resurrection, offering us forgiveness and eternal life).

- Thanksgiving as the fruit of saving faith:
  - A sinful woman: Luke 7:36-50
  - A Samaritan leper: Luke 17:11-19
  - Jesus responds to both: "Your faith has saved you."
- Humble, worshipful gratitude is the only real response to salvation.
- Thanksgiving as God's will for our lives:
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:18
  - We can be thankful in all circumstances because God is _____ in all circumstances.
- The true purpose of life is to thank and praise God: Psalm 30:8-12
- Thanksgiving as a lifestyle: Colossians 3:17
  - All of life is defined by our relationship with Jesus. Our relationship with Jesus is defined by gratitude.
- Thanksgiving as life transformation: Romans 12:1; Romans 2:4
- Gratitude to God is the Christian's #1 motivation for change. As change and obedience are the natural outcome of gratitude, they are themselves acts of thanksgiving.
- Thanksgiving as freedom:
  - Thanking God for secondary blessings keeps our hearts from serving secondary things: 1 Timothy 4:4-5
  - Thanking God for what He's done for us in the past keeps us from _____ about the future: Philippians 4:6-7 NLT

Application:

- Develop gratitude by meditating on who God is and what He's done for you: Colossians 3:16a
- Express thanksgiving by glorifying God with your words and actions: Colossians 3:16b-17; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 9:1

Discussion:

- Nick suggested that gratitude without thanksgiving is dead. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
- How can you grow a sense of gratitude for who God is and what He's done for you?
- How does Colossians 3:17 describe thanksgiving as a lifestyle? How can our actions, not only our words, be an expression of thanksgiving?
- How can you expand your expression of thanksgiving to God?
- How does gratitude motivate us to change? How is obedience to God an act of thanksgiving?
- How can thanksgiving give us freedom from anxiety?
- How does thanking God for the good things He gives us (health, family, food, entertainment, recreation), help keep those things from becoming "gods" in our lives?