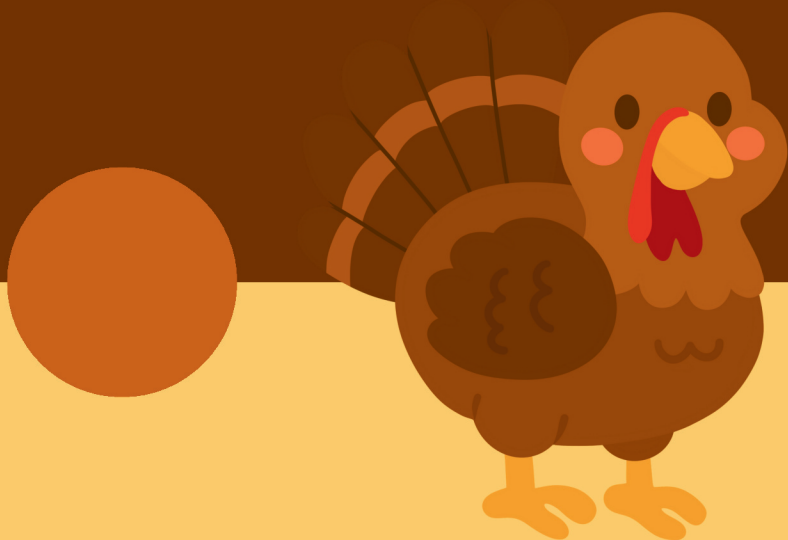


CORNERSTONE BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP



**14 DAYS OF
THANKFUL
THANKFUL
THANKFUL**

KIDS / FAMILIES

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Day 14

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good—Abstain from every form of evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22



These verses are from the very first letter we have in the Bible that was written by the Apostle Paul. He wrote the letter to a church he had started in a city called Thessalonica in Greece. He wanted to tell his friends there how followers of Jesus are supposed to act. Paul tells his friends that when we are thankful, it helps us treat people in kind ways. When I'm thankful that God is patient when I do things wrong, it helps me be patient when other people mess up. Paul says that being thankful is just as important as being kind and doing good things. Being kind and being thankful are all parts of what it means to live a life that looks like Jesus' life, which is what being a Christian is.

Question:

Who is someone you have trouble being kind to? How could being thankful help you to be kind to them?

Pray for yourself:

God, I thank you for all the ways that You are patient with me. Help me be patient with people today when they do things that frustrate me, as I remember how kind You are to me.

Pray for Others:

Lord, help me to notice people today who need a little extra love and kindness. Open my eyes to people's needs and how I can show your love.

Optional Activity:

Cut leaves out of construction paper. On one side write people you know and on the other side write things about them you are thankful for. Hang the leaves where you can see them as a reminder to pray for the people.



DAY 2

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all Your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.' The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!" And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon dry land.

Jonah 2:1-10

You may have heard today's story before, but you may not have thought of it as a story about someone being thankful. Jonah was a prophet of God, which meant that God spoke to him and gave him messages to give to people. One particular job God gave Jonah was to go to the wicked people of Ninevah and tell them God wanted them to turn from their sin and He would forgive them. But Jonah didn't want God to forgive the people of Ninevah. They were his enemies. So Jonah tried to run away on a ship so he wouldn't have to do the job. God sent a storm because of Jonah's disobedience. He was trying to get Jonah back on the right track. Jonah told the men on the boat to throw him overboard, and the storm would stop. When they threw him over, the storm stopped! But no, Jonah was in the sea and was going to drown. God sent a giant fish to rescue him. The verses we read are a prayer that Jonah said while he was inside the fish. Jonah was thanking God for saving him. Think of what it would be like to be in a fish. It would be so dark you couldn't see anything, and it would stink. It would be terrifying. But Jonah was so thankful that he was saying wonderful things about God.

Question:

What is a “stinky” situation that you have going on right now? Sometimes it’s hard to see the good parts of bad situations, but if we look really hard, there’s usually something we can find to be thankful for. Are there any good parts of your situation you can find to be thankful for?

Pray for Yourself:

Mighty God, I thank You for taking care of me in the middle of my hard situation. Help me see the good ways You are using hard things to help rescue me like You did Jonah.

Pray for Others:

Lord, I pray for a friend today who is in a dark situation that seems like the inside of a fish. Help them to feel that You are with them today.

Optional Activity:

Jonah wasn’t thankful for God’s forgiveness for Nineveh. Who is someone I see as an enemy? What is a kind thing I could do for them, to show God’s love today?

