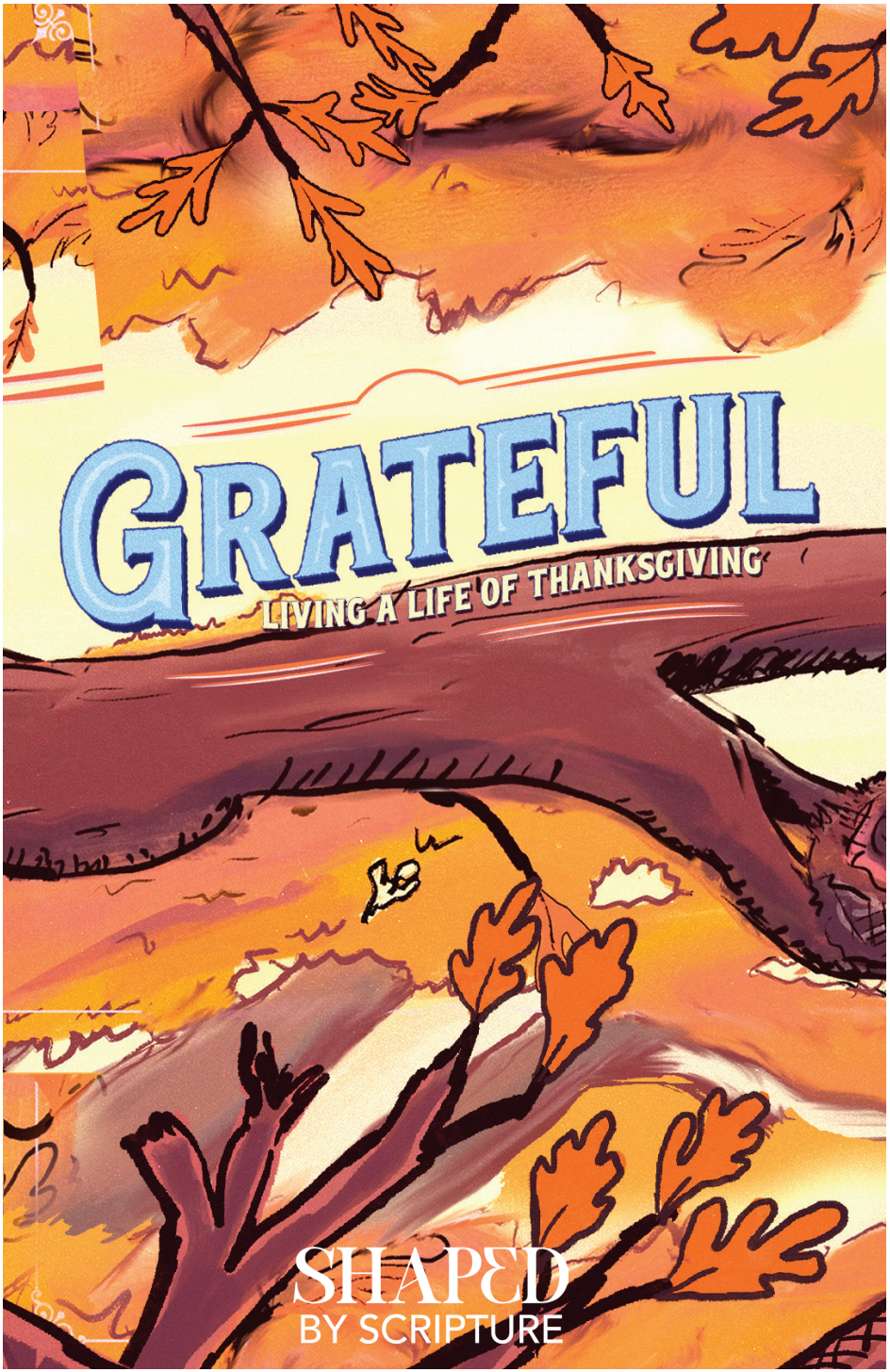

GRATEFUL
LIVING A LIFE OF THANKSGIVING
SHAPED
BY SCRIPTURE

SHAPED
BY SCRIPTURE



Dr. Scott K. Thomas II

LONEOAK
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

November

AI Ethical Guidelines[1]

As emerging technologies like Al find their way into the realm of ministry and theological writing, I've developed personal guidelines to preserve the integrity of this devotional work:

1. Avoid plagiarism and ensure authenticity: Al tools are helpful for idea generation, word choice, and structural planning, but I avoid copying Al-generated content verbatim. The goal is not expediency but authenticity. My personal study, meditation, and prayer are indispensable to every page written.

2. Maintain human oversight and moral responsibility: Al lacks moral agency and theological conviction. Human discernment is necessary to evaluate the appropriateness, tone, and truthfulness of all content.

3. Use Al to enhance, not replace, human creativity: Al serves as a helpful assistant but never replaces the divine inspiration that flows from prayerful engagement with the text. The Holy Spirit-not a machine-is the true illumination of Scripture.

These guidelines ensure that Shaped by Scripture is not only a tool of spiritual formation but also a product of integrity and pastoral care.

' I have chosen to include this disclosure and set self-imposed guidelines because the use of Al in writing and research remains a point of ethical concern and public skepticism. In the interest of transparency and pastoral integrity, I believe it is important to clarify how these tools were used in a supportive— not substitutive— role in the development of this work.

Shaped by Scripture

Introduction to *Shaped by Scripture*

Shaped by Scripture exists to help you plant God's Word deep in your heart so it can transform your life. This resource is designed to guide you toward Scripture memorization and to equip you with the Word of God. Life in general—and the Christian life in particular—is spiritual warfare. Every believer faces continual pressures from the world, the culture, and the enemy of our souls. Yet God does not leave us defenseless. He gives us His Word to shape us, strengthen us, and sharpen us for victory.

The Bible says in Proverbs 7:2-3, "Keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart." Notice how this verse begins with both a command and a promise: *Keep the Lord's commandments—and live.* When God's Word is hidden in your heart, it becomes your shield, your guide, and your joy.

Why We Created *Shaped by Scripture*

In an effort to promote Scripture memorization and spiritual growth, *Shaped by Scripture* was developed to guide participants in learning, understanding, and applying God's Word. Over the course of a year, you will explore 12 unique themes covering 50 selected verses (with mid-year and end-of-year breaks for reflection). Each monthly booklet introduces a new theme, providing both an "entry point" for new participants and a "re-engagement point" for returning participants.

How to Use This Resource

Each week follows a simple rhythm designed to help you memorize Scripture and grasp its meaning:

- **Day 1 – Memorization & Meditation:** Learn the verse, reflect on the weekly theme, and receive prompts to begin memorization.

- **Day 2 – Contextual Understanding:** Discover the historical and biblical context so you can see how the verse fits into the larger story of Scripture.
- **Day 3 – Theological Insight:** Based on context, explore what the passage teaches about God, His character, and His purposes.
- **Day 4 – Personal Application:** Using the Inductive Bible Study method (Observe, Interpret, Apply), discover how the verse directly speaks into your life.
- **Day 5 – Recap & Reinforcement:** Review, rehearse, and reinforce what you've learned to lock the verse and its truths into your heart.

A Word of Encouragement

For some, memorizing Scripture comes naturally. For the rest of us, it feels daunting. Be encouraged—*Shaped by Scripture* is designed to support learners at every level. By investing a few focused minutes each day, you will develop the skill of Scripture memorization and a deeper appreciation of God's Word. Over time, you'll look back and realize you've retained far more than you expected, and more importantly, you'll be shaped by the living Word of God.

Dr. Scott K. Thomas II
Senior Pastor

Grateful: Introduction

Living a Life of Thanksgiving

November 2–27, 2026

The table is set. A linen cloth stretches across its length, fine china waits beside polished silverware, and the aroma of turkey and pumpkin pie fills the room. Around the table, generations of family gather with hands clasped and heads bowed. It is Thanksgiving Day, a cherished occasion shaped by food, family, tradition, and gratitude.

For the Christian, however, Thanksgiving belongs to every season of life. Scripture presents gratitude as the proper response of people who recognize the goodness, grace, and sovereignty of God. Paul writes, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18). Gratitude flows from a heart that remembers who God is, recognizes what He has done, and trusts Him with what lies ahead.

A posture of gratitude does not develop automatically. When gratitude is neglected, our perspective is quietly reshaped by complaint, comparison, cynicism, and complacency. We begin measuring life by what we lack rather than receiving each day through the lens of God's grace. A grateful heart learns to recognize His provision in abundance, His presence in difficulty, and His steadfast love in every season.

