



Embracing

GRATITUDE

A 4-WEEK STUDY ON WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT



Gratitude is more than a holiday.
it's a way of life ...
in Christ.

We have big family dinners where we prepare our favorite dishes—such as turkey, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, pumpkin pie, and more. The American holiday of Thanksgiving promises connection with loved ones and gaining a few pounds from all the food.

Many families have a tradition during Thanksgiving. Before or after the meal, every person gathered must share one thing for which they are thankful.

Like many holidays, this one day expresses a constant reality. We celebrate thankfulness in November to remind us how we should live the rest of the year in gratitude. Especially as Christians, we shouldn't limit our thanks to a couple of days a year. Instead, we must find ways to rest in gratitude every day.



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week 1

WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

THANKFULNESS
KEEPS US HUMBLE
AND FAITHFUL.



day 1

BEYOND THANKFULNESS ...



Like many biblical concepts, the scriptural idea of gratitude extends far deeper than simply saying a quick “thanks.” *In the Bible, gratitude is a heartfelt and genuine recognition that God is the ultimate source of all good things.*

Thanksgiving becomes a state of being, an attitude, and a heart of worship. To give thanks to God, we acknowledge blessings and also respond to God’s character, his works, and faithfulness. Our thankfulness leads us to obey and follow the one who alone is good.

TAKE A MOMENT TO EXTEND THANKS TO GOD, FOR WHO HE IS, AND FOR HIS WORK IN OUR LIVES.



GRATITUDE IS A
HEARTFELT AND
GENUINE RECOGNITION
THAT GOD IS THE
ULTIMATE SOURCE OF
ALL GOOD THINGS.



THE ROOT OF THE WORD 'GRATITUDE' IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



THE OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW USES THE WORD TODAH FOR GRATITUDE. RELATED TO THE ROOT YADAH, TODAY MEANS "TO PRAISE, CONFESS, GIVE THANKS."

Todah expresses the idea of publicly recognizing God's goodness, usually in the form of praise, worship, and sacrifices of thanksgiving (Leviticus 7:12).

"If you present your peace offering as an expression of thanksgiving, the usual animal sacrifice must be accompanied by various kinds of bread made without yeast—thin cakes mixed with olive oil, wafers spread with oil, and cakes made of choice flour mixed with olive oil." - Leviticus 7:12

For the Old Testament, gratitude wasn't quiet or private. It comes associated with openly praising God's covenant and deliverance.

A second Hebrew word, barak, means "to bless." Barak was used to describe both God blessing people and people blessing the Lord (Psalm 103:1-2).

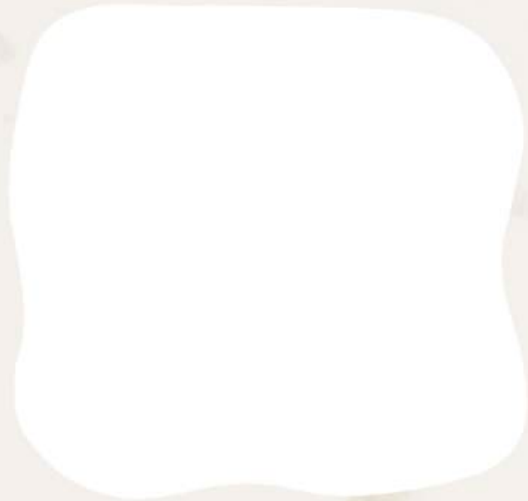
*"Let all that I am praise the Lord;
with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.
Let all that I am praise the Lord;
may I never forget the good things he does for me." - Psalm 103:1-2*

Gratitude involves both
the heart posture and
outward declaration.



Declarations of Gratitude

Take a moment to list heart postures and
declarations of gratitude to practice this week ...



THE ROOT OF THE WORD ‘GRATITUDE’ IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

For the New Testament, thankfulness is translated from the word *eucharisteo*, from which we also get the “Eucharist.” *Eucharisteo* means “to give thanks,” and the Bible uses it when Jesus gives thanks at a meal (Luke 22:19) and when Paul teaches Christians to give thanks in every circumstance (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." - Luke 22:19



"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

A related word is *charis*, which can be translated as “grace.” Still, it also connects the idea of gratitude in response to God’s grace. The apostle Paul often uses *charis* in conjunction with *eucharistia*, illustrating how gratitude arises from experiencing God’s gift of grace.

