

Week 1: October 25 – 31

Being ThankFULL means paying attention

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” Colossians 4:2

Being thankful is an easy thing to do, but it takes some intentionality. We often get wrapped up in enjoying our blessings and we forget to say “thank you” to God. Other times, we get so consumed by our daily concerns and worldly troubles that we fail to recognize the blessings that are certainly present even in dark days. Colossians 4:2 says “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” There is always something to be thankful for if we are watchful and paying attention. And so, the very first step to being ThankFull, is to pay attention to what is going on around you, and where God is present and at work. Resist getting swept away by the busyness of the world, but rather ground yourself in prayer. Pause. Breathe. Listen. God is present and working among the people and the moments that often go unnoticed. David was nearly overlooked to become king because he was the youngest among Jesse’s sons (1 Samuel 16). Elijah was looking for God in the strong wind and in the earthquake, but God was actually present in the still small voice (1 Kings 19). Thankfully, it was because Samuel took notice that David became king, and it was because Elijah took notice that he was able to feel God’s presence. What will we behold if we start paying attention? During this first week of ThankFULL, try to be more watchful and pay attention to the things that usually go unnoticed. It doesn’t matter how small or seemingly insignificant they may be, God created it all, and it is worth lifting up in prayer of thanksgiving.

Acts of Devotion

Journaling

Praying through writing is a great way to be more attentive. Think of things you are thankful for and write them down in your ThankFULL journal. Your written words are your prayers to God.

Acts of Devotion (continued)

Meditative Prayer

Hit the pause button. It doesn't have to be for long. Breathe deep and take a moment to look and listen for the things that usually go unnoticed. Give thanks to God for the things you hear and see.



Social Media Post

Yes, even the use of social media can be a spiritual practice. If you find something you are thankful for, take a picture of it and post it using #bsumc and #thankFULL. Say why you are thankful and share your story with others, inviting them to join in the practice of paying attention.

Acts of Worship

Below is a playlist of songs for your first week of ThankFULL. Sing along with the videos as an act of worship and thanksgiving to God. Create a youtube playlist and listen to the songs as part of your daily devotion this week.

- “Be Thou My Vision” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Optrm7lF16s>
- “Awakening” Woodlands Music
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me46gy_6sYY
- “The More I Seek You” Bethel Music
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVlumi1u0FU>
- “Come Thou Fount” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax_NMWLEb6U
- “Fall Afresh” Bethel Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJAsppeugzo>
- “Great Are You Lord” All Sons and Daughters
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jCnAAeEJSQ>
- “Open Up The Heavens” Vertical Worship
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF9pVCDHN_4
- “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come” traditional hymn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FqdCskC0QE>



Week 2: November 1-7

ThankFULL for others

"I thank my God every time I remember you." Philippians 1:3

The practice of remembrance and thanksgiving of those who came before us in faith, is what Christians around the world do on All Saints Day. You may be thinking, "Wait, I thought that was just a day to remember people who have passed away within the year." Well, yes, but it is more than that. "From the early days of Christianity, there is a sense that the Church consists not only of all living believers, but also all who have gone before us."¹ We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, people of faith both living and deceased, who are encouraging us, cheering us on in our own faith journey, teaching us, and praying over us (Hebrews 11:1-12:2).

Think about how you came to know Christ and who nurtured your faith. Was it a parent who faithfully brought you to church every Sunday? Or was it a teacher who was particularly patient and kind towards you? Or maybe it was a mentor who was lovingly hard on you. Was it a preacher who prayed with you at the hospital? Take a moment right now to remember their names and their faces, their words, and their actions, and give thanks to God for those blessed saints who walked with you in your spiritual journey.

Acts of Devotion

Journaling

If you are using the gratitude journal, consider listing the people for whom you are thankful. Who are the saints who have gone before you, who made an impact on your life? You can even include people you've never met like authors, theologians, or Biblical characters.

¹ <https://www.umc.org/en/content/all-saints-day-a-holy-day-john-wesley-loved>

Acts of Kindness

Coats for Kerns

You can be a saint for others by donating a new coat for the children at Thomas E. Kerns Elementary School. Drop off is at both the Downtown and Trinity campus offices, now through November 22.



Write a Thank You Note

This week, take time to remember the people who have played a role in your faith. First, give thanks to God for them. Then, actually reach out to those persons, and tell them that you are thankful for them, and the ways in which they encouraged you in faith. They may not even know how deeply their actions impacted you unless you tell them. You can write them a letter, give them a call, or send a text.

