Encountering God Through Thanksgiving
(Devotional)

SCRIPTURE

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! —Psalm 100:4 (ESV)



INTRODUCTION

Expressing gratitude and thanks to God has a miraculous way of opening and changing our hearts. Today we'll explore the discipline of thanksgiving, and encounter God in response. May you take away from our time today, timeless principles that quickly get your heart in the right place despite your season or circumstances.

DEVOTIONAL

Thanksgiving is a gift given to us by the good and loving nature of our heavenly Father. In and out of every season of life, we have a reason to give thanks because we serve a wholly faithful, good, and loving God. We serve the only King who would lay down his life for his unworthy, rebellious servants. We serve a God perfectly worthy of all the thanksgiving and praise we could possibly give.

In using the incredible gift of thanksgiving, we remind ourselves of how truly good our Father is. In thanksgiving, we experience the joy of a proper perspective and have our hearts stirred by the renewing of our minds. **Psalm 100:4** says, *"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"* When we come before God with thanksgiving, we seek the face of our Father while grounding ourselves firmly in the truth of his perfect nature. When we begin our days, prayers, worship, reading, and fellowship with a heart of thanksgiving, we live out of a place of faith and reality found in the kingdom of God come to earth.

Our God is bigger and better than our circumstances, fears, wounds, misconceptions, and past failures. There is security and joy in declaring the goodness, kindness, loving, and eternal nature of our Father. We dictate the emotions we feel by what we choose to dwell on and believe. Our minds are the battleground for our emotions, actions, and desire to dwell in communion with our good God.

Ephesians 5:20 says we are to be *"giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* And **Psalm 92:1-5** says:

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep!

Our hearts become glad when we offer continual thanksgiving. Five minutes of thanksgiving and praise has the power to change the direction of each day. It has the power to stir our hearts and make us open to and aware of God's will for us in every situation. It fills us with an atmosphere of joy and of the Spirit. And it can greatly assist us in choosing the life of communion with the Father over the pursuits of the world as temptations and situations arise. May you be empowered and filled with transcendent joy as you engage in continual thanksgiving.

Take time in guided prayer to practice thanksgiving and enjoy the fruits of a renewed mind and a heart filled with joy and truth.

PRAYER

1. Meditate on the importance of thanksgiving. Allow Scripture to stir up your desire to offer thanksgiving in every season.

"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." **Colossians 4:2**

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." **Psalm 103:2**

"Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!" **Psalm 95:1-2**

2. Take time to give thanks to God. Think about how he sent Jesus to die for you. Think about how faithful he is and always will be. Think about how good heaven will be. Give thanks for any gift he's given you.

"I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs." **Psalm 69:30-31**

"We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds." **Psalm 75:1**

3. How do you feel after taking time to engage in thanksgiving? Have your concerns, desires, and perspectives shifted? Journal about the effects of thanksgiving on your heart and mind.

WORSHIP

Listen to and meditate upon the song **"Thank You"** by Maverick City Music.

GO

We are continually commanded by Scripture to remember the deeds of our God. When the world comes crashing down around us, it's hard sometimes to remember how faithful God has been and will be. It's easy to get so wrapped up in the fleeting cares and problems of this life and forget how perfect and never-ending the next life will be. **Psalm 103:2** says, *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."* May you be quick to remember the benefits of restored relationship with your heavenly Father today as you take time to bless and thank the Lord for all the wonderful things he's given you.

Extended Reading: **Deuteronomy 8** or watch **The Bible Project's video on Deuteronomy**.