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THE WINE PRESS



Pressing into Truth, Pouring out His Grace

November 2025

A Heart of Thanksgiving

GratITUDE really does change everything. When we pause to thank God—not just for the big miracles, but for the little blessings woven through our days—we begin to see life through His eyes. Praise shifts our focus from life’s challenges to God’s faithfulness, and that fills our hearts with peace and joy.

A thankful spirit keeps us close to God. It opens the door for His grace to flow and reminds us that His presence is with us in every season.

As we celebrate this Thanksgiving, we want to send our warm thanks to you—our readers and friends. Your faith, encouragement, and love for God’s Word inspire us every month. May this season be filled with joy & peace!

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at The Wine Press!

The Wine Press is a thoughtfully curated collection of articles from across the web, compiled to inspire, encourage, and deepen your walk with our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. All articles remain the property of their respective authors to whom we joyfully give full credit and our appreciation for sharing their wisdom and experiences with us. May these words uplift your spirit, strengthen your faith, and draw you into ever deeper communion with the God of all grace.

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A Life of Thanksgiving

By Dr. Charles Stanley

Living Beyond the Table

Thursday morning, people all over the country will gather around tables overflowing with food — turkey, dressing, pies, and all the trimmings. When you think of Thanksgiving, what's the first word that comes to mind?

Most of us, if we're honest, think of turkey or football before we think of gratitude. We look forward to a wonderful meal someone has worked hard to prepare, then bow our heads briefly and say, "Lord, thank You in Jesus' name for this wonderful table. Amen."

But how often do we truly thank Him — not just for the food before us, but for the very breath in our lungs, the sight of our eyes, and the strength to rise each morning? So often our gratitude ends when dessert does. The television comes on, and Thanksgiving is over.

A Daily Attitude of Gratitude

Yet God desires that gratitude would not be a holiday event but a way of life. Every morning we wake to countless reasons for thanksgiving: we can still see, hear, walk, breathe, and think. Each of those is a fresh mercy from His hand. Why not begin each day by saying, "Thank You, Jesus"?

When something good happens — thank You, Lord.

When we face something painful — thank You, Lord, that You have a reason and will bring good out of this.

Thankfulness shifts our focus from what we lack to the One who provides. It acknowledges that every good thing in our lives is a gift from His hand.

Thanksgiving in God's Eyes

The Scriptures show us that gratitude has always mattered deeply to God. In Psalm 92 we read, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High, to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night."

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving every morning and every evening. It was God's way of reminding them that He alone was their source and provider. Psalm 50:23 says, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me." That truth still stands today.

Every time we say, "Thank You, Jesus," we are honoring God. We are recognizing His place as Lord of our lives, the source of every blessing.

A Grateful Heart Honors God

Gratitude is not only good manners — it is worship. When we thank Him, we are exalting His character, acknowledging His goodness, and strengthening our own faith.

A grateful heart brings a change in the atmosphere of our soul. It quiets complaint, drives away fear, and fills the mind with peace. The more we thank Him, the more aware we become of His presence in our lives. Thanksgiving helps us sense His nearness and walk in reverence before Him.

When we give thanks, our will begins to align with His. Even in suffering or loss, gratitude becomes the language of trust. Saying, “Lord, I don’t understand this, but I thank You,” releases the weight we carry and affirms our belief that He is wiser and greater than we are.

The Power of a Thankful Spirit

There’s something powerful about giving thanks when it doesn’t come easily. Gratitude offered in the dark becomes a declaration of faith — a way of saying, “God, I know You’re still good.”

When we choose thanksgiving instead of worry, our hearts begin to lift. Anxiety fades as we remember Who holds our future. The simple words, “Thank You, Jesus,” can silence fear faster than any argument.

Thankfulness also renews our strength. Praise has an energizing effect on the human spirit. When we focus on God instead of our circumstances, our energy rises, our joy returns, and our hearts find rest. Thanksgiving shifts us from the heaviness of the moment to the hope of His promises.