Acts of Worship

Below is a playlist of songs for your second week of ThankFULL. Sing along with the videos as an act of worship and thanksgiving to God. Create a youtube playlist and listen to the songs as part of your daily devotion this week.

- “The Blessing” Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZ55mDL7dA0>
- “Blessed Assurance” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBnf-OL6Wwk>
- “Hallelujah For The Cross” Chris McClarney
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMvLpPDe_cU
- “How Deep The Father’s Love For Us” Stewart Townsend
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YV2zMZ-nZ7k>
- “Reckless Love” Bethel Music
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>
- “King of Kings” Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of5IcFWiEpg>

Week 3: November 8 – 14

Being ThankFULL gives you peace

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

It is without a doubt that we are living in some very anxious times, and if we are not careful, anxiety can rob us of peace. We may be worried about the future or fearful about the unknown. There are things that are beyond our control and our demand for certainty can make us anxious. Anxiety and worry are often rooted in fear. Fear pesters us with questions like “what if...” *What if I lose my job? What if I can’t pay the bills? What if we get evicted?* That question is like a cyclone, pulling us ever inward in fearful thinking. But faith is also a powerful force to be reckoned with, and it reminds us “even if...” *Even if I lose my job, God will open a new opportunity. Even if money is short, God will provide. Even if we get evicted, God will shelter us.* A way to shift us from a “what if” mentality to an “even if” spirituality, is to be thankful. Finding things to be thankful for and lifting them up to God in prayer will starve those feelings of fear, anxiety, and worry. Showing gratitude changes our perspective, helps us to see beyond the darkness and claim the light where we will find God’s peace which transcends understanding. When we are thankful, we realize that beyond the source of whatever is making us anxious, is the Source of hope and peace.

Acts of Devotion

Journaling

If you are feeling particularly anxious this week, write in your gratitude journal the source of that anxiety, fear, or worry. Then strike through that word or sentence, and beside it write down 3 things within that situation that you can be thankful for.

Acts of Devotion (continued)

Prayer of Examen

This fall, B-Street Youth studied “Faith in an Anxious World” and learned a prayer practice that may also be helpful to you.² The Prayer of Examen is from Ignatius of Loyola and provides reflective prayer prompts. Give it a try this week.

1. Become aware of God’s presence.
2. Breathe deep and slow. Simply notice God’s presence with each breath you take.
3. Then, review the day with thankfulness.
4. Pay attention to your emotions. Where is God at work in the midst of your anxious moments? What might God – or anxiety – be trying to tell you?
5. Forgive, and ask for forgiveness. Who are you angry or frustrated with? Are there things you need to let go of in order to have peace? What would you like to be forgiven for?

Acts of Worship

Below is a playlist of songs for your third week of ThankFULL. Sing along with the videos as an act of worship and thanksgiving to God. Create a youtube playlist and listen to the songs as part of your daily devotion this week.

- “It Is Well With My Soul” traditional
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkkTLpnbSTg>
- “Better Word” Leeland <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdVASupYbA0>
- “Raise a Hallelujah” Bethel Music
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2XtRuPfaAU>
- “Stand in Your Love” Bethel Music
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHLEZzyAZrI>
- “You Say” Lauren Daigle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIaT8Jl2zpl>
- “This Is a Day of New Beginnings” traditional hymn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zwRIMC9-no>

² Powell, Griffin, Dodd, and Rosales. *Faith in an Anxious World: A 4-Week High School Curriculum*. Fuller Youth Institute, 2020.



Week 4: November 15 - 21

ThankFULL to God

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.” 1 Chronicles 16:34

Your high school senior eagerly rips open the envelope from her dream college hoping it is an acceptance letter. She reads it, clutches it to her chest, and squeals “thank you!” She got in! ~ It’s been a difficult week and an even more difficult day. You are driving in the rain and it is only compounding your misery. But the clouds begin to break, and you see the sun peak behind dark clouds. It’s a reminder that the sun was there all along and that the clouds are temporary. It’s enough to reset your perspective and with a tired but honest sigh, you say “thank you.” ~ In the highs, the lows, and the even the mundane, we remember to say, “thank you.” But to whom are we saying these words of thanks? Are we releasing them into universe, or are we deliberately directing our thanksgiving to God? It is a wonderful habit to say, “thank you,” but sometimes habitual behavior can make us lose intentionality. During this fourth week of ThankFULL, be deliberate in not just recognizing your blessings and saying, “thank you,” but directing your thanks to God. After all, it is God from whom all blessings flow. 1 Chronicles 16:34 says, **“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”** God is indeed good and is the source of all good things (James 1:17), so when we recognize a blessing, let us pause to remember who is responsible for giving us that blessing. All it takes is some intentionality. Address God directly and say “God, I give you thanks.” It is such a simple change, but it directs your words and your heart towards God. Observe how this intentional step can make you more aware of God’s goodness.

