

Thanksgiving Thoughts:

30 Day Devotional on Gratitude

by
Kelly
Freed
Arena



*from Weary
to Worship*

Introduction

As a young child, the first Psalm I memorized was Psalm 100. My family instilled in me from a young age to “enter His gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise” (vs 4). I’m grateful for this modeling; however, life events (and my own moodiness) don’t always make gratitude or thanksgiving easy, or even make sense.

My journey toward gratitude began when I needed a topic for my persuasive speech in high school for the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA). The Lord clearly placed the topic of gratitude on my mind. How do I know this? I dug my heels in and did not want to do it. I stubbornly resisted, and yet, “gratitude” would not leave my mind. Only God could have prompted such a good thing, which would prepare me for my imminent future. Between the end of that year and the beginning of the next, I would experience tremendous compounded grief due to back-to-back losses for the first (although not the last) time.

Gratitude profoundly changed my life. And may I be so bold as to say that gratitude saved my life as well. Sharing what you are thankful for around the Thanksgiving table is a wonderful way to reflect and is a beautiful tradition. I’m thankful it’s the norm for many of my friends and acquaintances. Being thankful on a holiday is an excellent start, but God calls us to something far deeper. Once I encountered genuine gratitude, it deeply and profoundly transformed me. In an effort to share the importance of gratitude and to call us to be people of thanksgiving, I write this devotional. I pray it blesses and convicts you and calls you to the richest Thanksgiving season yet.

As we consider Advent a time where Christians prepare our hearts for Christmas, let us consider this season of Thankfulness to prepare our hearts for Thanksgiving, and help us have an attitude of gratitude throughout the whole holiday season, and beyond. The five sections of the daily devotions tackle the Who, What, When, Where, and Why of our thankfulness. The How is woven through each day, along with a Scripture to lead our hearts to true and lasting thanksgiving.

Take heart. Jesus is with us and will lead us to Thanksgiving.

Love & Hugs,
Kelly Freed Arena

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Who

God - Psalm 118

As we begin our gratitude guide, I find it most appropriate to start with our thanks to God. There is a high likelihood that you thank God at least once per day, considering mealtime prayers, so you are already on the right track. Before we thank God for something, we would be remiss not to pause and meditate on thanking God for being God. We can thank God for being holy, loving, kind, merciful, sovereign...all of His attributes. A. W. Tozer is one of my favorite theologians. For more on this, I suggest Tozer's book, *Attributes of God*. Thanking God for being God gives us the right and important perspective of who God is and who we are. As we gear up for the holiday season, we may want to "do it all", but we cannot, and that shouldn't be our primary focus. We can, however, truly appreciate the One who is always at work and who desires a personal relationship with us.

Psalm 118 is a Hallel Psalm, and traditionally would have been the last psalm sung at Jewish Passover Meals. The psalm powerfully recounts the Israelites' plight from Egypt and God's faithfulness to them. Learning that Jesus and his disciples would have most likely sung Psalm 118 on the night He was betrayed stirs my heart. Psalm 118 carried Jesus through his suffering, his torment, and even his death on the cross.

In the twenty-nine verses of Psalm 118, "LORD" is mentioned twenty-eight times. The first and the last verse declare, "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!"

As the story unfolds in this psalm, the people have victory because of their association with the king. The king continually worked on behalf of his people, and it was not because of anything done by his people in the kingdom. The same is true with us. God loves us this much, not because of what we do, but because of who He is. Jesus suffered, died for our salvation, and rose victorious.

May the steadfast love of God captivate our whole being. May we be compelled to live a life of gratitude for Who God is as well as what God has done for us!

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What about God stirs your heart to thankfulness today?

Pray back Psalm 118 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude for who God is.

Who

Son - John 3:16-21 *(Originally written for Lent 2024)*

Jesus died on the cross for our sins. This truth is all too familiar; We may say it matter-of-factly and without pausing in awe and wonder...let alone thanksgiving. But this truth is staggering and amazing. Let us pause in awe and wonder. Yes, let us give thanks for the Son who laid down his life for us.

John 3:16 is one of the most popular Bible verses and is most commonly memorized. So much so, the weightiness of the truth can lose its power due to familiarity, and we can tend to forget the verses that follow. At least, that's been my experience with John 3:16.

When we think of what God has done for us - sending His only Son - it is right and good for our hearts to be filled with gratitude. It is a mighty miracle that we have the gift of eternal life. We are in the season of Lent, a time when we pause and purposefully reflect on the miracle mentioned in John 3:16. Thanks be to God that he chose to save the world, instead of condemning His own creation! But what was the reason for this tremendous act of love?

As a society, we no longer take sin seriously. Even as believers, we can be tempted to think of ourselves as better than we are and shift the blame onto someone else. We make excuses for our short tempers and careless words. We are influenced by a society that is self-centered and grumpy, instead of other-focused and grateful.

The 40 days of Lent are set apart to focus on reflection and repentance. Lent takes our gratitude for what is mentioned in John 3:16-17 one step further, from gratitude to giving. I used to view Lent only through the lens of giving up something. But the power of the preparation for Easter falls short if our focus is on what we lack rather than on worship. Sacrificing earthly pleasures temporarily is an act of worship. Taking our sins seriously and repenting is an act of worship. Pondering the suffering of Christ is an act of worship. When we couple these things with prayer and reading our Bibles, we can develop greater intimacy in our relationship with God. Even though Thanksgiving is not the season of Lent, repentance doesn't take a holiday. The more we are aware of our own need for a Savior, the more grateful we will be for the Son.

As believers, we are not condemned. But pausing and purposefully confessing our sins is an act of worship that leads to thanksgiving. To confess our tempers exactly as they are, and how badly we use our tongue; to humbly acknowledge that Jesus died on the cross for the sin of the entire world, including my sin.