During the next four weeks, *Shaped by Scripture* will lead us toward a deeper practice of gratitude. We will learn to give thanks in every circumstance, express gratitude through our words and actions, bring thanksgiving into our prayers, and praise God for His enduring love. As Scripture shapes our thinking and directs our worship, thanksgiving can become more than an annual tradition. It can become the daily posture of a redeemed life.

Week 1 *Gratitude in Every Circumstance*	1 Thessalonians 5:18
Week 2 *Gratitude in Word and Deed*	Colossians 3:17
Week 3 *Gratitude in Prayer*	Philippians 4:6–7
Week 4 *Gratitude for God's Steadfast Love*	Psalm 107:1

Gratitude in Every Circumstance Monday, Nov. 2, 2026

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

David Eagleman once observed, "Life is not measured by time. It is measured by moments." We organize our lives according to minutes, days, years, and decades; yet we tend to remember them through particular moments. The birth of a child. A conversation with an old friend. The phone call that brought unexpected news. A sunrise that stopped us long enough to notice its beauty. The diagnosis that changed everything. The closing of a casket. Life unfolds as a collection of moments—some joyful, others painful, and many so ordinary that we barely notice them as they pass. These moments form the landscape in which we learn to trust God, recognize His grace, and practice gratitude.

For the Christian, gratitude is an essential posture of the redeemed life because the Gospel teaches us to understand everything through the grace of God. We were sinners who could not save ourselves, yet God pursued us in love, provided salvation through Christ, and continues to sustain us by His faithful provision. Nothing we possess is ultimately self-made or deserved; life itself is a gift, salvation is a gift, and every good thing we experience bears witness to the generosity of God. A grateful heart remembers these realities and responds appropriately to grace. Without gratitude, however, we easily begin to treat God's gifts as entitlements, focus more intently on what we lack than what we have received, and evaluate His goodness according to the circumstances of the moment. Gratitude corrects this spiritual distortion by continually directing our attention toward God. It reminds us that He is the Giver, we are the recipients of His grace, and every circumstance must ultimately be interpreted through the unchanging goodness and faithfulness He has revealed in Jesus Christ.

This is the perspective behind Paul's command in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." The verse is brief enough to memorize in a matter of minutes, but its command requires a lifetime of faithful practice. Paul does

not present thanksgiving as a spontaneous emotion that emerges whenever life goes according to plan. He commands believers to give thanks, calling us to cultivate a deliberate response to God that remains steady even as our circumstances change.

The Greek verb translated "give thanks," *eucharisteō*, describes the expression of gratitude, particularly toward God. Throughout the New Testament, thanksgiving accompanies worship, prayer, fellowship, and the recognition of divine provision. Jesus gave thanks before distributing bread to the multitude in John 6:11, and He gave thanks as He broke bread with His disciples before the cross in Luke 22:19. Paul repeatedly thanked God for His work among the churches. Biblical gratitude begins with recognition: we look beyond the gifts we have received and acknowledge the God from whom every good gift comes. Thanksgiving then turns that recognition into worship as we remember His faithfulness and respond with praise.

The demanding portion of Paul's instruction appears in the phrase "in all circumstances." Some circumstances invite thanksgiving almost effortlessly. A healthy child is born, a prayer receives the answer we desired, a relationship is restored, or an unexpected opportunity arrives. In these moments, the goodness of God seems immediately visible, and gratitude comes easily. Other circumstances make thanksgiving far more difficult. The diagnosis is serious. The job disappears. The relationship remains fractured. Someone we love dies. A prayer offered faithfully for months seems to remain unanswered. These experiences remind us that gratitude cannot depend upon favorable circumstances because favorable circumstances never remain forever.

We must note that Paul does not ask Christians to deny the reality of suffering or pretend that painful experiences are pleasant. Scripture gives believers a vocabulary for grief, lament, disappointment, and sorrow. Instead, Paul commands us to give thanks in every circumstance because no circumstance changes the character of God. We can grieve deeply and remain grateful. We can acknowledge that something hurts while confessing that God remains faithful. We can admit that we do not understand His purposes while continuing to trust His wisdom. In difficult seasons, gratitude becomes an expression of faith because

thanksgiving declares that what we know about God remains true even when we cannot understand what He is doing.

Paul then grounds this command in the will of God. Christians frequently wrestle with questions about God's will concerning relationships, careers, opportunities, and major decisions. Scripture does not provide an individual answer to every circumstantial question, but it speaks clearly about the kind of people God desires His children to become. God desires His people to be grateful. Thanksgiving, therefore, is more than good manners, a positive outlook, or an attractive personality trait. Gratitude is an act of obedience through which our response to life becomes increasingly aligned with God's revealed purpose for us.

This means gratitude can be cultivated even when it does not arise naturally. We do not have to wait until we feel thankful before we begin giving thanks. We can deliberately remember God's faithfulness, identify His provision, rehearse His promises, and acknowledge His grace. As these practices become established rhythms, gratitude begins reshaping the way we interpret our lives. We become increasingly confident in God when circumstances tempt us toward complaint, comparison, cynicism, or despair.

Most importantly, Paul locates this life of gratitude "in Christ Jesus." Christian thanksgiving ultimately rests upon something our circumstances cannot remove. Through Christ, we have received forgiveness, reconciliation with God, adoption into His family, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of eternal life. Earthly blessings may increase or disappear, seasons may change, and life may move unexpectedly from celebration to sorrow, but the Gospel remains. Christ remains. Our standing before God remains secure in Him.

Memorization & Meditation

1. **Memorization –** Begin memorizing 1 Thessalonians 5:18 by reading the verse aloud several times or writing the verse. Pay attention to its progression: "Give thanks" → "in all circumstances" → "this is the will of God" → "in Christ Jesus for you."

2. **Meditation** – Consider the circumstances shaping your life today. Identify those that make thanksgiving easy as well as those in which gratitude requires greater faith. Reflect on this truth: your circumstances may change, but the character, grace, and faithfulness of God remain constant.

3. **Pray the Verse**

Father, thank You for Your goodness and grace in every season of my life. Teach me to give thanks in all circumstances, especially when gratitude does not come easily. Help me trust Your wisdom when I cannot understand Your purposes. Help me fix my heart on Christ, remember Your faithfulness, and live today with gratitude as an expression of joyful obedience to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

"*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Paul's command to "give thanks in all circumstances" carries greater significance when we consider the people who first received it. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians around AD 50–51 to a relatively young congregation in Thessalonica, an important city in the Roman province of Macedonia. According to Acts 17, Paul and Silas proclaimed the Gospel there during Paul's second missionary journey. Some believed, including both Jews and Gentiles, and a church was established. Opposition quickly followed. A hostile crowd attacked the house of Jason, where Paul and his companions had apparently been staying, and the escalating danger eventually forced Paul and Silas to leave the city. The Thessalonian believers remained behind.

This background gives the letter its distinctly pastoral character. Paul was separated from a congregation he loved, and he was concerned about how these young Christians were enduring opposition. When Timothy eventually brought encouraging news about their faith and love, Paul responded with thanksgiving and wrote to strengthen them further. Throughout the letter, he encourages perseverance in suffering, instructs them in holy living, clarifies questions concerning the return of Christ, and reminds them of the hope they possess through the Gospel.

That context frames 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Paul is instructing believers who understood the cost of following Jesus. They had experienced opposition because of their faith, grieved fellow believers who had died, and needed reassurance about what would happen when Christ returned. Their circumstances gave them legitimate reasons for sorrow and concern, yet Paul still taught them to give thanks.

The immediate context strengthens the command further. As Paul concludes the letter, he provides a concentrated series of instructions describing life within a healthy Christian community. Among them are three closely connected commands: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (5:16–18). These instructions

describe continuing patterns rather than occasional religious activities. Christians are to cultivate lives characterized by joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. Their joy leads them toward God, their dependence keeps them in prayer, and their confidence in His character allows gratitude to endure even when circumstances become difficult.

The larger context of chapter 5 also points toward the return of Christ. Paul has just reminded the Thessalonians that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (5:2), while assuring believers that they belong to the light and possess the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. Their present circumstances therefore had to be interpreted in light of their future hope. Persecution was real, grief was real, and uncertainty was real, but none of those realities possessed the final word. Christ would return, salvation would be completed, and God's promises would stand.

Paul's instruction to give thanks in all circumstances is grounded in that larger reality. Gratitude does not require Christians to ignore suffering or manufacture pleasant feelings about painful experiences. It calls us to view every circumstance from within the greater story of God's redemptive work. The Thessalonians could give thanks because the God who had saved them remained faithful, the Christ who had died and risen would return, and their future rested securely in Him.