WRITE A PRAYER OF THANKS TO GOD FOR HIS GRACE IN THE SPACE BELOW ...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slightly textured appearance and is set against a dark background.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

As we take these words and their contexts together, biblical gratitude actively acknowledges God's goodness and expresses such thanks in words, sacrifice, and obedience.



Being thankful to God is more than an emotion. It requires an intentional choice to give thanks in every situation, good or bad, because God's goodness and promises don't change. We should live in gratitude as we live in Christ.

Thankfulness keeps us humble and faithful. Paul's letters to the church make gratitude central to the Christian life, encouraging them and us to allow thanksgiving to overflow in prayer, praise, and everyday life (Colossians 3:15-17).



Meditate on the following verses.

Circle the word 'peace.'

Underline 'thanks' or 'thankful.'

Highlight any mention of Jesus, Christ, God, and the Father.

"And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.

For as members of one body, you are called to live in peace.

And always be thankful.

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.

Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.

Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father."

-Colossians 3:15-17




weekend reflection ...



week 2

WHERE DOES THE BIBLE TALK ABOUT GRATITUDE?



GRATITUDE IS
THE KEY TO
APPROACHING
GOD .



GRATITUDE VS. INGRATITUDE



Both gratitude and ingratitude are addressed in the Bible, and these contrasting themes show us the choice before us.

The Psalms mainly include commands to give thanks. Psalm 100:4 tells us to “enter His gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.”

*“Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and praise his name.”
- Psalm 100:4*

Gratitude is the key to approaching God and engaging with Him intimately. And once we enter his presence, we appropriately respond with thanks to the privilege of being before his throne. Paul writes to the church in Colossians 3:17:

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

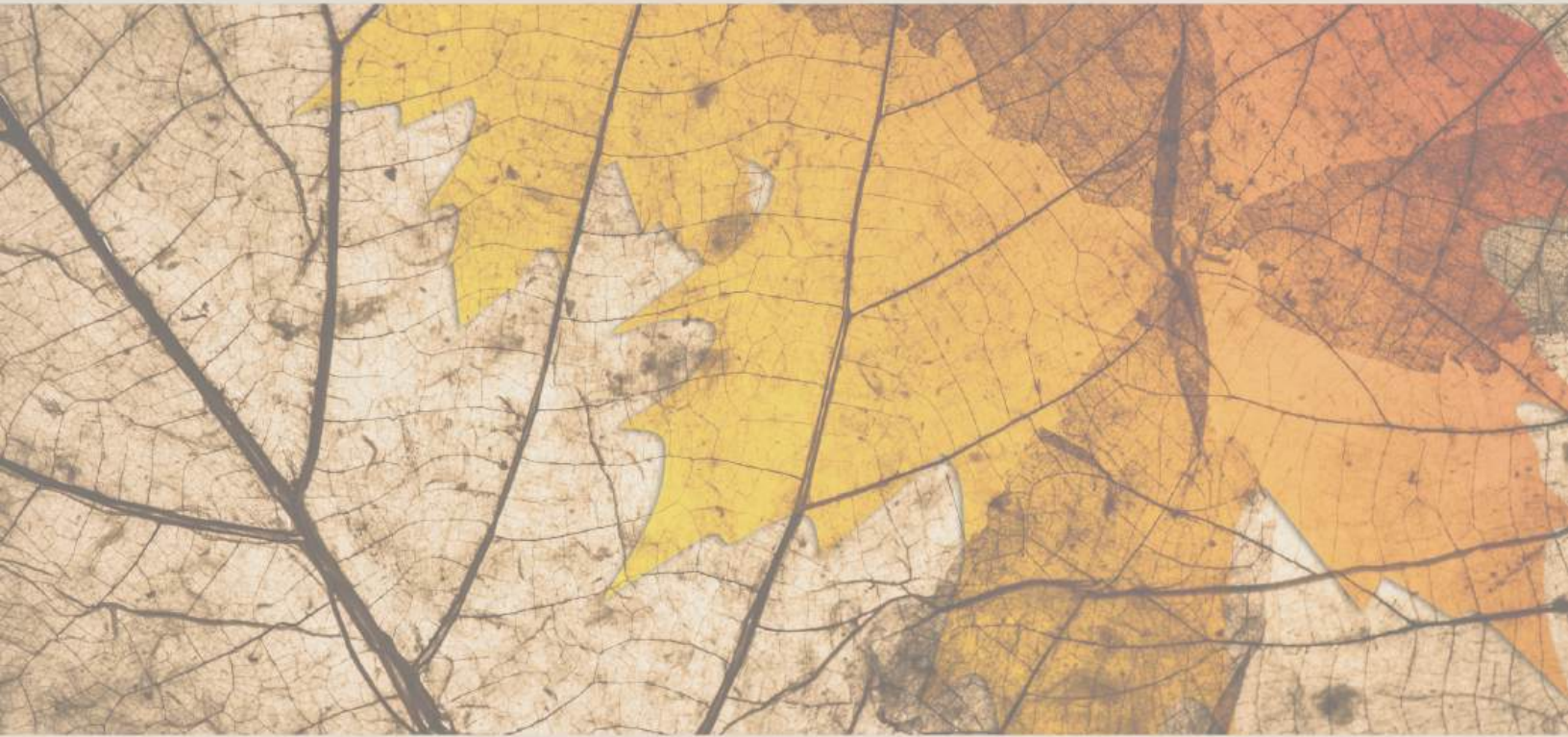
The apostle encourages us to live every moment for Christ, and he identifies part of what it means to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”—giving thanks to God. Further, we possess the ability to give thanks to the Father through the work of the Son in us.



