

OVERWHELMED

with

GRATITUDE

by Lyli Dunbar



INTRODUCTION

Hello! I met a dear friend for coffee and conversation, and we ended up crying into our cups. “That’s not right,” she exclaimed as I shared some hard news. She felt the weight of what I was experiencing and wanted to stand with me in my grief. I smiled back at her to thank her for her support.

I thought getting out of the house to share espresso with a friend would encourage my heart, but instead I drove home feeling defeated. Venting about my troubles hadn’t lightened my load at all. I still had more problems than I could handle, and nothing had changed.

But later that evening, something did shift in my spirit. A wise woman stood at the microphone on the church platform and opened up our weekly Bible study in a creative way. “Tell me something good that happened this week, friends. How have you seen God’s faithfulness?”

Women raised their hands and shared sweet evidence of how God had shown up for them in simple ways. Their stories helped me see His grace, and my weary heart was overwhelmed with gratitude. I’d been so focused on my problems, I’d failed to see the Lord’s hand at work, and I’d forgotten to remember He holds me securely.

Instead of focusing on circumstances I couldn’t change, suddenly I was reminded of unchanging truths that lifted my spirit:

- God provides abundantly when I have a need.
- God’s mercies are new every morning.
- God will empower me with the strength I am lacking for every situation.
- My God is good, and He will not fail me.

Proverbs 4:23 encourages us to “keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it flow springs the issues of life.” We need to guard our hearts so that we can continue to love God with all of our being and live free from doubt, fear, and unbelief.

When we intentionally take note of how God has blessed us, our hearts will be overwhelmed with gratitude. Instead of feeling overcome by our problems, we will rise up above the discouragement and find hope in God.

Let’s receive God’s invitation to give thanks. Over the next four weeks, we’ll remind ourselves God is good.

- We’ll remember His grace.
- We’ll recognize His greatness.
- We’ll respond with worship.

And we will learn to live overwhelmed with gratitude.



WEEK 1

RECEIVING GOD'S INVITATION

From the beginning of time, God has been creating beautiful things and inviting us to enjoy them. He paints the sky blue. He warms us with sunshine. He has created a world full of His glory, and we get to enjoy His goodness. Hallelujah!

As we start this week, let's receive the Lord's invitation to know Him, to worship Him, and to walk with Him: "Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders..." (Psalm 29:1-3)

Let this thought overwhelm you today and fill you with gratitude: Your Almighty God wants to speak to you and reveal Himself and His glory to you. Let's spend the next five days saying yes to His invitation.

DAY 1 - THE DELIGHT OF GOD



Close your eyes and picture God smiling down on you in delight. Do you know that your Heavenly Father takes pleasure in you and bends down to bless you?

Read Genesis 1. What phrase does God repeat in verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31 to communicate His delight in His creation?

What does God invite us, as His greatest creation, to do in verses 28-30?

Based on Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 43:7 & 20-21, why did God create the world and place us here?

Friend, we can remind ourselves that God delights in us because we are His creation, and we display His glory and declare His praises. Through His creative work in us, God reveals His wisdom and power to the world. Read Psalm 148:1-5. Write out verse 5 below as a reminder to your soul.

The enemy of our soul uses doubt to draw us away from experiencing God's delight. Read Genesis 3:1-13. Instead of delighting in what God said, what did Eve delight in?

DAY 1 - THE DELIGHT OF GOD



The devil was the first to sin. His sin was pride. When our focus shifts from worshiping God to pleasing ourselves, we miss out on the delight God has for us. Read Ezekiel 28:14-15 and Isaiah 14:12-15. How does a heart consumed by pride speak?

Here is the amazing thing about our God: Even though we failed to receive His invitation, He still pursues us. God made a way for us to be reconciled into a right relationship with Him.

Read Romans 5:6-11. Be overwhelmed with gratitude today as you meditate on the truth found in verse 8:

God showed His love for us in that while we were still sinners,

According to Ephesians 1:3-7, what blessings have we received because of Jesus?

Today, we can give thanks because we have a Savior who delights in us. (Zephaniah 3:17, NIV) When we turn from our sin and selfishness and receive His gift of salvation, we are blessed beyond measure.

DAY 2 – THE DEFINITION OF GRATITUDE



If you look up gratitude in a dictionary, you will learn that it means to appreciate the value of someone or something and to show thankful recognition. Let's dig into the Word and see how God defines this action.

Read Colossians 3:16-17. What are some examples you note of gratitude in action?

The ESV translation uses the word "thankful" in verse 16, which implies "extending favor toward" and means displaying grace, favor, gratitude, or kindness. "Giving thanks" in verse 17 means we acknowledge God's good grace in our lives.

In 2 Chronicles 29:20-36, the new king Hezekiah works to restore worship in the temple after cleansing and consecrating the sanctuary. Based on verse 31, what actions did he instruct the people to take in order to display their gratitude?

How did their external actions need to match the inner disposition of their hearts?

The Hebrew word used for thanks here is "todah." It speaks of making a confession, giving praise to God, and expressing thanksgiving through songs of worship. We can offer God thanks in many different ways. Read I Chronicles 16:8 and Psalm 136. When we give thanks, we take note of who God is and what He has done. What did the psalmist note when he "looked around" to see God's handiwork through creation in verses 4-9?

DAY 2 – THE DEFINITION OF GRATITUDE



How did the psalmist “look back” at God’s mercy in the past and express gratitude in verses 10-28?

The Hebrew word for “thanks” used in these two passages is “yadah,” which speaks of raising up and exalting God with our humble praise. We confess we are sinful, and He alone is holy and perfect.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says:

“In _____ give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” The Greek word for “thanks” here is “eucharisteo” and implies to actively express our gratitude. When we go through really hard things, we can stay anchored to our faith and acknowledge that He is good. In light of Romans 5:3-5 and Romans 8:28, what greater purpose does our suffering serve?

When we choose to actively express our gratitude, God is pleased. How does Hebrews 13:15 describe our offering?

The Greek word “homologeō” used here for praise means we agree with God. We concede to His will. We promise to declare His name, celebrate His works, and pledge to live as a worshiper.

