

November: Walk in Love with Thankfulness
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Verse:

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Psalm 136:1 (ESV)

Upward Gaze:

Heavenly Father, we have been taught through Your Word to give thanks in all situations. Our prayer is that we never cease seeing the many blessings You bestow upon us daily. In Christ's most holy and precious name, Amen.

Development of Theme:

I love Thanksgivings! It's my most relaxed holiday. A few years back I decided I really needed to decorate for Thanksgiving. I went to Hobby Lobby and got some amazing decorations for the inside and outside of my house. While at the store, I purchased a beautiful box which became our family's "Thankful" box. I placed slips of paper and a pen next to the box. I called a family meeting and explained the purpose of our box.

Starting on November 1st everyone would write something that they were thankful for. They would sign their name to it, fold the paper, and place it in the box. The evening of Thanksgiving we sit around the table and divide out the pieces of paper. We each take turns reading something that someone was thankful for and then guess who wrote it. I keep all the slips of paper. I place them in an envelope and date it. These have become special memories for me. I know when my kids are grown and have left the nest these little slips of papers will mean even more to me.

We have so much to be thankful for. I'm currently think of the chorus "Count your many blessings, name the one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God hath done!" It's impossible for us to list all that He has blessed us with.

Sometimes, when I pray and recite what I am thankful for, it feels almost shallow. What am I thankful for beyond the basics – family, friends, health? I started keeping a monthly gratitude log, and it helped me to break away from the standard thank you list. Each day I find up to three things to be truly grateful for and to name it only once. This log helped me go deeper.

Maybe you're like me. When I'm having a bad day, I try to think about all the good things God has been doing in my life, trusting that He has the day in His hands, and if I stay focused on Him and His love for me even a bad day can bring Him glory.

I love the movie "Facing the Giants". Their philosophy was to praise God when they won and to praise God when they loss. It's easy for us to praise God and give Him thanks when all is well. Scripture says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV) Did you catch those important words, **in all circumstances**?

Through my time of giving God thanks, He reminds me of the many other people in my life that I should express gratitude for. It's easy to take people in our lives for granted.

We need to be mindful of our actions toward others. While we don't do things for our personal recognition. We should be doing things for others that are worthy of being thanked for. Actions that bring God the glory.

Society tends to think of thankfulness during the month of November, but it's something we need to do all year long. It is more than words, it is action. It's every minute of every day. Our thankfulness is a way we can show God's love to those around us. We do so in our acts of kindness that comes from thankfulness. We also must set aside our need for recognition and praise so that God can receive the praise and glory. Praise God that He finds us worthy to be used to share His love to a world in need.

Inward Glimpse (Reflection):

Start a gratitude log. Keep your eyes open for the less noticed things that you should be grateful for. The things that often get taken for granted. It might be hard to remember to do it daily at first, but it will soon become a part of your day that you don't want to miss.

Outward Glance (Discussion):

Share in your group moments you have been thankful. Get beyond the basics and go deep.

Work as a group to make a list for adopting someone from one or more from the list below. Send around a sign-up sheet for who will adopt that person so no one is missed.

- a homebound person of your church
- military members
- a child from your children's program or Youth member
- someone from a group your local CPWM supports regularly

Send cards, bake some cookies, arrange a visit, send birthday and holiday cards, phone them and chat.

What can your Women's group do in your community to show others the love of Christ?

One more peek:

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. Colossians 3:23 – 24 (ESV)