Even when life feels dark, the Light of the World lives within us. Step by step, He opens the way ahead and gives grace for the journey. Gratitude keeps our eyes fixed on that light and reminds us that no shadow can overpower His presence.

Blessings That Deserve Our Thanks

When we pause to count the blessings that fill our lives, we begin to realize how

richly we’ve been favored. We’ve been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, sealed for eternity, and gifted with peace that passes understanding.

We live under His unconditional love — love that never says, “I will love you if...” but rather, “I love you, no matter what.” His hand provides our daily needs, His Spirit empowers us, His Word guides us, and His promise assures us of eternal life.

And we have the priceless gift of the Scriptures — the living Word of God that holds the wisdom, comfort, and truth our souls need every day. Truly, we have endless cause to say, “Thank You, Jesus.”

Choosing Gratitude Every Day

Tomorrow morning, when you’re tempted to complain about the weather, the traffic, or the troubles of life — just start thanking Him. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You for this new day. Thank You that You are with me.

Gratitude turns our focus from frustration to faith. It reminds us that we are not alone, that the Sovereign God of the universe is on our side.

When we learn to live with a thankful heart, every day becomes a celebration of His goodness. Thanksgiving is not a date on the calendar; it is a way of walking — a steady rhythm of grace, praise, and peace that keeps our hearts aligned with His.

So as you gather with family and friends this season, enjoy the meal, laugh, and celebrate — but let your deepest joy come from knowing the Giver Himself. Let every breath become an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord who has given you life, salvation, and His abiding presence.

Watch the full video here:
<https://youtu.be/-65RMONDrOY?si=cPlDH8enkEK6pSsE>

How Thanksgiving Shapes Your Life Story

By John Piper

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (Romans 1:21)

This really is an astonishing text. I spent a lot of time just soaking in the amazing statements of this text, especially because of its claim that every human being knows God. They know His eternity. They know His power. They know His being Creator of all. They know His deity. Everyone knows God. Atheists know God. Agnostics know God. Animists know God. Every person you meet on the street knows God.

Apart from God's saving grace, [Romans 1:18](#) says, every human being suppresses that knowledge. The reason we do is because every human being finds other things preferable to God, which is the very essence of evil, the essence of sin.

[Jeremiah 2:13](#) says, "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water." This is the arch evil, the primal sin, the root of all other evils: humans find things, people, the creation preferable to God.

Even though those other things are like dirt by comparison, we don't prefer God. We don't find God attractive. We don't find God desirable, beautiful, satisfying. That's the evil of all evils, and that's why, Paul says, we suppress the knowledge of

God that we have — because that knowledge shows Him as preferable to all things.

Heart of the Problem

So, we claim not to know God. We claim not to know Him, but we do know Him. We get angry at Him for not making himself more plain, but Paul says that God made Himself perfectly plain to everyone ([Romans 1:19](#)). Our problem is not lack of revelation; our problem is that we don't want to see, so we suppress and pretend that we don't see. Paul says that's our darkness, that's our foolishness, that's the futility of our minds ([Romans 1:21](#)).

"Every single thing that gives us any pleasure at all in this world is a gift of God."

Glory and Gratitude

Romans 1:18-23 says, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them [or made it plain]. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made [he's our Maker, and we know it]. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God [that's probably the most amazing statement in the text], they did not honor



[or glorify] him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.” ([Romans 1:18–23](#))

When we thank God, we are showing him to be glorious, and no one can truly glorify God with a heart of ingratitude.

To glorify and to thank are overlapping realities, but they’re not the same. There are ways to feel and think and act that glorify God, but we wouldn’t call them thankfulness. The reality of glorifying God is wider, bigger. It’s a bigger reality than thanking God. Thanking God is a subset, a subspecies, of glorifying God. And yet Paul, of all the ways to glorify God that he could have said, chooses to mention thankfulness alongside glorifying God. Why is that?