When we live overwhelmed with gratitude, we commit to lifting up God with our inward devotion and our outward actions. We offer Him our all.

DAY 3 – THE DANGER OF OUR INGRATITUDE



What would our lives look like if we failed to express our gratitude to God? The thesaurus offers some help, and the list of synonyms you'll find might just make you a little uncomfortable and come under conviction. A thankless person is self-centered, unappreciative, dissatisfied, and fault finding. Instead of glorifying God, we end up grumbling about what we want and do not possess.

Read Genesis 25:29-34. How did Esau display ingratitude?

The Hebrew word translated as “despised” in verse 34 implies not showing the proper respect to something or someone of great value. When we choose the temporal and physical over the eternal spiritual blessings of God, we dishonor the goodness and grace of our Heavenly Father.

How did the children of Israel display ingratitude in Exodus 16:1-8?

When we fail to trust Almighty God is good and just, doubt creeps in and can lead to a complaining spirit. If we allow ingratitude to fester, our hearts become cynical and bitter. Instead of reverencing God, we grow resentful and turn away from him in rebellious defiance.

Sadly, this was exactly what happened to God's chosen people during their wilderness season. Read Psalm 78:9-31 and describe how their ingratitude led to their destruction.

DAY 3 – THE DANGER OF OUR INGRATITUDE



According to Romans 1:18-32, what happens to anyone who fails to acknowledge God's glory and obey His truth?

The Apostle Paul was a man who was transformed by the gospel. After surrendering to Jesus on the road to Damascus, the once prideful Pharisee had a completely new outlook on life. Read Philippians 3:4-14. What does Paul now consider "gain"? How does his perspective help guard His heart from ingratitude?

When we consider how much Jesus has sacrificed for us on the cross, our hearts are overwhelmed with gratitude, and we find less reasons to grumble and complain.

How does Jesus expose the danger of our ingratitude through a parable found in Matthew 18:23-35?

Our prideful hearts grow callous to the needs of others when we fail to remember how God has extended His mercy to us. We were undeserving of forgiveness, but Jesus sacrificed His all and died on the cross to save us from sin.

If we live overwhelmed with gratitude, we extend God's mercy to the undeserving. We acknowledge that we have received more than we deserve, and we cannot help but share His goodness.

DAY 4 – OUR DEDICATION IN ADVERSITY



When we are overwhelmed with gratitude, we live wholly devoted to worshiping God and bringing honor to His name. We can expect opposition to our decision because we live in a fallen world where sin brings pain and sorrow. The enemy of our souls hates our commitment to honor God, and he disrupts our lives in order to discourage us. To remain dedicated to God, we need to prepare our hearts to stay steadfast during seasons of adversity.

Read Psalm 28. Based on David's example in verses 1-3, what course of action should be taken in response to trouble in our lives? What do you learn about the posture of David's heart from his lips and his hands?

David has placed His full confidence in the Lord. When we cry out to God in prayer during times of adversity, we acknowledge our total dependance on Him for deliverance.

Rather than festering in worry over the chaotic circumstances out of his control, David focuses his attention on the faithfulness of the eternal, unchanging God. Take a look back at Psalm 28:6-9 and note all the aspects of God's character that fill him with confidence.

Names during the time of Moses reflected the feelings of the parents at that time. We read about Moses's two sons in Exodus 3:22 and Exodus 18:4. What do their names mean?

DAY 4 – OUR DEDICATION IN ADVERSITY



During hardship, we can rise above discouragement and defeat when we choose to express our trust in God and thank Him for His steadfast love and mercy. Read Job 1:13-22. How did Job proclaim his dedication to God in the midst of his adversity?

Job declared that God was in control of His life, and He bowed in acceptance to His sovereign plan and blessed His name. He never learned a reason for His affliction, but He gained a greater understanding of who God was.

Although we may experience great physical and emotional loss, God has promised we will have great gain spiritually. How does James 1:2-4 indicate that we benefit from our trials?

The “patience” described by James is more than simply enduring our trials. It denotes remaining steadfast. When we choose to “count it all joy,” God strengthens our faith and fills us with His supernatural hope. We develop a peaceful disposition that simply refuses to give up in the midst of adversity because we know God will never forsake us.

According to 2 Corinthians 2:14, why can we always give thanks to God?

If you are walking through a difficult season right now, your determination to continue to praise God produces a sweet aroma that others will notice. Your sacrifice will draw others to ask you what your secret is for surviving the worst thing ever. Let them know you aren’t fighting this battle in your own strength. Almighty God is fighting for you, and He alone gets the glory.

DAY 5 – THE DECISION OF INDEBTEDNESS



I wish I could go back to visit my twenty-year-old self and teach my foolish younger self about “compound interest.” I failed to understand that my small debt would get larger by the day unless I worked hard to pay it off. The liability kept me in bondage for years.

A financial deficit may weigh heavy on our hearts, but it pales in comparison to the debt of sin we can never repay on our own. When we fully understand how Jesus has set us free, gratitude overflows from our unfettered heart.

Read Luke 17:11-19. How did the Samaritan show he fully understood his indebtedness to Jesus?

Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe points out how we tend to respond like the ungrateful lepers: “Too often we are content to enjoy the gift, but we forget the Giver. We are quick to pray but slow to praise.”

Based on Luke 18:9-17, what qualities are evident in a person who truly understands the debt of their sin? (Make sure you re-read verse 9 and note the reason Jesus shared this parable.)

During this time of history, tax collectors were despised as unscrupulous men who sold their souls to Rome in order to line their pockets with money. A tax collector was an unlikely candidate for mercy in his community. Yet, he understood the debt he owed, and his actions displayed his true repentance. The contrite action of “beating his breast” signaled his change of heart.

DAY 5 – THE DECISION OF INDEBTEDNESS



Describe the beautiful display of indebtedness found in Luke 7:36-38. How does Jesus commend the extravagant display through his story in verses 41-48?

The act of anointing normally took place when oil was poured on an individual's head. However, this humble woman decided to bow at the feet of her Savior and pour out an expensive perfume to express her indebtedness.