GRATITUDE IS THE
KEY TO
APPROACHING
GOD AND
ENGAGING WITH
HIM INTIMATELY.



REDEMPITIVE GRATITUDE



GRATITUDE ALSO RESULTS FROM OUR REDEMPTION.

God commanded Israel to remember God's deliverance from Egypt with songs of thanksgiving (Exodus 15). The feasts of the Old Covenant celebrated and praised God for His promises and works on behalf of His people (Leviticus 23). In the New Testament, gratitude remains centered on God's salvation, now made possible through the new covenant in the Lord Jesus Christ. We celebrate the gift of salvation with hearts that thank God for grace (2 Corinthians 9:15). Giving thanks becomes an act of worship, helping us continue to be connected with the heavenly reality.

“Thank God
for this gift
too wonderful
for words!”

-2 Corinthians 9:15



Declarations of Gratitude

Read Exodus 15:1-21

Write a personal prayer of gratitude to the Lord, reflecting on a time He delivered you from fear, danger, or sin.

“The Lord is my strength and
my song; He has become my
salvation.” - Exodus 15:2

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Read Leviticus 23:1-44 (focus on verses 1-3, 9-14, and 39-43)

God commanded regular times of feasting and worship as a way to remember His faithfulness. List 3 ways you can build rhythms of redemptive gratitude into your life—weekly, seasonally, or annually.

[illegible]

THE DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF INGRATITUDE

In contrast, the Bible talks about ingratitude as a sin, leading to destruction and emptiness. Romans 1:21 declares how people knew God but “they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

"Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused."
-Romans 1:21

Ingratitude leads to idolatry, selfishness, confusion, and all kinds of sin and decadence. A sinful heart refuses to recognize God as the source of goodness, as Creator and Provider. God is life, and to reject his authority results in death, spiritual and physical.

TAKE A MOMENT TO ASK GOD TO ROOT OUT ANY INGRATITUDE ...

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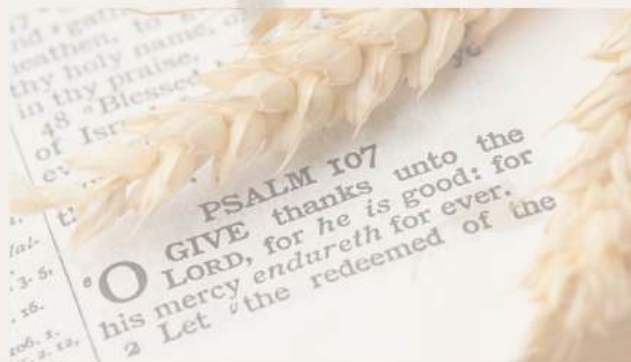
EVIDENCE OF INGRATITUDE

The Israelites provide us with an important example of ingratitude as they traveled through the wilderness. God had performed great and wondrous works on their behalf—delivering them from Egyptian slavery, destroying Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, meeting with them on Mount Sinai, giving a law to bring life, raining bread from heaven, and more.



Despite all this, they often grumbled and complained against God, the opposite of gratitude (Numbers 14). Their lack of thankfulness revealed their unbelief and rebellion, bringing judgment.