Acts of Devotion

Journaling

If you are using the gratitude journal, start your daily entries this week with the words “God, I give you thanks for...”

Family Prayer Time

If you have a ritual of going around the dinner table and asking everyone what they are thankful for, have them frame their responses with, “I am thankful *to God* for...”

Social Media Post

If you find something you are thankful for, take a picture of it and post it using #bsumc and #thankFULL. Use the prompt “Thank you God for...” in your caption. It is more than being thankful, it is recognizing that the One is the source of our blessings and to whom we give thanks.

Acts of Worship

Make a Commitment

If you are thankful to God for all that is given to you, prayerfully consider making a commitment to return a portion of your gifts in thanksgiving to God. If you have not already done so, please return your Stewardship Commitment Cards to the church office.

Praise and Worship

Below is a playlist of songs for your fourth week of ThankFULL. Sing along with the videos as an act of worship and thanksgiving to God. Create a youtube playlist and listen to the songs as part of your daily devotion this week.

- “10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)” Matt Redman
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_1RI0E
- “How Great Thou Art” traditional hymn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc0QVWzCv9k>
- “Christ Be Magnified” Cody Carnes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjGMIYywK9M>
- “I Surrender All” traditional hymn
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2BnL_zI7uw
- “Goodness of God” Bethel Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f4MUUMWMV4>
- “For the Fruits of His Creation” traditional hymn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3TGM4RAZhU>

Week 5: November 22 - 28

ThankFULL in all circumstances

*“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

It is most natural and easy to give thanks when life is going well, when you receive good news, or when your blessings are obvious, but what if things aren’t going well? We are told in 1 Thessalonians to give thanks in all circumstances, but how are we supposed to be thankful when every day is difficult, the news is bad, the stress is great, and your spirit is dampened? Are we supposed to give thanks for terrible events like the pandemic or a natural disaster, for unemployment or injustice? Look again at the scripture. It does not say to give God thanks for all circumstances but to give thanks to God when we are in the midst of all circumstances. When we find that we are feeling down, beaten, or broken, we can still find things within those circumstances that can make us feel thankful. Primarily, when we feel broken, we can give thanks that God’s heart breaks for the brokenhearted. We can give thanks that God weeps with us. We can give thanks that God is present, even we are not cheerful. Being thankful in these times does not negate or invalidate your feelings, but recognizes them.

As we close out our 5 weeks of ThankFULL we open ourselves to a new journey through Advent, and we are reminded that in Christ, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). And so, in being thankful in all circumstances, our hearts are tuned to see God’s goodness and to look for the light in the darkness.

Acts of Devotion

Journaling

If you are using the gratitude journal, think of something that has given you difficulty, and use the following prayer prompt: “Despite (name your difficult circumstance), I am thankful for....”

Prayer

“Lord, teach me to offer you a heart of thanksgiving and praise in all my daily experiences of life. Teach me to be joyful always, to pray continually and to give thanks in all my circumstances. I accept them as Your will for my life. I long to bring pleasure to Your heart daily. Break the power of the enemy in my life. Defeat Him through my sacrifice of praise. Change my outlook and attitude into one of joyful contentment with my present circumstances. I thank You for... [Name a difficult circumstance in your life presently and thank God for it.]

Jesus, I want to be like You who obeyed the Father without complaint. You embraced the chains of humanity when You walked this earth. Convict me whenever I complain or compare myself with others. Give me Your attitude of humility and thankful acceptance. Teach me the power of a thankful heart. In the name of Christ, Amen.”³

Acts of Worship

Below is a playlist of songs for your last week of ThankFULL. Sing along with the videos as an act of worship and thanksgiving to God. Create a youtube playlist and listen to the songs as part of your daily devotion this week.

- “Do It Again” Elevation Worship
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B_InQIITxU
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” traditional hymn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k1WhFtVp0o>
- “Blessings” Laura Story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQan9L3yXjc>
- “Ever Be” Bethel Music
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhasSpSBdEE>
- “Good, Good Father” Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ak0OoFBw3c>
- “See a Victory” Elevation Worship
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEK6_rz26z0
- “Now Thank We All Our God” traditional hymn
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKNM5KD9_Q

³ Adapted from “A Prayer for a Thankful Heart” by Debbie Przybylski, <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/a-prayer-for-a-thankful-heart.html>