Read Luke 21:1-4. Jesus commended the widow's sacrifice by explaining:
"She out of her poverty put in _____."

When we live with indebted hearts, we commit our all to worship the Savior who sacrificed His all to save us. Warren Wiersbe explains: *"When it comes to our giving, God sees more than the portion; He also sees the proportion. Men see what is given, but God sees what is left, and by that He measures the gift and the condition of our hearts."* Read Genesis 40. How did the cupbearer display the ungrateful condition of his heart in his response to Joseph?

Let's close our time today deciding to thank the Lord for His goodness and grace in our lives. In Psalm 103:1-5, David says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" David did not want to forget all the ways He had experienced God's kindness and generosity. How has God healed you? Redeemed you? Satisfied you with good things? Write your own version of Psalm 103:1-5 below to express your indebtedness.



WEEK 2

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GREATNESS

I laid my head down on the pillow, but I couldn't fall asleep. My mind refused to rest even though I was exhausted after a long day of work. I had a problem I could not fix. The messy situation was totally out of my control, and I had no idea what to do. I didn't want to spend the whole night imagining every worse-case scenario possible, so I decided to pray until I fell asleep.

Are your problems too big for you to handle? The troubles of this world can weigh heavy on our hearts. When we focus on the pain and the brokenness, we end up living paralyzed by fear and doubt. We forget how awesome our God is and how able He is to help us.

Friend, our God is greater than any obstacles in our way. What seems impossible to us does not surprise or alarm the Almighty. He reigns over every corner of this earth and all that concerns us. We can trust He will act on our behalf because we belong to Him.

Our skewed perspective of our obstacles shifts when we focus on the magnitude of our God. When we recognize His greatness, we cannot help but be overwhelmed with gratitude. Instead of laying in bed consumed by worry, we can turn our thoughts to the immeasurable majesty and splendor of our God.

"Praise him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness!"
(Psalm 150:2)

DAY 1 – GOD’S CREATION IS MAGNIFICENT



As a child, I loved singing “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.” I’d hold my cupped hands out in front of my body and belt out the words with great confidence. As I’ve grown older, I am going to confess that some days I forget the simple truth of those lyrics. I end up wringing my hands in worry and fear that my world is going to fall apart.

God created the whole world, and He holds it in His mighty hands. When we gain a solid understanding of this truth, our faith in God’s greatness increases and our fears about our problems diminish.

Read Psalm 19:1-4. How do the heavens declare the glory of God?

God’s glory is a term difficult to define, but creation itself speaks powerfully to reveal how our God is perfect in holiness, overflowing in abundance, and beautiful in splendor.

What does creation reveal about God’s character according to Psalm 33:1-8?
What should be our response?

To “fear” the Lord does not mean we are distressed or afraid in His presence. Viewing His greatness as Creator should fill us with a humble devotion and move us to worship Him.

Turn back a few pages and read Psalm 8. How does the psalmist’s perspective of himself change when he sees God’s majesty in creation?

DAY 1 – GOD’S CREATION IS MAGNIFICENT



The word “mindful” in verse 4 implies that God cares for us. God not only remembers us, He shows attentive concern to our needs.

In the midst of his affliction, the psalmist gains hope and strength by reflecting on God’s creation. Take a moment to read and reflect on Psalm 102. According to verses 25-28, what does creation teach him about God’s greatness that brings him such comfort?

In a world where everything changes, and we feel like nothing is certain, we can cling to the certain truth that Almighty God remains constant. No matter what happens today, you can remind yourself: “God, you remain the same.” The eternal God’s unchanging nature will never fail us.

In light of God’s creation, why does Jeremiah 32:17 indicate we can say “thank you” to our God?

God’s “outstretched arm” was often used to refer to His deliverance. When we view God’s infinite power in creation, we gain an understanding of how He acts beyond the limits of our human understanding or expectation.

Today, we can give thanks because the everlasting God who created the ends of the earth never grows faint or weary, and He has promised to give us power to use when we are weary and lack strength. (Isaiah 40:28-31) The same God who holds up the universe will hold us up and sustain us. (Colossians 1:16-17) Now that’s a reason to raise a hallelujah!

DAY 2 – GOD’S CHARACTER IS GOOD



As a teen, my youth pastor would often start the service by calling out to us in the audience and proclaiming: “God is good!” As a chorus, all of us would reply back: “All the time.”

Psalm 107:1 tells us to “give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for His mercy endures forever.” We are called to “confess” or verbalize our belief in His goodness. We acknowledge our gratitude when we say, “The Lord is good.”

Read Psalm 54. According to verse 6, why does the psalmist say he will give thanks to God’s name?

A holy God cannot be anything but absolutely pure and perfect. The Hebrew word translated “good” here implies that God will act with justice and do what is right. Out of His goodness, He takes action to ensure those He values will be blessed.

According to Psalm 86:5, what actions does God take to display His goodness?

We can give thanks today because our God is “ready to forgive.” We don’t have to strive to gain His favor. Out of the riches of His grace, our Heavenly Father is eager to pardon us when we confess our sins.

DAY 2 – GOD’S CHARACTER IS GOOD

Read Luke 6:35 and Matthew 5:44-45. How is God good to the undeserving? How should His actions toward us affect our response to those who sin against us?

When we remember the goodness of our God, we can lay aside our expectations of others. “Hoping for nothing in return” only becomes easier after we have encountered God and entered into communion with Him. His presence in our daily lives is our greatest reward.

You may be thinking about how hard it is to put this Scripture into practice. Read Psalm 119:65-72 out loud for some encouragement.

Write out verse 68 below as a personal prayer.

Psalm 34:8 says: “Oh, _____ and _____ that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who _____ in Him.”

We are invited to experience and enjoy God’s goodness. When we put our trust in God as our refuge, He fills our lives with the sweetness of His grace.



DAY 3 – GOD’S ACTIONS ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE



The book of wisdom in our Bible asks a question I’ve whispered in my heart many times after being disappointed by someone unreliable: “Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?” (Proverbs 20:6)

Unlike man, God remains true to His Word and always keeps His promises. We can trust our God will do what He said and accomplish His plan for our redemption. We can give thanks today because our Heavenly Father is worthy of our trust.