Made to Thank

First, I think it relates to the fact that Paul has just said that what can be known about God is known through the things he has made. In other words, everywhere a human being looks, whether the sky, the forest, the mountains, the rivers, the sea, the land, family, the mirror — all of it — whatever we see is made by God and is a gift of God, from the Maker to humanity. Every single thing that gives us any pleasure at all in this world is a gift of God.

The heart-response that God created for

glorifying him for his gifts is thankfulness. That’s what he created, that’s what he designed, in the human heart as a response to this vast, vast array of made things, of gifts. Of course, it’s not wrong to speak of being thankful to God for God. That’s not wrong, but in the Bible thankfulness mostly relates to God’s gifts and his deeds to bless us. For sure, God himself is the gift, and if we don’t arrive there, we haven’t arrived.

Still, it is right and good that our hearts brim, they just brim, with thankfulness that God is a Maker. Everything that is not God was made by God. Therefore, at every turn, everywhere we look, all the time, 24-7, we should feel profoundly, continually, earnestly thankful for God’s gifts. I think that’s one of the reasons why he lists thankfulness as the counterpart to “honor” or “glorify” in this text.

Everywhere a human being looks - whether the sky, the forest, the mountains, the rivers, the sea, the land – whatever we see is made by God and is a gift of God, from the Maker to humanity. Every single thing that gives us any pleasure at all in this world is a gift of God.

Made to Depend

Secondly, I think Paul calls out being thankful to God alongside glorifying God because built into thankfulness is humility, a sense of dependence and gladness in needy receiving. Humility, dependence,

glad neediness — not surprisingly, these sound a lot like faith.

I think if you pressed Paul, he would say true thankfulness toward our all-glorious, all-powerful, all-providing Creator includes humble, dependent, glad trust. Thankfulness and trust may not be the same thing, but they are so intimately and integrally connected that Paul thinks thankfulness is a good thing to mention here, where he also wants to call attention to trust.

Can anyone truly say, “I am joyfully thankful to God for his all-satisfying beauty and his all-governing power and his all-providing goodness to me — but I don’t trust him”? Nobody can talk like that. Something is inauthentic if that kind of sentence is spoken. Thankfulness, when oriented on God, is a deep and powerful experience.

“The heart-response that God created for glorifying him for his gifts is thankfulness.”

And so, when thankfulness fails, Paul describes its absence like this: “They became futile in their thinking. Their foolish hearts were darkened. Their claim to be wise was shown to be foolishness,

and they fell into the sacrilege of exchanging God for images, especially the one in the mirror.” That’s the absence of thankfulness. It’s a horrible, horrible description.

World’s Desperate Need

I think James is right. The absence of thankfulness as the absence of humility, dependence, glad neediness, and trust is one way of describing the darkness and folly and futility of our own times.

It is Pride with a capital P, the very Pride that calls our shame “glory,” exactly the way Romans 1 describes it, when they exchange God for the person in the mirror. There are many ways to describe the desperate need of the world, and according to Romans 1, one way is repentance from pride and independence and self-sufficiency toward a humble, dependent, happy, trustful neediness for God as he has revealed himself in Jesus, which we call thankfulness.

Read the Full article: <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-thanksgiving-shapes-your-life-story>



Attentiveness to God's Presence

By Tom Schwanda

Scripture reveals both God's deep desire for fellowship with us and the longing within every human soul for a relationship with Him. God always takes the initiative—by His grace—and seeks to draw us back into personal friendship. Central to this relationship is learning how to truly know Him. Since God has already revealed Himself, our task is to stay alert, recognizing that He is present and active in our world today.

Yet, sometimes our language distorts how we perceive Him. We may hear people say, "God really showed up in worship today," or when God seems absent, "If we pray harder, maybe the Holy Spirit will show up." I understand the sentiment—but this way of speaking can reflect a flawed theology. It implies that God's presence depends on our effort, rather than on His nature.

In truth, this kind of thinking misses the central reality of God's omnipresence. It echoes the prophets of Baal crying out on Mount Carmel as Elijah mocked them: "Shout louder! Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." (1 Kings 18:27)

God's presence is not something we conjure up. It is His gift—freely given, constant, and independent of what we do. He is already here; it is we who must awaken to His nearness. The great comfort of Scripture is that God is

always with us.

