

ThanksLiving

IN EVERYTHING, GIVE THANKS

A Pattern for Daily Prayer

Becoming Aware of God's Presence

He made it so you could take part in the inheritance, in light granted to God's holy people. He rescued us from the control of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

Colossians 1:12-13

Giving thanks to God

Keep on praying and guard your prayers with thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2

Listening for God's Voice

(see daily guides at right and inside)

Silence / Reflection

***Prayers for our world, the church,
those near to us, and ourselves.***

Offering of Self to God

God, what do you want to do through me today?

Blessing

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

Colossians 1:2

Day 1: Colossians 3:12

¹² Therefore, as God's choice, holy and loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Have you ever made a wrong turn? A few weeks ago, I made a wrong turn into an egress lane in a Publix Grocery Store parking lot. There I was, face-to-face with a car that was moving in the correct direction. I was embarrassed that I had not paid better attention. But what stung me most was the posture of the other driver. His face became angry, and his hand motions were filled with "attitude". His lips were moving and I'm glad I couldn't hear his words because I suspect they were less than understanding and kind. I mouthed the word "I'm sorry!" and reversed my direction. Embarrassed and disappointed in myself soon moved to disappointment and anger toward that angry driver.

Then, I remembered, almost immediately, how many times I had behaved just like that man. How many times I have chosen to take advantage of someone else's mistake? How many times I have let someone else know that their mistake was THEIR mistake and that they should be ashamed of themselves? How many times I have pretended that I would never do such a thing?

Grace is a funny thing, isn't it? The more we remember, with a deep self-awareness, our sins, the deeper grace runs in our lives. And the deeper grace runs in our lives the more grace-filled our immediate responses to others' mistakes will be. When we were immature, everything someone else did that was in error became important to point out in dramatic fashion because it made us look smarter and better than someone else. When our souls, and thus our lives, journey toward maturity, things are different. Life looks different, feels different, and IS different.

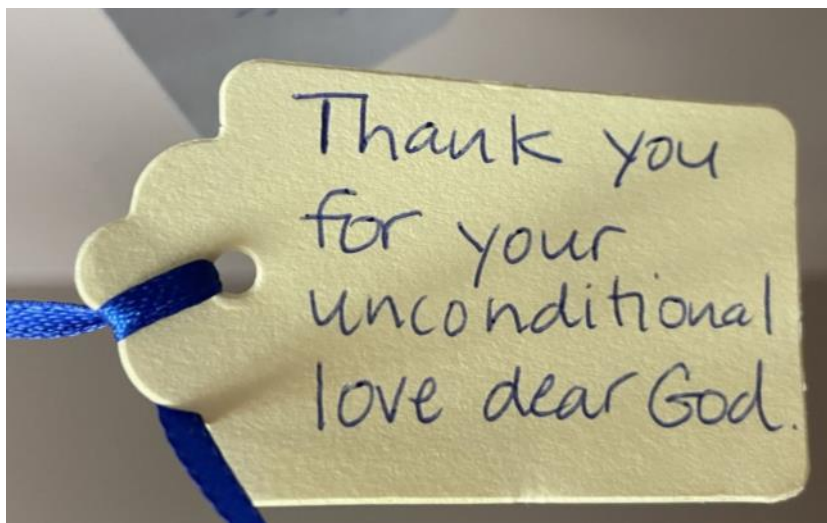
As we enter the season of hope, peace, joy, and love, I am hopeful that my life flinches will be graceful. I am a long way from maturing into the complete image of Christ...**but it is the folks that had every right to give me a piece of their mind but chose to give me a piece of Christ's heart (grace) that have helped mature me. And I am thankful.**

I know that in some cases you fight fire with fire to burn a fire out. But in Christ we learn another way of relating, you fight fire with water because the cool refreshment calms down the heat so that growth can conquer impending death. Grace is the embodiment of God's view of us and of others. It makes a difference in a healthy and productive way.

This Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, and into the New Year, I am hoping to give grace away. There will be moments when this will be difficult, but those are the moments I trust I will remember the grace that has been given to me. For this gift of grace needs 'regifting' in our families, communities, and in our world.

Jesus said it. "Give and it will be given back to you. A good portion—packed down, firmly shaken, and overflowing—will fall into your lap. The portion you give will determine the portion you receive in return." (Luke 6:38 CEB)

The Rev. Dr. Terry E. Walton
Executive Assistant to the Bishop, North GA
Annual Conference



Day 2: Colossians 3:15

The peace of Christ must control your hearts—a peace into which you were called in one body. And be thankful people.