Understanding their circumstances gives Paul's command its proper gravity. Thanksgiving is not reserved for seasons when life unfolds according to our expectations. It is the continuing response of people whose confidence rests in a faithful God.

Take Action: Before answering the reflection questions, read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:22. Pay attention to Paul's teaching about the return of Christ, the hope believers possess, and the practical instructions that follow.

Reflection Questions:

1. What circumstances were the Thessalonian believers facing when Paul instructed them to "give thanks in all circumstances"?

2. How do the commands to "rejoice always," "pray without ceasing," and "give thanks in all circumstances" work together to describe the Christian life?

3. How does the promised return of Christ provide a foundation for gratitude even during seasons of suffering, grief, or uncertainty?

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

The command to "give thanks in all circumstances" rests upon a foundational Christian conviction: God exercises providential care over the lives of His people. Christian gratitude is reasonable because our circumstances are never beyond God's sovereign authority, wisdom, or care. If life were governed by chance, thanksgiving in difficult circumstances would amount to little more than determined optimism. Scripture presents a different reality. The God who created the world continues to govern His creation and faithfully accomplish His purposes within it.

Divine Providence describes God's continuing work of sustaining creation and directing all things according to His wise purposes. Proverbs 16:9 declares, "The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps," while Romans 8:28 assures believers that "for those who love God all things work together for good." Neither passage promises that every circumstance will be pleasant or immediately understandable. Instead, Scripture teaches that even circumstances we would never choose remain under the authority of a God whose purposes are ultimately good.

This distinction is essential for understanding gratitude. Paul commands believers to give thanks in all circumstances; he does not require us to celebrate evil, minimize suffering, or pretend that painful experiences are good. Christians can mourn what is broken while remaining confident that brokenness never places us beyond God's providential care. Joseph expressed this confidence after enduring betrayal, slavery, and imprisonment. Looking back upon the evil committed against him, he told his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). Human evil remained evil, yet God sovereignly worked through those circumstances to accomplish His redemptive purposes.

This confidence also contributes to our sanctification. Gratitude trains the heart to trust God rather than demand control. It confronts

entitlement, weakens the impulse toward grumbling, and cultivates contentment as we learn to receive our lives from the hand of God. Because we are "in Christ Jesus," our confidence rests in the One who has already demonstrated God's love through His death and resurrection.

Christian gratitude, therefore, is an expression of theological trust. We give thanks when God's purposes are visible, and we continue giving thanks when they remain hidden, because our confidence rests in His character rather than our understanding. Gratitude declares whatever our circumstances may be, God remains sovereign, wise, good, and faithful.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why does the doctrine of divine providence provide a theological foundation for giving thanks in all circumstances?

2. How does Paul's command to give thanks differ from pretending that suffering, evil, or painful circumstances are good?

3. How does practicing gratitude contribute to the believer's sanctification and strengthen trust in God?

Memorization Reminder: Return to 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and recite the verse several times without looking at the text. If you struggle with a phrase, review it and begin again. As the verse becomes familiar, focus on understanding what you are saying: gratitude is possible in every circumstance because your confidence rests in the unchanging character of God.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

The inductive Bible study method moves from observation to interpretation and ultimately to application. We begin by asking what the text says, then we consider what it means within its context, and finally we determine how its truth should shape our lives. Application is therefore more than finding an inspirational thought in Scripture. It is the intentional process of bringing our attitudes, decisions, and behaviors into alignment with what God has revealed in His word.

When we observe 1 Thessalonians 5:18, several details immediately demand attention: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Paul gives a command rather than a suggestion. The action is thanksgiving, the scope includes all circumstances, and the reason is grounded in God's will for those who are in Christ. Our contextual and theological study has also shown that Paul wrote these words to believers acquainted with suffering and uncertainty. He was not asking them to ignore their difficulties. He was teaching them to respond to every season from the settled confidence that God remains sovereign, good, and faithful.

Application begins when we allow these truths to examine our own response to life. Consider the circumstances occupying your attention today. Perhaps you are enjoying a season of obvious blessing, or perhaps you are carrying disappointment, uncertainty, grief, or frustration. Now ask a more searching question: How am I responding to God within these circumstances? Complaints may reveal that we have focused primarily on what we lack. Anxiety may expose our desire to control what belongs to God. Entitlement may cause us to receive His gifts without recognizing the Giver. Paul's command redirects each response toward gratitude.

Practicing this verse can begin with deliberate thanksgiving. Identify your present circumstances honestly, then identify what remains true about God within it. Thank Him for His presence, remember specific

examples of His past faithfulness, and rehearse the promises of the Gospel. If the circumstance is painful, you do not need to pretend otherwise. Bring your sorrow to God while thanking Him that sorrow has not changed His character or separated you from Christ.

This is how biblical application transforms ordinary life. We observe the command, understand its meaning, and then intentionally obey it. As this pattern becomes habitual, gratitude begins reshaping our perspective. We learn to recognize God's grace more readily and to trust His character more deeply until thanksgiving becomes the steeled posture of a life increasingly shaped by Scripture.

Reflection Questions:

1. What circumstance is occupying most of your attention today, and how have you been responding to God within it?

2. What does your response to that circumstance reveal about your trust in God's sovereignty, goodness, and faithfulness?

3. What specific reasons can you identify for giving thanks to God within your present circumstances, and how can you intentionally express that gratitude today?

"*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*" 1 Thessalonians 5:18

This week, we have considered Paul's command to "give thanks in all circumstances" and discovered that Christian gratitude is rooted in something deeper than favorable experiences. Paul wrote to believers who understood suffering, yet he called them to lives characterized by joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. Theologically, this command rests upon God's providential care: every circumstance remains under the sovereign authority of a God who is wise, good, and faithful. Because we are in Christ, we can trust Him even when His purposes remain hidden. We then applied this truth personally by examining our circumstances and considering how we respond to God within them. Biblical gratitude does not deny sorrow or difficulty. It recognizes that changing circumstances never change the character of God and therefore chooses thanksgiving as an expression of faith.

Remember the Word Without looking at your Bible or previous entries, write or recite 1 Thessalonians 5:18 from memory. Afterward, compare your recitation with the biblical text and review any portions you missed. Continue repeating the verse until you can recall it confidently.

Summarize the Truth In your own words, summarize the primary truth you have learned from 1 Thessalonians 5:18 this week. Explain why Christians can give thanks in every circumstance and how gratitude expresses trust in the character and providence of God.

Make It Personal Identify one circumstance in your life where gratitude currently comes easily and thank God specifically for His goodness. Then identify one circumstance where thanksgiving is difficult. Write down what remains true about God within that situation and one specific way you can practice gratitude as an expression of trust and obedience.

Final Prayer *Father, thank You for Your faithful care in every season of my life. Forgive me when I allow difficult circumstances to overshadow Your goodness or receive Your blessings without recognizing Your grace. Teach me to trust Your wisdom when I cannot understand Your purposes. Through Christ, cultivate within me a grateful heart that remembers Your faithfulness and gives thanks. In Jesus' name, amen.*

'27 PREVIEW SUNDAY







SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

9 & 10:30 AM

Gratitude in Word and Deed Monday, November 9, 2026

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:17

Many of us have experienced the uncomfortable realization that a text message has gone to the wrong person. Perhaps you selected the wrong contact, replied to the entire group instead of one individual, or sent a message whose meaning changed considerably when read by an unintended recipient. Everything seemed perfectly reasonable when you pressed "send." Then you noticed the name at the top of the screen, your stomach dropped, and you immediately began searching for the option to delete the message before anyone could read it. Sometimes you succeed. Sometimes three little dots appear, indicating that the other person is already typing a response.

These moments are humorous afterward because they remind us that communication involves more than the words we intend to convey. The recipient matters. The context matters. Even the identity of the sender matters. A perfectly reasonable message can communicate something entirely different when one of those elements is misunderstood.

Our lives communicate in much the same way. Every day, through countless conversations, decisions, reactions, and interactions, we communicate something about who we are and what we value. For Christians, however, there is another dimension to consider. We bear the name of Jesus Christ. Our words and actions therefore communicate something about the One we represent.

Paul captures the comprehensive nature of this responsibility in Colossians 3:17: And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." This single sentence gathers the Christian life into one sweeping instruction. Whatever we say and whatever we do should reflect our relationships with Christ, and gratitude should accompany it all.

