



LIFENEWS

Ready to Start Your Day?

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My phone just buzzed. It was a notification that read, "Are you ready to start your day with gratitude?" Over the last couple of months, I have been working on cultivating a lifestyle of thanksgiving. Part of having a heart of gratitude is getting reminders on my phone at the start and end of my day. I set a reminder to quickly list three things that I am thankful for that day. Most of the time, I am in the same place when I get that ding, and it works pretty well.

The problem I have run into is when I am not in a good spot, both physically and mentally. Honestly, I am not ready to start my day with gratitude when I am tired from tossing and turning all night. I don't need this question when I have 26 things on my agenda today. The question is irritating when I am running behind, getting my coffee at the coffee shop, or still driving. It is then I am tempted to ignore it, and I've done that!

The Bible says a lot about thanksgiving. There are verses we quote with frequency, "**Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.**" *Psalm 100:4* Or how about, "**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**" – *Philippians 4:6*. We know thanksgiving is connected to our prayer and worship. It is something God has called us to do. Yet, it is something we often struggle with or speed through to get to other things, like asking for something we need. Or

we think if we thank God enough, we will have a guaranteed "Yes" and believe we've hit the formula.

Thanksgiving isn't a formula. Thanksgiving is about taking your eyes off yourself and putting them on Jesus. It is the realization that you can't control and do everything yourself. You need other people and a Creator intervening in your life. Thanksgiving is what helps with our selfishness. Gratitude is not something we just do in November. Gratitude and thanksgiving are daily practices as worship to our God.

Practical tips to incorporate thanksgiving:

- **Have a reminder.** Set a phone reminder or a post-it note on a mirror.
- **Keep track.** When you don't feel like God is near, you can go back and read all of the things God has done for you.
- **Get grainy.** Whenever I ask kids what they are thankful for, someone always goes, "The whole universe." To be honest, my list almost always defaults to Jesus, my family, and something with my coffee. To help with this, get to the granular level...i.e., "I thank God for this blend of beans. I thank God for Jesus doing a specific thing in my life, etc."
- **Don't give up when you miss a day.**

As Thanksgiving approaches, may you take this month to refocus your heart on the blessings God has poured out on you.