The power of the resurrection of the Son can and should be celebrated all year long. Being grateful for Jesus' death and resurrection is sweeter and more powerful when we take time to remember why Jesus sacrificed Himself in our place. Gratitude isn't always a giddy feeling. Gratitude can be somber, too. By starting this season with thankfulness, reminding ourselves of who God is and what the Son has done, gives much more meaning to our thankfulness.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What about God, the Son, stirs your heart to thankfulness today?

Pray back John 3:16-21 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude for who Jesus is.

Who

Holy Spirit - Romans 8

The Holy Spirit guides, convicts, emboldens, and comforts us. What a job! Before Jesus' death, He said it would be better if He left earth so that we would be able to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

As believers, the Holy Spirit seals us. We are now children of God and co-heirs with Christ. We have full security in our salvation, full guidance in our sanctification, full access to our Savior through prayer, and full residency in our eternal home. I will be quick to admit that I didn't use to give the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, a whole lot of thought. Depending on your denominational background, you might not either. But as we begin our gratitude guide with "Who" to express our gratitude to, I think reflecting on the work of the Holy Spirit will help properly prepare our hearts for thanksgiving.

Plenty of people who aren't Christians celebrate Thanksgiving. Many more talk about gratitude. On one hand, it's not impossible to journey through gratitude without the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. On the other hand, if we don't acknowledge the Trinity, the One Whom we are expressing our thanks to, then we miss the extent to which our gratitude can reach. We journey through life trying to have a grateful heart as we grieve, or when life gets hard, or as family tensions rise. Then we may become keenly aware that gratitude in and of itself and our circumstances can only go so far. When my gratitude is directed toward God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and that is my anchor for thanksgiving, then my gratitude transforms. Gratitude becomes something so much more profound, more certain, more solid, as I allow the Holy Spirit to work in my heart daily, so that I become a person of thanksgiving.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What about God, the Holy Spirit, stirs your heart to thankfulness today?

Pray back the verse(s) you wrote out from Romans 8 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude for the Holy Spirit.

What

Big Things - Luke 17:11-17

The most obvious time to express thankfulness is when something ‘big’ or noteworthy happens. But perhaps it’s one of the most overlooked. This story in Luke is a good example of how, unfortunately, gratitude is so counterintuitive. We may be grateful for a ‘big thing’ and relish in the gift, blessing, or even miracle that happened. But do we actually pause and take time to express our gratitude to God for the ‘big thing?’ When we read stories such as this one, a story of nine healed lepers not giving thanks to God, it’s easy to think that’s crazy - or if we were in their shoes, we would certainly take time to express our gratitude for being miraculously healed.

When ‘big things’ happen, sometimes we get so caught up in the excitement of it all, or rush into the ‘what’s next’ stage, or maybe even think ‘it would have happened eventually.’ The next time a ‘big thing’ happens, commit to pausing to express your gratitude to God. Give God the glory and the credit for the good ‘big thing’ happening in your life. Be vocal about it! Share with your friends and family how you don’t want to rush past expressing gratitude to the One who is always worthy and deserving of all of our thanks. When ‘big things’ happen and you invite Jesus into that area of your life, expressing gratitude for ‘big things,’ your eyes begin to open up to the ‘small things.’ Life becomes overflowing with gratitude to God.

Luke 17:11-17, “On the way to Jerusalem, he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What 'big thing' are you going to thank God for?

Pray back Luke 17:11-17 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude for the 'big thing' in your life. Ask God to help your heart stay attuned to gratefulness towards God during the good 'big things.'

What

Small Things - Philippians 4:4-7

Journaling helps me see more clearly how 'small things' lead into 'bigger things,' and that always tickles me...or when 'small things' are repeated enough that I start to pay closer attention. 'Small things' help us get anchored into this attitude, helping and solidifying our gratitude. If we wait and only give thanks for the 'big things,' we may be waiting a while. Give it a day, two days maybe, before the grumbling and complaining begin. People may scoff at you when you verbalize the 'small things' for which you are grateful. But let them scoff, and watch them change their attitudes, because gratitude is contagious.

There is nothing too small for which to give thanks! Creating a habit of expressing gratitude for the 'smallest things' can help our overall attitude. This verse instructs us to always rejoice, implying we are not to wait until we find something noteworthy to rejoice about. Taking note of small blessings for which to thank God helps create in our hearts and minds an attitude of gratitude.

Philippians 4:4-7 speaks of rejoicing always. 'Always' implies rejoicing in good times and bad times, in 'big things' and 'small things.' Historically, for me, this verse came to mind while I was anxious about 'small things.' In my mind, it made more sense to have anxiety about 'big things.' I would get frustrated with myself for being anxious over 'small things.' These verses helped remind me that everything, including the 'small things,' is part of the encouragement and admonishment of not being anxious and to pray. 'Small things' matter to God. If small irritations make me anxious, then small acts of gratitude can make me rejoice. And if we take time to be grateful for all of the 'small things,' then perhaps we will be on the right track to being a people who are known for rejoicing always, as this pleases God!

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What is a 'small thing' that you can thank God for today? Was there a time when you noticed a 'small thing' that led up to a 'big thing' that you were thankful for?

Pray back Philippians 4:4-7 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude even for the 'small things' that God does for us.

What

Anything - Colossians 2:6-7

I am easily entertained, and it doesn't take much to fill me with delight. Just show me polkadots or penguins and I'll be squealing. I have learned that not everyone can be so quickly amused. If we are called to be people full of thanksgiving, then having an attitude of gratitude toward anything counts. Expressing gratitude for anything helps battle entitlement, cynicism, and discontentment.