The breadth of Paul's language deserves our attention. "Whatever you do" leaves little room for compartmentalized Christianity. Following Jesus cannot be confined to worship services, Bible studies, ministry assignments, or other activities we readily identify as spiritual. Christ has

rightful authority over the conversation at the dinner table, the response to a frustrating email, the way we conduct ourselves at work, the patience we demonstrate toward our families, and the manner in which we respond when someone disagrees with us. The ordinary places of life become arenas in which discipleship is expressed.

Paul makes this even clearer with the phrase "in word or deed." Words and actions form the visible expression of our inner lives. What we believe eventually works its way into how we speak and how we behave. A confession of faith on Sunday carries little credibility when our speech throughout the week is consistently cruel, dishonest, or degrading. Likewise, words of devotion become hollow when our actions contradict the character of Christ. Christian faith is intended to become visible through a life increasingly transformed by Jesus.

Paul therefore instructs believers to do everything "in the name of the Lord Jesus." To act in someone's name carries the idea of representation. Christians belong to Christ, bear His name, and live before the world as His people. This gives tremendous significance to ordinary behavior. Before speaking or acting, we can ask whether our response accurately represents the character of the Savior whose name we bear. Would this conversation reflect His grace? Does this decision honor His holiness? Does this action demonstrate His love? Our daily lives become opportunities to make the character of Christ visible.

Yet Paul does not conclude his instruction with behavior. He reaches deeper, toward the disposition of the heart: "giving thanks to God the Father through him." Gratitude provides the internal posture from which Christ-honoring words and deeds should flow. Paul envisions believers whose outward conduct is shaped by an inward awareness of grace. We speak differently because we remember how graciously God has spoken to us. We serve differently because we recognize how generously God has provided for us. We treat others differently because we remember what we ourselves have received through Christ.

This connection between gratitude and conduct is significant because ingratitude eventually expresses itself outwardly. When we believe we deserve more than we have received, entitlement grows. When we concentrate continually on what is missing, complaint becomes natural. When we forget how patiently God has dealt with us, patience with others becomes increasingly difficult. Gratitude redirects our

attention toward grace, and a heart attentive to grace begins producing words and actions consistent with the Gospel.

Colossians 3:17, therefore, invites us to consider gratitude as something larger than the words "thank you." Biblical thanksgiving becomes a way of living. A grateful heart changes the tone of our conversations, the spirit with which we serve, the patience we extend to others, and the attitude we bring to ordinary responsibilities. Thanksgiving moves from the heart to the mouth and eventually into the hands.

Memorization & Meditation

1. **Memorization** Read Colossians 3:17 aloud several times, paying attention to the progression of Paul's instruction: "whatever you do" → "in word or deed" → "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" → "giving thanks to God the Father through him." Begin committing the verse to memory one phrase at a time, adding each phrase until you can recite the entire verse.

2. **Meditation** Reflect on the comprehensive nature of the words "whatever you do." Consider the conversations, responsibilities, relationships, and ordinary activities that will fill your day. Ask yourself: *What would change if I approached each of these as an opportunity to represent Jesus with gratitude?* Pay particular attention to how the condition of your heart influences what others hear in your words and see in your actions.

3. **Prayer:**

Father, thank You for the grace You have given me through Jesus Christ. Help me honor Him in everything I do today. Guard my words so they reflect His character, and guide my actions so they bring glory to His name. Cultivate gratitude within my heart so that every conversation, responsibility, and act of service becomes an opportunity to represent Jesus faithfully. In Jesus' name, amen.

"*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* Colossians 3:17

Paul's instruction in Colossians 3:17 becomes clearer when we understand its place within the larger argument of the letter. Paul wrote Colossians to believers in Colossae, a congregation he apparently had not personally established. The church had received the Gospel through Epaphras, whom Paul describes as a "beloved fellow servant" and "faithful minister of Christ" (Colossians 1:7). As Paul writes from imprisonment, he encourages these believers to remain firmly rooted in Christ while warning them against teachings that threatened to distract them from the sufficiency and supremacy of Jesus.

The first half of the letter therefore emphasizes who Christ is and what God has accomplished through Him. Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" (1:15), the One through whom and for whom all things were created, and the head of the church (1:16-18). Through His death, believers have been reconciled to God, and through faith they have been united with Christ. These theological truths establish the foundation for the practical instructions that follow. Paul does not begin by telling Christians how to behave; he begins by reminding them who Christ is and who they have become because they belong to Him.

That progression is especially important in chapter 3. Paul begins, "if then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above" (3:1). Because believers share in the life of the risen Christ, their conduct should increasingly reflect their new identity. Paul describes this transformation through the imagery of changing clothes. Christians must "put to death" sinful practices associated with their former lives and "put off" anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, and lying (3:5–9). In their place, believers are instructed to "put on" compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and above all, love (3:12–14).

Paul then turns his attention toward the inner life of the Christian community. The peace of Christ should rule their hearts, the word of Christ should dwell richly among them, and thanksgiving should

characterize their response to God (3:15–16). Gratitude is particularly prominent. Paul tells them to "be thankful" in verse 15, to sing "with thankfulness" in verse 16, and finally to live while "giving thanks to God the Father" in verse 17. Thanksgiving is therefore woven throughout Paul's description of Christian maturity.

Against this backdrop, Colossians 3:17 serves as a sweeping summary of the transformed life Paul has described: "whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." The command reaches into every dimension of life because belonging to Christ reshapes every dimension of life. Words, actions, relationships, worship, work, and ordinary responsibilities are all brought under the lordship of Jesus.

Paul's final emphasis on thanksgiving is therefore significant. Gratitude is not an isolated religious exercise added to an otherwise ordinary life. It is one of the defining dispositions of people who understand what they have received through Christ. The believers in Colossae had been reconciled, forgiven, raised with Christ, and welcomed into His people. Their words and deeds were now to flow from that new identity. Because they belonged to Jesus, they were to represent Jesus—and gratitude was to accompany their whole lives.

Take Action: Open your Bible and read Colossians 3:1–17. As you read, notice the movement from what believers are to "put off" toward what they are to "put on." Circle or underline each reference to thanksgiving in verses 15–17. Then consider how verse 17 summarizes Paul's description of a life transformed by Christ.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does Paul connect the believer's new identity in Christ with the way Christians are called to live?
2. What attitudes and behaviors does Paul instruct believers to "put off," and what Christlike qualities are they called to "put on"?
3. How does the repeated emphasis on thanksgiving in Colossians 3:15–17 help explain the role gratitude should have in the Christian life?

"*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*" Colossians 3:17

At the theological center of Colossians 3:17 stands the lordship of Jesus Christ. Paul instructs believers, "whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." This command rests upon the conviction that Jesus possesses rightful authority over the whole life of every believer. Christianity does not reserve certain portions of life for Christ while leaving others under our independent control. Because Jesus is Lord, every word we speak and every action we take belongs under His authority.

This truth has already been established earlier in Colossians. Paul describes Christ as the One through whom and for whom all things were created, the One who exists before all things, and the One in whom all things hold together (Colossians 1:16–17). Jesus is also "the head of the body, the church" and the One who is "preeminent" in everything (1:18). His lordship is therefore grounded in who He is. The One who created us, reconciled us to God, and reigns over us has rightful authority to direct the lives we now live.

When Paul commands believers to do everything "in the name of the Lord Jesus," he applies this theological reality to ordinary life. To act in someone's name means to act as that person's representative and in a manner consistent with his authority and character. Christians bear the name of Christ before the world. Our speech, conduct, relationships, work, service, and decisions should therefore communicate something true about the Lord we represent. There is no meaningful division between sacred and ordinary activities when every dimension of life belongs to Christ.

This understanding also explains Paul's connection between Christ's lordship and gratitude. He concludes the verse by instructing believers to give "thanks to God the Father through him." The Christian does not obey Christ as a servant attempting to earn the favor of a reluctant master. We live under the lordship of the One who has already reconciled

us to God through His blood (Colossians 1:20–22). His authority is exercised within a relationship established by grace. Thanksgiving is therefore an appropriate response to His lordship because obedience grows from recognizing what we have already received through Him.

Colossians 3:17 ultimately calls Christians to an integrated life in which worship and obedience extend into everything we do. Jesus is Lord at church, at home, at work, in conversation, in conflict, and in the unnoticed responsibilities of an ordinary day. When we understand His lordship and remember His grace, gratitude becomes the posture from which we live every part of life under the authority and for the glory of Jesus.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does the phrase "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" teach us about Christ's authority over the Christian life?

2. Why should there be no meaningful division between "sacred" and ordinary areas of life for someone who belongs to Christ?

