

Alley Rundown - November 25 & 26, 2017

Bible Story: Gratitude is with You . . . Always (Give Thanks No Matter What) •

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Key Question: What's keeping you from being thankful?

Bottom Line: Always be grateful.

Memory Verse: "Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus." *1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV*

CONNECT TIME: Alley Photo Hunt

Supplies Needed: Pens, Paper, and Clipboards (1 per group)

"What's up, party people? Welcome to *The Alley*! My name is [Your Name], and I want to thank each one of you personally for being here with me today."

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you, and you, and you and . . . you know? This is an incredibly inefficient way to show my gratitude for each of your individual presences—instead, how about I show off how thankful I am by playing a game with all of you? I call it *Alley Photo Hunt*!"

"This is how it's going to work. I'm going to pass out a sheet of paper and a writing utensil to each small group. Once every group has their resources, I'm going to put a picture on the big screen. Upon first glance, this picture may seem totally normal . . . but upon second, third, and even fourth glance, you may notice that some things are not quite right. The job of each small group is to write down as many things that are wrong with the image as they can find. At the end of sixty seconds, each group will pass in their papers, and we'll determine the winner, and the victorious small group will get an extra dollar of Alley Cash."

*Pass out paper and pen to each small group. Game starts once each group has its supplies.
The game will last 60 seconds.*

CG: Photo Hunt Image

"And that's time! Good hustle, everyone, good hustle! Let's pass up all those papers to the front, and I'll get someone checking them out ASAP!"

Begin Rundown...

"You know Alley, I've been blessed enough to have lived a pretty fortunate life. I've got a roof over my head, food on my table, and a Netflix subscription that allows me to watch *all my favorite shows* wherever and whenever I want. But even though I've had it pretty good, I'm no stranger to a Bad Day! And if you couldn't tell by my inflection, that's a Bad Day with a capital B and a capital D. See, there are regular old 'bad days' where one or two things go wrong . . . and then there are capital B, capital D 'Bad Days' where absolutely *everything* goes wrong."

Tell an appropriate and brief, personal story about a Bad Day you have experienced.

After your story...

"I imagine that not many of you have had the *exact* same stomach-churning, Bad Day that I had, but by a show of hands, how many of you out there have ever experienced a day where absolutely nothing went right? (*Allow response.*) If you're anything like me, you also find it easy to get stuck in a bad mood on a Bad Day. We can't see past it. We act like we can't be thankful for anything else in life because of the series of unfortunate events happening right now!"

"In those moments, how do we refocus so we're not stuck in the negative? Verses throughout the Bible talk about how we need to be grateful even when things are at their worst . . . but how is that even possible? When you're spewing like the world's grossest lawn sprinkler, how can we find *anything* to be grateful for? How will you show gratitude when things just don't go your way?"

"Well, to answer questions like this, we need to start with what we know to be true. And we can find all sorts of true things written in the pages of the Bible. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, (*open Bible and read 1 Thessalonians 5:18*) *Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus. (NIRV)*"

"There are three pretty important words in that verse: *NO MATTER WHAT*. If you're having a great day, give thanks. If you're having a Bad Day with a capital B and D, what do you think we should do? That's right—give thanks."

"But how does this work, right? Can we really be thankful no matter what? Well, let's explore that together in this week's episode of Re:Focus..."

CG: Re:Focus Week 4 Lesson Video

"When things are bad, it can be really, REALLY difficult to find things to be grateful for . . . but if you refocus your attention on what God's done for you and how He's working in your life, you'll find there's always something to be grateful for . . . in any situation . . . even if you're having the worst Bad Day in the history of Bad Days and can't find anything to be the slightest bit thankful for, you can take a step back and remember that you are loved by God."

"If you are a Christian, you always have something to be grateful for—Jesus. It's important to remember Jesus died on a cross to pay for all our sins . . . sins that keep us from being close to God the Father. When Jesus took the punishment for our sins, He gave us the opportunity to have a relationship with God. He did this because He loves us. His love for us should keep us grateful no matter what."

"As you head to Small Group, think about this question . . ."

CG: Key Question 4 Slide

"What's keeping you from being thankful? Let's pray."

(PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS)