

LIGHTS

WEEK 1

The Light of Gratitude

November 27 & 28, 2010 • René Schlaepfer

Do everything without grumbling or arguing... Then you will shine among them like **stars in the sky**. *Philippians 2:14–15b [NIV]*

...Let your **lives overflow** with joy and thanksgiving for all He has done. *Colossians 2:7 [LB]*

MOVE FROM A DAY OF THANKSGIVING TO A LIFE OF THANKSGIVING

WHEN THE _____ FLOWS IN...

...and it brings praise to God because of His wonderful **grace**. God gave that **grace** to us freely, in Christ, the One He loves. In Christ we are set free by the blood of His death, and so we have forgiveness of sins. How rich is God's **grace**. *Ephesians 1:6–8 [NCV]*

...THE _____ FILLS UP...

GRATITUDE GIVES ME:

- _____: RISING BEYOND CIRCUMSTANCES

Though the fig tree does **not** bud and there are **no** grapes on the vines, though the olive crop **fails** and the fields produce **no** food, though there are **no** sheep in the pen and **no** cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. *Habakkuk 3:17–18 [NIV]*

No matter what happens, always be thankful for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. *1 Thessalonians 5:18 [LB]*

- _____: GUARDING YOUR HEART WITH GRATITUDE

Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes — these are not for you. **Instead, let there be thankfulness to God**. *Ephesians 5:4 [NLT]*

- _____: STAYING "IN THE MOMENT"

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad **today!** *Psalms 118:24 [NCV]*

...AND THE _____ FLOWS OUT!

Jesus: "...her sins — and they are many — have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love." *Luke 7:47a [NLT]*

The bottom line:

DEVELOP THE _____ OF GIVING THANKS!

Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, **always giving thanks** to God the Father for **everything**. *Ephesians 5:19*

Daily Meditations

Monday

What point or verses from the message made the biggest impact, or challenged you?

Read Philippians 4:4–9. How do you think Paul practiced this even while in prison?

Have you had an experience where thankfulness changed your attitude though your circumstances were the same? What happened?

Today, ask God to align your perspective with His on the challenging circumstances in your life.

Tuesday

Read Psalm 100:1–5. Take the quiz below:

SELF-QUIZ: DO YOU COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS?

1. Which do you tend to talk about more — your blessings, or your disappointments?
2. When you lie in bed at night, do you tend to be a worrier, always feeling dread about the future? Or a complainer, finding fault with your circumstances? Or do you tend to dwell on the blessings of the day?
3. Are you generally content with what you have, or are you typically dissatisfied and wanting more?
4. Do you find it easier to count your blessings, or is it easier to count your afflictions?
5. Would others say that you are a thankful person?

Ask God to help you develop the daily habit of discipline. Start today by giving thanks to Him right now for whatever you see around you!

Wednesday

The Apostle Paul had to write letters to young churches because there were serious moral issues or doctrinal issues within those congregations. However, look at how he describes his attitude toward these churches according to these verses: Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3.

How would you summarize Paul's attitude? What do you think he could find to be thankful about, when many of these churches were causing him trouble — or were at least causing disturbances significant enough to merit his corrective letters?

How can you apply this specifically to your relationships?

How will a spirit of thankfulness improve your relationships with your spouse, children, friends, co-workers, bosses, parents, etc.?

Today pause and thank God specifically for certain things about people in your own life.

Thursday

Read Philippians 2:1–18. What a great passage to read as we enter the Christmas season! Paul beautifully and poetically describes how Christ set aside his majesty to become a man. Then he says: your attitude should be the same; no complaints or grumbling. When you live like this, he says you shine like a star! How does living like this cause you to shine like a star in our society?

In what area of your life do you need to change your attitude so that you can shine like a star?

Ask God to help you shine like a star through your grateful and obedient (to God) spirit!

Friday

Read John 1:1–18. What facts about “The Word” can you find in these verses?

From these verses, how would you explain what happened at Christmas?

How is this different from the way some understand Christmas?

What impresses you most about Jesus Christ from these verses?

Ask God to help you see His light and shine His light during the Christmas season!

Saturday

Please pray for the weekend services as we begin the season of Advent. In preparation for messages about the Light, please read Isaiah 9:1–7. What impresses you most about these verses?

These verses contain promises fulfilled in the first Advent of Christ at Christmas, and other promises that will be fulfilled. Which things were already fulfilled, and which are yet to be fulfilled?

Thank God for the way He has fulfilled — and will fulfill — the promises in these verses!



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1 Thessalonians 5:18 [LB]