Read Psalm 33:1-4. Why does the Psalmist say we should give thanks to the Lord?

God’s work is the outcome of His Word, and He will stay true to His Word. The Lord is faithful in all His words and kind in all His works. (Psalm 145:13)

Psalm 111 encourages us to gather in community and “Praise the Lord” with our whole heart. Read through this Psalm and take note of all the reasons the Psalmist indicates he is overwhelmed with gratitude. How does He describe the works of God’s hand in verse 7?

Everything God does on our behalf stands on certainty. He stays constant and unchangeable. Take a look at Psalm 91:3-5 and Psalm 57:2-3. How does God’s faithfulness act on your behalf?

DAY 3 – GOD’S ACTIONS ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE



The “buckler” mentioned in Psalm 91:4 signifies a protective defense wrapped around the soldier to surround him with security. What a beautiful picture of how God’s faithfulness shelters us!

Here is the amazing thing about our God:

“If we are faithless, He _____; He cannot deny himself.”

2 Timothy 2:13)

Based on I John 1:9, how does God display His faithfulness to us when we turn from our sin?

God had promised to forgive us and remember our sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:34) He sent Jesus to die on the cross in our place to fulfill that promise. Our faithful Father’s promises never fail.

The Apostle John got a glimpse of heaven and described how one day we will bow in worship before Jesus, the One Who is Faithful and True. (Revelation 19:6-11) Our gratitude today is getting us ready for that glorious day when we see our Savior face to face in all His glory. As we wait for the Lord’s return, let’s remember we are here to sing of His steadfast love and make known His faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 89:1)

DAY 4 – GOD’S LOVE IS STEADFAST



During a dark season of my life, I stopped believing in love. Someone I cared about deeply proved false and left me feeling unwanted and forgotten. I thought this love was forever, but instead my trust was fractured.

Maybe you’ve experienced a broken heart, and you have put a big protective wall around your pain. Instead of opening up our lives to experience all the love God has for us, we sometimes blame Him for the sin of others. We fail to see that the steadfast love of God never falters.

Read Psalm 118:1-4. What does the Psalmist repeat four times as a refrain of praise?

The Hebrew word for “mercy” here is “hesed.” We can see the depth of meaning in this word by the different nuances we find in different translations. Go to biblegateway.com on your computer, and look up the verse in the ESV, NASB, NLT, AMP, and CSB translations to dig a little deeper.

Based on Psalm 145:8-9, who are the beneficiaries of God’s great mercy and steadfast love?

Turn back to Psalm 36:5-10. How extensive is the impact of our merciful God’s steadfast love in our universe?

David describes the enormity of God’s steadfast love and mercy by describing how its expanse covers the vastness of creation. God’s love truly is immeasurable and greater than all the grandeur our eyes can see.

DAY 4 – GOD’S LOVE IS STEADFAST

Read Micah 7:18-19 and Isaiah 54:10. Take note of the word repeated in both of these verses. What did you learn about God’s character?

God’s constancy and compassion displays His mercy to us. He sees we are enslaved to sin, and He comes to our rescue. We stand undeserving of God’s steadfast love, and yet He unconditionally extends his unfailing love to us.

Reflect on the sweet promise found in Lamentations 3:21-23. Why does meditating on the steadfast love of our merciful Lord fill us with hope?

- God’s love never runs out.
- His love never quits.
- His love never walks away from us.

“Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.” (Psalm 106:1)



DAY 5 – GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES



I turned off the television and told my husband I wanted to stop and pray. The news report on the screen had filled me with anxiety, and I needed to stop listening to the voice of fear. I needed to remember God was in charge of the universe.

When we are overwhelmed by adversity in life, you and I can find hope by remembering that God is sovereign over every situation.

Read Psalm 103:19-22. What does David proclaim is true about God Almighty in verse 19?

David was overwhelmed with gratitude because He understood the Lord governed over creation. Because God is sovereign, we can have confidence that He is seated on the throne in heaven reigning in authority over every detail of our lives. He remains firmly in control.

Psalm 115:3 says, “Our God is in heaven; He does _____.”

From His exalted position in heaven, our all-powerful God has unlimited liberty to act at any moment. The Hebrew word translated “pleases” here implies that He delights to show His favor to those who place their trust in Him and practice justice and righteousness.

Based on Proverbs 21:30, how can you find great confidence and security today because your God is sovereign?

DAY 5 – GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES



The wisdom of the world is futile in comparison to God's wisdom. Because the Almighty knows everything, He remains completely unrestricted. He alone embodies truth and determines what is right and wrong. Bible teacher Donald C. Fleming points out: "It is useless to fight against God, and just as useless to fight without him."³

Read Luke 1:37, Matthew 19:26, Ephesians 3:20, and Job 42:2.

Job asserted a truth we need to remind ourselves of daily about our God:

"I know _____."

God will always do whatever He wants, and His will cannot be hindered.

Let's close our time today putting this Scripture into practice: "I will proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign Lord; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone." (Psalm 71:16, NIV). Write a prayer below expressing your overwhelming gratitude to your Sovereign God.

³ Fleming, Donald C. "Commentary on Proverbs 21:30." Fleming's Bridgeway Bible Commentary. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bbc/proverbs-21.html>. 2005

Rest in this truth today from Colossians 1:16-18: You are secure in God's sovereign care because Jesus is seated on the throne in heaven, and He is holding your world together.



WEEK 3

REMEMBERING GOD'S GRACE

I sat on the shore and stared out at the vast ocean in awe. The breadth of the watery blue blanket never seemed to end. I knew its greatest depth was way beyond my reach. The waves kept crashing onto the shore, but never once did I fear the sea would empty out of water.

God's grace is equally amazing. When our sin increased, His grace abounded all the more. (Romans 5:20) The depth and breadth of the Lord's grace extends beyond the scope of our guilt and our shortcomings. We can trust that His inexhaustible grace is sufficient to cover us.