Ideas: make something for them, write them a card, invite them to play sometime, sit with them at school or church



"When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, 'O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?' The king answered and said, 'The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.' Then they answered and said before the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.'"
Daniel 6: 10-13

Today our verses are about another well-known story from the Bible, the story of Daniel in the lion's den. The king where Daniel lived had made a crazy law saying people couldn't pray to anyone but him. If they did, they would be thrown into a pit full of lions. What do you think Daniel did when he heard about the new law? He could have panicked. He could have tried to hide when he prayed so no one would see him. He could have decided to stop praying altogether, after all, if he did, he would be killed! That might sound reasonable. But he didn't do any of those things. He went and prayed in front of his window, exactly like he always had. Praying was so important to Daniel that he wouldn't let anything stop him from spending time with God. Did you notice what kind of prayer he prayed? He prayed a prayer of thanks to God! Isn't it amazing that even when Daniel got some horrible news, he didn't grumble or complain—he gave thanks to God even in bad circumstances. God wants his people to be thankful no matter what is happening in their lives because we know He will be with us no matter what.



Question:

How do you think you would feel if you found out what Daniel found out? Would it be hard to give thanks to God?

Pray for Yourself:

Gracious God, I thank You that You are with me all of the time, no matter what is going on around me. Help me to love spending time with You the way that Daniel did. Give me the courage to do what's right even when it's hard.

Pray for Others:

Lord, I pray for people who live in countries like Daniel's, where being a Christian is not allowed. Make them brave to keep following You, even when it's hard.

Optional Activity:

Look up a country where it is difficult to be a Christian (try persecution.com or opendoors.org). Draw and decorate a picture of their flag and hang it in your room or on your fridge so you can remember to pray for believers there.



"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:4-13

These verses are from another letter Paul wrote, this time to a church he had started in the city of Philippi. This city was in Rome back in the time when people wore togas and watched gladiators fight. Paul is telling his friends in Philippi that people who follow Jesus have special power and abilities because the Holy Spirit lives inside them. One of those special abilities is to be able to feel peace in their hearts that is surprising because of the hard things going on around them. Paul had been through lots of bad things in his life- he had been in a shipwreck, he had been beaten up for preaching about Jesus, and he had even been put in jail. He was disliked by people all around him- the Roman government, the Jewish leaders, and even a lot of the Christians. But despite all those things, Paul said that because he had the special power of the Holy Spirit living in him, he could face any of the hard things that came his way, and even be thankful for them. He actually said that being thankful was one of the things that makes that peace grow! If we want to feel peace when things are scary or sad or frustrating, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to give us His special power and then be thankful that He is always with us.

Question:

What are some things that make you scared or sad or frustrated? Do you think God has power over even those hard things?

Pray for Yourself:

Loving God, I thank You that when we believe in You and follow You, Your Spirit lives inside us, giving us special power not to be afraid. Help me to be thankful, even when I'm having a hard day or feeling sad, because I know You are always with me. Help me feel Your special power of peace today.

Pray for Others:

Lord, Help me think of a friend who needs to feel Your special peace today. Help them to have a peace that doesn't make sense. Show me ways I can show Your love to them so they know that You are always with them.

Optional Activity:

Write a card to someone to tell them you are thankful for them and remind them that God loves them and wants to give them His special peace.



"The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, 'As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.' Elkanah her husband said to her, 'Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.' So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, 'Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore, I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD,' And he worshiped the LORD there."

1 Samuel 1:21-28

Today, we are reading part of a story from the Old Testament about a woman named Hannah. Hannah had wanted to have a baby for a long time but had not been able to yet, which made her feel very sad. One day, she was at the temple praying very passionately that God would give her a baby when a priest saw her and thought she was acting crazy and must not be thinking clearly. When he tried to talk to her about it, she told him she was praying and how much she wanted God to give her a baby. The priest said to her that God was going to give her a baby the very next year, and God did! Hannah had a baby boy, and she named him Samuel. But then Hannah does something very surprising. After God answered her prayer and gave her what she asked for, she returned it to God. When Samuel was still a boy, she took him to the temple to live and work with the priest who had talked to her. Afterward, she sang a song about how thankful she was to God for what He had given her, even though she had given him back to God. It would be tough to give away something that you had wanted for so long, but Hannah was grateful for the opportunity to give what she had to God, and the boy Samuel grew up to be a great prophet and leader in Israel. God used Hannah's sacrifice and gratitude to do big things and He will use the things we give Him too.