3. How does remembering what Christ has accomplished for us transform obedience from obligation into a grateful response to grace?

Memorization Reminder: Return to Colossians 3:17 and attempt to recite (or write) the verse without looking at your bible. If you need help, use the progression of Paul's thoughts to guide you: **whatever you do → word or deed → everything in the name of the Lord Jesus → giving thanks to God the Father through Him.** Repeat the verse several times until you can confidently recite it from memory.

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:17

The inductive Bible study method leads us from observation to interpretation and finally to application. We begin by examining what Scripture says, seeking to understand what it means within its context, and then asking how that truth should reshape our lives. When we apply Colossians 3:17 in this way, Paul's instruction reaches beyond occasional expressions of thanksgiving and calls us toward a life in which gratitude influences both our words and actions.

Begin with observation. Paul writes, "what ever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Notice the comprehensive language: "whatever," "word or deed," and "everything." Paul leaves no category of ordinary life outside the lordship of Christ. Notice also how the verse concludes. As believers represent Jesus through what they say and do, they are to be "giving thanks." Gratitude accompanies a life lived in the name of Christ.

Our contextual study helps us interpret why. Paul has described believers as people who have been raised with Christ and are therefore putting away the practices of their former lives while putting on the character of Jesus. Gratitude appears repeatedly in this description of the new life. Paul tells believers to "be thankful" in verse 15, to sing "with thankfulness" in verse 16, and to give thanks to the Father in verse 17. Thanksgiving is an outward expression of an inward life transformed by grace.

Application begins when we examine whether this pattern is visible in us. Consider your words. What does the way you speak to your family, coworkers, friends, or strangers reveal about the condition of your heart? Complaint often reveals dissatisfaction with what we have received. Harshness can expose impatience when others interfere with what we want. Constant criticism can train us to notice what is wrong

while overlooking evidence of grace. A grateful heart changes the vocabulary and tone of our lives because it increasingly recognizes how much has been received from God.

Then consider your deeds. Many responsibilities of daily life can become burdens when approached with resentment. Work, parenting, serving, caring for others, household responsibilities, and ministry can all become places where we quietly think, *Why do I have to do this?* Colossians 3:17 invites us to ask a better question: *How can I do this in the name of Jesus with thanksgiving?* The responsibility may remain unchanged, but gratitude can transform the spirit in which we perform it.

Applying this verse requires intentional practice. Before speaking, consider whether your words represent Jesus and arise form a heart conscious of grace. Before approaching an ordinary responsibility, remember that the opportunity to work, serve, encourage, help or care for another person can become an act of worship. Then consciously thank God as you do it.

Gratitude becomes practical when thanksgiving moves from something we occasionally say to the posture from which we regularly live. As our hearts become increasingly aware of God's grace, our words and deeds begin to reflect that gratitude. In this way, ordinary life becomes an opportunity to represent Jesus faithfully, honor His name, and give thanks to the Father through Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. What do your words—their tone, content, and frequency of complaint or encouragement—reveal about the presence of gratitude in your heart?

2. What ordinary responsibility are you most tempted to approach with frustration or resentment, and how could gratitude change the way you perform it?

3. What is one specific way you can intentionally represent Jesus today through a grateful word or deed?

Recap & Reinforcement **Friday, November 13, 2026**

"*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* Colossians 3:17

This week, Colossians 3:17 has shown us that gratitude belongs at the center of a life lived under the lordship of Jesus. Because we have been raised with Christ, our new identity should become visible through transformed words and deeds. Paul calls believers to do everything in the name of Jesus, recognizing that even ordinary activities provide opportunities to represent Him. Thanksgiving is the posture accompanying this Christ-centered life. As we become increasingly aware of the grace we have received, gratitude reshapes how we speak, serve, work, and relate to others. Our lives become expressions of worship as thankful hearts produce words and deeds that honor Christ.

Remember the Word

Without looking at your bible or previous entries, recite Colossians 3:17 from memory. If you need help, remember the progression of Paul's instruction: whatever you do → word or deed → everything in the name of the Lord Jesus → giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Afterward, compare your recitation with the biblical text and review any portions you missed.

Recall What You Learned

In your own words, summarize what Colossians 3:17 has taught you this week. Explain what it means to do everything "in the name of the Lord Jesus," why Christ's lordship extends to every area of life, and how gratitude should influence the words you speak and the actions you perform.

Final Prayer

Father, thank You for every grace You have given me through Jesus Christ. Teach me to live under His lordship in every part of my life. May my words reflect His

character, my actions honor His name, and my heart remain grateful for Your goodness. Help me approach every conversation, responsibility, and opportunity today as a way to represent Jesus faithfully and give thanks to You through Him. In Jesus' name, amen.

CHRIST HAS COME



A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

DEC. 11 AT 7PM

DEC. 13 AT 9 & 10:30AM



Gratitude in Prayer — Monday, November 16, 2026

"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." Philippians 4:6–7

An old story tells of a little girl who became deeply concerned about a bird trap her brother had constructed. She loved birds and could not bear the thought of one being caught, so she began praying earnestly that the trap would never capture anything. After several days, someone noticed that the girl seemed unusually confident and asked whether she really believed God would answer her prayer. "Oh yes," she reportedly replied. "I know He will. Yesterday, I kicked the trap to pieces."

Her approach to prayer may require some theological refinement, but the story captures something recognizable about the way we bring our concerns to God. We pray about what troubles us, yet we often remain preoccupied with controlling the outcome ourselves. We ask God to intervene while continuing to carry the burden as though everything ultimately depends upon us. Our mouths may say, "Lord, I trust You," while our minds continue rehearsing every possibility, anticipating every problem, and searching for some way to guarantee the result we desire.

This tension between prayer and anxiety stands at the heart of Philippians 4:6–7. Paul writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." He then attaches a remarkable promise: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

These words carry particular weight because Paul wrote them from imprisonment. His own circumstances were uncertain, and the Philippian believers were also familiar with opposition and hardship. Paul therefore does not address anxiety as a detached philosopher describing an abstract problem. He writes as a Christian who has learned to entrust uncertain circumstances to a faithful God.

Paul begins with a sweeping instruction: "Do not be anxious about anything." Anxiety divides our attention and consumes our thoughts with circumstances we cannot control. Paul does not suggest that Christians will never experience concern, nor does he condemn the appropriate recognition of genuine problems. Instead, he teaches believers what to do when the pressures of life begin pressing upon the heart and mind. The answer to anxiety is not denial. The burden must be redirected.

That redirecting movement becomes clear in Paul's next words: "but in everything by prayer and supplication." Notice the deliberate breadth of his language. We are to be anxious about nothing and pray about everything. Whatever is significant enough to occupy our thoughts is significant enough to bring before God. Prayer turns our attention toward Him, while supplication allows us to identify our needs and make specific requests. Instead of endlessly rehearsing the problem within ourselves, we bring it deliberately into the presence of God.

Yet Paul adds an essential phrase: "with thanksgiving." Prayer shaped by gratitude remembers the faithfulness of God while asking for His help in the present. Thanksgiving reminds us that the God to whom we are bringing today's concern is the same God who has sustained us before. We remember His provision, rehearse His promises, acknowledge His grace, and recognize that our greatest need has already been answered through Jesus Christ.

Gratitude therefore changes the posture from which we pray. Anxiety naturally concentrates our attention on what might happen, what could go wrong, or what we fear we may lose. Thanksgiving directs our attention toward what we already know about God. He is faithful, wise, present, and has demonstrated His love through Christ. Grateful prayer does not require us to minimize the seriousness of our circumstances; it enables us to place those circumstances within the larger reality of God's proven faithfulness. Paul then describes what happens as believers bring their requests before God: "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Notice what Paul does not promise. He does not say that every problem will immediately disappear, every request will receive the answer we

prefer, or every circumstance will suddenly make sense. God promises something that can exist even before circumstances change: *His peace*.

Paul describes this peace as surpassing understanding because its presence cannot always be explained by circumstances. There are seasons when peace seems perfectly reasonable because life is calm. The peace Paul describes can remain when life is anything but calm. It is rooted in confidence that our lives and concerns have been entrusted to a God whose wisdom exceeds our own.

The word Paul uses for "guard" evokes the protection provided by a military garrison. This image would have been familiar in Phillippi, a Roman colony accustomed to the presence of soldiers. God's peace stands guard over two places particularly vulnerable to anxiety: our hearts and our minds. When emotions begin to overwhelm us and thoughts race toward fearful possibilities, God's peace protects the inner life of the believer.

