

Lenten Prayer Guide - 2022

Week 3 – Thankfulness

Most of us have all witnessed ungratefulness. Perhaps a small child takes what is given and walks away without saying, “Thank-you.” Or you hold the door for someone and they just walk through without even an acknowledgement of your kindness. Ungratefulness is ugly. How then can we go through life and not be grateful for all that God has done for us.

To be truly thankful for all God has done and is doing and will accomplish in our lives is the mark of the believer who is walking with the Lord and drawing closer to God each day. It is a joyful walk to walk in thankfulness.

A psalm for giving thanks. Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 100:1-5

What a joyful Psalm! True thankfulness will show as joy in our lives.

Let this week be filled with prayers of praise and thanks to our Lord God – our Creator, Redeemer, King, and friend.

This week’s breath prayer:

Lord, you are good, and your love endures forever.

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Day 1 – Be Thankful - You Have Been Saved

There is so much we should give thanks for. Of all that we might give thanks for, the reality of our own salvation should top the list.

We were dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1); made alive in Christ (Colossians 2:13); freed from our sins (Revelation 1:5); Jesus is preparing our eternal home (John 14:2) and will return to take us home to be with Him (John 14:3). So be thankful today for your salvation and your eternal destiny – a free gift from God.

Let us live today as freed men and women – living joyful lives filled with thanksgiving and gratefulness.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.
Colossians 2:6-7

Take a moment this morning to list all the blessings the Lord has given you. Take time to thank God for each one. As you go through the day continue in an attitude of thankfulness and praise God for all you have and all you have become – a sinner saved by grace. Overflow with thankfulness. Let others see the joy you have because God loves you so much.

“...the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus”
Ephesians 2:7

Is there someone you will be in contact with today who needs to experience the same joyful, thankfulness? Be attentive and watchful today, listen to the Holy Spirit prompting you to speak about what you are thankful for.

Holy Spirit, come. I welcome your prompting today and everyday of the things in my life for which I should say, thank you. There is much to be thankful for, I pray that I would be reminded of those things that I take for granted. May I not take them for granted and instead be filled with thanksgiving and gratefulness. Amen.

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Day 2 – Be Thankful - God Loves You

*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.
1 Chronicles 16:34*

In our close relationships, family, children, marriage, we often share those special three words, “I love you.” They are special when spoken and even more special when heard.

Listen today as God repeatedly speaks to you, those treasured, precious words, “I love you.” Allow yourself to be embraced by His love, to be filled with that knowledge that no matter what this day may bring – God loves me!

For this alone we have need to be thankful and to express our thanks to God in the way we show His love for us to others. Can you speak a kind word to someone today? Maybe the words, “I love you” would be inappropriate but it can be said in other words and actions and attitudes.

Give thanks today for God’s enduring love for you and all humankind.

Share His love with all you meet. Bless those around you by being God’s love to them and His presence with them today.

Read Psalm 136 today – why do we give thanks? *Because His love endures forever!*

Lord, thank you. Thank you that your love endures forever. Thank you that you have taught us to love others as we love you. Thank you for the love you have shown your people. What a privilege it is to be able to say that God love me. Please help me to always remember and never forget that I am a beloved child of yours. Amen.

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Day 3 – Be Thankful – Live Accordingly

In a world that imposes its morality and its ways with such force and conviction how does a Christian live a pure life? How do we combat the pressures of the world? We may ask the question, “What can I do to stay pure?” The answer is surprising...

*But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but **rather giving of thanks.***
Ephesians 5:3-4

The Christian cannot help but be immersed in the coarseness of this world. This world is a fallen place, full of sin, depravity, and hopelessness. But into this world God has placed you, a believer in Christ, one saved by grace, a holy person, being sanctified daily by the grace of God. In the midst of all the ugliness of sin in the world you are His shining jewel, brilliant, resplendent reflecting the purity and holiness of God to the people and situations in which you find yourself.

So, Paul, fully aware of the depravity of the city of Ephesus, encourages the new believers in Ephesus by showing them how to stand against the world that surrounds them – be thankful he says. Paul’s encouragement to these Ephesian believers is, you be different, do not engage in coarse joking, bad language, and silliness. Instead by being thankful you will avoid these sins.

How are we going to avoid these same temptations that are all around us today? With thankfulness! Living today with words of thankfulness on your lips and thoughts of thankfulness in your heart will repel any temptation to slip into the world’s way.

“..in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ”
1 Thessalonians 5:18

Lord, as Paul prayed for the Ephesians, today I also pray that I would understand how wide, how long, how high, and how deep your love for me is. And in experiencing that amazing love, I pray that I would give you glory and honour by living the life that you have called me to live, one full of a thankfulness that repels earthly temptations. Amen.