Sin empties us of all joy and peace. But God's grace is greater. When we realize how boundless God's grace is, our weary hearts overflow with gratitude.

DAY 1 – GOD FORGIVES OUR SIN



Years ago, my pastor defined grace using each letter of the word to form a memorable sentence: God's riches at Christ's expense. God loved us so much that He gave His only Son to pay for our sin. (John 3:16) Because of His amazing grace, we can give thanks because we were once lost, but now we see. He has opened our eyes, and we have turned from darkness to light. (Acts 26:18)

Read Psalm 32:1-5. Who does David say is blessed beyond measure?

David describes the depth of God's grace 3 ways and gives us reason to rejoice:

- The heavy burden of our sin has been lifted.
- The shame and guilt of our sin has been covered.
- The debt of sin has been wiped away and no longer counts against us.

Ephesians 1:3-10 says God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. If we have placed our faith in Christ for forgiveness of our sin, we are redeemed through His blood. We can give thanks because we stand fully forgiven of our sin. According to verses 7 and 8, what has God lavished on us out of His riches?

"Riches" here describes the abundant goodness of our generous God who blesses us even when we do not deserve His compassion. Jesus sacrificed His life to purchase your salvation because God values you. You are His beloved.

DAY 1 – GOD FORGIVES OUR SIN



Skip ahead a few verses and read Ephesians 2:1-9. Based on verses 8 and 9, why does God save us by His grace, and not as we strive to work for His favor?

Pastor John Piper explains how the gift of God's grace impacts our faith: "Faith cannot boast in human goodness or competence or wisdom, because faith focuses on the free, all-supplying grace of God. Whatever goodness faith sees, it sees as the fruit of grace."

Read Isaiah 12:1-3. We can give thanks today because God has turned His anger away from us. What is our salvation compared to in verse 3? How does this tie into what Jesus said in John 4:14?

When our sin is forgiven, we can begin drawing from an unending source of refreshment. Our salvation is eternal, and our joy never runs out.

Psalm 103:2-3 says we should _____ the Lord and forget not all His benefits: He forgives _____ our iniquity and _____ us.

We can bow down and give thanks to the Lord today because our sin debt is paid in full by the blood of Jesus. What a gift of His grace! Let's bless His name because we know He is coming back to save us and complete our healing. One day soon, there will be no more sickness or death because sin will be wiped away forever. Hallelujah!

DAY 2 – GOD DELIVERS US FROM DEATH



Read 2 Corinthians 1:9-10. Paul was confident that God could not only save us from the sentence of death, but He was able to _____ the dead.
(verse 9)

Why was he confident that God would deliver him from death in the future?

Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe indicates that “Paul saw God’s hand of deliverance whether he looked back, around, or ahead.” Friend, this is the same confidence you can have in your God today.

Based on Colossians 1:12-13, what inheritance have we gained now that we have been delivered from death?

The ESV translation indicates we have been delivered from the “domain of darkness.” Domain denotes authority. God has transferred us from under the authority of the enemy of our souls and placed us under the rule of His Beloved Son.

Today we can offer God our thanks because He has delivered our soul from death and kept our feet from falling so that we can walk before God in the light of life. (Psalm 56:12-13) Death can no longer destroy us because the God of all grace has heard our cry for help. (Psalm 18:1-6) We can look forward to the glorious day when Jesus will return to vanquish the power of death once and for all. (Hebrews 2:14-15; I Corinthians 15:25-26)

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DAY 2 – GOD DELIVERS US FROM DEATH



In middle school, my English teacher had us memorize a sonnet by John Donne titled, “Death, be not proud.” The poet speaks directly to death as his enemy and ends with these lines: *One short sleep past, we wake eternally, And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.* When we realize how God has delivered us from death, our hearts are overwhelmed with gratitude. We do not need to fear death because Jesus has defeated it.

Read Psalm 116:1-8. How does the psalmist declare he has experienced God’s grace?

The descriptive words used to explain the power of death speak of bondage. The ESV translation of verse 3 describes the “snares of death.” A snare was a cord used to bind and control an animal. In our sin, we remain helplessly entangled in the clutches of death, and only God can save us.

According to Psalm 33:18-19, how does God take action on behalf of those who have placed their hope in Him?

God cares for us and always has His watchful eye on us. Bible teacher Charles Spurgeon points out: “They who fear God need not fear anything else; let them fix their eye of faith on Him, and his eye of love will always rest upon them.”

How does the psalmist describe God in Psalm 68:19-20?

Don’t skip over the word “daily” in verse 19. Your God remains constant in your life today and tomorrow, and He wants to carry the burden of sin and death for you.

DAY 3 – GOD PROTECTS US FROM EVIL



When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, He instructed them to ask God to “deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13) In the quiet of our hearts, we whisper this prayer often as we watch how sin causes chaos in this world. It’s heartbreaking to see people we love make terrible choices under the power of the evil one. (1 John 5:20) Thankfully, we have received grace and peace from Jesus, our Deliverer. (Galatians 1:3-5)

Based on Psalm 27:1-3, why do we not need to fear evil?

David expresses absolute confidence in the Lord as His protector. Pastor David Guzik notes, “David’s confidence in God was battle-tested. He did not have fair-weather faith that lived in always-easy circumstances. This isn’t the joy of a man in a comfortable monastery; this is the song of a man who knew God’s goodness even in danger and despair.” 7

Read Psalm 91:9-13. What actions does God take to protect you from evil?

We get an inside glimpse of the battle of good versus evil that is taking place in the heavenlies in these verses. The lion and the snake stand for the forces of evil that are crushed by God who stands triumphant over the defeated foe. Not only are we guarded by God’s heavenly army, but the Lord Himself provides us a sanctuary. He is our refuge to shelter us and keep us secure.

DAY 3 – GOD PROTECTS US FROM EVIL



In Psalm 37, David comforts His soul by comparing the way of evildoers to the way of the righteous. Read through the Psalm and write down what you learn about each:

The way of evildoers is

The way of the righteous is

We can find great comfort in knowing that God “upholds” us today. (Psalm 37:24)
The Hebrew word used here implies that God bears the weight to support and sustain us.

