

A THANKSGIVING DEVOTIONAL

A few years ago I was reading Psalm 100 and verse 4 hit me like a ton of bricks - "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise." It was as if God said to me, "Andrew, if you want to be with me, giving thanks is the way you open the gate into my presence."

Giving thanks is important. When we do it regularly, it becomes a habit and our hearts become hearts filled with gratitude. When we don't, our hearts can become hard. In Romans 1, Paul paints a picture of a people who were given over to their sin, and it started when they "neither glorified God nor gave thanks to Him" (Romans 1:21-25). Giving thanks is not only one way we enter God's presence, but will also keep us from slipping into sin.

This devotional is very simple: each day will include a thanksgiving themed scripture and a brief thought or question to usher you into prayer. It's not meant to be the end all be all of your spiritual diet for November (although it could be), but more of a launch pad into time with Jesus every day. Have a Bible and journal handy for this, as each day you'll write down one thing you're thankful for so you can see a cumulative list when you get to Thanksgiving day. My desire is that this would deepen your gratitude for God and give you time in God's presence during the month of November as we lead up to Thanksgiving. Feel free to share this with anyone who may benefit from it!

-Andrew Berg

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November 1st

Psalm 100:4 - "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name."

Write down one thing you are thankful for today. Let that lead you into a time of thanksgiving and praise to God.

November 2nd

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

What is one circumstance in your life that you *aren't* thankful for right now? Write it down, then thank God for it, believing that He uses all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8).

November 3rd

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 - "When the Lord your God brings you into the land He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you - a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant - then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Take time today to *remember* and *give thanks* for the things *you did not provide* for yourself, but were given as a gift from the Lord.

November 4th

1 Corinthians 15:56-57 - "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Write down one sin in your life that you are thankful Jesus has conquered. Give thanks to God for His victory and your salvation.

November 5th

Psalm 95:2 - "Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!"

What is one thing you are thankful for today? Write it down! Also, take 5 minutes today to *make a joyful noise* to God through singing or clapping along to one of your favorite worship songs.

November 6th

1 Corinthians 2:14 - "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere."

What is one way God has allowed you to share Him with someone lately? Write it down and thank God for that opportunity.

November 7th

Nehemiah 12:27 - "And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres."

Nehemiah celebrated with his tribe when the temple was dedicated. What's something you need to celebrate today and who will you share in that celebration with? Write it down and celebrate it later today!

November 8th

Philippians 4:6-7 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Today, give God your worries, and as you do that, thank Him as this scripture says. Let His peace wash over you. Write down something you are thankful for out of this time of prayer.

November 9th

Ephesians 5:3-4 - "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving."

Write down one possession you are thankful for. Ask God to help you use it well, be content with it, and to not become greedy.

November 10th

Luke 22:19-20 - "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

Give thanks to God today for the price He paid to make you clean. Write down one sin in which you are thankful is now paid for. If you are able, take communion with a thankful heart.

November 11th

Psalm 79:13 - "Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will proclaim your praise."

Write down one person from a previous generation who you are thankful for because they proclaimed Gods praise and it impacted you. Give thanks for them today.

November 12th

Revelation 7:11-12 - "All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

Our God is the eternal creator who is being worshipped twenty-four-seven at the throne. Write down one characteristic about our great God you are thankful for and give thanks to Him.

November 13th

Daniel 6:10 - "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before."

Daniel gave thanks even after a decree was written which said you could only pray to King Darius. Write down one thing for which you are thankful. Then, ask God for the strength to bow down to Him alone, even if others around you are bowing down to other Gods.

November 14th

1 Timothy 6:6-8 - "But Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."

Sheryl Crow says "It's not having what you want; it's wanting what you've got" (Soak up the Sun).

What is one material possession you have that you feel really content with? Write it down. What is another material possession that you desire to upgrade? Thank God for it and ask Him to help you be content with what you already have.

November 15th

2 Samuel 22:49-50 - "You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me. Therefore I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name."

Has God ever delivered you or vindicated you from a foe or enemy? Give thanks to Him for that and write it down.

November 16th

Hebrews 12:28-29 - "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.'"

Write down one reason why you're grateful that the kingdom you are receiving cannot be shaken. Thank and praise God for this!

November 17th

Matthew 15:36 - "Then He took the seven loaves and the fish, and when He had given thanks, He broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people."

What was the last meal you ate when you really felt grateful to God for how He provided it and how good it tasted? Write it down, give thanks to Him, and genuinely give thanks tonight when you have dinner with your loved ones.

November 18th

Nehemiah 11:17 - "Mattaniah son of Mika, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *the director who led in thanksgiving and prayer*; Bakbukiah, second among his associates; and Abda son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun."

Have you ever known someone (in an official role or not) who led you in giving thanks? Maybe it just oozes out of them. Write their name down today and thank God for them. Pray that you can become someone who leads others in giving thanks *because it's just who you are*.

November 19th

Jonah 2:9 - "But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"

Jonah said this from inside a fish after running from God. Where in life do you feel *stuck*? Give thanks to God in the midst of this situation for even there, *salvation comes from the Lord*.

November 20th

Colossians 2:6-7 - "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."

Write down one thing you are thankful for today and allow that to lead you into God's presence. Ask God to help you continue to live *rooted* and *built up* in Him that you might always overflow with thankfulness.

November 21st

Luke 3:14 - "Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

John the Baptist told some soldiers to be content with their pay. Write down your total household income in your journal today. Thank God for that money. Ask him to help you be content with it and use it well.

November 22nd

1 Thessalonians 1:2 - "We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers."

Write down one person or group of people who you are genuinely thankful for. Allow that to lead you into a time of thanksgiving and prayer.

Thanksgiving Day

Read Psalm 136 ("Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good")

This Psalm is an account of the goodness and faithfulness of God to the nation of Israel. Write down how you've seen Him be faithful and good to you throughout your life, including the list you've made over the past month. You may even want to read through your list and say (silently or aloud) "Your love endures forever" after every item in your list. Celebrate God's goodness and let it spill over onto the people you feast with today!