

“Living Thanksgiving”

1 Samuel 6:Select Phrases, 12:12, 16:7, 18:1, 20:41-42,
1 Kings 2:2-3, Psalms 1, 13, 19:1-4, 22, 23:6, 24:1-2, 51:1-15, 100, Acts 13:22

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The Apostle Paul wrote. **Acts 13:22 NLT “David, a man about whom God said, I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart.”** When God first called the scrawny, unimpressive, young David scripture explains. **1 Samuel 16:7 NIV “The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”**

What made David a man after God’s own heart? David’s life was a roller coaster of great success, fleeing for his life, wise leadership, and horrible sinful choices including murder. There are people in the Bible who were more loving, holy, wise, and served more than David. Perhaps David was a man after God’s own heart because he lived thanksgiving.

The majority of the psalms were created by David. The psalms are prayers that David sung. If you sang them in Hebrew, the language that David wrote, then you would notice the rhyme, rhythm, and poetry. David usually used couplets making the same point from two different angles. The Lord is my Shepherd; therefore, I have everything I need. God renews my strength, by guiding me along right paths. What will heaven be like? Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life; I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

Every psalm contains an element of thanksgiving. Every psalm reveals David’s striving, often struggling, to live thanksgiving.

For David living with thanksgiving begins with focus on God that informs one’s choices. The first psalm. **Psalm 1 NLT “Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.”**

David delighted in reading scripture and worship. David shared his experiences of God and listened to other people’s experiences of God. David believed God is love and all powerful, that love will ultimately prevail. This inspired David to be bold, at times to fight to protect his family and the innocent, to fight for freedom, so all can worship God and love extravagantly and be loved. Even when it appeared that hate, fear, and the obstacles would crush love, David still stood up for what he believed was God’s will. Even when it appeared that he would die fighting, David still was bold in love. David gave thanks to God for the opportunity to confront Goliath. After he, against all odds, defeated Goliath, once again David thanked God. He seized the moment, risked everything, even his life, to fight for what he believed was right and best for all. David lived thanksgiving by living boldly.

David cultivated deep friendships. Scripture explains **1 Samuel 18:1 “After David finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king’s son. There was an immediate bond of love between them and they became the best of friends.”** As time went by, Saul became obsessed with hunting down David to kill him; yet through it all, David and Jonathan still made time for each other, risked their lives to meet, prayed, and encouraged each other. They were thankful for their friendship. Scripture explains. **1 Samuel 20:41-42 NLT “David bowed three times to Jonathan with his face to the ground. Both of them were in tears as they embraced each other and said good-bye, especially David. At last Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the Lord’s name. The Lord is the witness of a bond between us and our children forever.”** David lived thanksgiving by nurturing friendship.

David refused to let a negative attitude and a desire for revenge darken his heart. In his young adult years David lived an extremely difficult life constantly on the run, sleeping in caves by day, fleeing at night as Saul and his army tried to kill him. Yet through it all, David remained positive. David had several opportunities

for revenge when he could have killed Saul taking the throne yet David walked away from every one of these opportunities. David never sought revenge. David kept positive, avoiding evil desires by venting to God. Several of his prayers begin with him bitterly complaining, weeping, and being angry at God. As David unloads on God he is transformed, he remembers God's love, and by the end of the psalm he is positive and thankful. Listen for the transformation in David's 13th psalm. **Psalm 13 NLT "O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way? How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand? Turn and answer me, O Lord my God! Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die. Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, "We have defeated him!" Don't let them rejoice at my downfall. But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me. I will sing to the Lord because God is good to me."** David lived thanksgiving by venting to God, restoring his positive attitude.

David always made time for his passion music. At times David served others by comforting them with his harp, other times he inspired through festive songs. David regularly prayed by singing and playing an instrument. David lived thanksgiving by utilizing and celebrating his musical gift.

David noticed God in creation. David sang. **Psalm 19:1-4a "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display God's craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make God known. They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world."** David lived thanksgiving by celebrating the beauty of God's creation.