Biblical Examples of God's Presence

King David understood this truth deeply. Surrounded by enemies, he found peace in knowing that God was intimately acquainted with his every step (Psalm 139:1–5). He wrote:

"Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me."
(Psalm 139:7–10)

For David, this was not a doctrine—it was a lifeline.

Joshua, too, experienced this truth. When Moses passed leadership to him, God's promise steadied Joshua's heart:

"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:7–8)

Joshua had already seen God's presence in the pillars of cloud and fire guiding Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21). That same assurance empowered him to lead with courage—not in his own strength, but in God's abiding companionship.

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus extended this same promise to His disciples:

“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

The writer of Hebrews echoed it again:

“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

These verses remind us that God’s presence is not reserved for prophets or apostles. It is the inheritance of every believer.

Jesus’s Call: Listen and Watch

Jesus repeatedly emphasized the importance of awareness—of listening and watching. His first parable begins, “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed” (Mark 4:3). The command is urgent, not casual. Again in Mark 7:14–16, He said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this.” God Himself reinforced this at the Transfiguration: “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him.” (Luke 9:35)

In Revelation, the same command echoes through every letter to the churches:

“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says.” (Revelation 2–3)

Jesus also told His followers to watch. In Gethsemane He urged Peter, James, and John:

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” (Matthew 26:41)

To listen and watch are not suggestions—they are commands for those who wish to live in step with God’s Spirit.

Learning to Notice God

Moses provides a vivid example of attentiveness at the burning bush (Exodus 3:1–3). While tending sheep, he noticed something unusual—a bush ablaze but not consumed. Instead of dismissing it, he drew near to investigate.

Moses’s encounter reveals three principles:

1. He noticed what was unusual. He didn’t glance and move on. He lingered long enough to recognize that something holy was happening.
2. It happened during ordinary work. God met Moses in the middle of his daily labor, reminding us that no moment is “secular.” All ground can become holy ground.
3. He responded. Moses didn’t just observe; he acted on his awareness.

Likewise, in Luke 10, Mary modeled attentiveness by sitting at Jesus’s feet, listening to His words, while Martha was distracted with many tasks. Jesus gently corrected Martha, saying, “Mary has chosen what is better.” (Luke 10:42) The



lesson isn't to favor contemplation over service but to remind us that even good activity can drown out divine presence.

Fresh Attentiveness

Through the centuries, believers have reflected on the challenge of staying aware of God.

John Calvin wrote that the universe itself is "a sort of mirror in which we can contemplate God, who is otherwise invisible." Everywhere we look, sparks of His glory are visible for those with eyes to see.

Hans Urs von Balthasar cautioned that even Scripture requires fresh attentiveness:

"The Word of God may require of me today something it did not demand yesterday."

Being familiar with a passage doesn't mean we've exhausted its meaning. The Spirit continually breathes new life into old words.

C.S. Lewis put it memorably:

"We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere incognito... The real labor is to attend."

And theologian Diogenes Allen noted that such attention demands humility:

"It can be performed only as one gains some freedom from self-importance and self-concern."

Practicing God's Presence

Awareness of God shouldn't be occasional—it's meant to be our way of life. We often look for the spectacular, but God is most often found in the gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:11–12).

Missionary Frank Laubach, known as the "apostle of literacy," discovered this truth in the Philippines after deep personal loss. Inspired by Brother Lawrence's

classic *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Laubach set out to live moment by moment in awareness of God. He wrote,

"I have done nothing but open the windows—God has done all the rest."

He made it his goal to turn his heart toward God every few minutes—whatever he was doing. His example shows us that spiritual attentiveness grows through continual surrender.

A Practical Exercise

Here's a simple practice to help cultivate this awareness. Ask yourself two questions throughout the day:

1. Where have I met Jesus and the Holy Spirit today?
2. Where have I missed Him today?

Over time, these questions sharpen your spiritual perception.

