

When You Cannot See

THE MISSING PIECE

GRATITUDE: THE ABILITY TO SEE GRACE, AND THE CORRESPONDING DESIRE TO AFFIRM IT, AND ITS GIVER AS GOOD.

Ephesians 5:15-20 (NLT) *So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. 18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NLT) *Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*

HOW TO RESPOND WITH THANKS WHEN YOU DO NOT SEE

1. Rest in God's _____

Romans 8:28 (NLT) *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

Hebrews 4:3 (NLT) *For only we who believe can enter his rest.*

2. Trust God's _____

_____ is productive.

Romans 5:3-5 (NLT) *We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*

James 1:2-4 (NLT) *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*

1 Peter 1:6-9 (NLT) *So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 8 You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 9 The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.*

3. Hold Onto God's _____

Genesis 8:15 (NLT) *Then God **said** to Noah*

Joshua 23:10 (NLT) *Each one of you will put to flight a thousand of the enemy, for the Lord your God fights for you, just as he has **promised***

1 Kings 8:56 (NLT) *Praise the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he **promised**. Not one **word** has failed of all the wonderful **promises** he gave through his servant Moses.*

Psalm 105:42 (AMP) *For He remembered His holy **word** To Abraham His servant*

Psalm 105:42 (NIV) *For he remembered his holy **promise** given to his servant Abraham.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (NLT) *All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 5 For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.*

Proverbs 3:26 (NLT) *for the Lord is your security. He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.*

James 1:5 (NLT) *If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.*

Philippians 4:19 (NLT) *And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*

Hebrews 10:23 (NLT) *Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.*

4. Look for God's _____

5. Allow for Godly _____

2 Corinthians 6:10 (NLT) *Our hearts ache, but we always have joy.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NLT) *And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.*

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (NLT) *For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 18 So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.*

GRATITUDE QUIZ

The short quiz below might help you test where you land on a spectrum from grateful to grumbling. As honest as you can be, highlight either (A) or (B) for each question.

1. Do you more often (A) remember God's blessings in your life or (B) forget them?
2. When things don't go your way, do you typically respond (A) in gratitude or (B) by grumbling?
3. Do you see thanksgiving as (A) an essential spiritual rhythm for Christians or (B) something that's great to do when you remember it but unnecessary?
4. Would you say you tell God thanks (A) daily or (B) less than daily?
5. Is thanksgiving (A) a significant part of your prayer life or (B) a small part of it?
6. Would you describe yourself as more often (A) content or (B) discontent?
7. As you go throughout your day, do you usually (A) have eyes open to reasons for giving thanks around you or (B) not see many things to give thanks for?
8. Do you tend to rehearse (A) God's generosity and goodness or (B) what seems unfair?
9. Do you (A) often tell others reasons you're grateful or (B) rarely talk about why you're grateful?
10. When you see things others have that you don't, do you (A) rest in what God has given you or (B) struggle with jealousy?
11. If you were to list reasons for gratitude, would it be (A) a long list and easy to come up with things to give thanks for or (B) a short list and hard to think of many things?
12. Is practicing thanksgiving (A) a regular part of your life or (B) an irregular part of your life?
13. Do you (A) have a place or way of intentionally recording reasons for gratitude or (B) not have a place or way to intentionally record reasons for gratitude?
14. When circumstances are difficult, do you (A) still find things to be thankful for or (B) stop giving thanks altogether?
15. When you think about thanksgiving, do you (A) tell God thanks or (B) feel grateful but not actually tell God thanks?

Now tally up how many times you highlighted (A). The goal isn't to condemn you but to reveal how prone you are to thanksgiving, knowing all of us have room to grow. If you highlighted (A) SEVEN OR FEWER TIMES, then grumbling likely feels more natural than gratitude for you. If that's you, don't be discouraged. This book provides practical help to begin taking small steps away from grumbling and toward giving thanks. If you highlighted (A) MORE THAN SEVEN BUT LESS THAN FIFTEEN TIMES, then you likely practice giving thanks with some regularity, but you know your heart often strays toward ingratitude or grumbling. This book can help you grow further and deeper in gratitude. If you highlighted (A) FIFTEEN TIMES, then you're either an expert who has mastered gratitude or you lack self-awareness.

THIRTY-DAY READING PLAN

- Read and meditate on the Bible verses about giving thanks.
 - As you read God's Word about gratitude, include a prayer of thanksgiving. Thank God for what you've learned about who He is, what He's done, or the gifts He's given.
 - During the day, look for things God is doing for which you can give thanks. Keep a journal, a scrap paper on your desk, or use a notes app on your phone, but find a way to record things you're thankful for. Set a goal of writing down five things each day. This doesn't always have to be spiritual. One day you might thank God for the forgiveness given through Christ, and the next day you might thank God for good football. Not all gifts are equally valuable but all gifts can be a source of thanksgiving.
1. Matthew 7:9-11; James 1:17; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Romans 11:36
 2. Daniel 2:17-23; 6:10; Romans 8:28-29
 3. Psalm 100
 4. Luke 17:11-19
 5. 1 Chronicles 29:10-22; Leviticus 7:11-15
 6. Romans 1:18-23; 12:1-2
 7. Psalm 103
 8. John 6:11, 23; 11:41; Acts 27:33-38; 1 Timothy 4:3-4
 9. Philippians 4:4-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 Peter 5:6-9
 10. Exodus 14:10-14; 15:22-16:8; Philippians 2:14
 11. 1 Chronicles 16:1-36
 12. Psalm 9
 13. Psalm 28
 14. Psalm 136
 15. Romans 6
 16. Psalm 33
 17. Matthew 26:26-29; Hebrews 8:6-13
 18. Psalm 30
 19. 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Ephesians 2:1-10; 2 Corinthians 4:15
 20. Psalm 95
 21. Psalm 118
 22. 1 Samuel 8
 23. Deuteronomy 8
 24. Ephesians 1:3-14
 25. 1 Corinthians 15:12-28, 35-58
 26. Psalm 105
 27. Psalm 104
 28. Psalm 138
 29. Psalm 145
 30. Revelation 4:1-11; 7:9-17