Paul finally locates this promise "in Christ Jesus." Christian peace does not originate in positive thinking, emotional control, or confidence that circumstances will eventually turn out exactly as we desire. Our peace rests in Christ. Through Him, we have been reconciled to God, brought into His family, and secured by His grace. Because we belong to Christ, we can bring an uncertain future to a Father whose character is already known.

Memorization and Meditation

1. **Memorize the Word:** Read Philippians 4:6–7 aloud several times. Because these two verses contain a progression of thought, learn them in sections: "Do not be anxious about anything" → "in everything by prayer and supplication" → "with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" → "the peace of God…will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Begin by memorizing each phrase, then connect them until you can recite the entire passage.

2. **Meditate on the Word:** Consider what is occupying your thoughts today. What concern do you repeatedly revisit, attempt to control, or imagine possible outcomes for? Now place that concern beside Paul's

instruction to pray "with thanksgiving." Recall specific ways God has demonstrated His faithfulness in the past, and consider how remembering His character changes the way you view your present concern. Ask yourself: *What would it look like to carry this burden through prayer rather than through anxiety?*

3. **Pray the Verse:**

   Father, You know every concern that weighs upon my heart and occupies my thoughts. I bring these burdens to You and trust them to Your wisdom and care. Thank You for Your faithfulness, Your provisions, and the grace You have given me through Jesus. Teach me to pray instead of remaining captive to anxiety, and guard my heart and mind with Your peace as I trust You with what I cannot control. In Jesus' name, amen.

"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." Philippians 4:6–7

Paul's instructions to pray "with thanksgiving" becomes especially meaningful when we consider the circumstances surrounding the letter to the Philippians. Paul wrote from imprisonment, most likely while awaiting a decision that could determine his future. He was restricted in his freedom, separated from churches he loved, and surrounded by considerable uncertainty. Yet the book of Philippians is remarkably joyful. Paul repeatedly speaks of rejoicing, gratitude, contentment, and confidence in God. His circumstances were difficult, but they had not become the ultimate measure of God's goodness.

Paul also shared a deep relationship with the church at Philippi. According to Acts 16, the congregation began during Paul's second missionary journey when the Gospel reached people such as Lydia and the Philippian jailer. The church later became a faithful partner in Paul's ministry, supporting him financially and demonstrating continued concern for his needs. Paul writes to thank them for their partnership, encourage their perseverance, address concerns within the congregation, and call them to live in a manner worthy of the Gospel.

The immediate context of Philippians 4:6–7 is particularly important. Paul has just addressed a disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche and urged these believers to "agree in the Lord" (4:2). He then broadens his instruction to the congregation: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice" (4:4). Their joy is grounded "in the Lord," which means it can remain even when circumstances are unsettled. Paul immediately adds, "The Lord is at hand" (4:5). Whether understood as emphasizing the Lord's nearness or anticipating His return, the statement directs attention away from circumstances and toward the presence and certainty of Christ.

Against this background, Paul writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." His instruction is part of a larger call to live with confidence in the Lord. Believers can rejoice because they are in the Lord, respond graciously because the Lord is near, and bring their anxieties to God because He hears their prayers.

Thanksgiving is essential to this response. Paul has already modeled gratitude throughout the letter, beginning with the declaration, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you" (1:3). In chapter 4, gratitude enters directly into the believer's response to anxiety. When concerns arise, Christians are invited to bring specific requests before God while simultaneously remembering His goodness. Thanksgiving places present uncertainty within the larger story of God's past faithfulness and continuing care.

Take Action: Open your Bible and read Philippians 4:2–13. As you read, underline Paul's instructions concerning rejoicing, prayer, thanksgiving, thought, and contentment. Pay particular attention to what Paul says about the Lord's presence and the believer's circumstances. Then consider how this larger context helps you understand the command to bring every concern to God "with thanksgiving."

Reflection Questions:

1. How do Paul's circumstances while writing Philippians add significance to his repeated emphasis on joy, gratitude, and confidence in God?

2. How does the statement "The Lord is at hand" help us understand Paul's instructions to rejoice and bring our anxieties to God in prayer?

3. Why is thanksgiving an important part of Paul's instruction for responding to anxiety, and what does gratitude help believers remember about God?

"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." Philippians 4:6–7

At the theological center of Philippians 4:6–7 is the conviction that prayer is an expression of our dependence upon the providential care of God. Paul can instruct believers to bring everything to God because nothing in their lives falls outside His knowledge, authority, or concern. Prayer therefore rests upon what Christians believe about God: He is sovereign over our circumstances, attentive to our needs, and faithful in His care for His people.

The doctrine of divine providence describes God's continuing work of sustaining His creation and directing all things according to His wise purposes. Scripture never presents God as distant from the concerns of His people. Jesus teaches that the Father knows what His children need (Matthew 6:31–32), while Peter instructs believers to cast their anxieties upon God "because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). When Paul tells the Philippians to bring their requests to God, he is calling them to act upon this same theological conviction. We pray because we believe that God both reigns and cares.

This explains why prayer is Paul's prescribed response to anxiety. Anxiety often grows from recognizing how much of life lies beyond our control. We cannot guarantee tomorrow, control another person, prevent every hardship, or determine the outcome of every circumstance. Prayer acknowledges these limitations without surrendering to despair. When we pray, we confess that we are dependent creatures bringing our needs to a sovereign Father.

Thanksgiving strengthens this expression of dependence. Paul instructs believers to make their requests known "with thanksgiving" because Christian prayer remembers God's faithfulness while asking for His continued care. Gratitude looks backward at the evidence of God's grace and allows that remembrance to shape our response to present

uncertainty. We thank God before knowing how He will answer because our confidence ultimately rests in His character rather than a particular outcome.

Paul's promise of peace follows naturally from this posture of dependence. The "peace of God" does not require every problem to disappear. Instead, God guards the hearts and minds of those who have entrusted their concerns to Him. Prayer transfers the burden from our limited ability to control circumstances to God's unlimited ability to sustain us within them.

All of this occurs "in Christ Jesus." Through Christ, believers have been reconciled to God and brought into a relationship in which we may confidently approach Him as Father. Grateful prayer is therefore an act of theological trust. We bring God what we cannot control, thank Him for what we already know of His faithfulness, and rest in the providential care of the Father who holds both our present circumstances and our future in His hands.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why does the doctrine of divine providence provide a foundation for bringing every concern to God in prayer?

2. How does thanksgiving strengthen prayer as an expression of dependence upon God, especially when the outcome of a situation remains uncertain?

3. According to Philippians 4:6–7, how does prayer change the way believers carry circumstances they cannot control?

Memorization Reminder: Return to Philippians 4:6–7 and recite the passage without looking at your bible. If you become stuck, remember the movement of Paul's thought: anxiety → prayer and supplication → thanksgiving → peace of God → guarded hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Review any words or phrases you missed, then repeat the entire passage several times.

"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." Philippians 4:6–7

The inductive Bible study method moves from observation to interpretation and finally to application. We first examine what the text says, then seek to understand what it means, and finally allow its truth to shape the way we live. Philippians 4:6–7 provides a particularly practical example of this process because Paul does more than identify the problem of anxiety; he directs believers toward a faithful response through prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving.

Begin with observation. Paul uses comprehensive language: "Do not be anxious about anything," but "in everything" bring your requests to God. He identifies prayer as the response to anxiety and includes both supplication and thanksgiving. The passage then concludes with a promise. As believers bring their concerns before God, His peace will guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The movement of the passage is clear: anxiety presents the burden, prayer brings the burden to God, thanksgiving remembers His faithfulness, and peace guards the believer who rests in Christ.

Interpretation helps us understand what Paul is asking us to do. He is not instructing Christians to pretend that difficult circumstances are insignificant or to feel guilty whenever concern enters their minds. Instead, Paul teaches us where to take those concerns. Anxiety keeps turning the problem over in our minds; prayer deliberately places the problem before God. Supplication names what we need, while thanksgiving reminds us who God has already proven Himself to be. Together, these practices express dependence upon His providential care.

Application begins by identifying what you are presently carrying. What concern repeatedly enters your thoughts? Perhaps it involves your family, finances, health, work, a relationship, or an uncertain future. Name the concern honestly rather than allowing it to

remain a vague source of uneasiness. Then turn that concern into a specific prayer. Tell God what troubles you, explain what you desire, and ask Him for what you need.

Before concluding your prayer, however, follow Paul's instruction to add thanksgiving. Remember specific evidence of God's faithfulness. Thank Him for prayers He has answered, needs He has supplied, people He has provided, grace He has demonstrated, and promises He has given. Most importantly, remember what He has accomplished through Christ. Gratitude places the present concern within the larger story of God's faithful care.

