

GOD IS GENEROUS

THE LESSON: PSALM 34

There are times in our lives when gratitude is the most natural thing in the world, and we are overflowing with God's praises because of his generosity to us. But there are also times in our lives when it can be an emotional struggle to "offer up a sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15).

Many of the messages in our modern world teach us to believe that we deserve the best of everything, but scripture teaches that our sin makes us *unworthy*. Whatever gifts we receive from God are not earned but are instead evidence of God's generosity and goodness. This means that we have a great deal to be grateful for, both in good times and in bad times. It is for this reason that the General Thanksgiving (found in the Prayer Book's service of Morning Prayer) begins with an acknowledgment of God's goodness, and our own unworthiness.

No matter what we're going through today, we can give thanks to God for the material world, that is, for "our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life" (BCP p. 14). No matter what we're going through today, believers can thank him for his spiritual provision in Jesus Christ: the "means of grace" and the "hope of glory" (BCP p. 15). No matter what we're going through today, God is *good*, and we know that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17).

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The psalms form the ancient "prayer book" of Israel, and even today they can help us to express the full range of human experience and emotion, while orienting our hearts and minds to God. These prayerful poems remind us continuously that God is good. The psalm we're about to look at was written by David during a time of his life when he was in danger from many enemies (1 Samuel 21: 10-15).

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

If you did the "At-Home Challenge" in lesson 1, this prayer will be familiar to you. Again, this week, take a moment each day to pray with the words of the General Thanksgiving from Morning Prayer. Pause after the words "blessings of this life" and add the specific blessings that come to mind for which you are thankful.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, We thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks For all thy goodness and loving-kindness To us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; But above all for thine inestimable love In the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; For the means of grace, And for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, That our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, And that we show forth thy praise, Not only with our lips, but in our lives; By giving up ourselves to thy service, And by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; Through Jesus Christ our Lord, To whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

(GENERAL THANKSGIVING FROM MORNING PRAYER, BCP PAGE 14)

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PSALM 34: **THE LORD IS GOOD**

¹I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

²My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.

³Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!

⁴I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

⁵Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.

⁶This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷The angel of the Lord encamps round those who fear him, and delivers them.

⁸Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!