

A low-angle shot of a woman looking upwards with her arms raised, reaching towards a canopy of autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. The woman's face is partially visible at the bottom, looking up with a gentle expression. Her arms are extended upwards, and her hands are near the top of the frame, reaching towards the leaves.

THANKSGIVING DEVOTIONS FOR FAMILIES

*10-Day Devotional
Plan*

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Day 1

THANKFULNESS TREE



Thanksgiving is just around the corner and next month, you'll probably be decorating a Christmas tree with your favorite ornaments. Or maybe your family just couldn't wait and there's already a cozy tree up with twinkling lights. Whether you're waiting or not to decorate a tree, what about sharing that tradition with Thanksgiving? You can make a thankfulness tree!

Gather some medium-sized sticks (real or fake) and place them in a medium/large vase or jar. Using tags, paper cutouts, or wood shapes, you and your family can write down what you are thankful for. Hang each item on a branch. You could also use a miniature Christmas tree without the ornaments.

Now you have a thankfulness tree. Let it remind you the rest of the month of how much you have to be thankful for. And whenever you have guests, invite them to add something to your tree as well!



“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

Colossians 2:6-7

Day 2

A NEVER-ENDING LIST



Have you ever made a gratitude list? That's where you list things you are thankful for. Some of the things I'm grateful for include:

Yummy food
The Bible
God's beautiful creation
Books
Music

Christ's life in me
My husband
Our families
Our home
Our church

What would be on your list? Set aside some family time today to make a list of things you are thankful for in this season.

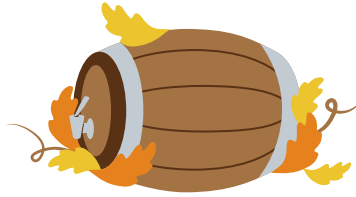
When we cultivate a grateful heart (all year round, not just at Thanksgiving) it sets our souls in tune with God. In good times, this practice reminds us of our faithful provider. In bad times, this practice keeps our hearts from becoming bitter and hardened by struggles. In other words, there's never a wrong time to make a list of all our blessings!



“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

James 1:17

Day 3
WE HAVE ENOUGH



With Thanksgiving and Christmas fast approaching, it's easy to be consumed with making lists of and shopping for all that we want (or think we need).

For kids, maybe you really want those new shoes, because Keely at school has ones just like them. Or you want to finally get your own phone, and hopefully it will be the new phone that just came out. Maybe it's something totally different.

For moms and dads, maybe you've been eyeing new cabinets or a new truck.

We all know it's fun to get new things. New things can be a blessing! But the gifts should never overshadow the Giver. We need to remind ourselves that God is our provider, and because he is the one who meets our needs, we will always have enough of what truly matters



"And my God shall supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

Day 4
SHOWING GRATITUDE TO GOD



“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?”

Luke 17:12-18

Jesus personally healed this group of ten lepers, and yet only one of them remembered to say thank you. Whenever I read today's story, I am always amazed that just one guy turned back to show gratitude to Jesus for this life-changing event. One guy! And he wasn't even a Jew. He was a Samaritan, who would've been considered an outcast in Jewish society at the time.

Think back over the last week or so. How often did you pause to give thanks? Giving thanks doesn't need to be a fancy prayer or a long speech. Simply pausing to say a quick prayer or a short thank-you can redirect our hearts to our faithful father. Let's be like the one and not like the nine. Let's not forget to say thank you to God.

Day 5
SHOWING GRATITUDE TO OTHERS



As we have been focusing on gratitude leading up to Thanksgiving, it's important to realize it's not enough to just think these thankful thoughts in our head - we need to speak them, or better yet, write them out!

Pick a person in your family (or at church or school) and think about what you are grateful for about them. Kids, maybe you'll write a note to your sibling, parent, or teacher. Parents, maybe now is a time to write a gratitude letter to each other or to a friend.

Write out your notes this week (actually write them - no texting!) and I guarantee you it will make the recipient's day.

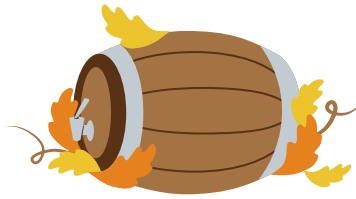
If you want, you can use this page to get started on your notes!

Dear [NAME],
I would like to tell you that I'm thankful for...

"I thank my God every time I remember you."

Philippians 1:3

Day 6
THANKSGIVING IN PSALM 136



Take a moment to read Psalm 136 and you'll notice a pattern in the verses. In these verses, a timeline of God's faithfulness to the nation of Israel shines through. They didn't always remember God's faithfulness (they could be forgetful sometimes). They complained, followed idols and other gods, and destroyed one another.

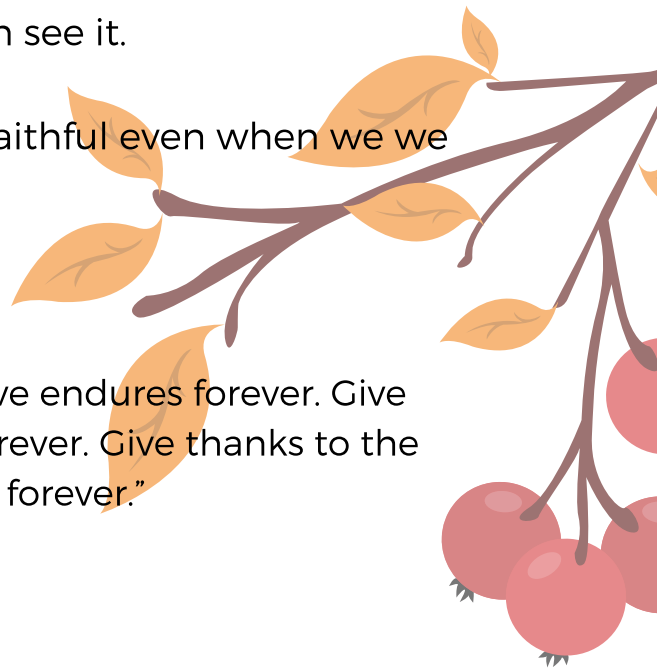
But here we do see a beautiful remembering of God's deeds. A remembering of his faithfulness when they were unfaithful. When we remember God's deeds, that makes us stronger. When we share what God has done, it's encouragement for us and a testimony to others.

