

THANKFUL

Definition: Express gratitude; Declare God's goodness

Synonyms: Gratitude, Appreciative

This week we will look at four women of the Bible who were thankful.

DAY 1

Read Exodus 15: 20-21

Enslaved in Egypt for a long time, the Israelites cried out for relief. God sent Moses to lead them back to the Promised Land.

Exodus records more miracles than any OT book, and Miriam was there to witness them all. God sent nine plagues, but it wasn't until the tenth plague, which took the first born sons of all the Egyptians, that Pharaoh relented and let the Israelites leave. However, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his chariots to bring the Israelites back.

God demonstrates his dominance and glory by parting the Red Sea, and His people escape on dry land. As the Egyptians gazed upon the parted waters, why weren't they in fear and awe of the Israelites' God? Instead, they continued to pursue the Israelites, and the water crashed down upon them and the Egyptian military all died.

When Miriam saw the water crash down upon her oppressors, she couldn't contain herself. So grateful to be free from her life of forced labor and hardship, she burst into song and led all the women in celebration as they played their tambourines and danced.

She knew who to thank for this wonderful event. She and the other women sang to the LORD.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

PRAISE GOD FOR THE BLESSINGS HE BESTOWS.

DAY 2

Read 1 Samuel 2: 1-11

Hannah cried out to God for a son. She promised if God answered her prayer she would give the child to the service of the Lord. He granted her request and she kept her promise.

I find it remarkable that this beautiful prayer of praise was lifted to God on the day she left her son at the Tabernacle in Shiloh to serve the Lord. She was returning home without Samuel, and instead of being resentful or depressed, she praised God for answered prayer and his sovereign grace.



During her childless years, Hannah endured pain and humiliation at the hands of her husband's other wife, Peninnah. Her prayer addresses her enemies, but she does not seek revenge, she wisely leaves it to God.

She also recognizes in this prayer that God is over both life and death. That He gives and takes, but is always in complete control. Hannah has no doubt that God has set the world in order. He will protect the faithful and the wicked will disappear in darkness.

It was probably because of her gracious and grateful heart that Hannah later has other children.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

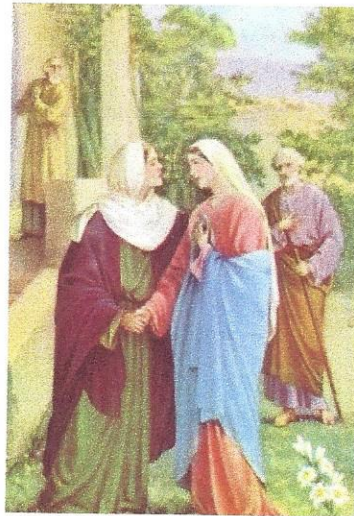
GOD BLESSES OBEDIENCE AND A GRATEFUL HEART.

DAY 3

Read Luke 1: 5-25, 39-43

Like Hannah, Elizabeth was barren; and because she was an older woman she had probably given up hope of ever conceiving. However, God had other plans; and when she realized she was expecting, she offered praise and thanksgiving to God. Not only was she pregnant with a son, but she would give birth to John the Baptist who, like Samuel, would serve the Lord all the days of his life.

Elizabeth was a humble servant. When Mary visited her, she recognized that Mary carried the Messiah. Elizabeth could have been resentful that it was Mary and not she that God honored with such a privilege. Instead, Elizabeth's heart was grateful and honored by Mary's visit.



John had the spirit and power of Elijah, and would prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. At first glance, it would not appear that John was humble. After all, he didn't mince words and called people out for their sin – even calling them snakes! However, he knew who the Savior was, and willingly faded into the background when Jesus arrived on the scene to begin His earthly ministry. John's mother set a good example.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

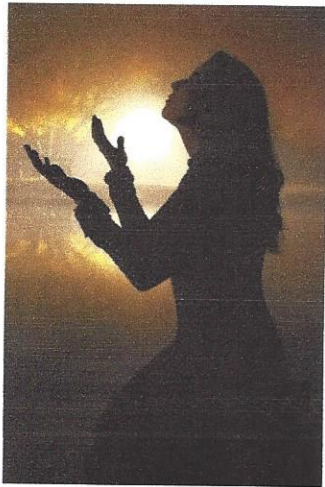
DEVELOP A HUMBLE SPIRIT, WHICH LEADS TO A GRATEFUL HEART.

DAY 4

Read Luke 1: 44-56

Mary went to visit Elizabeth when both of the women were expecting their sons. At Mary's greeting, the child in Elizabeth's womb jumped with joy. Elizabeth told Mary she was blessed.

Mary's response was not one of grandeur, but instead she praised God for all He had done. Like Hannah, Mary recognized that God is sovereign and can give and take as He sees fit. She praised God for His mercy and for promises kept.



Surely, Mary was suffering already. Her pregnancy was a source of gossip and condemnation. She and Joseph must have been bewildered and scared. It was not an ideal way to start a marriage, but she still praised God for the honor of carrying the Savior. She saw the big picture, and faced the future holding fast to her faith and God's promises.

Her visit with Elizabeth must have been a blessing from God. It guided both of these women during a special, albeit confusing time in their lives. I am sure Elizabeth mentored Mary helping her to understand what to expect during pregnancy. Being a devote woman and older than Mary, she probably had many life lessons to share.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

PRAISE GOD EVEN IN DIFFICULT AND CONFUSING TIMES.

WEEKEND REFLECTIONS

Pray Psalm 34

Praise God for the blessings He bestows.

Psalm 34, praises God for answered prayer and blessings. God will grant us our desires, but we often forget to praise Him for doing great things in our lives. We take for granted, or think we deserve, His grace and mercy. Miriam's response as soon as they crossed the Red Sea is a good example to follow.

God blesses obedience and a thankful heart.

Psalm 34 declares that God is close to the brokenhearted and will rescue those with sad hearts. That was certainly Hannah's experience.

Develop a humble spirit, which leads to a grateful heart.

Psalm 34 says we are to pray, seek peace, and do what is right. We must expect to face troubles in this life, but God will rescue us. Elizabeth was rescued from her pain of childlessness while she lived on earth. But by faith, we know that if we are not rescued now, our rescue will come in the next life.

Praise God even in difficult and confusing times.

Psalm 34 ends with a promise of redemption for those who serve God. Mary knew to take refuge in the LORD and she would not be condemned.