

## "Count Your Blessings"

One of the best things you can do today and this week is to count your blessings. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." God is so good to us, and counting our blessings will give us hope. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Psalm 118:24 says, "This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it." You can count your losses or count your blessings. God's word helps us to see the grace of God. And God's word points to what is right and good; and it provides comfort to the hurting, hope to the hopeless. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

We all have good days and bad days. And the older we get, the more our health challenges us. You might think of your health, your personal circumstances, or the chaotic and confused society that we live in and think, "what is there to be thankful for?" James 1:17 answers that: "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." Every bite of food, every drop of water, and every breath of air comes from the Lord Jesus. We live and breathe because of the goodness of God. God has given us much good.

And regardless of all the evil and suffering in the world, we can rejoice in God and in all that He has done for us. If you focus only on the foul and the evil, then your heart will be miserable. If you focus on what God has done and is doing, you'll give thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5:16 to 18 says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." See the beauty of God in this world. He still leaves His glory in the stars, the rainbow, the flowers, and the sunset.

Now this is an important study on counting our blessings; and we offer it free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have free materials on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). And you can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, we'll read from Psalm 103 verses 1 to 5, and we'll explore all the wonderful blessings God provides to us.

Our reading today is a psalm of David, Psalm 103 verses 1 through 5. And here he blesses the Lord.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget none of His benefits;  
Who pardons all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases;  
Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;  
Who satisfies your years with good things,  
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

What a wonderful, wonderful God we have. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for all the good things that you do to us. Help us to never forget the kindnesses that You've shown the love that You have and the grace that's given to us. And help us to do Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Psalms 34 verses 1 through 3 says, "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its' boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice. O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together." Philippians 4 and verse 4 reminds us, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" and we will rejoice when we look to the Lord and count our blessings.

Now each person chooses where we focus our hearts. We can let all the ugly things in this world overwhelm us to the point we become blind to what is good and beautiful. We focus on misery, and we'll become miserable. And when we focus on the good, we have hope and we find peace. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8 to 9, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things that you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

I tell ya the true is better than the false, the honorable is better than the dishonorable, right is always better than wrong, the pure is better than the defiled, the lovely excels above the unlovely, good repute is better than a bad report, moral excellence or virtue is better than compromise or corruption, and the things praiseworthy are better than the things blameworthy. Dwell on what builds you up with what is good, not on what tears you down with disappointment and discouragement. This sinful world has always been filled with darkness, but the Lord "gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1 and verse 4).

Now our God and Father promises something better than what this world offers. We have hope of a place in heaven, where the miseries of this life won't bother us. Paul said in Romans 8 and verse 18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." All that is in this world is temporary, but what God has in store for His people is eternal. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 4:16 to 18, "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

This life is not all there is, and for this reason we have hope. If we set our hearts on the blessings of God, we're much better able to cope with the disappointments of this life. Colossians 3:1 to 4 advises us, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." If we set our minds on Christ, we won't get so caught up in the present evil world. We have a hope in heaven of an eternal life of joy and peace.

Have you become a Christian according to the teaching of the Scriptures? Do you believe Jesus Christ is really the Son of God and your Lord? Have you put away your sinful ways and decided to take up a cross and live for the Lord? Have you confessed Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and made Him your Lord? Have you been baptized (that is immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ) for the forgiveness of your sins? If you have obeyed the gospel, you're now in Christ. There is a big

difference between those who stand in the grace of God and those who don't. Ephesians 2:12 to 13 says before one becomes a Christian, one is "at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Being saved by Christ matters greatly. Being brought near to God by the blood of Christ changes your life and your destiny. Ephesians 2:19 describes the person who has come to Christ: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household." God no longer sees you as a stranger but as one of His own citizens with the saints. God sees you as family; you're God's son or God's daughter!

