Thanksgiving Share

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Thanksgiving is almost here! Let’s take advantage of the opportunity it provides to express our gratitude to God. We should remember all that he gives us and reflect on his goodness with thankful hearts. In doing so we not only honor God, but experience more contentment, satisfaction and peace. There is no room for bitterness, resentment, anger, or fear in a heart filled to overflowing with gratitude.

If you’re new to Christ Fellowship, you may not know that on the Sunday before Thanksgiving we have a special service. No one gives a sermon, but instead we sing praises to God and invite people to come share stories of gratitude. As a body, we celebrate his goodness and faithfulness and give our thanks to him.

In the spirit of our Thanksgiving service, the Engage God Daily for this week will focus on praising God and acting on our gratitude. Each day, we are going to read through a few verses from the Psalms that can inspire us to give thanks.

# Day 1

## Think About

We should be thanking God when we spend time with him each day. Paul insists that we, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances.” Why? “for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18). We should be rejoicing in him, praying that his will be done, and giving thanks in every circumstance. Imagine what our daily life would be like if we did this.

Paul tells us that prayer and thanksgiving will combat anxiety and give us peace: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7).

Psalm 136 reminds us to praise God for his faithful, loving kindness.

## Read

Psalm 136:1–9 (NIV)

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His love endures forever.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love endures forever.

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love endures forever.

4 to him who alone does great wonders,

His love endures forever.

5 who by his understanding made the heavens,

His love endures forever.

6 who spread out the earth upon the waters,

His love endures forever.

7 who made the great lights—

His love endures forever.

8 the sun to govern the day,

His love endures forever.

9 the moon and stars to govern the night;

His love endures forever.

## Reflect and Pray

* Write out your own prayer of gratitude based on this Psalm then take some extended time to praise God in prayer.
* Some people find that gratitude comes easier when they are outdoors, because they can rejoice in God’s creation. Consider spending your prayer time outside or taking a prayer walk around your neighborhood. Other Christians need silence and solitude to focus their thoughts, so you may need to find a quiet room to be still and pray. Still others enjoy using music to lift their praises up to God, so you may want to find some songs that help move you to prayer.

Do whatever works for you or try something new — but take time to praise and thank God right now and then ask him to remind you to pray and thank him throughout the rest of your day.

# Day 2

## Think About

As Christians, we have many reasons to celebrate. No matter what our current circumstances, we can rejoice in our salvation, God’s love, the promise of heaven, the power of grace, the spread of the gospel, the beauty of nature, the talents, skills and gifts God has given us, the loving relationships we have, and on and on.

What’s more, God loves a good celebration! In the Old Testament, God established several feasts that the Israelites were to observe every year. These feasts celebrated the goodness of God and the covenant that he had established with them. They interrupted the normal routine and brought people together to praise and worship God. While we don’t celebrate those same feasts today, we can take advantage of holidays like Thanksgiving to do the same.

Psalm 100 was used as a call to worship by the Israelites. You can imagine the people singing this song as they came together to worship the Lord.

## Read

Psalm 100

1Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

2 Worship the Lord with gladness;

come before him with joyful songs.

3Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4Enter his gates with thanksgiving

and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

5For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

## Reflect and Pray

* The psalmist uses God’s relationship with his people as the basis for praise. How does he describe that relationship? In your own words, how would you describe your relationship with God?
* In our home, when something good happens to someone in the family, we find a way to commemorate it. When a child gets a good report card, or something positive happens at work for mom or dad, we do something to celebrate. We plan a special meal, go out for ice cream, or just play music and do a “happy dance.” What if we took some time out of our regular weeknight routine to celebrate God this week? With your family, roommate or friend, could you do something small, but fun, to revel in the goodness of God and what he’s done for you?
* We have the privilege of coming together to praise and worship the Lord every Sunday. Yet, sometimes we come to a worship service distracted by all kinds of things. Before you walk into a service, take a moment to pray and ask God to prepare your heart to celebrate him with your church family.

# Day 3

## Think About

Our circumstances don’t always give us cause for celebration. Life can be difficult. Sin and evil should be mourned, and we don’t have to pretend that everything is okay. In his time of earth, Jesus grieved death, was saddened when people rejected his love, and was angered by corruption.

Even in the darkest times, Psalms like the one we are reading today can help us see beyond the present moment to truths that we can be eternally grateful for. God’s presence is one of his greatest gifts to us. The Lord is with us and that is a reason to be thankful no matter what our circumstances.

## Read

Psalm 118:1–9 (NIV)

1Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

his love endures forever.

