

These words from II Corinthians are found within the context of Paul's words of encouragement to the church at Corinth to participate in the offering that was being received for their brothers and sisters living under persecution in Jerusalem. In chapter 8, Paul writes, "Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality."

In verse 7, Paul addresses the proper attitude that should accompany our giving. What does this say about the way we should offer our thanks to God? How might you cultivate in your life a sensitivity to giving thanks to God for all the blessings you have received?

Verse 11 says, "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous." What do you think Paul means by this? How is our generosity a reflection of our thankfulness?

GPS for Families

GrowPrayStudy.org/family

This Thanksgiving, teach your family to be grateful every day, not just one day a year. Here's why:

- Gratitude reminds kids that they did not get here on their own. This reminds them that we all need others, and it helps keep their egos in check.
- Gratitude helps kids learn to be content. When they are reminded that they do have things to be grateful for, they learn to want less and be content with what they have.
- Gratitude strengthens relationships. When someone searches and finds reasons to show gratitude for others, it connects them in new ways. And others like to be around people who appreciate them.
- Gratitude keeps us humble and able to submit to authority. Reminding kids what others have done for them, leads them to humility. When we have humble spirits, we can easily submit to God's will for our lives.

The more we have, the more we take for granted. Scarcity leads to appreciation of the important things in our lives. Here's how:

- Talk to your kids regularly about the things you are grateful for. Start a gratitude journal. Pick a pretty book or journal to leave out on the table, and let all family members draw or write what they are thankful for at any time. You can even let guests add to it as well.
- Remind your kids that everything comes from God. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the ability to work and play and live all comes from our creator. Not because we deserve them, but because He loves us so much.



GROW · PRAY · STUDY
RESOURCES FOR GROWING DISCIPLES

ZOE MINISTRY

The Empowerment Project with Rev. Greg Jenks, the head of Zoe Ministry, Epiphany Mujawamana, director of the Empowerment Project in Rwanda and Vincent Habimana

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 35:1-6

A number of years ago we felt that God was calling us to ministry in Africa. We prayed, searched, prayed and searched some more, and then God led us to ZOE Ministry and Rev. Jenks. Since that partnership began, we have never looked back, becoming the largest partner of this young mission. We began first in a small way with a feeding program in Zimbabwe. This grew and grew. More recently, a family in our church helped us build a secondary school in Rwanda that will educate more than 300 educators each year. It will make an exponential difference. Then two years ago, we made the decision to step up in a visionary way to a quarter of a million dollar commitment to the empowerment of 1,000 Rwandan orphans. I got to go to Zimbabwe some years ago on a medical mission and helped unload food for the 1,000 kids there. And two summers ago, I got to go to Rwanda with a team from our church and saw the amazing work of the Empowerment Project led by Greg and Epiphany. Vincent is a partner from Rwanda in that program. It is a faith-growing, life-changing, even country-changing program, as children abandoned because of genocide, AIDs and poverty receive a chance for a full, meaningful life. I can't tell you how impressed I was.

Today is a great day to be in church. You will receive the opportunity to celebrate firsthand what God is doing in Rwanda through you. Giving Hope is truly giving hope.

— Rev. Mike Ramsdell

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord, I celebrate your presence in my life and your grace at work in this world. Fill my heart with a sense of gratitude for the gifts you share with me each day. As I offer to you my thanks, enable me, Lord, to see myself as a living sacrifice, ready and willing to serve you and your kingdom in your world. As you have blessed me, Lord, help me this day and every day to be a blessing to others. AMEN.

In the fall of 1941, federal legislation established the fourth Thursday of November as the official date for the Thanksgiving holiday. Two weeks later, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States officially entered World War II. In his Thanksgiving proclamation that year, President Roosevelt wrote, "We are grateful to the Father of us all for the innumerable daily manifestations of His beneficent mercy in affairs both public and private, for the bounties of the harvest, for opportunities to labor and to serve, and for the continuation of those homely joys and satisfactions which enrich our lives."

We begin our Thanksgiving week emphasis with these words of gratitude and celebration from Psalm 100. As you prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, what are some of the things you are thankful for?

In what ways have you seen the promise of verse 5 fulfilled in your life?

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Have you ever felt the need to complain? Have you ever had a bad day turn into a bad week? Have you ever felt like for everything that went right, two things ended up going wrong? If you answered "yes" to any of those questions, you are in good company. The Apostle Paul writes this letter to the church at Philippi from prison. Like all of us, he knew what it was like to endure difficult circumstances. Still, he writes, "Rejoice in the Lord always; I will say it again, rejoice!"

Can you think of someone who is a living example of the words that Paul writes in verse 4? What has their example taught you about what it means to "rejoice in the Lord always"?

Are you anxious about anything today? Present it to God, and invite God's peace into your heart and life.

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For over 40 years Moses had served as the spiritual leader of God's people. With God's help, he had delivered them from the hands of their Egyptian captors and had shepherded them through their difficult wandering in the wilderness. On the brink of their triumphal entry into the Promised Land, the book of Deuteronomy shares Moses' final instructions to the Israelites.

In these verses, we see a strong connection between two essential practices of our faith. Moses instructs the people to present offerings and thanks to God, but he is careful in communicating that they should do this to remember all that God had done on their behalf. Giving thanks helps us remember and celebrate all that God has done.

As you gather with family and friends to offer thanks, what do you need to be reminded of this week?

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Over the course of his ministry, Jesus healed many individuals, and He seemed to perform each miracle in a unique way. Some were healed instantaneously. Others, like the 10 lepers in the story, received their healing "as they went." For some, He gave specific instructions to not tell anyone what He had done for them. Others were told to show themselves to the priests to offer their thanks to God for what had happened. In our story today, 10 were healed. One returned to Jesus to share his thanks.

Today, as you gather with family and friends for a time of celebration and thanksgiving, may you do so with the example of the one who returned to offer thanks fresh on your heart and mind.

In what ways have you experienced a "healing" in your life? Can you see evidence of that work in your life today?

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