



## Eat, Drink, And Be Thankful: Be Thankful | December 5, 2018

### Discussion Guide

#### The Scoop

I want more stuff. You want more stuff. We all want more stuff. But what if this desire for more stuff impacts our ability to be thankful?

#### Key Verses

##### 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (NIV)

*"Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."*

#### Discussion

If you've ever driven by an outlet mall, you've seen all the brand names advertised in a way where it's virtually impossible to miss them. You've maybe even driven by and felt the sudden urge that some of us feel when tempted by a "bargain" to buy something, something you didn't even know you wanted before the store was right in front of you. In that moment, it can feel really easy to recognize all the stuff that we don't have, or to think that what we already have just isn't quite enough.

1. Have you felt the urge to buy something suddenly, even when you didn't need it or were aware it even existed, simply because it was right in front of you? Where do you think this feeling comes from?
2. Why do you think we get so tempted by "stuff"? Have you experienced a let down after something you bought didn't fulfill you like you thought it would?

We live in a time where it's hard to go even an hour without being exposed to some new product we "need" to buy. But what if the constant need for more "stuff" prevents us from being thankful? The reality is that cultivating a life and attitude of thankfulness is not something that just happens to us, it actually takes practice. As followers of Jesus, thankfulness, like happiness, is something that we own, regardless of our circumstances. It fills our soul, even in the midst of some of the most difficult situations.

3. How would you describe or define thankfulness? Who is someone in your life that embodies thankfulness well? Explain.
4. Does your constant need or desire for more "stuff" get in the way of being thankful for what you already have? Why might this be so?

In 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, an apostle is describing his struggle with one of his ailments. He used to look at his "handicap" with negativity, so much so that he asked the Lord to take it away from him three times. He was so aware of what he didn't have, that he wasn't able to see what he already did. God responds by telling him that His grace and strength is enough. When we choose to follow Him, His strength is magnified in our weakness. That answer actually changed the apostle's perspective to realize how much he did have available to him in Jesus.

5. Do you relate to the apostle at all, either with his handicap or with something you've pleaded with Jesus to have?
6. Have you seen God's strength magnified in your weakness or lack? Explain.

#### What's Next?

What if instead of focusing on all that we don't have, we chose to recognize that some of those places and desires are where we actually need to step closer to God? Whether circumstances or actually possessions, the more that we chase or fill our lives up with "stuff," the farther we get from understanding how much we have received in Jesus and the harder it becomes to practice thankfulness.

This week, as you live out your faith and as we get close to Christmas, choose to practice thankfulness instead of being distracted by all that you don't have. Take time to reflect on the grace that we have in God. Take time to reflect on the places where you don't feel good enough or feel like you have everything you want, and remember that it's in those spaces that God wants to show up.