



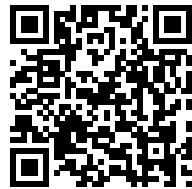
Thankful Living

STUDY GUIDE

**TRUTH
FORLIFE**

THIS STUDY GUIDE

contains seven sessions that are aimed to help you grow in Christian thankfulness as you intently read or listen to the sermons from the series *Thankful Living* by Alistair Begg. In the course of the study, you'll engage with key Scriptures on thanksgiving from the Old and New Testaments. The content for each session accompanies a particular sermon Alistair preached on the subject.



FIND ALL 7 MESSAGES AT
[TFL.ORG/THANKFUL-LIVING](https://www.tfl.org/thankful-living).

Thankful Living: Study Guide
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The following description of the *Thankful Living* sermon series provides a good summary of the purpose for this study:

“God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.” This is a call and response that is familiar to many of us, but how often do we stop to consider what it really means that God is good even when our circumstances are difficult? Our lives should reflect our trust in the character of God as our actions and attitudes are characterized by genuine thankfulness.

In this series of Thanksgiving holiday messages, Alistair Begg examines what it means to be truly thankful. It is more than keeping lists of the good things that we enjoy, and it can't be produced by our own effort or resolve. Genuine thankfulness flows from a heart that has found contentment by resting in the providence of God. It is produced by the Spirit of God as we respond with transformed minds, wills, and hearts to the unchanging goodness of our Father, who works in all circumstances to accomplish His will for our good.

Each session includes four parts:

- 1) Getting Started:** a brief summary statement or commentary on the sermon, followed by an introductory question
- 2) Key Scriptures:** important Bible verses that were referenced in the sermon and are flagged for further meditation and memorization
- 3) Going Deeper:** questions to help you process the main ideas of the sermon
- 4) Giving Praise:** a poem or hymn that can be committed to memory, incorporated in worship, and used as the basis for prayer about what you have learned and considered



SESSION ONE

“Contentment” | Psalm 131:1-3; Philippians 4:11-12

Getting Started

Jeremiah Burroughs, a seventeenth-century Puritan, wrote a book titled *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*. Indeed, true contentment is both rare and valuable. Swept away on the tides of covetousness, men and women seldom enjoy the peace that contentment brings.

How might you know whether or not someone is content?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned
in whatever situation I am to be content.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the
things that are revealed belong to us and to our children
forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

DEUTERONOMY 29:29

Going Deeper

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:17. What warnings and instructions does this passage contain, and how do they teach us contentment?

2. Contentment is learned (Phil. 4:11). What means does God use to train His people in contentment?

3. How does pride foster a spirit of discontentment?

4. The psalmist “calmed and quieted” his soul before the Lord (Ps. 131:2). What factors cause your discontentment, and how might adopting the psalmist’s posture help you?

5. In Philippians 4, Paul distinguishes between being content *with* something and being content *in* something. What is the difference?

6. Read Deuteronomy 29:29, Romans 12:2, and 1 Corinthians 13:12. How does a right view of God help us learn to be content? Which of His attributes are particularly helpful to us in fostering contentment?

GIVING PRAISE

And shall I pray Thee change Thy will, my Father,
 Until it be according unto mine?
 But no, Lord, no, that never shall be; rather,
I pray Thee, blend my human will with Thine.

I pray Thee, hush the hurrying, eager longing;
I pray Thee, soothe the pangs of keen desire;
 See in my quiet places wishes thronging;
Forbid them, Lord; purge, though it be with fire.

And work in me to will and do Thy pleasure;
 Let all within me, peaceful, reconciled,
Tarry, content my Well-beloved's leisure—
 At last, at last, even as a weaned child.

“EVEN AS A WEANED CHILD”

BY AMY CARMICHAEL

SESSION TWO

“The Goodness of God” | James 1:17-18

Getting Started

God’s goodness is unlike anything inherent to the human experience. He overflows with generosity, consistently extending it beyond what the recipients deserve.

Reflect on a time recently when someone has treated you generously. What happened, and what made it meaningful?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

JAMES 1:17

“The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.”

PSALM 145:8-9

Going Deeper

1. What context does James 1:13–16 provide for the teachings on God’s goodness in verses 17–18?

2. God always gives the right gifts at the right time (James 1:17). What does this truth reveal about God’s nature and, by contrast, our own?

3. When we approach God the Father, we will never find Him unaware, surprised, unable, or unavailable. How has this fact proven true in your experience?

4. How is God’s goodness toward believers different from His general goodness toward the world (James 1:18)?

5. How does God's goodness spur your evangelism and intensify your prayers?

6. Concerning God's unchanging nature, A. W. Pink wrote that God "cannot change for the better, for He is already perfect; being perfect, He cannot change for the worse."¹ What comfort does this truth provide the believer?