Henry Ward Beecher wrote, “gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul”.

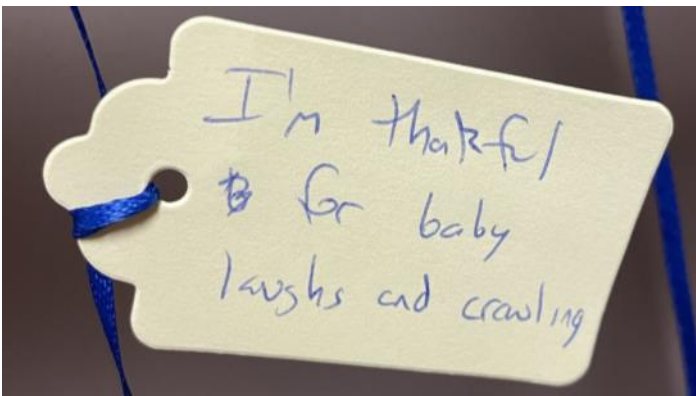
The Word of God says, one of the ways believers are spirit-filled is by giving thanks always. Because the Holy Spirit enables us to be grateful for all things that God allowed to enter our lives since they will be used for good.

The Bible spoke of the thankful leper who was not even a Jew, who returned to thank Jesus for healing him. “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? (Luke 17:12-19).

You see, God values thankfulness. A grateful heart is a happy heart; whereas an ungrateful heart is unhappy and closed off to God's wisdom .

In any matter of life, may we bless the Lord at all times with thanks- giving; and may his praise continually be in our mouths.

Serina Trueh

**Day 3: Colossians 3:16a**

The word of Christ must live in you richly.

How do you know Jesus Christ? Sometimes we focus on the scripture and forget that the word

of God in the scripture is Jesus Christ Himself. This is because the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Jesus Christ. God's words or message are given to us and deeply rooted in Jesus Christ. Hence, if we have a good relationship with Jesus, we are receiving God's words and messages.

Jesus Christ is the word of God. When we say Jesus is the word of God, it is demonstrated in two dimensions:

- a) Jesus is the word of God as written in all scripture passages. All scripture passages are words of God and when we hear the words of God, it is Jesus Christ whom God sent to us to imprint the word (Jesus Christ) in our hearts and minds; thereby living in us.
- b) The second dimension of Jesus Christ as the word of God is the vivid, practical, and good deeds of Jesus Christ illustrated in the scripture. Jesus Christ, through His actions and activities in the scripture passages, demonstrated the words of God which is Himself (Jesus).

In essence, Jesus as the word of God is seen as the words and messages in the scripture passages. And He (Jesus) is the word of God in His actions.

Inspired by these thoughts, as Christians, we are called and encouraged to fill our hearts and minds with the word of God in the scripture. And to exemplify in our daily lives the actions and activities of Jesus Christ illustrated in the scripture.

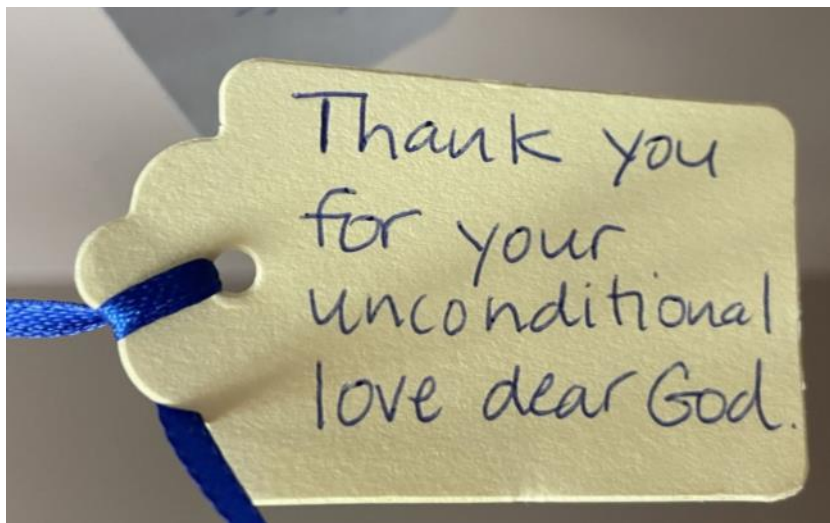
In doing this, we not only hear the word of God (Jesus) and retain it in our hearts, but we also practice the word of God (Jesus) by our good deeds towards each other. This is how Jesus, the word of God, lives richly in us.