Question: What is something you wanted and waited a long time for, and finally got? How did it feel to get it? How would it feel to give it away?

Pray for Yourself:

Generous God, I thank You for things I wanted and needed that You have said yes to, like You did for Hannah. Help me to have a grateful heart like Hannah and to be generous with everything You give me.

Pray for Others:

Lord, I pray that You would help me use something You have given me to be a blessing to someone today. Show me someone today that I can be generous to.

Optional Activity:

Ask your parents if you can gather some items from your pantry and drop them off at a local food pantry or Little Free Pantry so you can share your blessings with others.



"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Colossians 3:12-17

Today's verses are from another letter from Paul. Paul started several churches, and as he traveled as a missionary, he would write letters to the churches he had started and to those his friends had started, encouraging them and making sure they were still following the things Jesus had taught them to do. They didn't have the finished Bible yet, so they used these letters like we use the Bible. They would copy them and send them to other churches, and then try to do what the letters said as they followed Jesus. This letter was to the church at Colossae, which had been started by Paul's friend Epaphras. Paul told the church they needed to be thankful people who treated others well. He told them that one of the ways to do this is by letting God's Word dwell in them richly. That means reading it often and memorizing it so you can think about it throughout your day. He also wanted them to do this with other believers. Paul said it was important to have Christian friends to encourage us and help us do good things and make good choices. When we're with these friends, we should be talking about God's Word often and encouraging each other with songs and scriptures. Let's be thankful for the Christian adults and friends God has put in our lives, just like he did Paul and Epaphras, to help us know him better



Question:

It's good to have friends who encourage us to live for Christ, and also friends who don't know about Christ yet, so we can show and tell them of His love, so they might come to know Him. The important part is that we are showing them God's good way in the world and not letting them pull us away from God/ What friends in your life encourage you to live for Christ? What friends in your life are you having the opportunity to show Christ's love and truth to?

Pray for Yourself:

Loving Father, thank You for the friends You have given me that help me make good choices. Help me to be a friend who encourages others to do good and live for you.

Pray for Others:

Lord, bring to mind a friend who needs me to share a Bible verse or worship song with them today. Please give me the words to encourage them.

Optional Activity:

Paint or draw a picture and write a verse on it. You could use markers, watercolors, crayons or paint. You could even make a collage. Give it to a friend to adult who has been an encouragement to you.



"Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now, when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' But Jesus said, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They said to him, 'We have only five loaves here and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children."

Matthew 14:13-19

Today's story tells us about a time when Jesus thanked God for providing a miracle, even before the miracle had happened.

The disciples saw that the crowd was hungry and had no food. Even though they had seen Jesus perform miracles before, they didn't understand that Jesus could feed thousands of people with only a tiny bit of food. But Jesus knew that God would provide, so He thanked God before the food had even been multiplied.

There is a similar story of God's provision in the life of a man named George Mueller, who ran an orphanage in Britain in the 1800s. Mr. Mueller always believed that God would provide everything the orphanage needed. One day, they had no food, no money, and 300 children to feed. George told the children to sit down in front of their empty plates and pray, thanking God for the food they didn't have yet. As soon as they said amen, there was a knock at the door. A local baker was there because he couldn't sleep all night and said God was telling him to bake three batches of bread for the orphanage. As soon as he delivered the bread and left, there was another knock on the door. The milk cart had broken down, and the driver needed someone to take all the milk before it spoiled.

God is more than able to provide for all of our needs. Our gratitude and faith work together to help us trust God to supply our every need.

Question:

What is something in your life that hasn't even happened yet that you could thank God for?

Pray for Yourself:

Generous Father, we thank You for the many ways that You provide for us. Help us to run to You right away when we need something, knowing You love us to trust You with our needs.

Pray for Others:

Lord, we pray for something happening in the world that needs Your help and provision. Help us to believe that You can provide whatever is needed.

Optional Activity:

Write down some big things You are praying for and put them in an envelope. Put it somewhere safe and set a reminder on your parents phone to open it in a few months. Then see how God has answered your prayers.



"And all the people said to Samuel, 'Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king.' And Samuel said to the people, 'Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.'"

