



## **HOMEGROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*This week is all about praise and thanksgiving!*

*Read Psalm 138 together*

*Take time in your group to allow for sharing about what God has been up to in your life recently. Here are some questions to help get conversation started, feel free to share what the Spirit puts on your heart!*

- *How were you affected by our recent study in the book of James “Living Faith”? Did you see any change in your life or walk with God based on James’ teachings? Share about it?*
- *What is something you are thankful for in this season of your life?*
- *What is something God has been getting at in your life? Speaking to you about? Encouraging you to press in to?*

*We look forward to launching our new series “The Art of Neighboring” next Sunday. See you there!*

# DAY ONE

## A week of praise and thanksgiving

### Read Psalm 138

David wrote many psalms. One thing that is powerful about the psalms is hearing someone genuinely praise and thank God. Have you ever had that experience where someone is full of joy and enthusiasm about something God is doing in their life. It is contagious. This is one of the great reasons we take time to reflect and share with others. It encourages our own heart but it also can be a reminder to others of just how good our God is! We are focusing this week's study on praising God for the good things He has done.

### REFLECT

- When was the last time you shared with someone about something God was doing in your life?

### RESPOND

- Spend some time in quiet reflection. Think about something that you recognize God is doing in your life and write it in your journal or in this booklet.
- Can you think of someone who would be encouraged to hear what God is up to in your life? This might be your homegroup, a friend, family member, or even someone at work. Look for an opportunity this week to share what God is doing in your life with someone you know. This will help make your praise all the more real to you and it can encourage others to hear that God is living and active!

# DAY TWO

## A week of praise and thanksgiving

### Read Psalm 100

When was the last time you shouted for joy to the Lord? This psalm paints a picture of unleashed joy and thanksgiving to God. I feel that this kind of praise comes more easily when all is going well and the evidence that God is good is right before me. However I have come to find, that the times I choose to praise God joyfully for His goodness even in the midst of a challenging situation, it has the effect of pulling me back to a right perspective about my trial and God's goodness. I see this as a form of spiritual warfare, praising God for His unchanging character in the midst of challenging circumstances. As verse 5 makes clear "His faithfulness continues through all generations!"

### REFLECT

- *Think of the most difficult situation you are currently facing. For some this will be something really big, for others who are in a lighter season of life this may seem like something small. Regardless, write down what comes to mind in your journal.*

### RESPOND

- *Now take the situation that you wrote down and spend some time in prayer about it. Remembering that God's faithfulness continues through all generations (that includes yours) pray and ask God to reveal a way that His faithfulness is covering your situation. Ask the Spirit of God to show you how His goodness is touching you in your trial.*
- *Write down what comes to you and then thank God for it.*

# DAY THREE

A week of praise and thanksgiving

## Read Psalm 34

This psalm speaks praise of God and it also emphasizes the importance of walking in righteousness. We can have great assurance that He will remain faithful toward us and that His love is unwavering. On the other side of that we have some choices to make each and every day about how we will live. Will we choose to walk in righteousness, will we choose to follow God's lead? As good as God is, there are still responsibilities that we carry that can effect how we experience life. Verse 19 reminds us that even a righteous man may have troubles but the Lord will deliver.

## REFLECT

- *We just finished our sermon series on the book of James. This was a book that was very much about actively living a life that reflects our faith. As you have worked through our James study can you identify an area of your life that you have been challenged to grow? Have you seen any change in the choices you make?*

## RESPOND

- *Write out some of the ways that the study of the book of James has effected you. What changes can you identify in your walk with God? It is good to acknowledge how God's word is affecting you and how the Lord is maturing you as you walk with Him!*

# DAY FOUR

## A week of praise and thanksgiving

### Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This verse reminds us that there is always something we can be thankful for. It doesn't mean that we are not supposed to be real with God and bring our fears and frustrations to Him. We can approach God with what ever is on our hearts and He is there to listen. But He loves us enough to not leave us there. His will for us is that we would live with joyful and thankful hearts. Giving thanks in all circumstances takes some practice. Let's practice today!

### REFLECT

- *If your doing today's study in the morning, think back to yesterday, if it is evening, think back over the course of today; What is something from this day that you are thankful to God about?*
- *Did you have anything difficult happen in your day? Can you think of something you are thankful for in the midst of that difficulty.*

### RESPOND

- *Write down the things you are thankful for and then read them out loud. For some of you this may feel a little mechanical but just try it. There is something about hearing yourself give thanks to God that can set you on a course of joy and thanksgiving. The more you practice thanksgiving the easier it becomes to live 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.*

# DAY FIVE

A week of praise and thanksgiving

## Read Psalm 103

'forget not all His benefits' In this psalm David lists out many benefits of who God is. Taking time to reflect on what God is like can help keep our perspective of Him pure and true.

### REFLECT

- *List out some of God's characteristics that have meant the most to you. Think about how you have experienced those qualities of God in your story as you have come to know God and walk with Him.*

### RESPOND

- *Spend some time in prayer sharing your list of 'benefits' with God. Express to Him just how much His attributes have meant to you, and how they have effected your life.*

# DAY SIX

## A week of praise and thanksgiving

### Read Psalm 96

“Sing to the Lord a new song” We have read several psalms this week as we have spent time around the theme of praise and thanksgiving. To end this weeks study it would be fitting to join the psalmists and write our own song or poem. You can look back on your journal notes from this week. What things have you been thankful for? What attributes of God have you identified that you want to praise Him for? Why not write those things into a song or poem? Sure this might pull you out of your comfort zone but that’s ok, right? If you enjoy art, maybe draw a picture that represents your thankfulness to God. We follow a creative God and He has put that character in each of us. Be creative and have fun expressing your thankfulness to God in a new way. If you really want to stretch yourself, consider sharing your poem, song, or picture with someone once you have finished. Have fun!

*I hope that this week of praise and thanksgiving has helped set some fresh patterns of living with a thankful heart toward God and a renewed ability to see the goodness of God in the midst of your circumstances.*