When I was writing my gratitude speech at the end of high school, I was seriously struggling, yet I desired to become a grateful person. Ann Voskamp's concept of writing a gratitude list, found in her book *One Thousand Gifts*, at first challenged me, but then catapulted me toward an attitude of gratitude. So much so that over a decade later, I still get just as excited talking about gratitude. If it's hard to come up with "anything" to be grateful for, try writing things down. Don't overthink it...you can even write down penguins or polkadots, too if you'd like.

Depending on how long we've been walking with Jesus, our relationship with Him can become stagnant. In this season, as we anticipate Thanksgiving, it's a perfect time to express our thankfulness for Jesus and what He's done for us. It is right and good for us, of all people, to carry the banner of gratitude. As we grow in our faith, let us not be ashamed to be grateful for anything so that we can become people abounding in thanksgiving.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

Does the phrase 'abounding in thanksgiving' describe the kind of person you are? If not, how do you plan to become more purposeful in giving thanks for anything?

Pray back Colossians 2:6-7 to God and ask to help you become a person 'abounding in thanksgiving'.

What

People - *Ephesians 5:15-21*

Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* has captivated hearts for years. The famous quotation at the end of many renditions of the story, "To love another person is to see the face of God," leaves me breathless each time. As a Christian, I believe every person is made in the image of God and has inherent value. While on earth, Jesus commanded us to love God and love each other. Jesus also explained that people would know we belonged to Him because of the love we demonstrate towards one another (John 13:34-35).

But how often do we unintentionally take the people around us for granted? How often do we hold grudges instead of gratitude towards one another? It's a lot easier to love people if we have grateful hearts towards them. Holding a grudge while being grateful is nearly impossible. Holidays naturally stir up a form of nostalgia toward our loved ones. We collect Christmas cards from those we love. We reflect on the good times and bad, and celebrate another holiday season upon us.

This Thanksgiving season, allow your heart and mind to open toward those around you. Your friends and family near and far. Your neighbors and those across the church aisle. Gratitude is a gift to give, and a gift that is contagious. How awesome would it be if we took time to share with others the gratitude we felt for them? Let us address others in ways that build each other up, and ultimately point toward the goodness of God. Consider making a call or writing a note to a friend expressing your gratitude for having them in your life. Love for the people around us, fueled by gratitude, is not fleeting or conditional love. This is the kind of love Jesus means for us to express towards one another and our watching world.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What about how God desires us to interact with others stirs your heart to thankfulness today? Who has impacted your life, and how are you going to express your gratitude for them?

Pray back Ephesians 5:15-21 to God and ask to be filled with gratitude for the people in your life.

What

Hard Things - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Early on in my journey of chronic pain, I learned to be grateful for it, because I saw how God used my suffering to mold my character and bless those around me - particularly others who face chronic health struggles. My heart has drawn closer to the Lord than I believe I ever would have without these various trials in my life. I am truly grateful to God for using the suffering for my good. From experience, I have learned that being thankful for the hard things is a step in the right direction of finding and maintaining an attitude of gratitude.

I would caution, however, that I have watched Christians jump to gratitude prematurely.

Why do I say that? I am certain that I have at times as well. Before we are grateful for the hard things, I think it's healthiest to first acknowledge the reality of the hardness of the suffering. And yes, it's ok to ask God to remove the hard thing as well. Then, when we are at a place to give thanks, we are not sugarcoating anything. Jesus never taught us to hide our hard things from Him. He taught us to take our hard to Him.

For several years, beginning in college, I struggled significantly with my physical health. There were times I felt too weak to stand, and in that season of sickness, fear, and weakness, I began understanding 2 Corinthians 12:9. Out of that season, it became my 'life verse' and I still recite and cling to these verses almost daily. Like Paul, when the hard remains with us, we have a choice on how we will respond. Being grateful for the 'hard' is a trust exercise with God. But He is the safest and most trustworthy of all, truly worthy of our gratitude.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What hard thing can you give thanks to God for today?

Pray back 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude for how God is at work in the hard parts of your life.

When

When Thanksgiving is Easy - Psalm 145:1-7

One would think the most obvious and easiest time to be grateful is when life is going well.

However, some find reading our Bibles and praying take less of a priority during easy seasons. It's the more challenging seasons that bring us to our knees and have us digging into God's Word for answers, or better yet, simply longing to be closer to Him. Even our relationship with Jesus can become more stagnant and be pushed to the back burner when we don't detect a threat to our ease and a burning need for more of Him. So why wouldn't the same be true with our thanksgiving?

What if we changed a typically spiritually stagnant season that often comes when things are 'easy' to a time where we reflect on the greatness of God? Thanking God for the 'easy' things is also an opportunity to reflect on God's majesty, expressing gratitude to God for His work in our lives. By reflecting on the Lord's abundant goodness in your life, I hope it naturally stirs gratitude within your heart. If you are in an "easy" season, I am so happy for you! But please allow this season to help instill in your heart an attitude of gratitude and true and lasting thanksgiving.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

Do you take time to give thanks to God during 'easy' seasons? Have you noticed how spiritually growing in 'easy' seasons has helped you in harder times?

Pray back Psalm 145:1-7 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of genuine gratitude during the easy seasons in your life.

When

When Thanksgiving is Hard - Psalm 118:5-8 & 13-15

When life is hard, it's really not a time when we feel like being grateful. It's counterintuitive. Depending on the hard, it might feel impossible to have gratitude. But this is why we started with the "Who" in this gratitude guide. The "Who" we give our thanks to is God. Because I know God is sovereign, I trust everything is filtered through His hand, even when I don't understand or agree. Having gratitude in hard times proves that by God's grace, we are resilient people persevering in our faith. Having gratitude when times are hard means that we are people of hope. We are people of hope because our hope is in Christ, who rose from the grave, and our eternal hope is secure. God is for us; He is on our side. We are his sons and his daughters, and he loves us with an everlasting love. Even in hard times, having a hope secure in Christ is the reason we can have an attitude of gratitude.

