

Deeply Rooted in the Discipline of Gratitude

Choosing Gratitude

Every year during the Season of Lent (40 days before Easter), I have developed the pattern of giving up something as a way to focus on what Christ gave up for us by His death on the cross. Usually I give up chocolate, sugar, or an activity (Facebook, TV, etc.). In 2022, God really laid on my heart to give up complaining for Lent. I didn't think it was a big issue for me, but God kept pointing me in the direction of my tendency to complain even about small things (I was tired, the temperature was too hot, etc.) I began to start my day each morning with "I praise God for..." and then would list three specific things. To be honest, sometimes I would try to be cheeky and say "I praise God not every day is like yesterday" but I wouldn't re-write all the details. I was focusing on praising God. I was choosing to praise to God. (This is still my habit—1 1/2 years later).

Let's be honest, when things are going well, it is easy to say thank you and praise God. But when the road of life becomes bumpy, and things aren't all sunshine and roses, it is harder to be grateful. Just recently I was studying the book of Job. We hear his name and instantly think of suffering. God allowed Satan to afflict Job. In one day Job lost all of his oxen, donkeys, sheep, servants, and his kids. Talk about a bad day. Job's response wasn't one of complaint, but of praise: **"Naked I came from my mothers womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised"** (Job 1:21).

After this, things weren't bad enough for Job, and God allowed the devil to afflict Job's body with painful sores from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. His wife told him to curse God (Job 2:9), but Job didn't. He replied, **"You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"** **In all this, Job did not sin in what he said** (Job 2:10).

I know that if I endured all that Job endured, my first response would not be to praise God. Gratitude is a choice and a learned behavior. Christian author Ruth Chou Simons writes, *"Praising God is a battle for our minds before it is an act of our hearts."* We can't control circumstances around us or people's actions and behaviors, but we can control how we respond.

Job made a choice. He could complain (his wife was encouraging him to) or He could praise the Lord. Complaining doesn't change the situation, it just turns you and everyone around you sour. Job made the decision that in the good and the bad, He would praise the Lord.

Vertical Worship has a great song entitled, "Yes I Will." The chorus says, *"Yes I will, lift You high in the lowest valley. Yes I will, bless Your name. Oh, yes I will, sing for joy when my heart is heavy, all my days, oh yes I will."* May we be like Job, who chooses praise and gratitude no matter what life throws at us!



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Flourishing in Relationships: Conversation Starters

As you gather with family and friends, use these conversation starters to talk about gratitude.

- ◆ What job does somebody do that you're thankful they do?
- ◆ What product do you use on a daily basis that you appreciate the most?
- ◆ What is something you take for granted every day that you would like to express your gratitude for?
- ◆ Which of the holiday traditions in your life mean the most to you?
- ◆ What book are you most grateful that you read this year?
- ◆ What act of kindness was done for you recently that you appreciated?
- ◆ What person (alive or dead) whom you have never met are you thankful existed?
- ◆ Which experience in the past year are you most grateful for?
- ◆ What challenging life experience seemed awful at the time you were going through it but turned out to be a positive thing and you are now grateful you went through it?

“God is in control, and therefore in EVERYTHING I can give thanks—not because of the situation but because of the One who directs and rules over it.”

Kay Arthur

Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you be deeply rooted in the discipline of gratitude: <https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *Gratitude Bible Study* by Major Kim Williams based on Daniel 3:1-30.

Blog: In this month's blog, Colonel Genevera talks about flourishing in the spiritual discipline of gratitude.

Devotional: *Live Simply—Remain Grateful* by Major Linnea Desplancke.

Craft Idea: *Gratitude Cards* by Captain Jennifer Swain.

Prayer of Adoration

When we pray to the Lord, it is easy to get so focus on the needs that we have, that we quickly move to the asking. An easy way to develop an attitude of gratitude is to begin with prayers of adoration. Richard Foster defines adoration as *“a spontaneous yearning of the heart to worship, honor, magnify and bless God.”*

Adoration is talking to God about God. Adoration is a combination of thanksgiving (what He's done for us) with praise (this is who God is).

Here is a simple way to add prayers of adoration into your daily routine. When you read a scripture that talks about the character or nature of God, write it on a sticky note, and then write a prayer of adoration, praying and declaring the nature of God back to Him. The book of Psalms is a great place to start.

Display the sticky note where you will see it, and throughout the day, read not only the verse, but pray the prayer of adoration. This will also help you with Scripture meditation and memorization. When my Fitbit tells me it is time to get my 250 steps for the hour, I stand up, and as I am walking for my steps, I replay the verse and adoration prayer in my mind.

For example Psalm 93:4 says, ***Greater than the roar of many waters—the mighty breaker of the sea—the Lord on high is majestic.*** An adore prayer from this verse could be: *Lord, I adore You for You are greater than the roar of the ocean, mightier than the powerful waves. You are on high and majestic!*

Your prayers of adoration could easily be incorporated into “Praising God from A to Z” (see page 4).



"Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever." 2 Chronicles 20:21b

Flourishing in the Word

This month we will be reading biblical examples of people who gave thanks to the Lord. As you read the passage, note the circumstances and their responses. What did they have to be grateful for? What can you learn about expressing gratitude to the Lord?

Nov 1	Genesis 8:1-9:19	Nov 16	Job 1:1-2:10, 42:1-6, 10-17
Nov 2	Genesis 15:1-6, 17:15, 18:9-15	Nov 17	Psalm 69:1-36
Nov 3	Genesis 21:1-8, 22:1-19	Nov 18	Daniel 2:1-45
Nov 4	Exodus 14:15-31	Nov 19	Daniel 6:1-28
Nov 5	Exodus 15:1-21	Nov 20	Jonah 1:1-17
Nov 6	Judges 4:1-24	Nov 21	Jonah 2:1-10
Nov 7	Judges 5:1-31	Nov 22	Matthew 14:13-21
Nov 8	1 Samuel 1:1-28	Nov 23	Matthew 15:32-39
Nov 9	1 Samuel 2:1-10	Nov 24	Luke 1:26-56
Nov 10	2 Samuel 6:1-23	Nov 25	Luke 7:36-50
Nov 11	2 Samuel 22:1-51	Nov 26	Luke 17:11-19
Nov 12	1 Kings 8:1-53	Nov 27	John 11:1-45
Nov 13	1 Chronicles 15:1-29	Nov 28	Acts 16:16-40
Nov 14	1 Chronicles 16:1-36	Nov 29	Acts 27:1-44
Nov 15	2 Chronicles 20:1-30	Nov 30	Philippians 4:4-20

Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

Anacortes, WA held a Spaghetti Dinner and basket auction and raised \$2,220.

Aurora, CO ladies went to water golf and had a great time!

Boise, ID made 5 "Welcome Home Little One" baskets for the Booth Program students who had babies this year.

Cathedral City, CA did a Bible study on *"The Full Armor of God"* by Priscilla Shirer, and then a 10-week study on a *"A Woman's Heart"* by Beth Moore.

Coos Bay, OR filled 50 backpacks full of new items for their local Foster Care Office.

Eugene, OR, is currently studying the life of Moses.

Hemet, CA started a new study, *"Breaking Free"* by Beth Moore.

Long Beach, CA Spanish group has a mental health class once a month, taught by staff of the LA County Department of Mental Health.

Longview, WA held a "Crafternoon Tea." The ladies had tea and made crafts at the same time.

Medford, OR ladies wrote to the WM in Latvia, and the ladies wrote them back and sent Latvian Chocolate.

Pendleton, OR had a cake decorating class and learned how to use different tools, and frosting techniques.

Ridgecrest, CA had a "Let Love Grow" program and had a self-guided seed planting 'bar' with all the stuff!

Roseburg, OR held a "Bonds that Last" Tea.

Praising from A-Z

“Count your blessings, name them one by one, count your blessings, see what God hath done.” We know the song, but we often don’t actually take the time to acknowledge them and say thank you to the Lord.

A great way to incorporate more praise and gratitude in your life is to praise God from A to Z. Start with the letter A and think of something that you can praise God for right now that begins with that letter. Continue on to the next letter, all the way through the alphabet. A variation of this is to think of an attribute of God from A to Z that you are thankful for. You could also do verses or Christian songs that begin with each letter of the alphabet.

You could actually do all 26 letters each day, but that could seem overwhelming and some of the more difficult letters could become frustrating. Instead of doing all 26 letters a day, perhaps start with one letter a day (November 1—A, November 2—B, etc.) That even gives a few grace days, if you fall behind. Maybe start your day with a verse or song that begins with the day’s letter, so that you can think about it through the day. During lunch, think of something in your life that you are thankful for, and then end your day with praising God for one of His attributes.

For example, for the letter A, the verse that comes to mind is Matthew 7:7, ***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*** Something that I am thankful for in my life that begins with the letter A is Apples—they are delicious and nutritious. An attribute of God that begins with A is He Always Answers prayer. Praising God from A to Z will help your gratitude grow.



“Give praise to the Lord, proclaim His name; make known among the nations what He has done.” 1 Chronicles 16:8



Ways to Develop An Attitude of Gratitude

1. Daily thank the Lord for His presence in your life.
2. End each day by saying thank you to God for at least one thing and tell Him what that one thing meant to you.
3. Express gratitude to others; make it the habit of saying “thank you,” “I am so grateful,” “you are so kind,” etc.
4. Gather Scripture verses, poems, lyrics or quotes that center your heart on thankfulness.
5. Keep a gratitude journal of the myriad of gifts that God has given you. Count your blessings! Record your praises from A to Z in your journal!
6. Repent of your tendency to not be grateful of what God has given you.
7. When you pray, begin with a prayer of adoration (see page 2). Avoid the temptation to move directly into asking.