David lived with great joy. David was so grand in his dancing and singing some criticized him for being over the top in his celebrations. Some felt his dancing and clapping was not appropriate for worship. **2 Samuel 6: Select phrases "David and all the people of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all their might, singing songs and playing all kinds of musical instruments. David was leaping and dancing before the Lord. David said. 'I am willing to act like a fool in order to show my joy in the Lord.'" David lived thanksgiving by being joyful.**

David owned up to his mistakes. David committed some major sins such as his affair which led to lies and then to murder. When David was confronted by Nathan about his sins, David did not make excuses. He did not blame others. He did not silence the truth. David confessed his sins. He admitted his mistakes. **2 Samuel 12:12 NIV "Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."** David lived thanksgiving by confessing his sins.

David surrounded himself with wise people who were striving to follow God's will. He sought their perspectives. He listened carefully. He had a healthy self-esteem. He was bold and confident in his decision making yet humble to temper his ideas with the advice of others. David lived thanksgiving by enjoying community.

David let God's grace wash away his guilt. **Psalm 51:1-15 "Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there. Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you. Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Unseal my lips, O Lord, that I may praise you."** David lived thanksgiving by letting God's grace free him from guilt.

David regularly sang of God's steadfast, everlasting love. Both the ways God's love healed and delivered people in the past and the ways he imagines God's love will resurrect all in the future. David sang about how God blessed and helped him. David knew suffering and voiced it in his prayers. He let his raw emotions spill out, yet in the end he was thankful for he believed God will transform everyone's suffering into joyful perfection. **Psalm 22 "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away**

when I groan for help? Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them. They cried out to you and were saved. They trusted in you and were never disgraced. But I am a worm and not a man. I am scorned and despised by all! Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, "Is this the one who relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save him! If the Lord loves him so much, let the Lord rescue him!" Yet you brought me safely from my mother's womb and led me to trust you at my mother's breast. I was thrust into your arms at my birth. You have been my God from the moment I was born. Do not stay so far from me, for trouble is near, and no one else can help me. My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls; fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in! Like lions they open their jaws against me, roaring and tearing into their prey. My life is poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, melting within me. My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead. My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones. My enemies stare at me and gloat. They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing. O Lord, do not stay far away! You are my strength; come quickly to my aid! Save me from the sword; spare my precious life from these dogs. Snatch me from the lion's jaws and from the horns of these wild oxen. I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among your assembled people. Praise the Lord, all you who fear God! Honor God, all you descendants of Jacob! Show God reverence, all you descendants of Israel! For God has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy. God has not turned God's back on them, but has listened to their cries for help. I will praise you in the great assembly. I will fulfill my vows in the presence of those who worship you. The poor will eat and be satisfied. All who seek the Lord will praise God. Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy. The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to God. All the families of the nations will bow down before God. For royal power belongs to the Lord. God rules all the nations. Let the rich of the earth feast and worship. Bow before God, all who are mortal, all whose lives will end as dust. Our children will also serve God. Future generations will hear about the wonders of the Lord. God's righteous acts will be told to those not yet born. They will hear about everything God has done." Even in the depths of his sadness and angry ramblings David was transformed by his remembering of God's past blessings and trust in God's future deliverance. David lived thanksgiving by trusting in resurrection. **Psalm 23:6 "Surely God's goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."**

David was a faithful steward. He believed everything was a gift from God. He gave joyfully and generously. He served out of gratitude. David sang. **Psalm 24:1-2 "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to God. For God laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths."** David lived thanksgiving through faithful stewardship and generous giving.

David left a legacy of thanksgiving. He prepared for the building of the temple, the worship of future generations even though he knew he would never see the temple built. David gave generously from his own personal wealth. On his death bed David's final instructions, to soon to be King Solomon, were. **1 Kings 2:2-3 NLT "I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. Take courage and be a man. Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all God's ways."** David lived thanksgiving by leaving a God-centered legacy.

David's thanksgiving aroused his joyful worship. **Psalm 100 "Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before God, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! God made us, and we belong to God. We are God's people, the sheep of God's pasture. Enter God's gates with thanksgiving; go into God's courts with praise. Give thanks to God and praise God's name. For the Lord is good. God's unfailing love continues forever, and God's faithfulness continues to each generation."**

How will you live thanksgiving? Amen