Read Psalm 121 out loud. Note every time the psalmist uses the word “keep.”
Describe all the ways God is your Keeper.

Our Protector continually stands on watch to guard us. We can rest at night because He remains awake and alert. Take a look at 2 Timothy 4:17b-18. Paul says he was rescued from the lion’s mouth. As he looks ahead to the future, how does he express his confidence in God’s continued protection?

Bible scholars have described Paul’s words here as a “spontaneous doxology” in response to God’s deliverance. A doxology is an expression of praise spoken or sung as an act of worship. To close today, let’s personalize 2 Thessalonians 3:3 as our own doxology to remind us that the God of grace will keep us secure. Insert your name in the blanks below:

“But the Lord is faithful. He will establish _____ and guard

from the evil one.”

DAY 4 – GOD PROVIDES FOR OUR NEED



One of my favorite stories from the Old Testament is the story of Abraham laying His son on the altar in Genesis 22. I can only imagine the joy He experienced when he saw the lamb God provided peeking out of the thicket of trees. A sacrifice was required, but God Himself was the Provider.

There have been many days I have worried about what I lacked or how little I had to offer. My fears have always proved unfounded. I confess I often fail to remember how God has promised to meet my needs.

Friend, may God help us to never forget this truth: God is full of grace, and He never fails to supply what we cannot secure for ourselves. Read Psalm 65:9-13. How does David take note of God's provision and praise Him?

David acknowledges that the bountiful harvest was a result of God's supernatural provision, not because of human effort. The overflow of God's abundance filled His heart with immense gratitude.

According to Philippians 4:19 and 2 Peter 1:3, how has God promised to provide what you need today?

The Greek word translated as "supply" in Philippians 4:19 implies "to make full." God does not trickle out His provision. He generously provides "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over" right into our lap. (Luke 6:38)

God's provision extends past the physical. He supplies what our spirit needs. Based on I Corinthians 10:13, how does He provide for you when you are struggling with sin?

DAY 4 – GOD PROVIDES FOR OUR NEED



OWe first see God called Jehovah Jireh, our Provider, in Genesis 22:14 by Abraham on the day God supplied the sacrificial lamb he needed to lay on the altar. This miracle foreshadowed the way God would continually provide for our sin. Your God sent Jesus as your Passover Lamb to rescue you from the power of sin. As Pastor Eugene Peterson explains, “...All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he’ll never let you be pushed past your limit; he’ll always be there to help you come through it.” (I Corinthians 10:13, MSG).

Read Psalm 34:10 and Psalm 84:11. How do these two passages fill you with confidence for this season?

The psalmist gives thanks for the blessing of God’s favor by recognizing “the Lord will give grace and glory” (Psalm 84:11) God regards our need and withholds nothing back. His generosity knows no bounds.

2 Corinthians 9:8 states that “God is able to make _____ abound toward you, that you, always having _____ in all things, may have an abundance for _____.”

The Greek word translated as “sufficiency” here paints a picture of contentment or complete satisfaction. God’s provision abounds and fills us “to the excess.”

Let’s give thanks because we can trust His grace will supply exactly what we need so that we are enriched in every way to be generous in every way. (2 Corinthians 9:11) Our God takes action on our behalf out of His grace, and we respond out of gratitude.

DAY 5 – GOD ANSWERS OUR PRAYER



My husband and I have a basket full of rocks that helps us remember God answers prayer. Every year in December, we take a look back at all God has done, and we write out an answer to prayer on a rock to celebrate His blessings. Recently, we took all the rocks out and read through them to remind our weary hearts that God has never failed to show Himself faithful in response to the cry of our troubled hearts.

In Psalm 28:6, David worships God by saying: “Blessed be the Lord! Because He has

_____.”

Read 2 Samuel 22:1-7. List all the attributes of God that David describes to praise Him for “hearing” his voice and responding to His prayer.

Based on Psalm 34:17, how does God answer our prayers for His help?

Bible scholars believe that David wrote this psalm in a cave where he was hiding from King Saul, who was trying to kill him. His spirit was crushed because of his experiences, but David trusted that God saw his troubles. Like David, we can seek the Lord in faith and experience freedom from fear.

Read I John 5:14-15. What confidence can we have if we pray according to God’s will?

DAY 5 – GOD ANSWERS OUR PRAYER

The Greek word for “confidence” is “parresia” and denotes boldness and freedom to speak publicly and openly. Friend, because we KNOW God answers prayer, we can boldly speak His praise. Our hearts are overwhelmed with gratitude, and we simply cannot stay silent because our God is so good to us!

According to Psalm 145:18-19, how does God respond to those who call on Him in truth?

God’s caring response to our prayers is certain because He is “gracious” in all His works. (see Psalm 145:17) Close your eyes and take a deep breath and remind yourself that Your God is near to you, and He hears your cry.

Friend, today we can give thanks because we have waited patiently for the God of grace, and He has heard our cry, lifted us up from the pit of destruction, set our feet on the rock, and made our steps secure. (Psalm 40:1-3) You and I can trust our Deliverer takes thought of us. (Psalm 40:17) He will always respond to the prayer of His children and save us.





WEEK 4

RESPONDING WITH WORSHIP

Can you imagine if you spent the whole day preparing a wonderful party for someone you deeply loved only to not receive a “thank you” or any acknowledgement of your efforts? After all the love and effort you had expended, you’d probably feel unappreciated and insignificant. Gratitude shows recognition and appreciation and speaks of what we value.

How do we express our gratitude to God? We worship Him. Out of reverence, we choose to honor the Almighty. In humility, we offer Him our love wholeheartedly and submit to His leadership. With hearts overwhelmed with gratitude, we live to exalt Who He is and make Him known to the world.

Our God is worthy of our total adoration and reverence. This week, we will look at five different ways we can recognize how awesome He is and honor Him with our lives.

DAY 1 – AS WE PRAISE...



I stood with hands lifted high in an outdoor amphitheater as worship leader Matt Redman led a large crowd in worship. The song lyrics talked about how God is rich in love. His name is great, and His heart is kind. Because God is good, we all lifted our hearts and kept on singing.

