

Thoughts on Thanksgiving (from those wiser than me!)

Joyce Soderholm is a longtime Lincoln resident who ministers to people in the Lincoln area. She came and spoke to our homeschool moms group, and I was so blessed. One thing that she had us do was color a fall picture while we all read Scripture. It was rather relaxing. So find someone to read the verses while you and your kids color – fun for all! ☺

Thankfulness: (she used verses from the New American Standard Bible)

Ponder and discuss these definitions from Webster.

Thank – to express gratitude

Thankful – conscious of a benefit received; well pleased

Thanksgiving- a public acknowledgment or celebration of divine goodness

Consider WHY (to be thankful)

Psalms 92:1

Psalms 106:1

Psalms 119:62

I Chronicles 16:4

Luke 17:16-18

Consider WHEN (and consider using a sketch to capture your thoughts)

I Chronicles 23:30

Psalms 119:62 a

Daniel 6:10

Matthew 15:36

Philippians 1:3

Consider HOW (keep sketching)

I Chronicles 23:30

Nehemiah 12:40 (King James Version)

Daniel 6:10 b

Colossians 2:6-7 b

Consider the pervasiveness of thanks

Psalms 30:12b

Philippians 1:3-4

Philippians 4:6

Colossians 3:17

Colossians 4:2

Consider “Who to” ...

Psalms 92:1

I Thessalonians 5:12-13

Consider “What for”

Daniel 2:23

I Corinthians 15:57

II Corinthians 9:15

Ephesians 1:15-16

Ephesians 5:20

I Thessalonians 1:2-3

I Thessalonians 2:13

I Thessalonians 3:8-10

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

I Timothy 2:1-4

Think of other creative ways to demonstrate thanks. A few ideas:

1) Read Psalms 136 with someone else or in a group. Have one read the 2nd part of each verse (for His mercy endureth forever.” The other group reads everything else. *(Note: this actually works well with preschoolers since they can remember that short little phrase).*

2) Read and pray through Psalm 30

3) Sing

4) Whenever you are feeling especially thankful for a specific way that God has blessed you, set aside a little change to give as a thankful offering.

5) Print out a turkey – add feathers with each one labeled with a thankful thought.

6) Cover a window or mirror with post-it thank yous!

(Thanks to Joyce, for allowing me to share this with all of you!)

Lisa Peebles led the devotional for MOPS leadership last week. I now have additional perspective on thanksgiving. Others from the group contributed their thoughts as well, so thanks to all of the moms who were there who contributed their thoughts.

Colossians 2:6-7

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and *overflowing with thankfulness.*

Thankfulness: heartfelt gratitude to God, expressed in response to His love and mercy.

Thanksgiving: the offering of thanks, especially for gifts received. Scripture emphasizes the importance of giving thanks to God for *all* His gifts and works, *both* as an expression of our dependence upon Him and gratitude to Him.

Overflow: to be filled or supplied with in great measure: *a heart overflowing with gratitude; a region overflowing with orchards and vineyard. (Picture of the cornucopia, spilling out)*

Abundance: a state of plenty.

What is in our heart will flow out

Proverbs 4:23 (NASB) “Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it **flow** the springs of life.”

Luke 6:45 (NIV) “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For *the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.*”

Luke 6:45 (ASV) “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the **abundance** of the heart his mouth speaketh.”

How to illustrate this to children: Fill a large pitcher with water. Then proceed to pour that water into a smaller pitcher. Water will obviously go everywhere. This shows that whatever we fill our heads and hearts with will overflow out!

“The feeling of joy begins in the action of thanksgiving.” (Lorri Goode from her testimony that she recently shared in Mexico).

Being thankful is not in our nature, especially when it involves hard circumstances.

I Thessalonians 5:18 tells us to be thankful **in all circumstances**. Notice: we are not asked to be thankful *for* all circumstances –there is a big difference. Being thankful in the midst of a hard time is a challenge – it may not happen right away.

How do we handle being thankful in trials? We need to have built ourselves up with His Word. The more that you have God’s Word as the basis for your life, the more it will be your foundation when your world is shaken. Strength from inside because Christ is filling you!

We also need to surround ourselves with a community of believers. MOPs is a good place to start, but being a part of a church where you can fellowship with other believers is also crucial. We need to rely on each other and walk through life together. Strength from outside because we are supporting each other!

Lisa mentioned a few quotes in her talk. When I was searching for the exact wording, I came upon several other online devotionals that were also encouraging.

(The following from the devotional that Lisa Peebles had read that morning from Proverbs 31 ministries. Evidently you can sign up to get a daily devotional thought.)

“The truly thankful person is a truly peaceful person. They have made a habit no matter what to notice, pause and choose.

Noticing something for which to be thankful no matter what circumstance they’re in.

Pausing to acknowledge this something as a reminder of God’s presence.

Choosing to focus on God’s presence until His powerful peace is unleashed.”

(I would **highly** recommend reading the whole devotional from 11/17 “The Treasure of Thrown Away Food” by Lysa Terkhurst)
<http://devotions.proverbs31.org/page/2>

Another quote that was shared: “A thankful spirit is a mark of Christian maturity. When a believer is abounding in thanksgiving, {they are} really making progress!”
(Warren Wiersbe, former teaching pastor of “Back to the Bible”, a wonderful organization that is headquartered in Lincoln)

I am not sure which book Wiersbe’s quote originally came from, but I found the quote in the midst of a blog written several years ago. While I do not personally know the author of the blog or his perspective enough to recommend his theology, I did appreciate his thoughts on thankfulness. The author seems to be a missionary in Thailand. (Oh the wonders of the web!)

<http://joeydelapaz.blogspot.com/2007/08/continue-in-christ-and-overflow-in.html>

Again in searching for that Wiersbe quote, I found a different Wiersbe quote on thankfulness in a sermon by a man named Pastor Jack Peters of Mount Union Bible Church in Kittanning, PA. Again I do not know enough about his theology to recommend everything on his site, but I appreciated his thoughts on Psalm 100 and Thanksgiving.

<http://www.expositoryechoes.org/psalm100.htm>

Happy Thanksgiving from your friends at MOPs!