Field Guide and Leader Guide 11.22.26

Synopsis

One hard thing can take up so much room that it's the first thing we remember about an otherwise good day. And some things are heavier than a bad day. Grief, financial pressure, or the exhaustion of caring for someone you love can shape how you see everything else. In *Count Your Blessings*, Johnson Oatman Jr. gives us something simple to do when life feels that way. Name your blessings one by one and see what God has done.

David does the same thing in Psalm 103. He speaks to his own soul: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Then he starts naming them. God forgives, redeems, and crowns us with steadfast love and mercy. He shows compassion like a father who knows how fragile his children are. Gratitude begins when we slow down long enough to remember what God has done and thank Him for it.

Questions

1. Think about a time when one hard thing seemed to color your whole day or week. What took up most of your attention? What good was easy to miss?
    - What helped you notice the good in the middle of what you were carrying?
    - What would it sound like to bring both the hard thing and the good thing to God in the same prayer?
2. Read Psalm 103:1–14. Which of the things David remembers about God do you most need to hear right now? Why?
    - What do you notice about the way God responds to our sin and weakness in verses 8–14?
    - Where have you seen that part of God's character in your own life?
3. Think about what God has given you in Christ, what He's brought you through, who He's put in your life, what He provides each day, and what He's promised for your future. What's one specific blessing you can name and thank Him for this week?
    - If you turned that blessing into a one-sentence prayer of thanks, what would you say?
    - When in your normal routine could you pause and name one blessing each day this week?

Scripture References: Psalm 103:1–14 (ESV)

Conclusion

Maybe this has been a hard year. Someone you love is gone. A prayer is still unanswered. You're carrying something you wish God would take away. You can tell Him exactly how hard it is. And in that same prayer, you can thank Him for the friend who called, the strength He gave you to get through another day, or the mercy He's shown you in Jesus.

This week, take a few minutes to do what David did. Speak to your own soul. Start with one thing God has done and thank Him for it by name. When you have trouble finding words, start here: Through Jesus Christ, God has forgiven your sins. Take a moment to remember what that means for you today.