In the Introduction, I shared a peek into my senior year of high school when I first began the journey of gratitude. As someone who does not like change, the unknown of college life and the 'what ifs' about my future appeared daunting. But the hardest part of that time was losing five friends in a span of seven months. Sadly, three friends passed away, and two betrayed me. It was truly a devastating year for me, and I was not a grateful girl. I know that God called me to gratitude because when I said "yes" to gratitude, I did so reluctantly. But by God's mercy, I said "yes," anyway.

If life is hard for you right now, be grateful reluctantly. It's okay to tell God you don't want to be grateful. Be honest with Him about how difficult it is to be grateful in the hard, but choose to be grateful anyway. And through the power of the Holy Spirit, He can take us begrudgingly, whiningly, and doubting, and give us an attitude of gratitude that we know could only come from Him. If we say "yes" to gratitude in hard times, then that is how gratitude can truly become life-changing. Gratitude in the hard is a sacrifice of praise, but it solidifies in your heart that you're working on true and lasting gratitude.

If your "hard" is so hard that gratitude feels impossible, then I pray Jesus will be near you and keep you from falling. Your perseverance in gratitude is not in vain, and is a testimony to the watching world.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What about how God's help in hard times stirs your heart to thankfulness today?

Pray back Psalm 118:5-8 & 13-15 to God and ask Him to help you give thanks even during hard times.

When

Thanksgiving When We Grieve - Psalm 126:5-6

In May 2024, I penned “My miscarriage” in the margin of my Bible next to Psalm 126:5-6.

After seven years of marriage and a lifetime of anticipating motherhood, losing my baby right before Mother’s Day felt like a cruel joke. But these verses struck a chord with me, and I clung to the promise that my weeping was not in vain.

For me, loss and grief are all too familiar, yet each time, there is always something puzzling and new. A couple of years before my miscarriage, I lost one of the most significant people in my life. One month after her death, this is the Thanksgiving holiday social media post I wrote:

“Happy Thanksgiving?: How grief and gratitude can go hand-in-hand.”

Grateful for...

Anytime a memory of our loved one causes grief, let it also simultaneously cause gratitude for the life they lived, and the honor of having them in our lives.
...while I grieve.

Grateful for...

Jesus felt our sorrow. On the cross, He took upon Himself the brokenness of the whole world. What tremendous love He must have for us!
...while I grieve.

Grateful for...

The promise that death is not victorious - Jesus is. And if our loved ones loved Jesus, we will be able to spend eternity with them.
...while I grieve.

The Thanksgiving I wrote that post, the weight of my grief was crushing. Honestly, some days it still is. And in the early days of meditating on Psalm 126:5-6 after my miscarriage, I think it was a comfort that I had “permission” for my tears, and that I knew in some way, God would not waste them. In my grief, I hoped for those days of joy.



The person whom I lost before that Thanksgiving is in Heaven and not on earth with me. Mother's Day 2025 came with no baby. But it did come with a gathering of ladies who have the grief of childlessness, and we read together Psalm 126:5-6. Sharing my testimony of God's faithfulness was my shout of joy. Only God could write such a good story out of my tears!

However, I would be a cruel person to look at your tear-stained face and tell you to be grateful. Genuine gratitude does not ignore or mask our pain. It unearths it, handing it to God, making space in our broken hearts and weary minds for grief and gratitude to exist hand-in-hand. And I would be the first to say that some days in deep grief, gratitude does not feel like an option. If that is where you are at this Thanksgiving season, then I am so, so sorry. You are not alone, and know that Jesus doesn't guide you anywhere where He hasn't been. In a mysterious way that I will never fully comprehend, even in our grief, gratitude heals.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What are you grieving, and how are you able to be thankful today?

Pray back Psalm 126:5-6 to God and ask to give you a grateful heart even as you grieve.

When

Thanksgiving and Strained Relationships

Husband - Isaiah 54:5-8 | Father ~ James 1:17 | Mother ~ Luke 13:34-35
Brother ~ Mark 3:35 | Friend ~ John 15:12-15

It was important for me to take a day to pause and acknowledge what to you may feel like an elephant in the room. The holidays can give us visions of Norman Rockwell paintings. But unfortunately, it seems that those images taking place in real life are few and far between. If you're facing strained relationships threatening to make your Thanksgiving holiday more complicated than it needs to be, then I am truly sorry. I pray that you see how Jesus stands in the gap and how we can be grateful for His relationship with us. Throughout Scripture, it is so fascinating to see how He is described in various relationship contexts. Some of these have resonated with me, and I remember the season of great comfort these truths brought me. My relationship with God grew astoundingly because He became more to me than my Savior (as complete as that is!) Truly, if the only thing Jesus did for us was to die on the cross and rise again, then that is enough to be grateful! But out of His goodness and love for us, He desires a personal relationship with us, and even those who are estranged from you. Jesus meets us right where we are. No matter where you are or what relationship struggles you may be facing this Thanksgiving season, I pray you lean into Jesus. May you experience Him more purposefully, personally, and profoundly than you ever have before.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

Do you have a strained relationship that will complicate this holiday season? How can you see Jesus standing in the gap for you?

Pray back the verse you selected to God and ask to grow deeper in your gratitude for how the Lord shows up for you as you face relationship turmoil.

