
DAY 1: WORDS OF THANKS

Read: [Psalm 19:1-6](#)

Several times in the past few year I have arrived at work – to a dark and quiet office – to find a card on my desk from different people about different things: a thank you for helping out with a big task, a “great job” note, an unexpected word of encouragement. It has happened with such regularity that it has become my favorite way to start the day. Now, before I turn on the lights, I scan my desk each morning to see if there’s a surprise awaiting me. That sounds silly, I recognize, but there’s just something refreshing about a word of thanks or praise or love that’s like a new breeze on my face.

Perhaps we savor words of thanks and praise and love because we are made to express them. We are wired to thank God. We are built to praise Him (Romans 1:20). The Bible says that trait isn’t singular to us. All of Creation is made to thank and praise and love Him. All of Creation has an awareness and an inherent awe for our Creator and Provider.

In Psalm 19:1-6, the heavens declare His glory. The skies proclaim the height of His love. They pour forth speech. Their voice goes out into all the earth. There is a reason for that; our God is so beyond our comprehension, so holy, so beyond our words that even nature joins us in our efforts and responds in praise.

The last sunrise you caught, where the sky went from grey to orange to brilliant in a matter of minutes, was the heavens’ “thank you” card to God. The same should happen in our own hearts; our praise for God should live there, a continual hum of adoration and thanksgiving. We were made for it. The chaos of everyday life can diminish our response to Him. It can cause our affection to dull and gather dust, but we were made for greater praise, especially as we rediscover the height of His love.

Reflect:

- Have you praised God for His gifts to you? Take a moment to thank Him for His goodness and blessings in your life.
- Complaining is the opposite of praise. Today, consciously replace any negative thoughts with praise of God’s good and sovereign care in your life.

DAY 2: FOCUS DETERMINES DIRECTION

Read: [John 1:29](#)

Our focus determines our direction. For example, how many times have you been driving a car, taken your eyes off the road for a minute, and began to drift towards the left or the right? In defensive driving classes, they teach you to keep your car centered by fixing your gaze straight ahead as far down the road as possible. When our gaze is fixed on something, our course will follow. Life works the same way. What we focus on becomes the new direction of our decisions.

The focus of the Jewish crowd in John 1 changed the moment Jesus stepped forward to be baptized by John. The announcement, "Look, the Lamb of God," carried the weight of a lengthy anticipation. For thousands of years, the Jewish people had been waiting for a Messiah, a savior that could restore God's kingdom and free them from oppression. At this point, John didn't know everything about Jesus' upcoming ministry. He did not know much about Jesus' eventual death and resurrection, but he knew Jesus was worth his immediate focus. Finally, Jesus was there. Finally, God had fulfilled His promise and would remove the sins of the whole world.

So, what are you looking at? Are your circumstances so daunting that they have caused you to take your eyes off God? John's message to Israel on that day 2,000 years ago is the same for us on this day: Look! He is here, the one who will take away our sin. Jesus, the one we have been waiting on the one who will save us. God Himself came to earth. He wants to fix what is broken and heal what is sick. Finally, He is here. No more drifting or waiting. Look, He is here!

Reflect:

- What are some practical ways to keep our focus on God and His promises?
- Is there anything in your life that has your worried, tired, or focusing on the wrong things? Are you ready to change your focus?

DAY 3: GOD CAN BE TRUSTED

Read: [Psalm 16](#)

Trust makes or breaks relationships. You can't see it or touch it, but it's obvious whether or not it exists between two people. Trust will determine the success or failure of all of our relationships: with our friends, spouses, children, and even with God. All of our behaviors and attitudes will be governed by whether or not we trust God's character.

There's something unique about the Psalms because we learn about God by someone's response to him. Someone must trust God to be able to write Psalm 16: to ask him to keep him safe, to choose God over all else in the world, to affirm that the Lord will be faithful to His promises.

This affirmation saturates Psalm 16: God is better than anything else. The writer admits there's another way to live: you can seek after other gods, including seeking after good things, but if we seek things and not God himself, our sorrow will multiply.

We do not need more. We need Him. More things won't satisfy us: not more money, prestige, or friends. Only God will satisfy us for the rest of our lives. Everything else is temporary. Everything else will leave us wanting. He alone will satisfy our souls. Our contentment is grounded in who God is and not what He can give us.

We must, like the psalmist, realize, "I have no good apart from [God]." We did not earn our gifts or abilities or even our blessings. We have no good apart from the giver of every good and perfect gift. The real gift is the Giver himself, our relationship with God.

Trust God and His goodness above all else. Trust him to satisfy for now and eternity.

Reflect:

- Sometimes your heart needs to be reminded of truth by declaring it with your own voice. Read Psalm 16 aloud.
- Were there any phrases you said that you didn't believe? Pray over those verses specifically. Ask God to make the words that pass through your lips true in your heart.

DAY 4: GOD IS GREATER

Read: [Psalm 25](#)

Last fall I went through a zip line course in Tennessee. I never thought that I was afraid of heights, but when I was 90 feet up in the air, flying through the air over the mountains, I quickly realized that I am (just a little). I knew that I was safely connected to the wires and that they were more than strong enough to hold me, but I didn't focus on any of that at the time. All that raced through my mind was how I was going to fall. I let my thoughts get carried away, and it made me more afraid than I needed to be.