GIVING PRAISE

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

"COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS"

BY JOHNSON OATMAN, JR.

¹ A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in the Godhead* (Chicago: Moody, 1975), 35.

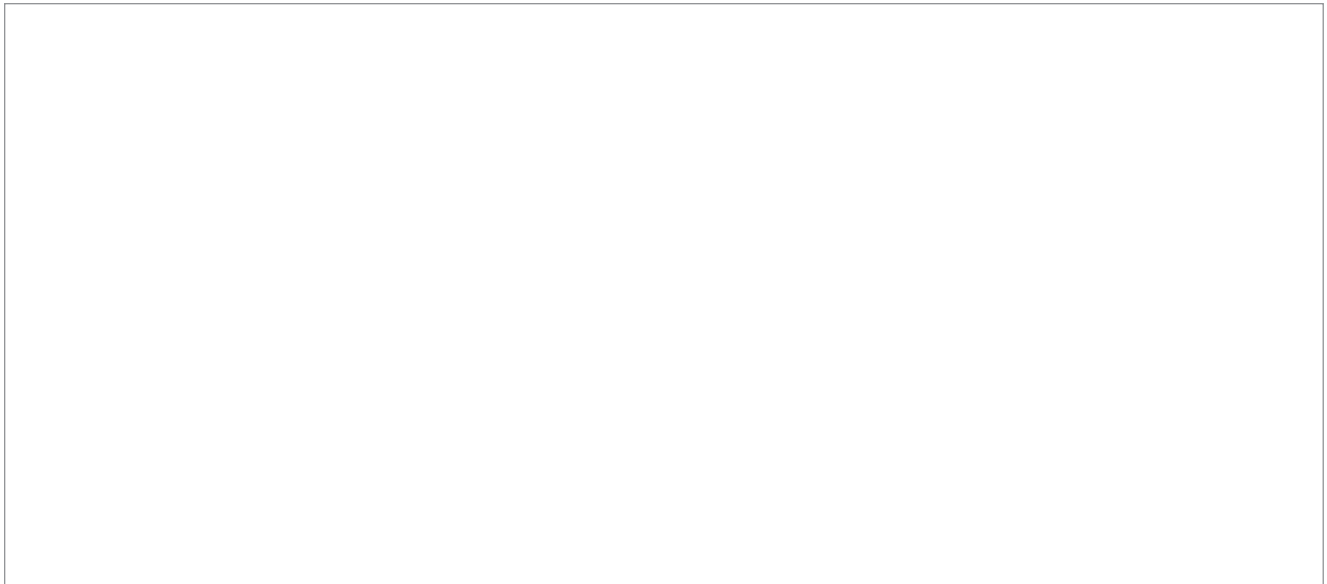
SESSION THREE

“A Psalm for Giving Thanks” | Psalm 100:1-5

Getting Started

A thankful heart is a distinguishing mark of the Christian. Conversely, ingratitude is a mark of unbelief. Believers, of all people, have sufficient reason for giving thanks.

Would others have reason to believe that you are a Christian based on your rhythms and routines of praise, gratitude, and service to the Lord?



KEY SCRIPTURES

“The LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

PSALM 100:5

“The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”

EXODUS 34:6

Going Deeper

1. What actions does the psalmist call us to in Psalm 100?

2. How do both joyful worship and thankful praise contribute to our growth in godliness?

3. The foundation for thanksgiving is in what we know (Ps. 100:3). Why is a right view of God crucial to proper thanksgiving, worship, and praise?

4. What reasons do you have to be thankful?

5. Commenting on Psalm 100, Alistair says, “The expressions of gratitude that come are tied neither to the psalmist’s circumstances nor to his feelings.” What danger does it pose when we root our relationship with God in anything other than His character?

6. Compare Isaiah 1:12 with Psalm 100:4, and explain what these verses tell us about how we should we approach God in praise.

GIVING PRAISE

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell.
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

“ALL PEOPLE THAT ON EARTH DO DWELL”

BY WILLIAM KETHE

SESSION FOUR

“Overflowing with Thankfulness – Part One” | Colossians 1:3–14; 2:6

Getting Started

God-given gratitude produces at least four effects in Christians: it turns our gaze away from ourselves and our circumstances, defends us against the devil’s schemes, protects us from pride, and allows us to rest in the unfolding of God’s loving purposes.

Of the four effects of Christian gratitude listed above, which has been most obvious in your life?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

COLOSSIANS 2:6–7

“Understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

2 TIMOTHY 3:1–5

Going Deeper

1. Paul mentions thankfulness numerous times in Colossians (1:12; 2:7; 3:15-17; 4:2). Based on these passages, what can we learn about the thankfulness that ought to mark the Christian?