When

Thanksgiving Day & Night - Deuteronomy 6:4-9

A fun fact about me is that I have extreme ADHD; my brain is thinking of multiple things at the same time, all the time. So, setting aside a moment to pause and worship has significantly helped my daily choice of expressing gratitude to God. Having purposeful reminders in my busy days with a busy brain that gratitude is critical deepens my walk with God. Years ago, I had a friend who, whenever the clock turned 11:11, would exclaim, “It’s 11:11, make a wish!” Being inspired by her idea, at some point years ago, I thought, “11:11...why don’t I just pause right now, and thank the Lord?” I have continued this practice ever since, and am always excited to share the tip that has helped me over the years so simply yet significantly.

Whenever I’m awake and the clock strikes 11:11 in the morning and at night, I get giddy with gladness that the gratitude moment is here! No matter what I’m doing, I try my absolute best to stop. Instead of “making a wish,” I pause and I think of one attribute of God that I am grateful for. For a solid sixty seconds, I thank God for a single attribute He embodies. Okay, because I do have ADHD, sometimes it’s multiple attributes – but I truly try to hone in on one attribute because sixty seconds is not much time. But I do remember the days when sixty seconds felt like an eternity as I began this habit!

Pausing in my day to purposefully thank God helps me to stand fast in the Lord. Daily gratitude helps reorient my weary heart to pause and focus my heart on worshipping God through my gratitude for Who He is.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What could be a tangible reminder in your daily routine to pause and give thanks to God?

Pray back Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to God and ask for awareness of opportunities to give thanks to God day and night.

When

Thanksgiving When You Don't Feel Like It - Psalm 25 (Originally written Spring 2023)

Lamenting is a sacrifice of praise. The beauty of lamenting is that it doesn't negate the pain. It actually brings it front and center. The focus is not on dwelling on it, but giving it to the Lord. Even as we don't feel like being grateful, it is astounding to remember that the Savior of the world was not only well acquainted with suffering, but the Holy Spirit comforts us. Both are indeed reasons to be grateful.

Six months ago today, I tragically lost the most significant person in my life. In the past six months, my 'weary' has outweighed my worship. But in the depths of my agony, Jesus is still

Six months ago today, I tragically lost the most significant person in my life. In the past six months, my 'weary' has outweighed my worship. But in the depths of my agony, Jesus is still here with me. I am incredibly thankful for friends who have let me grieve, but also continually point me to Jesus. One of these precious friends introduced me to lamenting, and the practice was therapeutic for me. If you have something in your life to lament about, I hope this helps you to hold your weary and your worship together as you cling to Jesus - the Man of Sorrows.

Six movements of Lament based on Psalm 25

- Cry out to God
- Tell God where you are
- Ask God your questions
- Repent to God for your lack of trust in the situation
- Pray the Gospel
- Ask God for help
- Respond in praise and trust

*There could be a myriad of reasons for why there are times we don't feel like being grateful. Lamenting is simply one, and the one that has mostly resonated with me.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What are you lamenting, and how are you able to be thankful despite your sorrow?

Pray back Psalm 25 to God, and ask Him to give you the courage to walk through the movements of lament, to become more honest with God, and to strengthen your relationship with Him.

Where

Thanksgiving at the Hospital - Hebrews 13:15-16

It's countercultural to see a sufferer sing. It's Kingdom-cultural. I stood at my friend's hospital bedside, who was admitted for seizures. It was awkward. I wanted to be there, but didn't know what to do. So I sang. In my own season of medical tests and doctor visits, I was convinced that it wasn't a time to "take a break" from having a grateful heart...but to sing, pray, and give thanks even at the doctor's office. When I had a CAT scan done, the radiologist suggested that I sing in my head, and afterward asked me what song I sang to myself. I told her my favorite hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God." She smiled and said she liked that song too. Another time when I admitted myself to the Emergency Room, I shared the gospel with the phlebotomist. Evangelism has regrettably not been a strength of mine, but in the moment, the Good News rolled off my tongue.

A friend of mine, with chronic illness, talks about her health being a "backdoor pass" and is always quick to see the opportunities God gives her to speak with medical staff about Jesus. She inspires me. Especially if you are the sufferer receiving medical assistance, it's uncanny to have a grateful spirit. But just think of how impactful one grateful patient could have on a whole medical team. We don't do this to show off or like we have something to prove. We have nothing to boast of but what the Lord has done. So, let us exclaim our gratitude even in sterile rooms and cold halls. Gratitude in the hospital is a sacrifice of praise. Let us be quick to share it!

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What is your ‘sacrifice of praise?’ How can you express gratitude in uncommon places?

Pray back Heb 13:15-16 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude despite your sacrifice of praise.

Where

Thanksgiving in the Car - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

My best “God times” are in the car. There were a couple of years when I would drive once or twice a month, three hours one-way for my job. When I moved, my employer was gracious to allow me to work remotely with the agreement of regular in-person visits. Toward the end of this season, the drive started getting old, but for the most part, I cherished this car ride. For three hours, I had uninterrupted time with God. Looking back, I see how those drives sustained me because these were also the hardest years in my adult life thus far.

Thank God in the car.

When was the last time you drove in silence long enough to steady your heart and mind? Long enough to think deeply and tell God what you are pondering? In these drives, I told God what I was thinking (yes, I know He already knows), and I asked Him to help me make decisions. I asked Him why some things I was facing were just so very difficult. But I also remember verbally giving thanks for anything that came to mind that was ‘noteworthy’ of gratitude. The list usually began with my two dogs in the back seat. I expressed gratitude that one of them no longer threw up in car rides like she used to. We see social media reels of people in their cars because of good acoustics and good natural lighting. But for me, the car represents so much more...a safe space to pour my heart out to God, and an echo chamber of thanks.

My three-hour car rides were pre-children. If you are a parent, being alone in the car is likely a rare occurrence. As you bring your children along for the ride, include them in your gratitude to God. Invite them into the conversation, and listen to how God can stir even the youngest hearts toward thanksgiving.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

How can you transform your car rides into God-times? What is something your kids said they are thankful for?