Ingratitude originates from the heart but can manifest as complaining, entitlement, and mockery.



7 Ways to Reflect on Numbers 14

1

Compare the Voices

Read verses 1–10 and compare the voice of the fearful majority (the people) with the voice of faith (Caleb and Joshua).

- What kind of voice do you give your attention to?

2

Confess the Root of Rebellion

Israel's refusal to enter the Promised Land was rooted in distrust.

- Where might fear be disguising itself as wisdom in your life?

3

Marvel at Moses' Intercession

Read verses 13–19.

Moses prays not based on Israel's merit, but on God's character.

- How can this model shape your prayers for others?

4

Trace God's Justice and Mercy

Verses 20–38 show both forgiveness and consequence.

- Do you acknowledge both aspects of God's nature in your worship?

5

Remember the Generational Impact

God delays the blessing for a generation.

- How does your faith—or fear—affect those who follow you?

6

Consider the Danger of Presumption

Verses 40–45 show the people trying to "fix it" their own way.

- Have you ever moved ahead of God, trying to fix a past mistake without repentance?

7

Pray Psalm 95 Alongside Numbers 14

Psalm 95 directly references this rebellion.

- Let it guide a time of reverent confession and renewed trust:

"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..."

(Psalm 95:7–8)



Gratitude brings us into God’s presence, into his very heavenly courts. Ingratitude produces a hardened heart, pride, and a separation from God. As followers of Jesus, we’re called to choose thankfulness, which brings numerous benefits.

Below, list what results from gratitude and ingratitude.

Gratitude

Ingratitude



weekend reflection ...



week 3

WHY IS GRATITUDE CENTRAL TO FAITH?

FAITH IS THE
PERCEPTION AND
THE PURSUIT OF
THE UNSEEN,
HEAVENLY
REALITY.



day 1

PERCEIVING GRATITUDE



Faith is the perception and the pursuit of the unseen, heavenly reality.

Through faith, we can see and follow God, having access to his grace. *Without faith, it's impossible to please God.* Faith grows when we remember and thank God for his past works.

God continually called Israel to remember God's mighty acts through songs and feasts of thanksgiving.

Our thankfulness builds our God-story, a list of how he has provided and delivered us, and how he will do so in the future.

Repeating and remembering God's goodness, we strengthen our faith. Without thankfulness, we develop an evil heart of unbelief.

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR TODAY?
TAKE A MOMENT TO REMEMBER ...



REPEATING AND
REMEMBERING
GOD'S GOODNESS,
WE STRENGTHEN
OUR FAITH.



REHEARSING GOD'S GOODNESS



REHEARSING GOD'S PAST GOODNESS THROUGH
THANKFULNESS, OUR TRUST IN THE FUTURE BECOMES
MORE SECURE, AS WELL.

Giving thanks is part of God's will for us (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."

- 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Gratitude doesn't dismiss or ignore hardship. On the contrary, it trusts God's sovereignty in the trial.

Thankfulness during suffering becomes a declaration of trust that God will turn all things for good.

The Father desires to bless us, and gratitude keeps us rooted in him and his benefits. Therefore, God's will for us includes gratitude in Christ Jesus.





Future Gratitudes

List any future worries for today or beyond, and thank God for going before you.

Four large, white, wavy-edged rectangular boxes stacked vertically, intended for writing future worries and gratitude.



A ROAD PAVED IN GRATITUDE

We can be thankful for what God will do in the future. God’s Word is final, and his promises are sure. So we can speak of gratitude in the assurance of his promises. Romans 5:2-5 connects rejoicing in suffering with a hope that can’t disappoint. Thankfulness gives us the anchor of hope, reminding us of God’s character instead of the storm around us.

“Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.”

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.

And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment.

For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.
* -Romans 5:2-5

Thanking God today, we look ahead with confidence to his complete redemption.

WHAT KIND OF STORM IS RAGING RIGHT NOW? REFLECT ON THESE VERSES, AND HOW GOD IS YOUR HOPE IN IT.



THE PEACE GRATITUDE PRODUCES

With such hope and security, gratitude produces peace. Paul writes in Philippians 4:6-7 that when we share our requests to God “with thanksgiving,” his peace (beyond our understanding) guards our hearts and minds in Jesus.



