



THE SEASON OF THANKS



Where is your Gratitude Focused ? • Philippians 1 : 3 - 19 •

Thanksgiving

DEVOTION

Is your gratitude focused on what you get out of things or on how a situation can glorify God? The letter to the Philippian church is often referred to as "the letter of joy." Five times Paul speaks of joy, and seven times he uses the word "rejoice." Yet, at the time he is writing on this subject, he himself is imprisoned! Still, his letter overflows with thanksgiving and confidence in God's work through the church's partnership in the gospel. He writes, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (vv. 3-5). What is striking here is that Paul's gratitude is not centered on his own personal comfort or circumstances but rather on how God is being glorified through the situation.

Paul's joy is not based on what he can get out of the situation, but on how God's kingdom is being advanced. In verse 12, Paul points out that his imprisonment has actually served to spread the gospel: "Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel." He rejoices because Christ is being preached, even if it means hardship for him!

This raises a question for us: where is our gratitude focused? Is it on the benefits we receive from a situation, our comfort and happiness, or is it centered on how that situation can glorify God? It's easy to be grateful when things are going well—when we're blessed with comfort, success, or recognition. But what about when life becomes challenging, when we're called to sacrifice, or when we don't see immediate personal benefit? Do we still find joy and gratitude in those moments? As Pastor Owen used to say..." this is too convicting, let's move on."

Paul's perspective challenges us to see beyond ourselves. Instead of asking, "How is this benefiting me?" we should ask, "How is this bringing glory to God?" True gratitude in the Christian life is not self-focused but Christ-focused. It acknowledges that God's purposes are greater than our immediate circumstances. Even in hardship, when it seems like we are losing, God is still at work, and His kingdom is advancing!

Monday

Gratitude for Others

Read Philippians 1:3-5; Ephesians 1:15-16; Hebrews 13:7

1. Read Philippians 1:3-5. How does Paul's thankfulness for the Philippians inspire you to be more grateful for the people God has placed in your life?
2. How do you usually express gratitude in your relationships with others? Are there people in your life you need to thank more often?
3. Reflect on a person or group of people who have partnered with you in your spiritual journey. How can you encourage or pray for them today?

Tuesday

Gratitude in Difficult Circumstances

Read Philippians 1:12-14; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

1. How does Paul's example of gratitude in imprisonment challenge the way you think about your own hardships?
2. Think of a difficult situation in your life. How could God be using that situation for a greater purpose, even if it's hard to see right now?
3. What steps can you take to shift your focus from your difficulties to how God might be glorified through them?

Wednesday

Focusing on God's Glory Over Personal Benefit

Read Philippians 1:15-18; Romans 14:7-8; 1 Peter 4:11

1. How can we learn to rejoice in God's work, even when things don't seem to benefit us directly?
2. How would your daily attitude change if your primary focus was always on glorifying God instead of seeking personal gain?

Thursday

Partnering in the Gospel

Read Philippians 1:5; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9; Romans 12:4-6

1. What does it mean to "partner in the gospel"? How are you currently partnering with others in sharing and living out the gospel?
2. How does partnering with other believers help you stay focused on God's mission and purpose for your life?
3. Reflect on a time when working with others in faith strengthened you. How can you invest in those relationships going forward?

Friday

Cultivating Christ-Centered Gratitude

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Isaiah 55: 8-9

1. Reflect on a recent situation where you felt gratitude. Was it more about how the situation benefited you, or about how God was glorified? How could you approach it differently now?
2. Why do you think it's easier to be grateful when things are going well? How can you train your heart to be grateful even in difficult times?
3. What practical steps can you take to cultivate a Christ-centered attitude of gratitude each day, especially when facing challenges?