The Power of Thanksgiving: A Future with God In It
The Power of Thanksgiving
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The Power of Thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6–7 NLT
Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

1. Thanksgiving in prayer moves us from worry to hope to peace.

Matthew 6:7–11 NLT
When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Pray like this: "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, …"

Matthew 6:25–34 NLT
That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?
And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so

wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?
So don't worry about these things, saying, "What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?" These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.
So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Colossians 4:2 NLT
Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

2. Thanksgiving in worship is how we approach the Father.

Psalm 100 NLT
Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

Hebrews 13:15–16 NLT
Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.

Psalm 95:2–5 NLT
Let us come to him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to him. For the Lord is a great God, a great King above all gods. He holds in his hands the depths of the earth and the mightiest mountains. The sea belongs to him, for he made it. His hands formed the dry land, too.

2 Chronicles 20:21–22 NLT
After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: “Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!” At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves.

3. Thanksgiving in relationships changes how we love the people around us.

Colossians 3:14–17 NLT
Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.
Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Philippians 1:3–7 NLT
Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart.

Small Group Guide: The Power of Thanksgiving

Opening Question
What is something small that you are thankful for this week?

A Future with God in It
None of us ever *decides* to worry, but before we know it, tomorrow or another uncertain circumstance starts playing in our heads, usually in the form of the worst-case scenario. In this week's message, Pastor Jimmy framed worry as a prediction of the future with God left out.
The antidote to worry, and inviting God in to our present and our future, is *thanksgiving.* When we remember what He has done, our eyes lift, and we begin to see a future that has God in it. Paul shows us the way in Philippians 4:6–7. Bring everything to God, thank Him for all He has done, and His peace will guard our hearts and minds.
We bring everything to God in *prayer.* Jesus tells us to start with who the Father is, then hand over what we need, knowing He already knows. Look at the birds and the flowers, Jesus says, and then remember how much more the Father cares for you (Matthew 6:25–34).
Worship carries it further. Psalm 100 has us walking into God's presence with thanksgiving. Praise reminds us who God is, and thanksgiving is our response to what He has done. Either way, we end up looking at the Father instead of at our need. In 2 Chronicles 20:21–22, the singers marched out ahead of the army, and God went to work as they began to sing.
Then, thanksgiving changes how we treat each other. Paul ties our whole life together in thankfulness in Colossians 3:14–17.
This week, particularly heading into the Thanksgiving holiday, try these things. Praise God, thanking Him for specific things He has done. Bring to Him a need you have, surrendering it fully to Him. What are you thankful for in someone near you? Think about your spouse, kids, friend, or coworker, and share your appreciation with them.

For Discussion

1. Read Philippians 4:6–7 out loud. What stands out to you in the problem, the pattern, and the promise?
2. Jesus points to the birds and the flowers and then to us. When you remember how the Father cares for them, how does that change the way you see the thing you're facing?
3. In 2 Chronicles 20, God acted as the singers began to sing, before the battle was won. What would it look like to give thanks ahead of an answer you're still waiting on?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise you for who You are. Thank you for all of the evidence of your faithfulness in our lives. We look back at what you have done, how you have cared for and provided for us, and we look to the future with confidence, knowing You are there, too. Help us to live with grateful hearts as ones who express our thankfulness to You and those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.