Pray back 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 to God and ask Him to help you have gratitude moments even as you travel.

When

Thanksgiving in Church - Acts 2:42-47

Having gratitude for your church may be easy, touchy, or impossibly difficult. Although I can empathize with church hurt, today's devotion is purposefully on Thanksgiving in the Church. (If you are struggling with church hurt, I invite you to hear my heart on the topic via a blog post accessible by the QR code on the next page.)

There are many reasons for and benefits of attending church. Reflecting on my church participation, I believe God uses the church to anchor us in our faith. Although we have access to God and can worship Him while alone in our homes, worshipping God together reminds us that we are a collective people of God, brothers and sisters in Christ who are also on our own journeys of walking with the Lord. These people in your church need encouragement, prayer, or someone there for them, just like us. In short, the church is for proclaiming Christ and loving one another. Revisiting what the early church looked like in Acts reminds us of how God desires us to treat one another, as well as the characteristics to look for in a church.

Sundays are genuinely my favorite day of the week. A large part of that is because I get to go to church. I realize this is not true for everyone. I'm not sharing this to elevate myself, but to give you hope if church is hard for you. After experiencing church hurt, through God's grace, I was able to get back to loving Sundays again, and you can too. I'm grateful for the church, hearing the Gospel preached, and participating in corporate worship. Sundays help recalibrate us to the truth of Who God is in a world of constant bombardment of messages vying for our attention, many of which conflict with God's truth. Regularly attending and being grateful for church doesn't mean my relationship with God and others is unscathed. Sometimes my relationship with God feels complicated, or I feel like I have too many questions about God. Sometimes my relationship with others is uncomfortable. Sometimes I feel annoyed by the very person I need to love most. Sometimes it's still hard to be in church. But going to church, even as an act of obedience, is worth it as we are called not to neglect the meeting of the saints (Hebrews 10:25). There's something truly special about going to church that will deepen our relationship with God in unique ways that we may not otherwise experience.



invite you to be grateful for the people in your church and to have gratefulness in your heart while in church. Church is a place where Christ is proclaimed, where we come to worship, to serve, and a place to love and be loved. Church is a place to express collectively our thanks to God for Who He is and what He has done for us. It's a place to learn more about Him, to sit under solid teaching, because we will never know everything about God. I'm so grateful for my current church community. I've experienced people coming to my aid in times of need. I've had people pray for me, and I've prayed for them. There is something truly remarkable that happens when you do life with your brothers and sisters in Christ. So, this Thanksgiving season, if it wasn't a habit before, will you consider regularly attending your local church?

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts



Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

Where are you on your church journey? How can you be thankful for your church today?

Pray back Acts 2:42-47 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude or the church.

Where

Thanksgiving at Home - Psalm 33:1-3 & Hebrews 13:2

Growing up, it wasn't a morning without the cassette tapes in and then the novelty of CDs playing praise and worship music. There is just something different about listening to music at home to fill every room with thanksgiving. Although this is not a daily habit of mine, I have found listening and singing along with music that glorifies God helps me when I need an attitude adjustment bigger than a piece of Dove Dark Chocolate can bring...no matter how much the wrapper makes me laugh.

Home is not only the place that we dwell, it's a space to invite others into and just maybe, a place where people can draw closer to God. Once, a young man who worked with my husband came over to our apartment, and before he left, he exclaimed, "Wow, I feel like I could go to heaven just by being in your house!" Anytime I've moved, I spent time praying in every room of the home. Any home is a gift from God, and I desire that the gift blesses others. Just this year, I began being more purposeful with hospitality. My prayer for my home is that it will be a safe space, a haven for people to come and rest. Soon after, we received two back-to-back hospitality opportunities for loved ones who needed a place to rest and decompress.

Having gratitude at home doesn't mean your home has to be Pinterest-perfect before you practice hospitality. But having gratitude at home not only changes the perspective of those who live there, but it also has the potential to impact the lives of people who cross your threshold for the kingdom of God. The Thanksgiving holiday is a prime time for hospitality.

If you are hosting this year, how can you find a new appreciation of your home to thank God for? If you'll be the guest in someone else's home, how can you show your gratitude during your stay?

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

Have you noticed that every home has a unique scent? Does your home have the “aroma of gratitude?” How can you express gratitude towards your guests (or the host) this holiday season in a tangible way?

Pray back Psalm 33:1-3 to God and ask Him to give you an attitude of praise that benefits the people in your home.

Where

Thanksgiving at Work - Ephesians 3:9-15 & 22

God worked and works. God created us to do good works (Eph 2:10). We all have unique abilities, learned skills, or talents that we thrive in. May they align with our place of employment, where work can be a blessing to us as we use these abilities to bless others. However, as you know, even the arena of work is tainted by our fallen world, and work can quickly turn from delight to drudgery to disdain. Unfortunately, there are corrupt businesses, broken systems, and coworker conflicts. Work sounds like the perfect place to practice gratitude...right?

Expressing thanksgiving at work may not solve all of your work weariness, but speaking from experience, it takes the edge off. It's easier to work with someone who says "thank you" often

Expressing thanksgiving at work may not solve all of your work weariness, but speaking from experience, it takes the edge off. It's easier to work with someone who says "thank you" often than someone who gripes and complains. Last year, I gave a presentation on coworker conflict at a national conference. I spent roughly nine months digging deep into workplace dynamics and how people interact with each other. In my research in preparation for the talk, it was interesting, although not surprising, to find that individual attitudes can impact the workforce so profoundly. Just as negativity and cynicism can contaminate a workplace's atmosphere, gratitude can transform it for the best. Sometimes the change we want to see in our workplaces starts with us. This Thanksgiving season, try to have a purposeful grateful heart for work and at work, and see how God will use your attitude of gratitude in the workplace.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What attitude do you bring to your workplace? How would you like to see it turned around?