1 Samuel 12: 19-25

Today, we are looking at a story from the Old Testament where the people of Israel made a bad choice because they were being ungrateful for what they had. Israel was different than all the nations around it. (A nation is a country, like the United States or China.) Israel was God's special nation that He chose to use in a special way to bring all of His blessings to the world. His presence stayed with them inside the tabernacle and later the temple, which was kind of like their church. One of the things about them was that they didn't have a human king like the other nations; God was their king. He gave them prophets like Samuel and judges like the mighty Samson to help lead them, but God was their king. Even though having God as your king or president would be amazing, the Israelites weren't grateful for it. They were actually kind of embarrassed and wanted to just be like everyone else around them. They asked God to give them a human king. Sometimes, when we want the wrong things, the consequence is that God lets us have what we want, and then we see that God had given us what was best to start with. That's what happened with Israel: they made a bad choice to ask for a human king rather than God, so God gave them a king. His name was Saul. After they got their way, they became afraid they would get in trouble. They are sorry for what they've done and tell God that they want to do right from now on. When we say what we did wrong, that's called confessing. Confessing is the important first step in making things right. When we sin, we should tell God and others that we know we did wrong and that we want to do right now.

When we say we're sorry and stop doing wrong and start doing right, that's called repenting. When we do wrong we should confess and repent. The people of Israel confessed their sin and repented, saying they wanted to follow God fully now. Samuel told them that one thing that would help them not sin again was to remember the good things God had done for them and be grateful for all He had done. He told them to stop chasing after things that aren't important and seek God instead.

Question:

Do I ever want things that aren't good for me and don't bring God's best way in my life? How could being grateful for what I have help me not want things that aren't good for me?

Pray for Yourself:

King of kings, I am thankful that You always know the best ways that are good for me and that You want to be king of my life/ Help me be grateful for Your good plans for how I should live so I can not chase after things that aren't best for me.

Pray for Others:

I pray for a friend who hasn't decided to follow You and make You king of their life. Help me to show them how amazing it is to live a life following You as King.

Optional activity:

Make a crown out of paper. You can cut out the shape and decorate it with anything you like! Pray, thanking God for being your King, and ask Him to help you follow His loving rule. Hang the crown somewhere to remind you that God is your king and you get the special job of growing his kingdom on the earth.



DAY 9

"Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies...

I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs."

Psalms 69: 1-4, 30-31

These verses were written by King David as he was going through a hard time in his life. David had a lot of hard things happen to him. Before he became a king, he served King Saul. Saul knew that God wanted David to be king instead of him, so he spent years chasing David through the kingdom trying to kill him. David had to hide in caves and dangerous cities where he was surrounded by enemies. Another time, when David was older and had been king for many years, his sons tried to take over the throne and started a war across the country to help them steal it. David had to run away from his palace to stay safe. We aren't sure what was happening when David wrote this particular psalm, but we know that he had lots of enemies and hard things all of his life.

But even when David's life was tough, he always trusted God and was grateful to Him. That's one of the reasons David was called a man after God's own heart. He even said that his thankful attitude was more pleasing to God than bringing sacrifices. That means that God wants us to be grateful more than He wants us to just do things for Him or others with a bad attitude.



Question:

What hard thing do you have to do today? How could you worship God, even in the middle of that hard thing, and be thankful for the good parts?

Pray for Yourself:

Loving Father, I thank You for the stories of how You took care of people that help me remember that I can trust You. Thank You that even on hard days, You are a good God who can be trusted.

Pray for Others:

Holy Father, bring to mind today someone who feels like David did, like they don't have any friends, and they are in the middle of troubles. Show me a way I can be a friend to them and help them be less lonely.

Optional Activity:

People who can't leave their homes because they're sick or too old to go out can sometimes feel lonely. Find a way to be encouraging to someone you know who is stuck at home. You could write them a letter, make them some cookies, or go visit them. You could ask if there is anything you can help them with around their house. Pray for God to guide you in how you can be a blessing to them.



"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Matthew 26:26-29

Today's story is another unexpected place to find someone being grateful. Jesus was eating his last meal with his disciples before He would die on the cross. They were eating the special feast of Passover that the Israelites ate every year to celebrate and remember how God had rescued their people hundreds of years before when they were slaves in Egypt. Every year, they had to eat certain special bread, special food, and wine as they remembered all the things God had done for them. Each food helped them remember something about the story. Jesus used the things in the meal to teach the disciples something new and to set up a new meal tradition that would help them remember how He had rescued them this time. After Jesus died, was resurrected, and then went to heaven, God's people grew. His special people weren't just the nation of Israel anymore, but all people who wanted to follow Him, people from any country. We call those people the church. Anyone who trusts Jesus to save them and wants Him to be their king gets to be part of God's special people. And now, instead of Passover, God's special people remember Him rescuing us by taking the Lord's Supper. Jesus told us to eat bread that reminds us of his body, drink juice that reminds us of his blood, and remember what he did on the cross for us. This is a very serious meal because we are remembering something serious. One interesting thing in these verses is that Jesus gave thanks for the bread and wine even though He knew they meant something bad was going to happen to Him. Jesus was thankful for the cross because He was glad to defeat evil in the world and make a way for all people's sins to be forgiven so they could be part of His special people.