Instead of being ruled by anxiety or fear, we remember that God has been faithful before and will be faithful again. This allows us great peace in uncertain times.

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 4:6-7



THE PATHWAY TO PEACE

1. "Don't worry about anything."

What situations tend to stir up worry in you most often?
Read Matthew 6:25–34 for Jesus' teaching on worry.

2. "Instead, pray about everything."

Do you limit your prayers to only major concerns? What
everyday things can you bring before God today?

3. "Tell God what you need..."

Read Psalm 62:8 – "Pour out your heart before Him..."
Have you been holding back in your prayers—assuming
God already knows?

4. "...and thank him for all he has done."

What are 3 things you can thank Him for today—even in
hardship?
Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18.

5. "Then you will experience God's peace..."

Have you ever felt peace in a moment that made no sense
naturally?

6. "...which exceeds anything we can understand."

Isaiah 26:3: "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is
stayed on you..."
Where have you looked for peace apart from God?

7. "His peace will guard your hearts and minds..."

What thoughts tend to pull you away from peace?

8. "...as you live in Christ Jesus."

John 15:4 – "Abide in Me..." How can you make your walk
with Christ more central to your day today?



FAITH, HOPE, PEACE & TRUST


Faith, hope, peace, and trust: these give us the motivation and the strength to endure the hard times. Hebrews 12:28 calls us to be thankful as we receive an unshakable and unstoppable Kingdom. Heaven and earth are being shaken, and the world shakes along with them. Yet we remain steadfast in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Thanksgiving lifts our eyes beyond the temporary, changing situations, looking to the unseen and greater hope.

Remembering God's goodness, we dare to persevere with joy.

"Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe." - Hebrews 12:28

List the reasons you have to be joyful today:





LORD,
HELP ME TO BRING EVERY CONCERN TO YOU IN PRAYER. TEACH ME TO TRUST, TO
THANK, AND TO ABIDE IN CHRIST. LET YOUR PEACE GUARD MY HEART AND MIND,
NOT JUST ONCE, BUT DAILY.
AMEN."



Finally, walking in God's presence through thanksgiving, we fall more deeply in love with Him. We are content and satisfied in his presence. As we recall his mercy, faithfulness, and giving, our affection and appreciation deepen. Psalm 136 repeats the line, "His steadfast love endures forever." God's love never fails, and our hearts respond with love in return.

Circle the repetitive phrases in Psalm 136:

¹ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.
² Give thanks to the God of gods.
His faithful love endures forever.
³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords.
His faithful love endures forever.
⁴ Give thanks to him who alone does mighty
miracles.
His faithful love endures forever.
⁵ Give thanks to him who made the heavens so
skillfully.
His faithful love endures forever.
⁶ Give thanks to him who placed the earth among
the waters.
His faithful love endures forever.
⁷ Give thanks to him who made the heavenly
lights—
His faithful love endures forever.
⁸ the sun to rule the day,
His faithful love endures forever.
⁹ and the moon and stars to rule the night.
His faithful love endures forever.
¹⁰ Give thanks to him who killed the firstborn of
Egypt.
His faithful love endures forever.
¹¹ He brought Israel out of Egypt.
His faithful love endures forever.
¹² He acted with a strong hand and powerful arm.
His faithful love endures forever.

¹³ Give thanks to him who parted the Red Sea.
His faithful love endures forever.
¹⁴ He led Israel safely through,
His faithful love endures forever.
¹⁵ but he hurled Pharaoh and his army into the Red
Sea.
His faithful love endures forever.
¹⁶ Give thanks to him who led his people through the
wilderness.
His faithful love endures forever.
¹⁷ Give thanks to him who struck down mighty kings.
His faithful love endures forever.
¹⁸ He killed powerful kings—
His faithful love endures forever.
¹⁹ Sihon king of the Amorites,
His faithful love endures forever.
²⁰ and Og king of Bashan.
His faithful love endures forever.
²¹ God gave the land of these kings as an inheritance—
His faithful love endures forever.
²² a special possession to his servant Israel.
His faithful love endures forever.
²³ He remembered us in our weakness.
His faithful love endures forever.
²⁴ He saved us from our enemies.
His faithful love endures forever.
²⁵ He gives food to every living thing.
His faithful love endures forever.
²⁶ Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His faithful love endures forever.