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Day 4 – Be Thankful – Be Generous

Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."
1 Chronicles 29:13-14

As an act of thankfulness, the people of Israel gave back to the Lord a portion of what He had given them. Do we look upon all our possessions as gifts from God? Do we demonstrate our thankfulness towards God by our generous giving? Do we hold back in fear of lack while praising the God who has given us everything we have?

From the beginning of this day to the end as you look at and touch anything that “belongs” to you – remember it came to you from the hand of God. Your home, your vehicle, your job, your family - everything is a gift from God.

He who created the universe and everything in it – all comes from God

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."
1 Corinthians 10:26

Can you show your thankfulness to God today by one generous act towards another – done in secret?

"...that your giving may be [done] in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:4

Lord, I pray today that I would be prompted to see and fulfill an opportunity to show generosity toward another. Please help me to be your hands and feet to someone, that they would be on the receiving end of the thankfulness that I feel for you and be blessed by it. Amen.

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Day 5 - Be Thankful – Lift Someone's Burden

No matter in what situation we find ourselves there will always be someone whose situation is worse. Sometimes we encounter a person in such a dire situation that they are unable to help themselves. This is particularly true of the poor in our midst.

Jesus said,

*“...you will always have the poor with you.”
John 12:8*

Yes, indeed there will always be those worse off than us. Too often we look at those who have more than us and we spend less time looking at those who have less.

As Christians we are to have our eyes open for those in need. We should not be neglecting the ones around us who need help. This is particularly true of those who are of our own Christian fellowship. Are you aware of the needs of those we worship with Sunday by Sunday?

Paul directed the Galatian believers to:

*“Carry each other's burdens, and, in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
Galatians 6:2*

Is there someone who needs a little help in your circle of influence? Have you been attentive and responsive? It is an act of thanksgiving to God to return generosity and help to those in need around us.

James wrote,

*“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”
James 1:27*

Be thankful today by being generous with someone in need.

Lord, you have taught us that we can come to you with our burdens and for this I am grateful. I pray today for the wisdom and discernment to help lift another's burden. You have made us all brothers and sisters. Please help me to see where I can help another and let it not be just an act of love, but also an act of gratitude for the love that you give to me. Amen.

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Day 6 - Be Thankful – No Matter What

Sometimes giving thanks and praise are very difficult. Our circumstances can overwhelm us to the point even of despair. But we are not alone in this. This is not new. Throughout the history of the church believers have encountered difficult situations and have found themselves battling against insurmountable difficulties.

But the heart that is fixed on Jesus has a model of endurance as an example:

*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Hebrews 12:2*

With Jesus as our example of a life lived totally surrendered to the will of God, we too can endure whatever comes our way.

The apostle Paul had a very difficult life as an evangelist and church planter. He suffered indeed: ... in prison, flogged, exposed to death; five times received thirty-nine lashes; three times beaten with rods, once stoned, three times shipwrecked, in danger from rivers, bandits, his own countrymen, Gentiles; the city, the country, at sea; and from false brothers (2 Corinthians 11). Are your circumstances anywhere nearly as difficult as Paul's?

Yet Paul learnt to be content in whatever circumstances (Philippians 4:12). Can we today just be content? Can we give thanks to God, be content in our situation and trust He will lead us through whatever we are experiencing?

*“...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus”
1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Today is a day for trusting God in all your trials and circumstances and being thankful.

Lord, please help me to trust you in all the circumstances of my life. My desire today is that I can rest in that trust, surrender all to your will, and know that no matter what comes my way, yours is a love that endures and in that I can place my hope and be eternally thankful. Amen.

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Week 3 – Thankfulness

Day 7 - Be Thankful – The Kingdom is Yours

Of all we have to be thankful for today the reality of our status as children of the Kingdom of God should be uppermost. We are called the “children of God”

*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **children of God**--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12*

This week we have been giving thanks for different things and showing our thanks and gratefulness in various ways. How do we express our thanksgiving for this great honour of being called children of God?

In our families we expect our children to behave in a certain way because badly behaved children bring a “bad name” on the family and reflect poorly on the parents. We all want well behaved children who bring honour to the family name.

Likewise, we as children in God’s family, need to behave in such a way that brings honour and glory to God, our Father.

*He who speaks on his own does so to gain honour for himself, but he who works for the honour of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.
John 7:18*

Let us resolve to live this day in such a way that brings honour to the name of Christ and lifts up the family of God. This way we demonstrate our thankfulness for all God has done for us.

Sovereign Lord, I give you my praise and glory and thankfulness. This is your Kingdom, and I am grateful for each day in it. You call your children into holiness, to be like you, to show the world who you are through the way we live and love. I pray that I honour you in my words and my deeds; please forgive me when I do not. Amen.