Question:

How do people get to be part of God's special people in His special kingdom? Are you ever thankful for doing hard things because they benefit you or others?

Pray for Yourself:

God, I thank You for what Jesus did on the cross, making it possible for us to be part of Your family again. Help me to make sure the people around me know about this good news!

Pray for Others:

Lord, I pray today for a people group that has never heard Your good news. Send people to tell them the gospel and make a way for them to hear and believe in You.

Optional Activity:

Get some bread or crackers and some juice or a drink. Use these things to tell someone in your house the story of the Passover and what the people were remembering. Then tell them how Jesus used it to tell His followers to remember Him at the last meal He ate before He died.



“Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORDS’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.

Psalm 118: 19-26

Our verses for today are part of a song that people used to sing when they gathered together to worship the Lord. They would sing it when they took the Lord’s Supper and in the days before Easter. It’s neat to think that people were singing these words together hundreds, even thousands of years ago, and we’re reading them today all this time later. We are connected to believers throughout history and all over the world because we follow Jesus. Even though we may not speak the same language, eat the same foods, or wear the same clothes, we still have the most important thing in our lives in common. One of the ways that God created us to live the life He wants for us is to be in community with other people who are following Him. Being in community means we spend time together, share meals, share what we have, encourage one another when we’re sad or disappointed, help each other do good things, and protect each other from doing bad things. The people we do this regularly with and we are committed to is called our church. In the New Testament, the apostles were very thankful for the believers who cared for each other in their churches. God wants us to be thankful for our church, too! Any time we are with other people a lot, there are opportunities for us to hurt each other’s feelings or be unkind to each other. We’re all sinners, and we all mess up sometimes. But there are also lots of opportunities to make repairs when we hurt each other. When we do these things, it grows our ability to be patient and kind and put others before ourselves. Over time, this makes us more like Jesus. God wants us to be thankful for the good parts of community and the harder parts because He is using all of them to make us more like Him.

Question:

What are some of the wonderful ways you have seen God use other people who follow Him to help you know Him more? What are some ways it has been hard to be with other believers?

Pray for Yourself:

Gracious God, I thank You for all the ways You have used other people to help me love You more and be more like You. Help me be a blessing to my church and love the people there the way You do.

Pray for Others:

Lord, show me one way today that I could encourage or pray for someone in my church. Help me listen as You guide me and have my eyes open, looking for ways I can serve others.

Optional Activity:

Think of one way you could serve your church. Maybe you could empty the trash or help your teacher clean up after class. You're never too young to serve others in your church!



DAY 12

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6: 19-21

Today's verses come in the middle of a lesson Jesus was giving on the side of a mountain. Today, we call this lesson the Sermon on the Mount. Huge crowds would follow Him around to listen to what He had to say and to watch Him perform miracles. This time, He went on top of a big hill, and the people sat down on the ground below him. The sermon He taught there is the longest sermon we have from Jesus that is written in the Bible. The things He taught in that sermon were completely opposite of what most people thought, so we sometimes call the law He gave to those who wanted to follow Him and live in His kingdom the “upside down kingdom”.

The world around us wants us to think that the things we buy are really important. That having every toy of a kind, the newest game, or the most expensive sports gear is important and determines how cool or popular we are. The world wants us to believe that what brand something is matters or that we would be happier if we could just buy one more thing. But Jesus teaches the opposite of that. He calls that storing up treasures on earth, where everything will eventually break anyway. That new thing you think you have to have today will be the thing you're getting rid of eventually. Jesus says there's a better way. Instead of collecting all these treasures on earth, we should care about things that will last forever- treasures in heaven. Things like being kind and generous and making sure people everywhere know about Jesus' love. One thing that helps us not store up treasure on earth is being thankful for what we have. If we are thankful for what God has already given us, we won't feel like we need new things to make us happy all the time.

Question:

When is a time you thought getting something would make you happy? Did that happiness last, where you never needed a new thing again?

Pray for Yourself:

Generous Father, I thank You for all the things You have blessed me with. Help me care more about things that will last forever than things that will be destroyed someday. Make me grateful to You for all of Your gifts and help me to long for You as the Giver more than the things You can give me. Teach me to live in Your upside-down kingdom.