You might also reflect on:

- What helps me pay attention to God?
- What hinders me from paying attention to God?

Write two lists. Then focus on one helpful practice to embrace, and one hindrance to reduce.

Psalm 55:22 offers a remedy:

"Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken."

Conclusion

God is not distant. He is here—now—in our midst. The invitation remains the same:

"Listen!" and "Watch!"

As we learn to notice His presence, we follow Him more fully and faithfully.

Read the full article here: <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/cultivating-attentiveness-to-gods-presence/>

Jason Fowler Trades Drugs & Fame for Jesus Christ

By Jeannie Ortega Law

Jeannie Ortega Law: You have been through so much, can you share a bit of your journey with us? Your past before Christ and how you came to Him.

Fowler: I grew up in a musical family. My dad has a voice like Pavarotti, his brother Mike taught me how to play guitar, my brother Chad plays drums, and my uncle Chris Fowler plays piano. Chris and his wife, Joy Waters Fowler, have led worship in Atlanta for over 20 years.

Some of my earliest memories were sitting around the piano at my grandmother's house singing everything from gospel to The Allman Brothers. I was surrounded by music from an early age but did not start playing an instrument until I was a teenager.

I grew up in an alcoholic family and always said I'm never gonna drink or do drugs. I saw the effect it was having on my family. My friend asked me one weekend if I wanted to go and hang out with his older brother and their friends. I really didn't want to drink but wanted to fit in. I took my first drink and it changed everything. The alcohol killed the fear and made me feel like I was funny, liked, and comfortable in my own skin. It was my "liquid courage."

I was raised in a Christian home but started to turn away from God and church. I started drinking to have fun, to deal with life situations, and to fit in. Before long I was relying on it for

everything instead of relying on God. Soon after, I started smoking pot. Both gave me a false sense of spirituality. I thought I could control it and could quit whenever I wanted.

During college I decided to try to make it in music. I joined a band called "Dirt Circus" and started touring the college circuit. It was a party every night. I started using whatever drugs were offered to me. Crazy enough I actually ended up getting kicked out of the band. I was hurt but wasn't going to give up. I thought that if I made it and got a record deal that everything would be okay.

After my band kicked me out I formed two bands "Entropy" and "Ultraplionic." I was going to try even harder. You see I was really trying to fill up the place inside of me with things of the world. I thought this would make me happy. I was "looking for love in all the wrong places." I realize now that the place inside all of us is designed for Jesus. He is the only one that fits perfectly and makes us complete.

By the time we got the record deal I had a big drug and alcohol habit. I had long passed the point of drinking and drugging for fun. I just drank and used drugs to hide and to numb the pain, but they weren't working anymore. I felt I had to drink and do drugs to survive. They had me. My problems continued to pile up and I never faced them. My actions of making bad choices, being

selfish and self centered, and just trying to stay high created some bad consequences. My relationships with my family, friends, and myself were all broken. I was trying to stay afloat the only way I knew how.

The band broke up shortly after. I ended up trying a solo career in Atlanta with ImageMil. It had gotten so bad that they had to have an intervention with me. They told me they couldn't work with me anymore. My alcohol and drug addiction was too much. It was controlling and destroying my life. I was crushed.

I couldn't hold a job, I couldn't keep relationships together, I didn't like who I was, and did not have a relationship with God. I was hopeless...and ended up homeless. Staying with whoever I could. At the very end I was kicked out of a drug dealer's house.

Right then and there I said, "God whoever You are, whatever You are, please help me." I meant it with everything I had left.

The next thing I knew, I was in a Christ-based homeless shelter in Athens, Georgia. It was December 30, 2005. I was starting over.

We studied the 12 steps based on the teachings of Jesus. I started to feel better and get better mentally, physically, and most of all, spiritually. At 6 months of sobriety, I attended a men's conference. That is when I gave my life to Jesus.

After I accepted Jesus in my life, everything started to get better and better. It's really like a country song backwards. I started getting my life, my family, my friends, and myself back. I started getting involved in church and even joined the praise team.