2Let Israel say:

“His love endures forever.”

3Let the house of Aaron say:

“His love endures forever.”

4Let those who fear the Lord say:

“His love endures forever.”

5When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord;

he brought me into a spacious place.

6The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?

7The Lord is with me; he is my helper.

I look in triumph on my enemies.

8It is better to take refuge in the Lord

than to trust in humans.

9It is better to take refuge in the Lord

than to trust in princes.

## Reflect and Pray

* How is God described in this Psalm? How does the psalmist rely on God? How is the writer able to be thankful even during difficult circumstances?
* For much of Christian history, people heard the Bible far more often than they read it. This is a practice we can use today. Hearing the Scripture spoken aloud can help us experience the Word in a fresh way. In hard times, saying the promises of God can be meaningful. Consider reading Psalm 118 or listening to it on a Bible app as you reflect on its truth.
* One of the most powerful testimonies that a Christian can give is to praise God even in the midst of hard times. When we are crushed by our circumstances yet allow the presence of God to comfort us and bring us into “a spacious place,” and when we trust in his goodness and take refuge in the Lord, we invite other hurting people to do the same. What would it mean for you to demonstrate your faith in God by being thankful?

# Day 4

## Think About

One thing I love about David’s psalms is that they are so honest. David doesn’t hide his emotions but pours them out to God. He doesn’t sugarcoat the trouble he’s in but asks God for help. Yet through it all, he praises God because he knows that God is worthy.

As you read through Psalm 138, think about how he has demonstrated his goodness in your life. In the same way that David did, how can you thank him for who he is and what he has done.

## **Read**

Psalm 138

Of David

1I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;

before the “gods” I will sing your praise.

2I will bow down toward your holy temple

and will praise your name

for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,

for you have so exalted your solemn decree

that it surpasses your fame.

3When I called, you answered me;

you greatly emboldened me.

4May all the kings of the earth praise you, Lord,

when they hear what you have decreed.

5May they sing of the ways of the Lord,

for the glory of the Lord is great.

6Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;

though lofty, he sees them from afar.

7Though I walk in the midst of trouble,

you preserve my life.

You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes;

with your right hand you save me.

8The Lord will vindicate me;

your love, Lord, endures forever—

do not abandon the works of your hands.

## Reflect and Pray

* What does David ask God for in this psalm? Could you ask for the same?
* What is David praising God for? How does he demonstrate his praise through action? What about you? What actions can you take to show that you are thankful to God?
* Singing for joy has been mentioned in several of these Psalms this week. Although we may think of joyful singing as a part of corporate worship, it can be something we use in our individual time with God. Put on some praise music and sing to your Lord!
* Thanksgiving is coming up. If you are planning to be with friends or family on that day, is there a way you can celebrate God as part of that gathering? Could you devote part of the time to celebrating God and offering thanks to him in addition to great food, family, and friends?

# Day 5

## Think About

There is an unfortunate stereotype that people can associate with Christians. They sometimes see us as a dour, solemn group who are opposed to having a good time. Nothing should be further from the truth. Christians should be the most joyful people on earth!

We’ve been focusing on expressing our gratitude to God this week and using a few psalms to guide us. Again today, let’s remember the greatness of God and praise him.

## Read

Psalm 95:1–7

1Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;

let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

2Let us come before him with thanksgiving

and extol him with music and song.

3For the Lord is the great God,

the great King above all gods.

4In his hand are the depths of the earth,

and the mountain peaks belong to him.

5The sea is his, for he made it,

and his hands formed the dry land.

6Come, let us bow down in worship,

let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

7for he is our God

and we are the people of his pasture,

the flock under his care.

## Reflect and Pray

* What actions are described in this psalm? Have you ever tried different postures when you pray or worship? As you express your gratitude to God today, consider standing and shouting for joy, or kneeling before him. Try involving your whole body as well as your heart and mind.

This week we read from several Psalms. Consider going back to each and underlining the verses that encourage you. Write them on post-its and put them on your mirror or in your car. Make one your smartphone’s wallpaper so you can look at it throughout the day.

* [Psalm 136:1–9](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps136.1-9)
* [Psalm 100](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps100)
* [Psalm 118:1–9](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps118.1-9)
* [Psalm 138](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps138)
* [Psalm 95:1–7](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps95.1-7)

An attitude of gratitude can change our whole perspective.

Let’s remember that God’s love endures forever, and his faithfulness continues through all generations! Though we walk in the midst of trouble, he preserves our life. God is the Rock of our salvation, and we are people under his care! These are things for which we can be thankful — no matter what and no matter when.