Pray for Others:

Lord, I pray for the world that doesn't know You. As I try to live my life in a way that looks different from the rest of the world, I pray that my light will shine in that difference and draw others to You.

Optional Activity:

Get an envelope and write something that you could give money to that will not be destroyed, but is eternal. Maybe buying a Bible for a believer in a country that doesn't have one, or sending livestock to a family through an organization that shows the love of Jesus, or sending money to a missionary. Every time you get some money, put some in the envelope and see how it feels to store up treasures in heaven instead of on earth.



"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! With my lips, I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word."

Psalm 119: 9-16

Today's verses come from the longest chapter in the whole Bible, Psalm 119. It was written as a special kind of poem using all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. We don't know for sure who wrote it — maybe King David —but whoever it was used their creativity to make something beautiful to show how much they love God. We can use any of the gifts and skills God gave us to make beautiful things for Him, too, whether writing a poem or song, making a piece of art, singing, or dancing; these are all ways people used in the Bible to show how great God is and how much they loved Him. When we use our bodies and skills to show our love for God, that's called worship.

We get excited about all kinds of things —a new movie, getting to spend time with a friend, going on a fun outing, or our favorite holiday! The writer of Psalm 119 got excited about God's law. He says that he can't stop thinking about it all day and night, and it's like a treasure to Him. Sometimes, we have so much access to God's Word that we don't even realize how amazing it is that the Creator of the whole universe would write a letter for us that tells us about Him, and we can read it any time we want! It took a lot of different things happening throughout history for us to have the Bible in our language. A long time ago, the only Bibles were in Latin and only the priests at the churches could read them. Every copy of the Bible had to be handwritten by monks. That's a lot of writing! Each church usually only had one Bible, and it was chained to a table so no one would steal it. The priests would tell the people what it said, but sometimes they told them the wrong things because they wanted power. Different men decided people needed to be able to read the Bible themselves, so they translated it into German and later English. Some of them were even killed for translating it. One man invented a printing press so Bibles could be printed faster than by hand. They used their creativity and skill to get the Bible to people. God made all of these things happen through history so that you could have your very own Bible to read! That should make us very thankful and remind us how important it is to meet God in His Word.

Question:

What is something you get excited about? Does knowing how hard it was to get the Bible to you make you more grateful to have it and more excited to read it?

Pray for Yourself:

God, I thank You for making sure I have the Bible in my language so I can know about You! Help me to treasure it more than gold and rubies and to always love reading it.

Pray for Others:

Lord, I pray for the people who still don't have a Bible in their language. Send people to translate Your Word for them and show me ways that I can pray for them and maybe even help get Bibles translated for them!

Optional Activity:

Use your creativity to write a poem for God. Use a different letter of the alphabet to start each line. Or use each letter for a word about God.



“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’”

Revelation 21: 1-4

These verses come from a book of the Bible that can be kind of confusing and even a little weird. It uses a lot of pictures to describe things, but because it uses all those pictures, sometimes it makes people afraid. But the book was written for the opposite reason. At the time the Bible was written, the Christians who lived in the Roman Empire were having really hard lives. When they became Christians, they were losing their jobs, being thrown in jail, and even being beaten up or killed. They were pretty scared and didn't know what was going to happen to the world. The Apostle John had been put in prison on an island called Patmos. While he was there, God gave him a beautiful vision of how God was going to remake the world, Jesus would come back and get rid of all the evil and sin in the world, and then heaven would come down to earth, and all of those who followed Jesus would live together forever in the perfect world with Jesus as King. He told them there would be some bad things like they were going through, but to hold on and keep going because the future was already decided! He wanted them to have hope that everything would turn out okay because god had a plan to make all things right. We can be grateful in all things, even on bad days, because we know the end of the story and it's a happy ending for those who follow Jesus. We will live with God forever in a perfect world. That is something to be thankful for.

Question:

Has knowing something good is coming ever helped you do something hard?

Pray for Yourself:

Alpha and Omega, thank You that You are going to make all the bad parts of the world right again. Thank You that I will get to live with You forever.

Pray for Others:

Lord, I pray for people who haven't heard this great news yet. Show me ways I can tell people about this hope that we have in You.

Optional Activity:

Print out or draw a picture of the Earth. Put some watercolor paint or water on the edge of the paper. Use a straw to blow the water or paint all over the earth. Imagine that being the good news of Jesus and the light of His kingdom covering the whole earth, and thank Him that we can look forward to that day.