Now as God's faithful child, the blood of Jesus washes away your sins, God hears your prayers, and promises you an eternal home in heaven. Ephesians 1 and verse 3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Yes, we have every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Lord Jesus promised in John 10 and verse 10, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Yes the Lord gives us life, newness of life, an abundant life, and eternal life. We have no one who can do so much for us as our Lord Jesus can.

When we're baptized, that is born again of water and the Spirit, we have newness of life. Romans 6:3 to 4 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." When God our Father unites us with Christ, everything changes and becomes new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." I tell ya there is a big difference between what one was before Christ and what one becomes when one is in Christ. One dies to the old life of sin and is born to a new life of righteousness.

Now a new Christian can say, "I'm thankful I'm not what I used to be! And I don't want to be that person anymore." You see this change from the old life to the new life will give you peace and hope you long for. Romans 6:20 to 22 says, "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification of he's being made holy, and the outcome, eternal life." Being enslaved to sin will never, never, never bless your life like living close to God.

Titus 1 and verse 15 says, "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." You see sin weighs down your conscience with regret. Some people hate themselves for what they've done. Guilt and shame always follows sin. Some may want to ignore it, but it lies hidden inside our souls. We know it and you know what, God always knows. The only answer to that shame inside is the forgiveness of God. That's what allows us to find peace with ourselves. You can deny your guilt, but it won't go away. You can blame everyone else, but you're responsible for your sins.

You don't have to live in guilt and shame. You can have a good conscience, which is a foretaste of heaven. You can change and come to God. Romans 6:6 to 7 says, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." Free from sin, free from guilt, free from the

shame that arises from a sinful life. This takes place, of course, when we're baptized into Christ and into His death. 1 Peter 3:21 explains, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of the dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Our greatest blessing as members of the body of Christ comes from knowing that we are right with God and stand in His love and grace. Walking with God brings us promise and hope. 1 John 1:6 to 9 says, "if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Walking in the light with our Lord means we can be cleansed from all sin, and being honest enough to confess our sins is always the right thing to do. If we confess, God is trustworthy and He is just, or righteous, to forgive us.

God's blessings are enormous, not only in this life but also in the life to come. Ephesians 2:4 to 7 says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." God has promised to show in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness.

I don't know what all that means, but we'll find out in the ages to come how great our God's love and grace truly is. If He is gracious and kind in this life, He will surpass it in the ages to come. Psalm 16:11 says, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." Christians have "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1 verse 4). And that inheritance is a prepared place. The Lord Jesus told the apostles in John 14:2 to 3 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Will Jesus prepare a place for you? Your soul and your eternal destiny matter. Can you count being with God forever as one of your blessings? Do you belong to Christ? Have you been washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus? Why not come to the Lord, be forgiven, and become a child of God with an inheritance in heaven?

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for all the blessings that You give us. Those that are outside of us, that are physical, and those that internal and spiritual. And Father we're thankful You have prepared for us. Help us to be prepared for You and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they didn't honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:20 to 21). The God who made this world, the sun, the moon, and the stars also made you with a free will. You can choose to acknowledge God and be thankful or refuse to acknowledge God and end up alone without His blessing. Think carefully about your choices. Care about God because He cares about you.

Recognizing God's love and being thankful is a way of life that leads us to love and serve Him. Being thankful for our blessings, for the cross of Christ, for our forgiveness, for answers to prayer, and for the hope of heaven is merely seeing how very much God loves us. Being thankful and serving Him is how

we love Him. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Do you love God?

Why not turn your life to God today in faith and love. If you need to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, don't put it off. That's always been God's way to salvation; it's what Peter who spoke by the utterance of God said in the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost. Now if you've drifted away from God, come back to Him. God hasn't moved, and He still loves and He still wants you to be close to Him. Don't miss out on God's blessings. And don't let anything separate you from God.

We pray that today's study about counting your blessings has helped you see God's concern for you. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMInistry." Now that's all one word. And when you watch the programs be sure to like them; because when you do that that helps us to spread the program so more people will see it. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And I realize some of you for health reasons can't attend worship; I'm speaking to those who can. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.