The same is true when it comes to our relationship with God. We need to be cautious about what we think, especially when we are going through rough seasons or when we feel lonely and afflicted. It's tempting to focus on how deep your sin runs or how hopeless your circumstances are, but, when all we think about is our sin, it starts to appear to have more power over us than it actually does, and we are tempted to lose hope.

David shows us how to fight this battle in Psalm 25. Although he is experiencing deep affliction, he says in verse 5 that he still hopes in God all day long. He also says in verse 15 that his "eyes are ever on the Lord." In order to hope in God all day long, we have to look to Him all day long. When we fill our minds with thoughts about God, our souls are filled with hope and peace. Seeing God's value makes sin seem less desirable and circumstances less devastating. Remember, God's not focusing on your sin and He's in control of every situation, so you don't need to worry. Keep your focus on Him, and trust Him to be your strength and your song of joy in this season.

Reflect:

- What does your thought life reveal you are focusing on?
- Do you tend to focus more on your circumstances, or your savior?

DAY 5: NO OTHER NAME

Read: [Acts 4:12](#)

Anyone who went to church three times a week and served in every area of the church certainly does enough, right? I had never committed a serious crime. Did I mention that sometimes I even helped in the nursery at church? People around me described themselves as Christian, so I figured I probably was, too.

Something still seemed to be missing. I was the Pastor's son, but I was still struggling with sin. Still struggling with anger. Still struggling with issues. One year, as a high school student, I decided to take the Easter season seriously. I would commit to spending time with God, read a passage in the Bible, pray, and write down thoughts God was sharing.

The first day I stumbled to my big blue cozy chair (that I miss to this day) to start my daily Bible reading, prayer, and journaling. As I started writing, my mind turned quickly to the issues in my life. I wasn't who people thought was. I wasn't who I wanted to be. My prayers were raw and honest, almost begging the Lord, "Please fix me and change my heart."

The weeks passed by quickly and something interesting happened. Even though I wasn't immediately changed on day one, I could definitely feel my heart changing. I began to understand who I am in Christ. I felt comforted, as though Someone was actually hearing my prayers.

It began to occur to me, "What if following Christ was all about His goodness, not mine?" One morning all alone in my big blue cozy chair I prayed, "Jesus, I need you. I want you for real. I want to change for real. Please be the center of my life." He did. Acts 4:12 says God has given no other name but Jesus by which we must be saved. Actions, self-discipline, and good habits do not save us. Jesus does.

If you've been working overtime to be "good enough," would you consider calling on the One Name, Jesus Christ, who loved you enough to die for you?

Reflect:

- Can you remember a specific time you gave your life to Jesus? If so, thank God for saving you. If you can't remember a time, today could be the day that changes everything for you. Take the time to ask Jesus to forgive your sins and be Lord of your life.
- Is there a difficult or struggle in your life right now that you need to turn over to Jesus?

DAY 6: WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION?

Read: [Psalm 103](#)

Psalm 103 doesn't ask us to bless God with our actions or our mouth. It takes us to the source of our words and actions by urging us to express an inner attitude of blessing. God doesn't want your begrudging obedience. He wants your heart. Our actions, however "good" and religious, don't matter until our hearts worship His character, and until we are motivated by love for God.

So, how do we bless God with our inner being? Like the psalmist, we rejoice in His character and His faithfulness. He has an impressive track record: forgiving, healing, redeeming, satisfying, and renewing His people.

Notice that we are not told to work harder to earn God's love and approval. His attitude towards us is wholly dependent upon his character. He even removes our transgressions for us so that nothing separates us from Him. He remembers that we are like dust, that our lives are as fleeting as the grass, but this doesn't surprise God or anger Him. He knows we are weak and imperfect, and that doesn't stop His unending love. He doesn't simply ignore our inabilities; He knows them and cares for us just the same. We are only told to respond by fearing Him, remembering His character, and blessing Him.

Reflect:

- What aspect of God's character in this passage is most comforting to you?
- How does it propel you to bless Him with all that is within you?

DAY 7: JESUS IS OUR ANSWER

Read: [1 Chronicles 29](#)

Where is our rest in trial? Where is strength to fulfill our purpose? Where is our hope for salvation? Where is our provision? Where do we find victory? These questions aren't easy, but the answer is simple. We find everything we need in Jesus.

Life has struggles and difficulties, but we have the answer. Look at David's words in 1 Chronicles 29:11-13. God is "head over all." He is in control of all of our troubles, sicknesses, needs, and worries. We can trust in his power.

Do you have trouble believing you are forgiven or could be? Is there someone in your life who seems beyond God's reach? "Everything in heaven and earth" belongs to God. He has control over our lives and salvation. Are you faced with financial pressures? "Wealth and honor come from [our God]." He has access to everything we need.

Has God asked you to do something that seems too hard? He holds "strength and power...to give strength to all." This strength is not only available in trials, but in living out His purpose for our lives.

In every situation and to every question, we have an answer. Jesus is our answer. The victory is His!

Reflect:

- When you face difficulty, do you look at what you can't do or what God can do?
- Knowing God's power and strength are available to you, what is your next step in your relationship with Him?
- Look around you. What do you see in creation that shouts, "Glory to God"?