I have been sober over 10 years and leading worship at Celebrate Recovery for over 6 years. I've been the worship leader at a church plant in the heart of

Atlanta with Pastor Jason Becker for over three years. My wife and I also work together serving others through her ministry HEARTS Across Atlanta. We feed the homeless, provide clothing, toiletries, and play music to share His love.

I love serving, giving back, and sharing the story of redemption. Jesus saved my life and I want to share my story and His story of love, mercy, and Grace through my music.

JCL: Not many people in the Christian industry have come through homelessness and addiction. How have what you've been through influence your music, your show and how you value what you do?

Fowler: When I first got sober I didn't really want anyone to know that I was a drug addict and homeless. I was ashamed of the way I was and what I had become. There is a certain gratitude and humility that comes with surviving that. It's amazing how God can use our past hurts, habits, and hang ups for His glory to help others. People relate with someone who share a similar experience. Like survivors of a shipwreck there is a certain bond that forms.

I have always played music for the love of it. It ended up being a big part of who I was and what defined me. After accepting Jesus I started to realize that God had saved me and my life really had a purpose. It was to share my experiences, hope, and redemption with others. Music is not what defines me but what God has given me to help others. My grandmother has a saying I just love. "Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift to God."

In my show I usually incorporate a short testimony about being homeless and struggling with alcohol and drug addiction. I also tell my story at different events for youth, churches, conferences,

and Celebrate Recovery. I use my past to help others.

I value what I do so much today. I am so grateful for the life God has given to me. I no longer regret the past. I use it in a way to show others that there is healing and redemption through Jesus. I'm a true miracle. I am a new creation!

JCL: Your new album is a collection of prayers and devotions, what scripture would you say helped you out of your darkest time?

Fowler: I had been trying so hard to run things in my life and failed without having Jesus. I was broken down, lost, and tired. When I said "God please help me" and really meant it, He did!

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

[Matthew 11:28-30 NIV](#)

JCL: Many who go through recovery are taught to follow a "higher power" but are rarely pointed to Christ. What would you say is the difference in making your own version of god and having a true relationship with Christ?

Fowler: A lot of people come into recovery having never known Jesus, were raised in a Christian home but have gotten away from church and their relationship with Jesus, or even have been hurt by someone in the church. It's hard to get through the resentments of some. It takes time for some people. I think working the 12 steps gets a lot of people closer to a relationship with Jesus. I started my recovery in a Christ-based program and we went to AA and NA meetings as well. AA is really based off of the beatitudes of Jesus.

As I continued working the steps and

accepted Jesus in my heart I knew that He is the way.

That's what I love about Celebrate Recovery. It's very similar to AA but Jesus Christ is the "Higher Power."

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." [John 3:16 NIV](#)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." [John 14:6-7 NIV](#)

JCL: What advice do you have for others who have lost their way?

Fowler: There is hope in Jesus. Find a Celebrate Recovery at a church near you. It's not just for addiction. They cover everything that we may struggle with. Get involved with a step study. Start serving.

"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." [Isaiah 1:18 NIV](#)

I'm really grateful to be able to share my story and testimony through music. I believe God gave us music as the universal language. Any time someone can connect with a song and the experience of the truth in the performance and words there is a connection. I hope to connect with others in that way and be able to empathize, relate, and share experiences together in the way God wants us to...with love.

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/former-rock-star-jason-fowler-trades-drugs-and-fame-for-jesus-christ-interview.html>

The Power of Silence in a Noisy World

By Billy Graham

Silence Is Strength

Let me tell you something that took me years to understand: silence is not the absence of strength—it's the evidence of it. In a world that glorifies noise, applause, and constant validation, the one who learns to be silent has already won half the battle.

You don't have to raise your voice to prove your point or answer every critic. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is say nothing and keep moving. There's a quiet confidence that comes when your worth no longer depends on the opinions of others. When you know who you are, you stop needing to be seen, defended, or applauded.