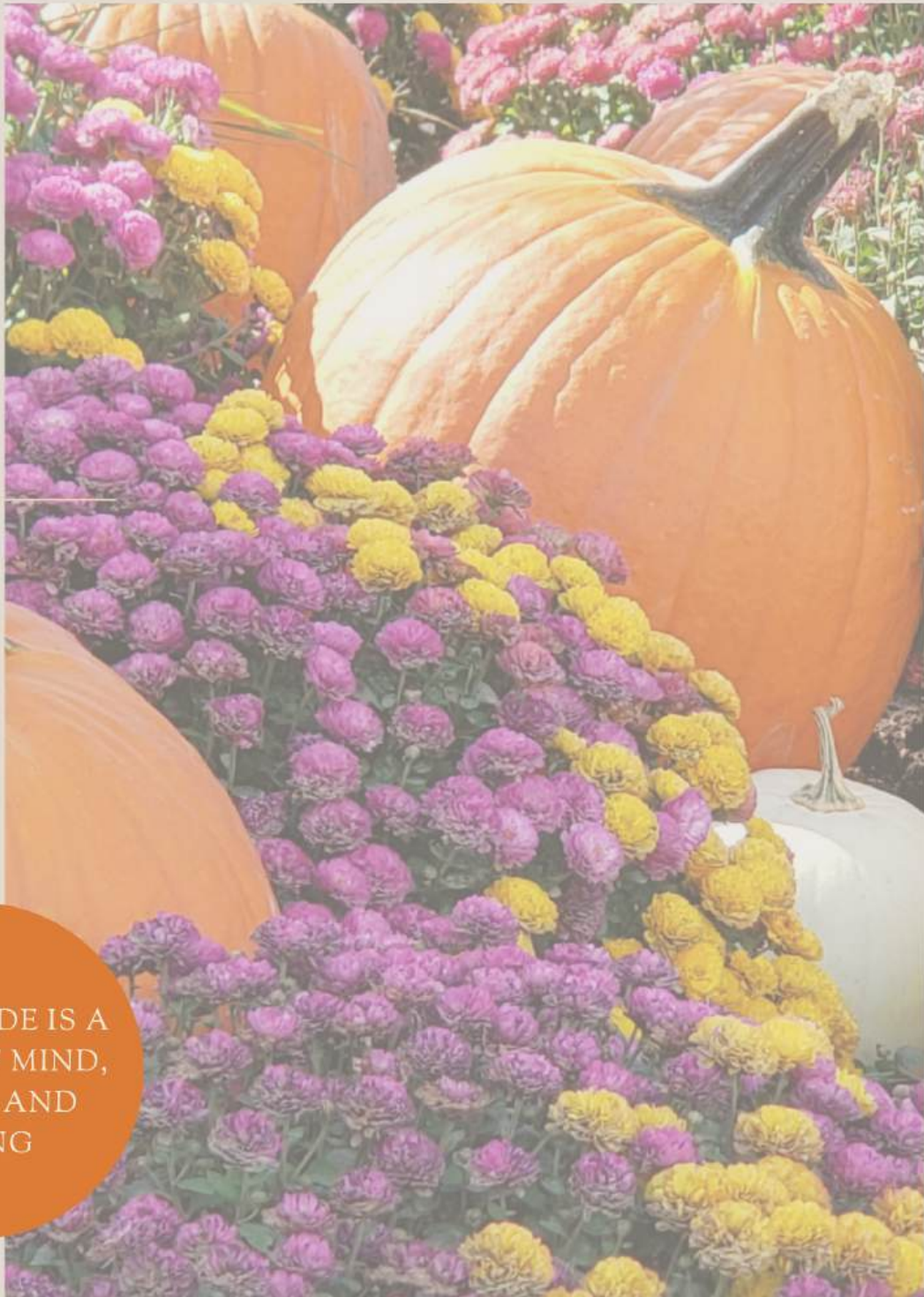


weekend reflection ...



week 4

HOW DO WE PRACTICE GRATITUDE ALL YEAR?



GRATITUDE IS A
STATE OF MIND,
HEART, AND
LIVING



A GRATEFUL STATE OF MIND



As we understand, gratitude is a state of mind, heart, and living; it sounds good. But how do we choose it every day and moment?

While gratitude isn't (and can't be) limited to one holiday in the year, Thanksgiving day provides traditions that can guide us into a lifestyle of gratitude year-round.

LIST YOUR THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS,
OR THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS WOULD
LIKE TO BEGIN ...

