

Saying Thanks

Read [Luke 17:11–19](#)

Let's dig a little deeper now and see what some other Bible passages have to say about worshiping God through prayer. We'll look at what the Scriptures say, and then consider how it applies to our personal lives.

Saying Thanks (from [Luke 17:11–19](#))

My wife is a stickler for thank you notes. If we receive a gift, or are invited over to someone's house for dinner, she sends a thank you note. If some church member gives me a gift, she asks me, "Have you sent a thank you card?" I say, "I told him thanks when he gave it to me." She replies, "You still need to send a note."

She also notices when she doesn't receive a note. Perhaps she took a gift to a baby shower, or sent a graduation gift to someone, or bought a present for newlyweds. A few weeks go by, and out of nowhere Elia will say, "You know, I never received a thank you card from. Then I wondered why?" It's not that she's bitter about, but she does notice.

Do you know that God notices whether we say thank you or not? One time when Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, ten men with leprosy met him. *"As He entered a village, ten leprosy men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!'"* ([Luke 17:12–13](#)).

The reason they stood at a distance is because the Law of Moses required lepers to live away from the rest of society, wear torn clothes, keep their hair unkempt, and cover the lower parts of their faces and cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" if anyone came near them. ([Leviticus 13:45–46](#)).

So these men stood at a distance and called for Jesus to have mercy on them. He did:
¹⁴**"When He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they were going, they were cleansed."**

[LUKE 17:14](#)

There were two reasons Jesus told them to go show themselves to the priests. The first reason was to keep the Law of Moses. According to the Old Testament, it was the priests' job to declare "**clean**" anyone who had been healed of leprosy—to clear them for reentering society. The second reason was that it required an act of faith on the part of these men. You'll notice in the verse above that they were not healed before they turned to go to the priests, but only *"as they went"* were they cleansed. They had to obey Jesus' words and take that step of faith before the cleansing came.

All ten were healed. But notice what happened next:

¹⁵ **“Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,**

¹⁶ **and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.”**

[LUKE 17:15-16](#)

Though all ten were healed, only one came back and said thank you to Jesus. And the one who came back wasn't even a Jew, one of the chosen people. He was a Samaritan, people who partly worshiped the one true God of the Jews, but who mixed their worship of him with pagan beliefs. Because of this the Jews ordinarily had nothing to do with them. But it was the Samaritan who came back and gave thanks—the one who might be least expected to.

Jesus noticed:

¹⁷ **“Then Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?”**

¹⁸ **“Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?”**

[LUKE 17:17-18](#)

Jesus noticed that only this one man came back to give thanks. And he wondered why the other nine hadn't. God notices whether we say thank you or not. It's one of the ways that we give him worship, that we stay connected to him.

It also keeps our vision for life clear and bright. Have you ever noticed how you can have ninety-nine things going great in your life, and one going wrong—and your focus is on the one wrong thing? I know that is often the case with me. I tend to lose sight of all the blessings because of the one or few things going wrong.

The practice of giving thanks will restore our vision. It will help us focus on all the things going well, rather than the one or two things going wrong. “Heavenly Father, it sure is a struggle at work these days. We are overwhelmed, don't have enough help. But thank you that I have a job. Thank you that I have a vehicle to drive to work, a house to go home to. Thank you for my family. Thank you for my health. And a special thank you for my vacation time coming up soon!”

In any situation, we can find much to give thanks for, and it will restore our vision. A man and wife were on a long trip. They stopped at a full-service gas station. After the attendant washed the windshield, the man leaned out of the window and said, “It's still dirty. Wash it again.”

The attendant complied. When he finished, the man leaned out the window again, and said, “It's still dirty. Don't you know how to wash a windshield?”

At that, the man's wife reached over, removed her husband's glasses, cleaned them with a tissue, and slipped them back on him—and behold: the windshield was clean!

Sometimes all we need for a brighter day is not the removal of our problems, but the cleansing of our vision. Thankfulness is the cleansing agent.

What is the one problem you've been focusing on?

What are some things you could thank God for instead?

Remember to include thankfulness in your prayer time, and as you go throughout your life. It's one of the ways we worship God, and keep our connection to heaven.