Just like this chapter is a timeline of God's faithfulness to Israel, you have your own spiritual timeline. What would your version of Psalm 136 sound like? How has God been faithful to you? Take some time with your family this week to reflect on what God has done for your family and write out a personalized version of Psalm 136. Write it out or type it up and place it where everyone can see it.

Let it be a reminder this season that God is faithful even when we are not.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever."

Psalm 136:3



Day 7

DELIGHT IN THE LORD



If you're a preteen or a teenager, it can seem like there is a lot of waiting in life. Waiting until you are old enough to babysit, go to the movies with friends, get your permit and learn to drive, finish middle school and move on to high school, etc. Always lots of waiting.

If you're an adult, you are no stranger to waiting. Waiting for the doctor or repairman to call you back. Waiting to get the car fixed. Waiting to see family members come to the Lord. Waiting for God to answer prayers.

If you focus too much on the waiting, it will zap you. Boredom and restlessness will quickly fill your heart and if they're left to sour, they turn into bitterness and disappointment.

Today's verse is a remedy for those moments as they challenge us to delight in the Lord instead of being dismayed at our circumstances.

Do you delight in the Lord? Or do you default to restlessness, just biding your time until the next big thing comes along? If you instead focus on the Lord and take pleasure in being with him, it will "renew a right spirit within you." (Psalm 51)

Delight in the Lord, and he will follow up on the promise of the second part of the verse. He will refine the desires of your heart and give them back to you.

"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Psalm 37:4

Day 8

A NEW SONG



Throughout the Bible, we are encouraged to sing to God a new song. What exactly does that mean?

I don't know about you, but I can't exactly write a song. And although I love to sing in worship, you wouldn't want to hear my voice on its own.

But God loves to hear his children express their hearts to him, even if it isn't in an official "song" that is sung in church or on the radio. We don't all have to be singers to produce a song that is pleasing to God.

So how do we get started? First, start by listing something you are thankful for:

Now, turn that into a prayer to God. Pray your words back to him. After that, try "singing" your prayer to God. You could sing it to the rhythm of a song you already know, or your own tune in your head. It doesn't have to rhyme and no one else has to hear it. So don't let that stop you from expressing to God what's on your heart in a new song.

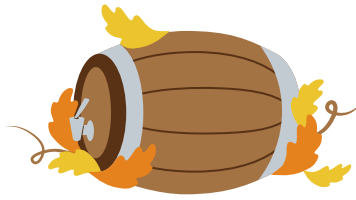


"Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him."

Psalm 98:1

Day 9

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING



Do you know about the first Thanksgiving? I'll give you a clue – it's not all about turkeys, parades and football. It's about an ordinary group of people who were following God's direction and had to persevere through some incredibly hard times.

The first Thanksgiving took place nearly 400 years ago. That's a long time ago. A group of about 100 people set out from England to make a new life in a new world: America.

They didn't sail over in a nice cruise ship, by the way. The Mayflower was a dark, smelly, creaky wooden ship that rocked and swayed with the powerful waves. When the ship arrived, the people (the Pilgrims) had to immediately start building shelter and finding food as winter was fast approaching. There was no Lowe's or Home Depot in the New World, so everything had to be built and planted by hand.

That first winter, nearly half of the Pilgrims that sailed over died due to sickness. But those that survived never gave up. The Lord then worked through a group of Indians who already lived in that land and who were equipped with better planting methods for the New World's soil and climate. The Indians helped the Pilgrims plant corn that would survive, providing enough food for the colony.

As the one-year mark approached since the Pilgrims had arrived in the New World, they knew they wanted to celebrate and take time to thank the Indians and offer thanksgiving to God for preserving them and helping them make it through that first winter.

As you sit down with family and friends this year for Thanksgiving, take time to think about the first Thanksgiving and what the small ragtag bunch of Pilgrims went through to settle the land in which we live now.

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Psalms 100:4

Day 10
WHEN DO WE STOP?



As we move from the Thanksgiving holiday to Christmas, it can be easy to lose sight of all our blessings and let the grateful attitude slip to the back of our minds. Is there ever a time we can stop being grateful?

According to the Bible, no.

The verse today says to "give thanks in all circumstances." So that means in the summertime, during school, and during the whole holiday season, we should constantly cultivate a grateful attitude as a whole family: kids, moms, dads – all of us!

I also love that this verse says that this is God's will for us. Sometimes it seems hard to know God's will. Through cultural pressure and our own hangups, we may think God's will is like a hidden treasure in a field and if we don't find that one thing, we miss God's entire plan for our lives. I know I definitely fall into this trap.

But in reality, his will isn't one hidden treasure in a field, but a way of life, a series of choices woven together that gleam with love and trust as we become more like him. What does he want from us? For us to be thankful. In all circumstances.

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Coming December 1!