Thinking about how good our God is fills us with gratitude. In light of all He has done, we praise His name as we open our mouths and proclaim He is worthy. We truly have more than ten thousand reasons to praise Him.

Read Psalm 95:1-3. What actions does the psalmist suggest we take to honor God with worship?

The ESV translation says we should make a “joyful noise.” This shout was a loud cry to celebrate God acting as Creator or their Deliverer. We recognize how great our God is in contrast to our own frailty and need.

Based on Psalm 100:4-5, why should we praise our God?

We can use David’s framework to help us form our own praise song:

Recognize Your God is good.

Remember His love is steadfast.

Reflect on His faithfulness.

Praise expresses our appreciation for what God has done on our behalf. Let’s learn from Moses’ example in Exodus 15:1-18. List everything you learn about God through his song of praise:

DAY 1 – AS WE PRAISE...



God had performed a miracle and parted the Red Sea to rescue Moses and the Israelites. Had God not intervened, they would have perished. God was their only hope. This act of deliverance foreshadows the miracle God has done in our lives through Jesus. Today, we can praise our God because He made a way for us by sending Jesus to save us. Hallelujah! Take a look at how David recounts God's wonderful deeds in Psalm 9. Note how he uses the word praise 3 times in verses 2, 11, and 14.

Let's personalize verses 9 & 10 to praise our God. Insert your name in the blanks:
The Lord will be a refuge for _____ in times of trouble.
_____ knows Your name and puts her trust in You, for You, O Lord, have not forsaken _____.

Psalms 9 and 10 actually use an acrostic format by using each letter of the Hebrew alphabet to share a word of praise. Try following this framework by grabbing a piece of paper and writing out the 26 letters of the alphabet. Describe how awesome your God is from A to Z. Read David's song of praise in Psalm 30 and note all the actions he shares that God has taken on his behalf.

Based on verses 11 and 12, why does David say he simply cannot stay silent?

Dancing is joyfully declaring our praise with our physical body. We express our reverence for God with all of our being – our thoughts, our emotions, our actions, and our words. Let's give thanks to the Lord for turning our mourning into dancing. With hearts overwhelmed with gratitude, let's worship Him and not stay silent.

DAY 2 – AS WE PRAY...



When we value someone, we make time for them. We listen to what they say, and we share our hearts openly. What matters to them becomes important to us, and we verbalize our respect.

Prayer is how we communicate with God. Jesus modeled the importance of prayer for us during his time on earth. He valued His private times of prayer with the Father, and He even taught the disciples how to pray.

The Lord's prayer begins with praise. (Matthew 6:5-14) We pray to God, "Hallowed be Your name" because our hearts are overwhelmed with gratitude.

We worship as we pray. How does the Apostle Paul explain this to the church in Colossae in Colossians 4:2?

The NASB translation of this verse reads "Devote yourselves to prayer..." It was a call to remain faithfully steadfast in our communication with God. We worship as we pray with persistence and determination.

Our prayerful worship perseveres even when we face persecution and suffering. In Acts 16:22-34, how did Paul and Silas decide to spend their time after they were arrested for preaching about Jesus?

Take note that Paul and Silas did not necessarily pray for their release. They took their eyes off of their temporal circumstances and turned to look at Jesus. They said, "Even in this, we will praise Your name." Their physical bodies may have been chained, but their spirits remained free.

DAY 2 – AS WE PRAY...



According to Philippians 4:6-7, what blessing do we receive from God when we choose to pray instead of worry?

When we pray with thanksgiving, we give testimony of our trust in God. As we remember His goodness and grace, the Lord sets us free from anxious thoughts.

Read Psalm 55:16-17 and Psalm 119:164. How was prayer a continual part of the day for the Psalmist? Have you considered setting aside specific times to pray throughout your day? Write out Psalm 141:2 below.

How is prayer like an offering that emanates a pleasing aroma to our God?

Let's close our time in a prayer of praise using the words of Psalm 146 as our inspiration:

Lord, we will praise You as long as we live. We will sing Your praises all the days we have breath. We don't put our trust in the rulers of this world, but in You Who are our salvation. You made heaven and earth, and You are our help and our hope. Thank You for being a faithful God who is just and provides what we need. You've set us free and opened our eyes to see. You watch over us and uphold us. You reign forever, and You are over all generations. We are overwhelmed with gratitude. Thank You, God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 3 – AS WE SERVE...



I love it when I go through a drive through window for a chicken sandwich and an alert young person in uniform shows up quickly to hand me my lunch. I say “thank you” as I reach for my waffle fries, and the helpful attendant always replies, “My pleasure.”

I want to be a woman who serves God out of delight, not duty. When I recognize how great my God is and remember all that He has done for me, everything I do should be an act of obedient worship to say: “Thank You, God.”

What action does the psalmist encourage us to take in his call to worship in Psalm 100:2?

The word “serve” here refers to labor that is focused on honoring another person. Our worship and our work operate together to bring glory to God. Wherever our hands and feet are active, we give Him our all and magnify His name.

Take a peek at Psalm 2:11 as well. Based on both Psalm 100:2 and Psalm 2:11, what should be our motivation as we serve?

To serve is to willingly submit. No one is forcing us to strive for the Lord. We do so out of the overwhelming gratitude in our hearts.

Read I Samuel 12:24. In his message to God’s people, the Prophet Samuel says we should fear the Lord and serve Him because.....

DAY 3 – AS WE SERVE...



I love it when I go through a drive through window for a chicken sandwich and an alert young person in uniform shows up quickly to hand me my lunch. I say “thank you” as I reach for my waffle fries, and the helpful attendant always replies, “My pleasure.”

I wantThe fear of the Lord mentioned here described recognizing the awesomeness of God and committing to keep His commands to show respect and submission.

Spend a few minutes reading through Romans 12:1:13. Describe what our service looks like when we worship.

Paul uses the same wording that describes the service of the priest at the temple in Old Testament times. The priest had to consecrate Himself before he could enter into God’s presence. We present our all on the altar of sacrifice by yielding our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to serve the Lord.

