

A Real Thanksgiving

How are you doing? Are you getting ready for a real thanksgiving?

Tell me you are not making excuses for why you do not have time to do this. Tell me you are not pushing it to the bottom of your to-do list. Tell me you are not ignoring it!

I know I'm being preachy and pushy, but I really want your heart to cry out with joy this Thanksgiving. I want you to find that deep sense of peace and joy that only God can give us.

If you're not ready yet, don't shut me out. Next week I'll be back with a lighter fare for your palate. But in the meantime, won't you give this a chance? You just never know what you might find.

In Him who gives me peace and strength,
Jennifer

16 Days of Thanksgiving (Part Two)

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore. **Don't rush through!** Take your time to wander through the scripture and let God speak to you.

Wondering about Part One?

If you didn't receive Part One, you print it at

http://www.hopeinthelord.org/Downloadable_PDF_Bible_Study_Files.html

Day 8 – Wednesday, Nov. 19

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.

2. Let's start go back again to the early days. Read Genesis 14:1-4 and 21:1-4 for background. Then read Genesis 21:8-21 for the lesson.
 - a. What did God tell Abraham to do (v.12)?
 - b. What was the result (v.14)?
 - c. Why do you think God would allow that to happen?
 - d. How do you imagine Hagar felt?
 - e. Have you ever felt that desperate?

- 3a. What instructions did God give Hagar (v.17-21)?
- b. What promises did God give Hagar (v.17-21)?

- 4a. How does this passage show us that God's plans don't always make sense to us?
- b. How does this passage show us that God is always trustworthy?
- c. How does this passage show us that it is possible to be thankful in even the most desperate of situations?

5. Write a prayer expressing thanking God for being trustworthy and worthy of thanks. Thank Him for specific instances He has shown you this in your life.

Day 9 – Thursday, November 20

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.

2. Today we're going to look at another desperate situation. Read Exodus 13:17-14:31.

- a. From Exodus 13:17-18, why did God lead the Israelites on the longer route rather than the shorter, quicker route?
 - b. Describe a time in your life when God took you somewhere via the long route.
 - c. In what ways did you benefit from the long route?
- 2a. Where in your life are you currently on the long route?
- b. Are you complaining and discontented with the long route, or are you trusting God and looking for His blessings along the way?
 - c. What will you do to change your perspective?
3. Based on this passage, why should you be thankful for the long route?
4. Write two prayers:
- a) First, confess to God your complaining and bitterness. Ask Him for eyes to see the blessings and for a heart of obedience to be a quick learner.
 - b) Second, pour out your thanks to Him for giving you what is best for you and not what is easiest for you.

Day 10 – Friday, November 21

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
 2. We'll continue with the Israelites and their story of God's deliverance. Read Exodus 13:20-14:31.
 - a. The Israelites were camped in a place of no escape. According to Exodus 14:2, why were they there?
 - b. Why do you think God directed them to camp there?
 - 3a. Where in your life has God brought you to an "impossible" place with no escape?
 - b. How do Matthew 19:26 and Mark 10:27 change your thinking?
 - c. Do you believe these verses to be true? (If yes, praise God. If no, ask God for faith.)
 - 4a. Why did Pharaoh go after the Israelites (v14:4)?
 - b. Why do *you* think God did this?
 - c. Why *did* God do this (v14:17-18)?
 - d. How might this apply to your "impossible" situation?
 - 5a. Were the Israelites ever in real danger? Explain. (See 14:14, 14:19-20)
 - b. Again, how might this apply to your "impossible" situation?
5. Pour out to God whatever He has placed on your heart.

Day 11 – Saturday, November 22

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
2. Let's continue with yesterday's lesson. Read Exodus 13:20-14:31.
 - a. What specific things did the Lord do in these passages?
 - 14:14
 - 14:19-20
 - 14:21
 - 14:24
 - 14:25
 - 14:26-27
 - 14:30
 - b. What specific things would you like God to do for you?
 - c. Write a prayer expressing to God these specific requests.
- 3a. How has this passage changed your thinking about seemingly impossible situations?

- b. How do you now see a need to give thanks in seemingly impossible situations?
 - c. How does an "it's all about me" attitude affect all this?
 - d. How has this changed your thinking about how God meets our needs?
4. As a result, what will you do so that God will be glorified and know by the things He has done? (Be specific.)
5. Write a prayer giving God glory, praise and thanks.

Day 12 – Sunday, November 23

1. Think back over your lessons, reflecting on what God has taught you. Then, pray, thanking God for all the things you can think of to be thankful for.
(Yes, that's all, so take your time!)

Day 13 – Monday, November 24

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
2. Read Isaiah 43:1-3.
- a. Write out this passage.
 - b. Underline each representation of God and what He will do. Circle each representation of you, the person He will do it for.
- 3a. Put a square each "when."
- b. Note that God uses "when" and not "if." God's words in His Bible are significant. What do you think God's word choice of "when" and not "if" means?
4. Read Isaiah 43:4-7.
- a. Rewrite each verse placing your name after each "you" and replacing "men" and "people" with "Christ."
 - b. What does that mean to you?
 - c. How far will the Lord go for you (v.5-6)?
 - d. What do you think it means to be "called by Christ's name"?
 - e. Are you called by His name?
5. We know that Christians and non-Christians both suffer and both die. When a Christian is seemingly "burned by the fire," how do verses 4-7 show that God is still with them and has not really turned them over to the fire?
6. Reread 43:1-3.
- a. What waters, rivers and fires has the Lord brought you through?
 - b. What will you do, specifically, the next time you face the waters, rivers and fires of life?
7. Write a prayer expressing your thankfulness to God based on today's passage.

Day 14 – Tuesday, November 25

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
2. Read Psalm 91.
- a. List all the things that describe the Lord and His protection.
 - b. In each of these passages, record who the protection is for:
--91:2
--91:9
--91:14
--91:15

3. Reread v.9-11.
 - a. Remembering yesterday's lesson of "when," not "if," and considering John 16:33, what do you think v.10 means?
 - b. Does it mean you will never face challenges or suffering? Explain.
 - c. Follow up with verse 15. Does this indicate that Christians will face trouble or live a trouble-free life?
- 4a. Where do you usually turn in times of trouble?
- b. Where should you turn in times of trouble?
- c. What specific things will you do the next time you face trouble?
5. End with a prayer to God based on Psalm 91, thanking Him for his protection.

Day 15 – Wednesday, November 26

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
2. Read Philippians 4:4-7.
 - a. How many times does Paul tell us to "rejoice"?
 - b. Why should we rejoice (v.5)?
 - c. Because the Lord is near, what should we do (v.6)?
 - d. In what things should we pray (v.6)?
 - e. And with what attitude should we pray for all things (v. 6)?
 - f. What is the result of this (v.7)?
3. Look back over your notes. How do the passages we've studied support giving thanks to God in ALL things?
4. What will you do to rejoice daily?
5. What will you do to help others rejoice daily and know that the Lord is near?
6. How will you be different this Thanksgiving Day?

Day 16 – Wednesday, November 27

1. Pray, thanking God for who He is and what He does for you. Thank Him for that which is easy and that which is difficult. Thank Him for the sunny days and stormy nights of your life. Thank Him for His son, Jesus. Thank Him and praise Him.
2. Go let your gentleness be evident to all. Amen.



May God bless you and keep you,
Jennifer