2. In what sense are ingratitude, bitterness, grumbling, etc., incongruent with the Christian life (Col. 3:1-17)?

3. What are a few things for which only Christians can be grateful?

4. On what basis can believers be thankful in hardship?

5. How should a life that is “abounding in thanksgiving” look?

6. What is the difference between gratitude that begins with the benefits we accrue and that which starts with God Himself?

GIVING PRAISE

Why should I feel discouraged,
Why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely
And long for heav'n and home
 When Jesus is my portion?
 My constant Friend is He;
 His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

“HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW”

BY CIVILLA D. MARTIN

SESSION FIVE

“Overflowing with Thankfulness – Part Two” | Exodus 35:1–35

Getting Started

One way we express thankfulness is in our generous giving to the Lord’s work. Exodus 35, which records the contributions made to the construction of the tabernacle, provides an Old Testament picture of Israel’s overflowing generosity in response to God’s grace.

How does the Gospel make us generous?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Take from among you a contribution to the LORD. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the LORD’s contribution: gold, silver, and bronze.”

EXODUS 35:5

“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.”

PROVERBS 11:24

Going Deeper

1. Moses instructed Israel to contribute “from among” what they possessed to the work of the tabernacle (Ex. 35:5). What does this verse teach us about what God expects of His people?

2. What is the context surrounding Exodus 35, and how does it contribute to our understanding of the passage’s events?

3. What has God given you that you may use for His kingdom purposes?

4. Alistair reminds us that we give generously because “God does not administer His grace in percentages.” How has God proven gracious to you? How might you express thankfulness in return?

5. What principle for generosity does Proverbs 11:24 provide? What matters in your life (e.g., personal, relational, professional) might you need to reorient?

6. What does it mean to give generously?

7. What might it look like for you (and your church) to overflow in generosity? How might that impact your community?

GIVING PRAISE

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart; O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

"COME, THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING"

BY ROBERT ROBINSON

SESSION SIX

“Thankfulness: A Mark of Grace” | 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Getting Started

In his 1863 proclamation appointing a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer, Abraham Lincoln, president during the American Civil War, addressed the American people as follows: “We have forgotten God. ... Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.” Regrettably, the same ingratitude marks the lives of many Christians.

What hinders or prevents thankfulness?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

“We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

ROMANS 8:28

Going Deeper

1. What is the Bible's answer to the question "Why should God's people be thankful?"
2. Why does the Christian worldview necessarily produce thankfulness?
3. Scripture makes it clear that we can give thanks in all circumstances. Indeed, Paul says that it "is the will of God in Christ Jesus" for us to do so. When is it hardest for you to obey that command?
4. How do rejoicing and prayer cultivate thankfulness (1 Thess. 5:16-17)?

5. Alistair says, “The ultimate goodness to which [God] works is to conform us to the image of His Son and to prepare us for the day when we will stand with Him in glory.” What encouragement does God’s overarching purpose for us provide?

6. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, what are some of the defining features of God’s people?

7. How might a Christian’s thankfulness be a powerful tool for evangelism—a display of the Gospel to someone who has yet to believe?

GIVING PRAISE

We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God’s almighty hand.
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine
And soft, refreshing rain.

He only is the Maker
Of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star;
The winds and waves obey Him,
By Him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, His children,
He gives our daily bread.

**“WE PLOUGH THE FIELDS AND
SCATTER”**

**BY MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS,
TRANS. JANE M. CAMPBELL**

SESSION SEVEN

“And Be Thankful” | Colossians 3:12–17

Getting Started

The New Testament calls both individual Christians and entire church communities to give thanks. Writing to the Colossian Christians, Paul reminded them to be thankful because of what God had done for them in Jesus Christ.

What are some features of a thankful church community?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

COLOSSIANS 3:15

“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

ROMANS 13:14

Going Deeper

1. How should our identity as God's chosen, holy, and beloved people (Col. 3:12) shape our living?

2. How does the church, comprised of individuals who are different from one another, make us more like Jesus?

3. What does it mean to "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17)?

4. What is the relationship between our salvation in Christ and our thankfulness (Col. 1:12)?

5. How is Christian gratitude different from what Jonathan Edwards calls “natural gratitude,”² or thankfulness that springs from circumstances rather than God Himself?

6. As you conclude this study, prayerfully consider how you might increase your thankfulness. Write a few reflections below. Consider sharing these with another believer who can help you grow in gratitude.

GIVING PRAISE

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

“PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW”

BY THOMAS KEN

² *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), 1:276.

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