



Week of Thanks Journal  
2023

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## Giving Thanks in All Seasons

Each year, we set aside a week to contemplate and act on our gratitude—we call it Week of Thanks. As a way to practice gratitude for God’s kindness to us and His good work in our lives, we wanted to offer a week’s worth of Scripture, devotional thoughts, and questions to lead us into the wide open space of gratitude. Our hope is that you can carve out a few minutes each day to let God’s love for you compel a heart of thanks.

Think of these excerpts, prompts, and questions as invitations to explore the spiritual practice of gratitude alongside Jesus. Feel no obligation to answer every question or read every passage. We also encourage you to take note of God’s gifts to you this week: write down all you notice, big or small, as a record of His faithfulness to you. At the end of each day, look back and thank God for these gifts.

### *Read & Reflect*

At the end of his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul writes, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5:18). The Thessalonians were facing persecution for the sake of the Gospel; even so, Paul challenged them to walk in God’s will by adopting a posture of gratitude.

Read Psalm 148. Which line or image stands out to you? What do you think God is speaking to you through this?

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### *Practice & Pray*

Whatever your current circumstances, take a moment to align yourself with God’s will by giving thanks. This may look like making a list of things that you are grateful for, talking with a friend, singing a worship song, or sitting quietly in His presence. As we live in the now and the not yet of God’s cosmic plan to “bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ” (Eph. 1:10), He invites us to draw closer to Him by practicing gratitude—not because we earned it, but because it’s His nature.

*Listen:* “Providence” by United Pursuit



**GIVE THANKS IN  
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES;  
FOR THIS IS GOD’S WILL  
FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.**

*1 THESSALONIANS 5:18*



## Hope in the Dark

### Read & Reflect

Psalm 13 is one of the “psalms of lament”—psalms that speak to the deep sorrow, grief, and regret that are unavoidable as we await the Lord’s restoration of all things. Read the psalm, slowly, allowing yourself to enter into the psalmist’s lament.

Near the end, the psalmist tells himself, “*But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation*” (13:5). While pain, grief, and loss are constants in our personal lives and in the world around us, we are not without hope, for God is with us.

*“The hope God offers us is this: he will keep close to us, even in darkness, in doubt, in fear and vulnerability. He does not promise to keep bad things from happening. He does not promise that night will not come, or that it will not be terrifying, or that we will be immediately tugged to shore. He promises that we will not be left alone. He will keep watch with us in the night.”*

—Tish Harrison Warren, *Prayer in the Night*, Pages 32–33

### Practice & Pray

Spend a couple of minutes naming what you are lamenting right now, whether it’s in your own life, your community, or the world around us.

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Christ enters into our places of darkness, vulnerability, and pain. Spend a moment thanking Him for His constant presence. How have you seen the hope that He offers in the midst of your lament?


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*Listen:* “The Road, the Rocks, and the Weeds” by John Mark McMillan



THE HOPE GOD OFFERS  
US IS THIS: HE WILL  
KEEP CLOSE TO US,  
EVEN IN DARKNESS,  
IN DOUBT, IN FEAR  
AND VULNERABILITY.

TISH HARRISON WARREN,  
PRAYER IN THE NIGHT

## Remembering God's Faithfulness

### *Read & Reflect*

Ours is a culture of “now.” So often, we allow our hurry—and the worries that come with it—to cloud our awareness of God's steadfast presence in our lives and stories. While these worries are real, pointing us to places where we need the Kingdom to break in, Jesus invites us to remember and trust in the Father's faithfulness in the midst of them.

*“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:29–31).*

### *Practice & Pray*

Take a moment to reflect on your own story. Where have you seen God's faithful presence, care, and provision? As memories come up, allow them to lead you into a posture of gratitude and worship.

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In 1 Samuel 7, the Lord delivered Israel from the attacking Philistines. Samuel, Israel's judge and leader, placed an Ebenezer—a “stone of help”—at the place of their deliverance to serve as a physical reminder of God's faithfulness. As you consider your own story, how is He inviting you to mark His faithfulness to you and your community?

*Listen:* “Just as Good” by Chris Renzema (feat. Ellie Holcomb)



**SO DON'T BE AFRAID;  
YOU ARE WORTH MORE  
THAN MANY SPARROWS.**

*MATTHEW 10:31*



ALL THAT'S LOST,  
WILL BE GAINED.  
THANK YOU, LORD.  
THANK YOU, LORD.

JON GUERRA, "THANK YOU, LORD"

## The Gifts of the Kingdom

### Read & Reflect

God's gifts—and the ways that we participate in His good work in the here and now—serve as signposts of His coming Kingdom to ourselves, one another, and the world around us.

*"What you do in the Lord is not in vain...Every act of love, gratitude, and kindness; every work of art or music inspired by the love of God and delight in the beauty of his creation; every minute spent teaching a severely handicapped child to read or to walk; every act of care and nurture, of comfort and support, for one's fellow human beings and for that matter one's fellow nonhuman creatures; and of course every prayer, all Spirit-led teaching, every deed that spreads the gospel, builds up the church, embraces and embodies holiness rather than corruption, and makes the name of Jesus honored in the world—all of this will find its way, through the resurrecting power of God, into the new creation that God will one day make."*

—N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, Page 208

### Practice & Pray

Ask the Spirit to highlight a few of God's gifts to you in your present season. How do they invite you into the Good News of His Kingdom, His resurrecting power?

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How have you seen God's in-breaking Kingdom through others in the Body of Christ? Take a few minutes to write a note or text to a friend, family member, or mentor thanking them for pointing you to the love and grace of Jesus.

*Listen:* "Thank You, Lord" by Jon Guerra

## Overflowing Cups

### Read & Reflect

Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, freedom from the fear of sin and death, adoption into the family of God—these are God’s greatest gifts to us. It is only through Him that we have real, abundant life.

*“Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty...All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me...For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day’” (Jn. 6:35, 37–38, 40).*

### Practice & Pray

Spend a couple minutes reading Psalm 23:5 a few times through, slowly and deliberately: *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”*

God’s faithfulness, the hope we have in Christ, the presence of the Spirit—we’re not meant to keep these to ourselves. As we adopt a posture of gratitude, our proverbial cups overflow into our communities and the world around us. In John’s account of the life of Jesus, Jesus says, *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn. 15:12–13).* As we close Week of Thanks, take a moment to contemplate how you can serve your friends, family, or community in the coming days as an outpouring of your gratitude for what Christ has done for us.

*Listen:* “Doxology” by Maverick City Music

*“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15)*



**GREATER LOVE HAS  
NO ONE THAN THIS:  
TO LAY DOWN ONE’S LIFE  
FOR ONE’S FRIENDS.**



*JOHN 15:13*





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