Let’s close our time today personalizing Colossians 3:17 as our commitment to worship and serve God for all He has done for us. Insert your name into the blanks below:

Whatever _____ does in word or deed _____ will do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

DAY 4 – AS WE CONFESS...



When we think of “confessing,” we may have some fears of opening up our lives to scrutiny. For many of us, confessing means acknowledging our guilt. But confession actually means we are in “harmony” with God.

Philippians 2:10-11 explains that one day everyone will bow to Jesus and confess His name to bring glory to God, the Father. Ultimately, all of creation will submit to God. Our worship now is just a glimpse of the overwhelming gratitude we will feel on the day we see Jesus face to face. When we confess, we acknowledge our agreement with our Heavenly Father that we are sinners in need of His forgiveness, and we profess He is good and deserving of all glory and praise.

Read Nehemiah 9:1-3. How did the Israelites respond to the reading of God’s Word?

Bible Scholar D.A. Carson explains, “True confession arises from a renewed appreciation of who God is, and that is very much the starting point for this prayer.”

You’ll find a beautiful prayer of confession in Daniel 9:1-19. Take note of how Daniel paints a sharp contrast between the sins of the Israelites and the mercy of God:

What do you learn about Israel’s sin?

What do you learn about God’s mercy?

DAY 4 – AS WE CONFESS...



The original Hebrew word for “confession” in verse 4 is “yadah.” The first time this word is found in the Bible is in Genesis 22:18, but in that instance, we find the English word “praise.” When we acknowledge our sin and recognize God’s holiness, we are offering praise through our confession. Our repentance professes our agreement with God and our submission to Him as our Lord.

Solomon’s prayer to dedicate the temple in I Kings 8:22-53 includes confession and worship. Based on verses 41-45, how does God respond to our confession?

The phrase “maintain their cause” in verse 45 speaks of how the God of justice will uphold His people whenever they face a battle. He reigns as Judge over all, and He faithfully rules in righteousness.

Read John 9. How did the blind man “confess” his faith in Christ in verses 30-32?

This blind man points out that the argument of the Pharisees against Jesus cannot be true because God does not hear the prayer of sinners. (See Isaiah 1:15 and Psalm 66:18) David’s prayer in Psalm 51 is a confession of repentance. Based on verses 10-15, what changes are evident in our lives when we have truly turned from sin and submitted to God?

To “show forth” in verse 15 is translated “declare” in the ESV and NIV. When we are fully forgiven and free from guilt and shame, God transforms our hearts. We cannot help but speak of His goodness because we have experienced His grace. Overwhelmed with gratitude we confess He alone is our Salvation.

DAY 4 – AS WE CONFESS...



Many churches practice declaring a “confession of faith” as part of their worship service.

Let’s end our time today by reading out loud this adapted version of the **Nicene Creed**

I believe in One God, Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all ages.

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created,
of one essence with the Father,
through whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit
and of the Virgin Mary and became Man.

He was crucified for our salvation under Pontius Pilate,
and suffered and was buried.

And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and sat at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.
His Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life,
Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father
and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
Who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the ages to come.

Amen.

Reardon, JoHannah. (2008, July 30). “The Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds.” Christianity Today.

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/articles/churchhomeleadership/nicene-apostles-creeds.html>

DAY 5 – AS WE HOPE...



Psalm 147:7-11 provides a call to worship. He is the reason we sing and worthy of our praise. Based on verse 11, what is evident in the life of those who please the Lord?

When we “hope in His mercy,” we place our confidence in God and wait with complete trust that He will act because His love is steadfast.

Read Hebrews 10:19-23. Why should we “hold fast” to the confession of hope without wavering?

The implication is we have hope because our trust is placed in a God who is dependable and worthy of our confidence. What the Lord has promised, He will certainly provide. Check out Colossians 1:24-28. Who is the hope of glory? How are we encouraged to share our hope in verse 28?

Note the word that is repeated 3 times in verse 28. The Good News about hope in Christ is
for _____ .

How does Paul live this out in front of Agrippa in Acts 26? (Take special note verses 6 and 7)

DAY 5 – AS WE HOPE...



Paul's hope was undergirded by the belief that the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The promises of God were His firm foundation.

Because of Christ, we have a hope that helps us rise above our pain and suffering as we look to eternity with Jesus. Read Job 13:15. How did Job "look ahead" to the hope He had in God?

The ESV translation of Job 13:15 reads: "Though he slay me, I will hope in him..."

Friends, we worship a good God who extends His grace to undeserving sinners like you and me. Our hope is anchored to the One Who is Faithful and True.

One of the best ways to cultivate a heart of gratitude is to set aside time to remind ourselves of the Truth. Take a moment this week to look back over the last four weeks of study and reflect on all you have learned about God's steadfast love.

Let's end our time together with a prayer of thanksgiving:

Father, You are a good God, and I am indebted to You. Thank You for inviting me into Your grace. You've forgiven my sin and delivered me from death. Daily, You provide what I need and protect me from evil. Bless You for hearing my cry and answering my prayer. I stand in awe of Your greatness and glory. Your creation is magnificent, and your actions are faithful and true. Every circumstance in my life is under Your sovereign control and covered by Your steadfast love. With all my heart, soul, and mind, I worship You and confess You alone are my God. I place all my hope in You and will live to praise Your name. Amen.

Thank you!

Thank you for joining us for this study on Gratitude I pray it was a blessing to spend time getting to know God through these two books of the Bible. I pray He continues to grow your faith through the study of His word.

Meet the Author

LYLI DUNBAR

Lyli Dunbar's burning passion as a writer, speaker and Biblical life coach is to fuel a wildfire faith in the weary hearted. She starts every weekday by digging into the Word verse by verse with thousands of women as a writer for [Proverbs 31 Ministries' First 5 App](#) and [Love God Greatly](#). A fireball at heart, Lyli is energized by singing karaoke in the car with her husband, reading 12 books at a time, and cooking Cuban food for a full house. Stop by lylidunbar.com to grab faith fuel for your day or connect with her on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), or [Twitter](#). You'll love her free downloadable resources including a [30-day Pray Big Calendar](#).

