

A THANKSGIVING DEVOTIONAL

As a society, we tend to skip over Thanksgiving, sprinting straight from Fall into Christmas. There's such opportunity if we use November intentionally!

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." God was saying to me, "Andrew, giving thanks to Me is *the* way you open the gate into My presence."

Giving thanks is important. When we do it regularly, it becomes a habit, our hearts become filled with gratitude, and we are changed in Jesus' presence. 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 a way we enter God's presence and cultivate a heart of gratitude, but will also keep us from slipping into a life of sin.

This devotional is very simple: each day will include a thanksgiving-themed scripture and a brief thought or question to usher you into thanksgiving, prayer, and worship.

A small but powerful change to this devotional this year is that each day you'll write down one thing you're thankful for, so have a journal handy along the way! By Thanksgiving day, you will have a list of over 20 things you've thanked God for throughout the month (what I'll refer to as your "thankful list" throughout). The goal is that you could write your own version of Psalm 136 as a culmination to the month based on this "thankful list" (see instructions on the final day). I hope that on Thanksgiving day this exercise will lead you to an overflow of worship and gratitude to God as you recount His faithfulness to you.

This devotional is meant to help us pause in November to be more aware of God's blessings and presence in our lives, and hopefully as habits are formed, a heart of gratitude will be developed in us increasingly year-round.

This tool is great for personal use, but can also be a great thing to do with others, such as your family, IDR, or GoCo. 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 (the start of your "thankful list"!). 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? Add it to your thankful list, 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 something you *did not provide* for yourself, but were given as a gift from the Lord. Add it to your thankful list.

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? Add it to your thankful list! 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 else lately? Write it down, thank God for that person and opportunity, and say a prayer for them.

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? Add it to your thankful list 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. Add something to your thankful list that comes out of this time of prayer.

November 9th

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 10th

Psalms 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 God's praise and it impacted you. Give thanks for them today and add them to your thankful list.

November 11th

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 12th

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 on your thankful list 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 13th

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? Add it to your thankful list. 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 14th

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 add it to your thankful list.

November 15th

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 16th

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, adding it to your thankful list, and genuinely give thanks tonight when you have dinner with your loved ones.

November 17th

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 on your thankful list and thank God for them. Pray that you can become someone who leads others in giving thanks *because it's just who you are becoming*.

November 18th

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 (adding it to your thankful list) for even there, *salvation comes from the Lord*.

November 19th

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 20th

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. Add your total household income to your thankful list today. Thank God for that money. Ask him to help you be content with it and use it well.

November 21st

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

This Psalm is an account of the goodness and faithfulness of God to the nation of Israel.

Today, take your "thankful list" and silently or aloud read each item on your list followed by the phrase, "his love endures forever." Consider even writing it out! Use your creation of your own Psalm 136 to lead you into a time of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord as a culmination of your thankfulness this month!