

WEEK 3: MAKE PRAYER A WAY TO SAY THANKS

David

I thank You for answering my prayer and giving me victory! – Psalm 118:21

Read: 1 Chronicles 29:10-14, 2 Samuel 7:18-22, Psalm 118:21, Psalm 16:8

“Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your blessings, see what God has done.” (Johnson Oatman, Jr.) As I sing the chorus of this old hymn, I’m reminded of the “discipline of gratitude” developed by author Ann Voskamp. She kept a running list of things to be thankful for. Sometimes they were major answers to prayer; other times they were something as simple as seeing the sun shine through her kitchen window. But it was through this discipline, that over the years, she and many others have found meaning and comfort in the idea of counting their blessings.

King David might be considered an expert at counting blessings. Many of the psalms are devoted to expressing thanks to God for his goodness. Sometimes it’s easy to be thankful: life is going smoothly, good things are happening, and the sun is shining. But there are times, in each of our lives, when it’s not easy to see the blessings, let alone count them. The psalmist’s life was not a walk in the park; there were enemies who wanted him dead, and his own sin brought disastrous consequences on more than one occasion. Yet God gives us this example of an imperfect man with imperfect circumstances, choosing over and over and over again to be thankful.

David was not necessarily an eternal optimist, though. Read through the Psalms and you will witness deep grief, anger, and a desire for vengeance. God is not afraid of our emotions and he can handle whatever we throw at him. But the Psalms show us David always seemed to find his way back around to gratitude.

When we express gratitude to God, it doesn’t mean we are ignoring the hardships and problems that surround us. It means we’re choosing to remember, even when it’s hard, that God is good and that he loves us. We count our blessings because it helps us remember who he is and all that he has done for us.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. What in your life do you have to be grateful for today?
2. Think back to some of difficult times seasons in your life. In hindsight, what were the blessings hidden there?
3. Have you ever tried keeping a list of the things you are grateful for? Even in hard seasons, can you find ways to “count your blessings?” Take some time now to record your blessings and give thanks to the Lord today.