Then entrust the outcome to Him. You may still need to make a decision, have a difficult conversation, seek help, or take responsible action. Prayer does not remove our responsibility, but it changes how we carry it. We act faithfully while trusting God with what remains beyond our control.

Reflection Questions:

1. What concern or uncertainty is presently occupying your thoughts, and how can you turn that specific burden into prayer?

2. What evidence of God's past faithfulness can you remember and thank Him for as you pray about your present circumstances?

3. What part of your current situation remains beyond your control, and what would it look like to faithfully entrust that outcome to God?

Recap & Reinforcement **Friday, November 20, 2026**

"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." Philippians 4:6–7

This week, Philippians 4:6–7 has taught us to respond to anxiety by bringing our concerns to God through prayer. Paul wrote from difficult circumstances, yet his confidence remained rooted in the Lord's presence and providential care. Because God is sovereign, attentive, and faithful, believers can bring every need before Him through prayer and specific supplication. Thanksgiving is essential to this response because gratitude remembers God's past faithfulness while trusting Him with present uncertainty. We do not have to control every outcome because our lives remain under the care of our Father. As we identify our burdens, make our requests, give thanks, and entrust our circumstances to God, He promises something circumstances cannot provide: His peace guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Remember the Word

Without looking at Your bible, recite Philippians 4:6–7 from memory. Remember the progression of Paul's instruction: anxiety → prayer and supplication → thanksgiving → the peace of God → guarded hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Recall What You Learned

In your own words, summarize what Philippians 4:6–7 has taught you about responding to anxiety through prayer. Explain why believers can confidently bring their concerns to God, how thanksgiving changes the posture from which we pray, and what Paul promises concerning the peace of God.

Final Prayer

Father, thank You for inviting me to bring every concern before You. You know the burdens that occupy my thoughts and the circumstances I cannot control. I bring them to You today and ask for Your help. Thank You for Your faithfulness and for the grace You have given me through Christ. Help me trust Your wisdom, surrender the outcome to Your care, and rest in the peace that guards my heart and mind in Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.


Church-wide
Christmas
PARTY
Sunday, December 20
6:00 PM | MPR

Gratitude for God's Steadfast Love

Monday, November 23, 2026

"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"
Psalm 107:1

Forever is a word often used, rarely understood, and commonly exaggerated. A teenager, after being asked to clean her room, collapses onto the couch and complains, "I'm going to be doing chores forever!" A man stands in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles, checks his watch after five minutes, and groans, "This is taking forever." Even the snack aisle participates in the exaggeration. An "everlasting" Gobstopper eventually disappears, and an "endless" family-size bag of chips rarely survives more than a few afternoons.

We casually use the word *forever* to amplify inconvenience, discomfort, pleasure, or impatience. Yet when Scripture declares that something endures forever, it is not exaggerating. It is describing a reality that extends beyond the temporary circumstances by which we usually measure our lives.

Psalm 107:1 directs our attention toward one such reality: "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

This verse raises an important question as we conclude our study of gratitude: What gives us an enduring reason to give thanks when so much of life changes? Circumstances fluctuate. Possessions disappear. Relationships change. Health can decline. Prayers may be answered differently than we hoped. If our gratitude depends entirely upon favorable circumstances, then our thanksgiving will always be vulnerable to whatever happens next. Psalm 107:1 gives us a stronger foundation. We give thanks because of who God is and because His steadfast love never ends.

The verse begins with an invitation that carries the force of a command: "Oh give thanks to the LORD." The Hebrew verb *yadah* can communicate the public acknowledgment or confession of praise and

thanksgiving. Biblical gratitude is therefore directed toward someone. The psalmist does not call us toward a vague feeling of appreciation or a generally positive outlook on life. He directs our thanksgiving toward the LORD, the covenant God who has revealed Himself and acted faithfully for His people. Gratitude recognizes the Giver and responds to Him.

The psalmist immediately gives us a reason: "for he is good." Notice carefully where the emphasis falls. The verse does not say to give thanks because every circumstance is good. It declares that God is good. His goodness belongs to His character. Psalm 119:68 similarly declares, "You are good and do good." Everything God does flows from who He eternally is.

That distinction becomes especially important when life becomes difficult. There will be circumstances we would never choose and experiences we cannot easily understand. Biblical gratitude does not require us to call suffering pleasant, loss desirable, or evil good. Instead, it gives us something stable to hold when circumstances become unstable. We may not understand everything God permits or everything He is accomplishing, but the character of God remains unchanged. He is good.

The psalmist then takes us even deeper: "For his steadfast love endures forever." The Hebrew word translated "steadfast love" is *hesed*, one of the richest descriptions of God's relationship with His people in the Old Testament. The word carries ideas of faithful love, mercy, loyalty, kindness, and covenant commitment. No single English word captures its full significance. *Hesed* describes a love demonstrated through faithful action—a love that remains because God Himself is faithful.

Throughout Israel's history, God repeatedly demonstrated this steadfast love. He rescued His people, provided for them, forgave them, preserved then, and remained faithful to His covenant promises even when they repeatedly failed Him. His steadfast love was grounded in His character rather than their ability to deserve it.

Then comes the remarkable declaration: this steadfast "endures forever." Human love can disappoint us. Human promises can be broken. Seasons end, circumstances change, and even our strongest earthly relationships are limited by time. God's steadfast love belongs to an

entirely different category. It does not erode with age, expire with changing circumstances, or weaken under the weight of our need.

Psalm 136 repeats this declaration twenty-six times: "for his steadfast love endures forever." The repetition establishes a rhythm through Israel's history. God creates—His steadfast love endures forever. God delivers—His steadfast love endures forever. God provides—His steadfast love endures forever. Generations and circumstances change, but the refrain remains.

Psalm 107 develops the same truth through stories of deliverance. Some people wander through desert wastes, others sit in darkness and distress, some suffer because of their own foolishness, while others find themselves overwhelmed by storms at sea. Their situations differ, but the pattern repeatedly returns: "then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress" (v. 6, 13, 19, 28). Again and again, God's people discover that His steadfast love reaches them in their need.

For Christians, we see the fullest demonstration of this love in Jesus Christ. God's steadfast love did not remain as abstract doctrine; it moved toward us in our helplessness. Through Christ's death and resurrection, sinners receive forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life. The cross gives us evidence that God's love is stronger than our sin and His grace greater than our failure.

Psalm 107:1 therefore gives us a reason for gratitude that can survive every changing season. We should thank God for His daily gifts, answered prayers, relationships, provision, and countless expressions of grace. Beneath all those blessings stands an even greater reason for thanksgiving: God is good, and His steadfast love endures forever.

Memorization & Meditation

1. **Memorize the Word:** Read Psalm 107:1 aloud several times or write it out. Notice its simple progression: "give thanks to the Lord" → "for he is good" → "for his steadfast love endures forever." Memorize each phrase separation, then connect them until you can recite the entire verse.

2. **Meditate on the Word:** Consider how often your gratitude is connected to circumstances that can change. Then direct your attention toward what Psalm 107:1 says will never change. Reflect on the goodness of God and remember specific ways His steadfast love has been demonstrated in your life. Ask yourself: How would my gratitude change if it were grounded first in who God is rather than what is happening around me?

3. **Pray the Verse:**

Father, I give thanks to You because You are good and Your steadfast love endures forever. Thank You for the many gifts of Your grace, but teach me to ground my gratitude even more deeply in who You are. When circumstances change, remind me that Your character does not. Help me remember Your faithfulness, trust Your goodness, and live with gratitude for the steadfast love You have shown me through Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"
Psalm 107:1

Psalm 107 opens the fifth and final major division of the Psalter, Psalm 107–150, and begins with a call to thanksgiving: "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" The verses immediately following suggest a setting of restoration. The psalmist calls upon "the redeemed of the Lord" to give thanks and describes them as people whom God has "gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south" (v. 2–3). Although the psalm does not identify its author or precise historical setting, this language is consistent with Israel reflecting upon God's restoration after exile and celebrating His faithfulness to a scattered people.

The remainder of the psalm demonstrates why God deserves such thanksgiving. Verses 4–32 present four portraits of people in distress. The first group wanders through desert wastes without finding a city in which to dwell (v. 4–9). The second sits imprisoned in darkness because of rebellion against God (v. 10–16). The third suffers because of foolish and sinful choices (v. 17–22). The fourth encounters a terrifying storm at sea that leaves even experienced sailors helpless (v. 23–32).