By Dr. Lele Dominic

Day 4: Colossians 3:16b

Sing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Singing is an inherently joyful act. Even in its most basic form, it requires a unified commitment of your vocal cords, lungs, mouth, and mind to produce a sound. The body and mind naturally delight in the opportunity to engage in an action that connects all parts of ourselves. It is actually more difficult to sing apathetically than it is to sing joyfully!



Perhaps for this reason, singing as a choir is often a synergetic experience where each person's individual joy intensifies the joy of everyone else around them. Singing together bonds people through teamwork, all minds and hearts in one place being singularly focused on making a joyful noise.

That said, the discipline and focus of music can be overwhelming, and the turbulence of the world and our lives can distract from the joy at the heart of musical expression. For this reason, I end each Wednesday night rehearsal with prayer of gratitude. I thank God for the blessing our of our choir and for the blessings that we may fail to notice: our able bodies and minds that allow us to make a joyful noise, the support for our music-making at McKendree, and the opportunity to come closer to the Lord through the intimate faithfulness of musical praise.

Have you ever felt caught up in the stress of day-to-day life and lost sight of your joy? How do you reconnect with your joy and anchor yourself in your faith through practiced gratitude?'

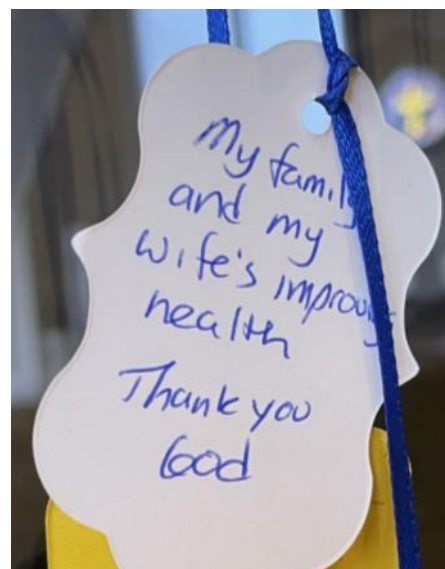
Sean Butler

Day 5: Colossians 3:18-19 (The Message)

¹⁸ *Wives, understand and support your husbands by submitting to them in ways that honor the Master.* ¹⁹ *Husbands, go all out in love for your wives. Don't take advantage of them.*

Yeah, I know, you hate it! What do you mean submit? I don't want to submit to anything or anybody.

But what if we thought of it as joint submission? Everyone submits to each other. If a husband is going, "all out in love" for his wife I think that is another form of submission. The KJV reads, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." And The Message Bible says, "Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another."



When we submit we are first of all yielding our own desires for self fulfilment for the benefit of the other person. And ultimately we are submitting to the will and dominion of God, the Master of us all.

Yes, I could battle to always get my way but does that honor the Master? Yes, I could take advantage of my spouse but does that honor the Master? We know the answer. The problem is living it every day and it is hard! That is why we need the reminder from Paul and that is why God sent Jesus.

What is the goal of all of this submitting and all out loving? Peace! Again from The Message, “Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness.” (3:15)

Cultivate thankfulness in your homes by saying “thank you” often. Cultivate peace in your homes by being, “even-tempered, content with second place, [and] quick to forgive an offense.” (Colossians 3:13)

Can I tell you a secret? Sometimes I submit to Eric and then I tell God, “Please go get him!” Of course I have to add to my prayer, “but if I’m the one that needs correction let me know.” The Master will answer your prayer and give you peace.

Pastor Paula

Day 6: Colossians 4:2-3

Keep on praying and guard your prayers with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray for us also.

Paul opens his letter with prayer for the Colossian church: that they will grow in wisdom, in living lives worthy of the Lord, in producing fruit in good work, in endurance, and in giving thanks in joy (Colossians 1:9-12).

Now he ends with a request that they pray too, and guard their prayers with thanksgiving.

What does it mean to GUARD prayers?

To grow in thankfulness is to turn outward rather than our natural tendency to turn inward. It makes us humble when we give thanks; we see ways we depend on God and others, not only ourselves.

When you praise and thank God, you are more likely to ask for what is the will of God, rather than asking according to your own will.

Ed and I did not teach our children to say, “mine!”, they learn that on their own! But a good parent teaches the child to be thankful, not only in polite words, but with their attitudes and desires. And Paul is a good teacher, ready for his students to take their next step in prayer.

Pastor Cyndi