Pray back Ecclesiastes 3:9-15 & 22 to God and ask Him to help you have an attitude of gratitude in your workplace, for your work, and your coworkers.

Why

God Deserves our Thanksgiving - Revelation 4:8-11

A song that has resonated with me this year sings, “If you never did another thing, still, I would sing.” The God of the universe, who created all, came down to walk among us to save us. But not just to save us, but to have a deep and abiding relationship with him that will last for all eternity! God is always worthy of our worship and deserving of our thanksgiving. In Revelation 4, the only thing they could do was worship and proclaim “holy, holy, holy.”

Perhaps it will be easier to express our gratitude in the heavenly realms when streets are paved with gold and secrets are revealed, and we are no longer looking through a dimly lit glass (1 Cor 13:12). The gratitude today prepares us for gratitude tomorrow and a gratitude that will last for all eternity. The only One who deserves our complete, full, and everlasting thanksgiving is the Lord. It is good and right to praise Him! Even at Jesus’ triumphal entry on Palm Sunday, as the crowds rejoiced, not everyone expressed thanksgiving. Jesus said some shocking words that even nature would rejoice if people did not (Luke 19:28-40). The name of the Lord deserves to be proclaimed throughout the nations, and eternity isn’t long enough to adequately express our thanks. Let’s not wait. Let’s start now.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What about God makes you especially grateful for Him today?

Pray back Revelation 4:8-11 to God and ask to be filled with gratitude for who He is.

Why

I Need Thanksgiving - Lamentations 3:22-26

I was gifted a stay at my friend's Bed & Breakfast, The Garden Gate. I sat alone on the bed with my Bible on my lap and a tear-stained face and a whole lot of prayers in my heart and on my tongue. During my stay, I read through the book of Lamentations, and it not only brought me comfort for what I was facing but filled my heart with a deep gratitude for what the Lord had done for me. He was still present with me and leading me down an 'unknown path'. How grateful I am that the Lord's mercies are new every morning! Great is His faithfulness for my God is great! Perhaps a reason why I write this devotional book is that I need reminders to be grateful. We need thanksgiving.

I opened my Bible to Lamentations because I thought it could be a book that met my heart in the season of lamenting and pleading with the Lord that I was in. And yes, my heart resonated with the text, and I received comfort. But then something even greater happened. I left The Garden Gate in a much better state than when I arrived. (Perhaps the three soaking baths in twelve hours had something to do with it.) But after purposefully fixing my eyes on the Lord during my stay, my heart was lighter and my mind clearer. I truly began to experience gratitude in a time that was very difficult for me to find tangible things to be grateful for due to the daunting unknowns before me.

Gratitude did not come in the form of giddiness from thanks. Gratitude came in the form of peace that I knew God would take care of me, and I was so grateful to be His. Over these years of being intrigued by gratitude, I have found that having a grateful heart directly relates to our mental, emotional, and physical health. There is a reason why Scripture talks about our thought life (2 Cor. 10:5) and choosing to fix our minds on pure thoughts (Phil. 4:8). Gratitude strengthens our relationship with God, and in turn, gratitude strengthens us.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

What has made you realize you will benefit from being a more grateful person?

Pray back Lamentations 3:22-26 to God and ask to be filled with an attitude of gratitude each day, just as He provides us with new mercies each day.

Why

Thanksgiving is Life Changing - Philippians 2:12-18

To say I wasn't in a good spot when I began my gratitude journey over a decade ago is a complete understatement. At the time, it was the hardest year of my life, and it remains a top-five contender. I shudder to think of what could have happened to me if I succumbed to my physical chronic pain or grief from back-to-back losses. Through God's grace, saying "yes" to gratitude completely changed my life.

Gratitude changed my life...just as our actions and reactions reflect our outlook on life. Paul talks about putting on qualities we have in Christ, similar to how we put on our clothes every day (Colossians 3:12-17). Having an attitude of gratitude is a daily choice. Because it changed me, I realized how I was and how I can be when I do not have an attitude of gratitude and a grateful outlook on life.

If we are married, we say "I Do" at the altar, but it leads to a lifetime of daily saying 'yes' to the marriage with your spouse. When we accepted Jesus as our Savior, we essentially said 'yes' to Him. But now we have a lifetime of daily saying 'yes' to following Him. Every day, as we walk with Jesus, we get to choose whether to walk in the Spirit or in the flesh.

Thankfully, because of the power of the Holy Spirit working in my heart and this process of continual sanctification, I know that having and maintaining an attitude of gratitude is possible. However, it is a daily choice. Sometimes, several times throughout the day, I must purposefully choose to be grateful. But once I do, and once you do, having an attitude of gratitude will be life-changing.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

Has gratitude changed your life? If not, why not? If yes, who are you going to tell?

Pray back Philippians 2:12-18 to God and ask Him to help you be a person who is known for rejoicing.

Why

Thanksgiving is Life-Giving - Proverbs 17:22

After competing with my gratitude speech, I had the opportunity to share it with various groups, ranging from 10 people to 300 people at a time. Not everyone was accepting of the message, but for the most part, it was well-received. Gratitude multiplies; the more you are grateful, the more gratitude will continue to grow.

I appreciate the analogy in Scripture of the aroma of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:15). An aroma is something evident to people around us. (I've worn deodorant since I was nine, so I know how smells can attract, or detract!) But the aroma of Christ is sweet and pleasing as it draws us towards Christ. When someone has a bad attitude, you can 'smell it' a mile away. Their bad attitude might affect your day, or it might affect your week, depending on the situation and that bad attitude. Isn't it interesting, though, how complaining leads to more complaining, and when you are around someone who complains or has a bad attitude, it's so contagious. You get sucked into joining them in the grumbling or complaining, and soon, your own attitude becomes unattractive.