[illegible]

GRATITUDE IS A
STATE OF MIND,
HEART, AND LIVING.



REMEMBERING TO BE THANKFUL



AT THANKSGIVING, FAMILIES OFTEN PAUSE TO REMEMBER WHAT THEY'RE THANKFUL FOR. THIS SIMPLE ACT CAN BE POWERFUL AND EXPRESSES A BIBLICAL THEME.

We can live this out by keeping a journal, writing down ways God has remained faithful and answers to prayer, allowing us to return to it for reminders.

We should also speak thanks aloud in private and corporate prayer.

Additionally, we should express gratitude to God in our conversations with others.

*“Bless the Lord, O
my soul, and forget
not all His benefits.”
-Psalm 103:2*



Gratitude Journal

Start your gratitude journal as a way to remember this season of thankfulness, and carry it into all of your days. (More journal pages included at the end of the study.)



TOGETHERNESS

At Thanksgiving, we gather with loved ones around a shared meal, reflecting the feasts of the Old Testament. We can do this more often in our own lives.

Gratitude grows in community.

Meeting regularly with our earthly and spiritual families to pray, worship, and give thanks reinforces gratitude. We can be intentional about having people share testimonies of faith and miracles, encouraging every heart with joy.

"Let all that I am praise the Lord:
with my whole heart, I will
praise his holy name.
Let all that I am praise the Lord:
may I never forget the good
things he does for me.
He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.
He redeems me from death
and crowns me with love and
tender mercies.
He fills my life with good things.
My youth is renewed like the
eagle's!"
-Psalm 103:1-5

HOW ARE YOU CONNECTED TO YOUR
COMMUNITY? WHO ARE THE PEOPLE
IN YOUR LIFE? THANK GOD FOR THEM
BELOW.



THE IMPORTANCE OF SERVING OTHERS

Thanksgiving brings several opportunities to serve food to the hungry or give to those in need. Our culture connects the holiday of thanks to charity and giving. This reveals a profound truth: gratitude naturally flows into generosity.



Remembering God as the giver of every good gift, we find joy in sharing, especially with those in need. We take on God's character of love and compassion.

Therefore, we shouldn't limit generosity to a couple of weeks a year, but instead practice it throughout the year by volunteering to offer our time and resources.



10 VERSES ABOUT SERVING OTHERS

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” -Galatians 5:13 (ESV)

“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” -Mark 10:45 (KJV)

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God.” -1 Peter 4:10 (NASB)

“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” -John 13:14–15 (NKJV)

“The greatest among you shall be your servant.” -Matthew 23:11 (ESV)

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” -Romans 12:11 (NIV)

“For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.” -Hebrews 6:10 (ESV)

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.” -Philippians 2:3–4 (CSB)

“The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.” -Proverbs 11:25 (NKJV)

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” -Colossians 3:23–24 (ESV)



THE GRATEFUL HABIT

Build gratitude into daily habits. Start the morning by thanking God for his new mercies (Lamentations 3:22-23). End the day by thinking of three blessings of the day. Write down verses on thanksgiving and post them in places where you can continually see them. Resists complaining.

Biblical gratitude is a discipline, so consistent practice renews the mind and transforms the life. Living in gratitude honors God, strengthens our faith, and brings joy to our lives.

“The faithful love of the Lord never ends!
His mercies never cease.
Great is his faithfulness:
his mercies begin afresh each morning.”
- Lamentations 3:22-23

List some ways to ensure gratitude becomes remains/becomes a daily habit.



weekend reflection ...



Gratitude Journal



This image shows a single page from a "Gratitude Journal". The background features a soft-focus illustration of various flowers in shades of yellow, pink, and orange. At the top center, the words "Gratitude Journal" are printed in a dark red, classic serif typeface. Below the title, the page is filled with approximately 20 evenly spaced, thin brown horizontal lines, providing space for handwritten entries. In the lower-middle section of the page, centered horizontally, there is a small, stylized orange icon depicting two hands clasped together in a supportive grip.



Notes

Britt Mooney lives and tells great stories. As an author of fiction and non-fiction, he is passionate about teaching ministries and nonprofits the power of storytelling to inspire and spread truth. Mooney has a podcast called Kingdom Over Coffee and is a published author of We Were Reborn for This: The Jesus Model for Living Heaven on Earth as well as Say Yes: How God-Sized Dreams Take Flight.