Their circumstances are different, but each account follows a remarkably similar pattern. The people experience distress, reach the end of their own resources, and cry out to God. Four times the psalm declares, "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress" (v. 6, 13, 19, 28). Each deliverance is then followed by another repeated appeal: "Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!" (v. 8, 15, 21, 31).

These repetitions help us understand Psalm 107:1. God's "steadfast love" is not presented as an abstract theological idea. Throughout the psalm His *hesed* becomes visible. Through faithful action God guides the lost, frees the imprisoned, restores the afflicted, and rescues those overwhelmed by the storm. Some suffer because of

circumstances connected to their own rebellion or foolishness. Yet when they cry to the Lord, they repeatedly encounter His mercy.

The final section broadens the perspective further. God demonstrates His sovereign power by transforming rivers into deserts and deserts into pools of water, humbling the proud and lifting the needy (33–42). The psalm concludes by inviting the wise to "consider the steadfast love of the Lord" (v. 43). The reader is therefore called to do more than remember individual acts of deliverance. We are invited to recognize what those acts reveal about God himself.

Psalm 107 begins and ends with the same theological reality. God acts faithfully because God is faithful. His people can look backward at His repeated deliverance and learn something enduring about His character. Their stories become evidence supporting the opening summons: Give thanks to the Lord.

Take Action: Open your bible and read Psalm 107:1—43. As you read, notice the four stories of distress and deliverance in verses 4–32.

Reflection Questions:

1. What four situations of distress does Psalm 107 describe, and what common pattern connects each account?

2. How do God's repeated acts of deliverance throughout Psalm 107 demonstrate the meaning of His "steadfast love"?

3. How does the conclusion of Psalm 107 help us understand why remembering God's past faithfulness strengthens our gratitude toward Him?

"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"
Psalm 107:1

Psalm 107 directs our attention toward one of the most important subjects in Christian theology: the attributes of God. God's attributes are the perfections of His character revealed to us in Scripture. When Christians describe God as holy, righteous, wise, powerful, merciful, faithful, or loving, we are describing who God eternally is. These are not temporary qualities that God possesses in varying degrees. His attributes belong perfectly and unchangeably to His nature. God does not occasionally act with goodness or decide at certain moments to become loving. He is good, and He is loving.

Psalm 107:1 highlights this truth through the declaration, "For his steadfast love endures forever." The Hebrew word translated "steadfast love" is *hesed*, a rich term that describes God's faithful, loyal, and covenant-keeping love. While human love can fluctuate with emotions or circumstances, God's *hesed* is grounded in His own character. He remains faithful to His promises because faithfulness belongs to who He is.

This understanding is rooted deeply in God's revelation of Himself. In Exodus 34:6, the Lord describes Himself as "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." Israel repeatedly experienced this steadfast love throughout its history. The people wandered, rebelled, failed, and suffered the consequences of their sin, yet God continued to demonstrate mercy and remain faithful to His covenant purposes. His steadfast love did not mean that He ignored sin or abandoned justice. Rather, His holiness, justice, mercy, goodness, and love exist together perfectly within His character.

Psalm 107 provides concrete examples of this attribute in action. People become lost, imprisoned, afflicted, and overwhelmed by storms. Some suffer because of their own foolishness, while others face circumstances beyond their control. Yet when they cry to the Lord, He repeatedly responds with deliverance. These acts do not create God's steadfast love; they reveal it. God acts faithfully because God is faithful.

The fullest revelation of this divine love is found in Jesus Christ. Romans 5:8 declares, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." At the cross, God's love is displayed through His gracious action toward undeserving sinners. The God whose steadfast love rescued His people throughout the Old Testament demonstrates that same faithful character decisively through Christ.

This is why God's steadfast love provides such a strong foundation for gratitude. Our circumstances change, our emotions fluctuate, and our faithfulness sometimes fails. God's character does not. We can give thanks in every generation and every season because the God who loved, rescued, forgave, and sustained His people remains the same.

Reflection Questions:

1. What are the attributes of God, and how are they different from temporary or changing characteristics in human beings?

2. What does the Hebrew word *hesed* communicate about the nature of God's steadfast love toward His people?

3. How do God's acts of deliverance in Psalm 107 and the work of Christ on the cross reveal His unchanging character?

Memorization Reminder: Return to Psalm 107:1 and attempt to recite the verse without looking at your bible. If you need help, remember its three-part progression: give thanks to the LORD → He is good → His steadfast love endures forever.

"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"
Psalm 107:1

The inductive Bible study method moves from observation to interpretation and finally to application. We begin by carefully examining what Scripture says, seek to understand what it means within its context, and then consider how its truth should shape our lives. Psalm 107:1 provides a simple but profound opportunity to practice this method because the verse not only commands thanksgiving but also tells us why gratitude should characterize God's people.

Begin with observation. The verse contains one primary command: "give thanks to the Lord." It then provides two reasons for obeying that command: "he is good" and "his steadfast love endures forever." Notice that neither reason depends upon the circumstances of the worshiper. The foundation for thanksgiving is found in God Himself. His goodness and steadfast love provide enduring reasons for gratitude.

Interpretation deepens this understanding. The remainder of Psalm 107 describes people facing hunger, imprisonment, affliction, and dangerous storms. Their circumstances differ, yet each group eventually cries to the Lord and experiences His faithful care. These stories demonstrate the *hesed* announced in verse 1. God's steadfast love is His faithful, covenant-keeping love, and His acts of deliverance reveal a character that remains worthy of trust. Christians see the greatest demonstration of this love in Christ, through whom God has acted to rescue sinners and reconcile us to Himself.

Application begins by examining the foundation of our gratitude. Ask yourself, *What usually determines whether I feel thankful?* It is easy to give thanks when prayers are answered as we hoped, relationships are healthy, needs are supplied, and life feels manageable. When these circumstances change, however, our gratitude can disappear with them. Psalm 107:1 teaches us to establish thanksgiving upon something more permanent.

One practical way to do this is through deliberate remembrance. Consider a difficult circumstance you are presently facing. Instead of beginning with what you wish were different, begin with what remains

true. God is good. His steadfast love endures forever. Then remember specific evidence of His faithfulness. Recall prayers He has answered, needs He has supplied, forgiveness He has extended, people He has provided, and seasons through which He has sustained you. Above all, remember the cross, where God has permanently demonstrated His love for you in Christ.

Then express that gratitude directly to God. Thanksgiving becomes formative when we intentionally rehearse what is true about Him. Circumstances may still be painful, questions may remain unanswered, and desired outcomes may still be uncertain, but none of these realities alter God's character.

Reflection Questions

1. What circumstances most often influence whether you feel grateful, and what does Psalm 107:1 teach you to make the foundation of your thanksgiving instead?

2. What specific examples of God's faithfulness and steadfast love can you remember from your own life?

3. What difficult or uncertain circumstance can you view differently today by intentionally remembering that God is good and His steadfast love endures forever?

"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"
Psalm 107:1

This week, Psalm 107:1 has given us an enduring foundation for gratitude: the unchanging character of God. The psalm calls us to give thanks because God is good and His steadfast love endures forever. Throughout Psalm 107, that steadfast love becomes visible as God responds to people in distress with mercy, deliverance, and faithful care. We learned that *hesed* describes God's loyal, covenant-keeping love, an attribute of His character ultimately displayed for us in Jesus Christ. Because God's character does not change, our gratitude does not have to depend upon changing circumstances. Whether life is joyful, difficult, predictable, or uncertain, we can remember who God is, recall the evidence of His faithfulness, and respond to His enduring love with thanksgiving.

Remember the Word
Without looking at your bible, recite Psalm 107:1 from memory. Remember the progression of the verse: give thanks to the LORD → He is good → His steadfast love endures forever. Afterward compare your recitation with the biblical text and repeat any words or phrases you missed.

Recall What You Learned
In your own words, explain why Psalm 107:1 gives Christians a lasting reason for gratitude. Describe what God's "steadfast love" means, how Psalm 107 demonstrates that love through God's actions, and why His unchanging character provides a stronger foundation for thanksgiving than changing circumstances.

Final Prayer

Father, I give thanks to You because You are good and Your steadfast love endures forever. Thank You for the many ways You have demonstrated Your faithfulness through my life and, above all, for Your love revealed through Jesus Christ. Teach me to remember Your goodness when circumstances change and to trust Your character when I cannot understand Your purposes. May gratitude become the settled posture of my heart as I rest in Your steadfast love. In Jesus' name, amen.

EXALT **CHRIST**

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