Similarly, choosing an attitude of gratitude is powerful because it penetrates grumbling or complaining attitudes. It's hard to possess gratitude while holding onto comparison or cynicism. (I already tried that out for you!) If we have the aroma of Christ in us, then we can be life-giving people. As we share the Gospel, our actions and our attitudes make a big difference in the impact of our words. Gratitude is life-giving. Because gratitude is not giddiness, and joyfulness is not happiness, I believe the two go hand-in-hand. Gratitude begets joy, and joy begets gratitude. Being someone who acknowledges their blessings and is quick to say 'thank you' is someone who often also exhibits joy and is life-giving to those around them.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

How can you be 'good medicine' to those around you?

Pray back Proverbs 17:22 to God and ask Him to help you be a life-giving person through your grateful spirit.

Why

Your People Need Thanksgiving - Isaiah 12

Your people need thanksgiving. Being a person marked by thanksgiving is a person who will light up a room. Gratitude has a contagious effect similar to laughter. Being a grateful person will benefit and bless your people.

There are enough Negative Nancies and Debbie Downers in this world. Life is hard, and if you haven't noticed, it's all too easy to find something negative to discuss or hone in on... something that discouraged you. These situations appear as clear as day and take zero effort for us to engage in. But your people don't need more of that. Your people need gratitude. Because gratitude ultimately reflects the goodness of God, our attitudes of gratitude reflect how thankful we are for what Christ has done for us. So if gratitude is the manner in our hearts, then let's be a people of thanksgiving. Let's be quick to share our attitude of gratitude that we have, or we are discovering, or that we are working on with those around us.

When you are with your people at Thanksgiving, I encourage you to go around the table and share what you are grateful for. This is a fun and simple activity to do with your people. But then see how you can be the person overflowing with thanksgiving this year. See how you can be the person who looks for the things to be grateful for and shares what you are learning with your people. Being a grateful person is contagious. Your people ultimately need Jesus. So if your people do not have Jesus, then this is a great way to introduce them. Maybe they will ask, 'How are you grateful despite your circumstances?' That could be a little opening of the door. Or if your people know Jesus, then together collectively, how marvelous would it be if Thanksgiving became a time when you went back to the basics? Reflect on what the Lord has done for you and your people to be saved. Together proclaim His name, and together desire to be people marked by thanksgiving. How awesome would it be for this watching world to see true and genuine gratitude by the people of God.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

When and how are you going to express gratitude towards those around you?

Pray back Isaiah 12 to God and ask God to use you as a blessing towards those around you by your grateful spirit.

Why

Thanksgiving Represents Jesus Well - Psalm 67

My heart's desire is for people to praise God. The working tagline of my ministry, From Weary to Worship, is 'Praising God in the Midst of Chronic Pain.' My prayer for this devotional book is that you would have a renewed sense of gratitude as you pursue a deep and abiding relationship with your Savior. We've already been over how grumbling is contagious and how gratitude can quickly turn the atmosphere of a room around for the better.

Jesus commands us to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). Disciples are people who follow Jesus. We may not be called to serve in Togo or Alaska, but we are all called to go. If we want people to know Jesus and love Jesus, then do we have an attitude that attracts people to Jesus? As believers, we have the Holy Spirit in us 100% of the time, which means 100% of the time we are representing Christ. Are we grateful for His saving work in our hearts? Are we grateful for how he comforts us? Are we grateful for how He leads us down unknown paths?

As I prayed about the final Scripture for this book, Psalm 67 jumped off the page. It reads like a declaration of praise, and I pray it over you. May we be a people who cannot keep in our praises to God. May God use us to make His name known throughout all the earth. May we love and serve Him all our days. May our hearts and minds, filled with gratitude, pour out to those around us. May they be drawn in desiring to learn about Jesus who has saved us, and also find a relationship with Him.

Your Thanksgiving Thoughts

Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.

How does being reminded that we represent Jesus, motivate you to have an attitude of gratitude this holiday season (and beyond)?

Pray back Psalm 67 to God and ask God to fill you with gratitude this Thanksgiving season and beyond so that you can make Jesus great!

Conclusion

Thank you so much for spending the past thirty days with me! I pray that this journey of gratitude has filled your heart and given you a new perspective on being grateful in all seasons of life.

Looking for more encouragement? Tune into my podcast.
<https://fromwearytoworship.com/podcast/>



Want to stay connected? Follow my Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/from_weary_to_worship/



I would be grateful for the opportunity to speak at your church's women's conference, retreat, or business training day. You can reach out to me at: kellybecca16@gmail.com.

Thank you for being a part of the From Weary to Worship community. God bless you!

Acknowledgements

I can't have a gratitude book without saying "Thank you!"

I want to thank my parents, Clarke & Barb Freed, for raising me in a way that instilled a love for the Lord and having a grateful heart.

My editor, Barb Freed, has worked faithfully and tirelessly, not just on this book, but on so many writing projects throughout my life. Thank you, Mom!

My husband who puts up with my 'writing frenzies' anytime creativity sets in, and who encourages me to keep writing.

My sister who is such a cheerleader in my life! Thank you for your love and support.

To all my friends and family who inspired various days of this devotional book. I am abundantly blessed by the community around me.

And finally, in loving memory of my Grandmother, Jackie Freed, who went to Heaven days before this Devotional book was complete. I had the privilege of reading her various parts of this book while they were in progress.

Thank you for being a part of the From Weary to Worship community. God bless you!