

Connection

Has anything caused you to say "Praise the Lord" in recent days?

Cheer and Challenge

How did it go living out your "I will..." statement from last week? Share your experience with the group.

Tell about any experiences you had this week following through on the B.L.E.S.S. challenge.

Content

What do we do when we don't *feel* thankful? Read Psalm 100, looking for the following:

- Who the Lord is (verses 3, 5)

- How I respond (verses 1, 2, 4)

1. Write out Psalm 100:3 & 5 on the lines below. As you write, meditate on these truths about God.

2. Do you know that God **was faithful** in your life in 2020? Below write down several things, big or small, that demonstrate the Lord's faithfulness in your life over this past year.

3. Now read Psalm 100:1-2 & 4. God's matchless character invokes a response from those who follow Him. List the actions the Psalmist notes in these verses which can be a believer's response to God's faithfulness:

Circle one of the above actions that feels like a response you could give in light of God's faithfulness to you in recent days.

Take a moment to listen to the song "It is Well," using this link: <https://youtu.be/YNqo4Un2uZl>.

4. The song "Come Thou Fount" includes the phrase "Here I raise my Ebenezer" (eben = stone, ezer = help). This is a biblical phrase found in I Samuel 7:12-13. Samuel raises a stone and proclaims, "Thus far, the LORD has helped us." What is he referring to? Read over this chapter, beginning at verse 3, and write the context of that proclamation here:

5. Contemplate this truth: if you are a Christ follower, the Lord is a rock-solid help in your life. Take a few minutes and find a stone out in your yard, or at a nearby park. Using a permanent marker write these words on the stone:

Thus far, the LORD has helped me.

(If you can't find a stone, draw an outline of a stone on a notecard and transcribe these words there.)

6. Holding your stone, listen to the song "Come Thou Fount" using this link: <https://youtu.be/3bvYJL6WhuY>.

- Meditate on how the Lord has helped you in your life over the past year.
- Ask Him for continued help as you navigate life in a broken world.

7. Find a place in your home to put this stone where you will see it regularly and be reminded of God's help.

Commitment

Praise and worship overflow from our relationship with God and are not just for Sunday mornings! Consider how you might include moments of worship in your personal time with the Lord this year. What fits your personality and preferences? What tools do you have access to that you could incorporate?

Create an "I will..." statement of something you can do this year to incorporate praise and worship into your personal life. "I will _____."

B.L.E.S.S ~ **B**egin with prayer. **L**isten with care. **E**at / **E**ngage with another. **S**erve them. **S**hare your story.



As you read scripture and listen to worship music, certain words or phrases can trigger you to pray for friends who don't yet know Jesus. Listen again to one of the worship songs from this study and pray over someone who comes to mind.

Continue Digging Deeper

1. Enter each day with thanksgiving and praise using Psalm 100 as a guide. Praise the Lord every day for who He is, what He has done and what He is doing.

Day 1 - Read Psalm 100, write it down and practice memorizing all or part of it.

Day 2 - Read Psalm 100, practice memorizing it and then listen to a worship song based on this Psalm such as "Psalm 100 (Enter In)" featuring Joshua Sherman, Charity Gayle, Steven Musso (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjgdKWbD0xE>). This song is powerful and recites the words of the Psalm which can help with memorization.

Day 3 - Using the concordance in the back of your Bible, or an online search, find Bible verses containing the words "thanksgiving" or "glad(ness)". Write down the references and what you learn about thanksgiving and gladness. Here's one to get you started: I Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Day 4 - Praise involves expressing adoration and thanksgiving to God for His character and His works. It is a celebration of all God has done and for His faithfulness. Read the following verses in Psalms and write down what you learn about God's faithfulness: Psalm 145, Psalm 91:4, Psalm 89:1-2, Psalm 119:90. Pray and thank God for being faithful in all things.

2. If God has gifted you in the creative arts of painting, doodling or drawing, you are invited to use those gifts to create a work of art demonstrating the word, "praise". Perhaps you could draw or paint the word, "PRAISE" in the middle of the page or canvas and then add Bible verses, song lyrics, pictures, etc. that demonstrate what praising God is, looks like, or sounds like according to God's Word. Put on some praise music and spend timing praising God in song while creating a work of art. Take a picture and share your artwork on social media, text it to a friend or email it to dmoyer@visitccc.com so it can be shared on our Facebook page to encourage others.

3. Have you ever heard the expression, "offer a sacrifice of praise"? What do you think it means to offer a sacrifice of praise?

- Read Hebrews 13:15-16. Contemplate what it means to offer a sacrifice of praise. What is the significance of it being called a "sacrifice"? Praise begins in the heart, but why do you think it is important to verbalize our praise to God? What does verse 16 convey we should share with others, and how is this a "sacrifice that pleases God"? If you are able, read chapter 13 in its entirety and write down what else you can learn from Paul's final encouragement in the book of Hebrews.
- Psalm 145 is a creative work of art as David weaves in the Hebrew alphabet, beginning each verse with successive letters. Try creating your own alphabet of praise by writing down an attribute of God, a name of God, or something for which you would like to offer praise to God for each letter of the alphabet. For connection, do this activity with a friend, family member or someone in your small group.

Optional Resource:

If you want to learn more about offering sacrifice of praise, read "What does it mean to give a sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15)?". You can find this article on www.gotquestions.org or use this link (<https://www.gotquestions.org/sacrifice-of-praise.html>).