

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP – **Discovering God's Will for Your Life.**

Session Four – March 11, 2014

God's Will for our Hearts

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Clearing the cobwebs: Are you a stocker-upper? I mean, when you buy groceries, do you always buy extra to keep in your pantry? If you were to check in your cupboards now, how many days could you go without shopping and still provide basic meals for your household?

When my daughter was little, she was such a little sparkler. Her eyes had a twinkle, she loved to chatter away, and she had such a thankful attitude. With all the wonder a three-year-old could muster, she found a wealth of little things to exclaim over. The funny thing was, it didn't take much—a brand-new pink crayon, a ladybug on the windowsill, a squirrel on the birdfeeder, a bracelet made from yarn, a new shape of pasta, the first dandelion of summer. “Oh, Mama!” she would shriek, startling me. I would rush to see what calamity had befallen her, only to find her in delight over some small discovery. I would dutifully ooh and aah over her newest find. Often, these became opportunities to point her little heart toward God, and offer up a prayer of thanks for His making such wonderful things for our world. Pretty soon, she was prompting us to remember her discoveries in our prayers of thanks at mealtimes and bedtimes. She was living proof of the Scripture that says, “Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all He has done!” There is nothing quite like a child to reopen our eyes to the miracles we have gotten used to.

1. Aha! Now this is the very sort of thing we've been looking for. We have found a sentence in the Bible that is straightforward about the will of God. It is so bold in its assertion “This IS the will of God for you” Just for the record what is God's will in **1 Thessalonians 5:18**?
2. When is it easy to follow that advice? When is it difficult?

Barbara Johnson: *God has two dwelling places: one in heaven and one in a thankful heart.*

3. So far this week, could you say you've been thankful for everything that has come your way? Why or why not?

4. Thanksgiving is tied closely to prayer in the Scriptures. When we find ourselves overwhelmed with gratitude toward God, what could be more natural than telling Him so. What is the Psalmist thankful for in **Psalm 95: 1-6**?

Barbara Johnson: *If you're going through a stormy time in our life, realize with gratitude that our all-wise, loving Father hasn't deserted you. He isn't allowing you to be tossed about. He is working with awesome skill to smooth your rough edges and bring forth from your soul the brilliant loveliness of Christ.*

5. It is easy to be thankful once we have received the things we desire. Turn to **Philippians 4:6**. When does thankfulness put in its appearance here?

I have always been amazed at the children of Israel. Have you ever seen such an ungrateful lot? God frees them from their chains, drowns their pursuers, shades them with a cloud by day, provides them with a nightlight at night, brings forth water in the midst of the desert, gives them bread from heaven itself, talks one-on-one with their leader, and promises them beautiful new homes in a land that will be all theirs. What slave would have dreamed so much? But they are not thankful. Worse, they complain! I wonder what would have happened if the Israelites had considered their circumstances with a brighter eye, and simply said. "Thank you Lord" God's will for our lives doesn't include griping and grumbling. We are called to an attitude of gratitude.

6. Why do you think people are often unaware of the blessings in their lives?
7. Is it possible God does things for us every day that we don't see?
8. What kind of blessing might we be missing?

Lucy Swindoll: *Wherever you are now is God's provision, not His punishment. Celebrate this moment, and try very hard to do it with conscious gratitude.*

9. Thankfulness has a way of bubbling up. We can't help it when our hearts are full—it just overflows! What outlet of praise is mentioned in both **Psalm 69:30** and **Psalm 92:1**?

10. Do you have a favorite song that often flows out of your thankful heart?

11. Another aspect of the thankful heart is found in 2 Corinthians 4:15. What is the result of the thanksgiving we lift up?

Sheila Walsh: *I'm learning to stop for thankful moments. It's become a daily discipline of mine since I found that I was getting overwhelmed by all the daily stuff that "has to get done."*

12. First Thessalonians 1:2 mentions something we should always be thankful for. What is that?

Sheila Walsh: *Giving thanks does wonders for my soul. It refocuses me on what's really important so that instead of dwelling on the fact that my son, Christian, just tried to flush my new pale blue suede pumps down the toilet, I can celebrate the gift of a child when so many arms are empty.*

Trinket to treasure: The trinket is a reminder of the lesson that we share together. It will serve to remind you of the things you have learned and talked about.

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, sometimes the days seem bleak, and gloominess comes into our hearts. Help us to remember that there are always things to be thankful for. Let us be mindful of little blessings that brighten our every day and prayfully offer our thanks. May we often remember your will for our hearts—that of thankfulness. Transform our grumblings so that we bubble over with gratitude and fill our hearts with love.