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# The Transforming Power of Thanksgiving

*The Roots*

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*4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

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*7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

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*9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

***Philippians 4:4-9 (ESV)***

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**Paul begins 11 of 13 of his  
letters with thanksgiving.  
What makes this discipline  
so important?**

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# Today's Roadmap

- What does it mean to “give thanks”?
  - Thanksgiving brings peace
  - Thanksgiving thwarts complaining
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# What does it mean to give thanks?

- We all have an intuitive understanding, but what does it mean to say “thank you”?
  - Dictionary definitions are circular and unhelpful
  - We need to think more deeply about it...
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# What does it mean to give thanks?

- Thanksgiving implies *receiving something*.
  - We are acknowledging that what we are thankful for *has come from an outside source*, we were not entitled to it, rather it is an **act of grace**.
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# What does it mean to give thanks?

- Thanksgiving functions as...
  - An avenue of transforming our minds
  - A potent means of spiritual warfare



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*16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18  
give thanks in all circumstances; for this is  
the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)*

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# Examples of thanksgiving as spiritual warfare

- The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God! (Psalm 50:23)
  - And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against [their enemies]....  
(2 Chronicles 20:11-22)
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# Thanksgiving Thwarts Complaining

- Complaining affects **our own hearts** and **the hearts of those around us**
  - Complaining is NOT the same as lament
  - Complaining is a **seed of sin** against God that has the potential to become a “root of bitterness” (Heb 12:15)
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# Thanksgiving Thwarts Complaining

- There are close to **fifteen verses** of the Israelites complaining/grumbling in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy alone!

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# Thanksgiving Thwarts Complaining

- “And the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes, and when the Lord heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them...” (Num 11:1)
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# Thanksgiving Thwarts Complaining

- Complaining is...
    - A pervasive issue in God's people
    - It deeply matters to the heart of God
  - **Thanksgiving, then, is the antidote to complaining!**
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# How to practice thanksgiving

- Begin prayers with thanksgiving
  - Read passages about thanksgiving
  - Journal/record things you're thankful for
  - Thank God throughout your day
  - When anxiety hits, come in the opposite spirit with thanksgiving
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# Response

- God, do I feel entitled to anything, from You, or anyone else? How can I surrender this?
  - God, do I need to be aware of ways I have been complaining lately? If so, how do I replace that with thanksgiving?
  - God, in general, how can I increasingly practice thanksgiving?
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