You're not silent because you're afraid—you're silent because your focus is too precious to waste on noise.

Choosing Your Battles

Not every battle is worth fighting, and not every voice deserves a response. Some arguments are traps designed to pull you away from your purpose. I once thought silence made me look weak, that I needed to correct every misunderstanding. But true strength is often shown in restraint. It takes more courage to hold your peace than to argue with fools. The strong don't need to speak to be heard. Their life, their work, and their peace speak for them.

Trusting God in the Silence

Silence is more than the absence of

words—it's a posture of trust. When you choose to stay silent, you're saying, "God, I trust You to handle what I cannot." When Jesus stood before His accusers, He didn't argue or defend Himself. His silence wasn't weakness—it was power under control. It was authority rooted in truth. In your life, there will be times when you're misunderstood or misjudged. Let them. Your silence in those moments is a declaration that you are grounded, anchored, and unmoved.

Let Your Results Make the Noise

The people who shout the loudest are often searching for validation. But when you're walking in purpose, you don't need to chase acknowledgment. You let your consistency do the talking. A tree doesn't explain how tall it's growing. It just keeps reaching. And one day, the same people who ignored the seed will have no choice but to notice the fruit.

Staying silent isn't about avoiding conflict. It's about mastering your spirit. You've got to get to a place where your peace cannot be stolen just because someone else is having a bad day. You've got to mature to the point where people's opinions don't interrupt your progress. And when the enemy can't destroy you, he'll try to distract you. He'll send confusion, offense, pointless debates, anything to pull you out of alignment. But when you stay silent, when you hold your focus, when you refuse to play the game, you win every time.

Don't waste your energy proving to people

what God already spoke over your life. Let them think what they want. Let them say what they will. You keep building. You keep showing up. You keep doing the work in silence.

And the time will come when your breakthrough will speak louder than your defense ever could. Stay grounded. Stay focused. Stay silent. And watch what happens.

The Growth That Happens in Silence

There is a kind of growth that only happens in silence. Away from the noise, away from the crowd, away from the pressure to perform. There is a deep work that God does in the unseen places of your life. That's where transformation begins - in the quiet corners of your soul where nobody's watching.

Growth requires stillness, requires discipline, and yes, sometimes it requires you to walk alone. Think about the seed before it becomes anything. It has to go underground, hidden, unseen. It has to break in the dark before it can rise in the light. In your life, there will be seasons where God buries you, not to forget you, but to strengthen your roots before He ever allows you to bloom.

When you're committed to your destiny, you've got to learn to embrace those silent seasons where it feels like nothing's moving, where it feels like your prayers are echoing back to you. Because those are the seasons where God is doing his deepest work. He's pruning your heart, healing your wounds, building your character.

The Peace Within

Peace isn't something you chase—it's something you cultivate. So many look for peace in people, possessions, or approval, but real peace begins when you stop depending on

circumstances to define it. When you stop comparing and start focusing on your own journey, freedom follows. You no longer live under the weight of others' expectations but in alignment with God's calling.

The peace that comes from God is unshakable. When life hits hard, that peace holds you steady. It's not tied to a person or moment—it's anchored in who you are and Whose you are.

The Power of Stillness

There's something powerful about being still in a world that never stops moving. Everyone else may be hustling, but progress doesn't always look like activity—it often looks like patience. God will call you to rest when the world tells you to rush. It's in the stillness that you find strength, clarity, and direction.

Silence isn't the absence of sound—it's the presence of God at work. He moves in the quiet, He shapes you in the waiting, and He prepares you for what's next.

When you stop striving and start trusting, you begin to hear what truly matters—the voice of God, the desires of your heart, and the truths that endure.

Stay in the Silence

Don't rush your process. Don't compare your journey. God is doing something sacred in the stillness. He's shaping you, strengthening you, and preparing you for blessings beyond what you can imagine. When the time is right, the fruit of that quiet work will speak for itself—and you'll know it was worth every silent season.

Stay silent. Stay focused. Trust the process.

Watch full video: https://youtu.be/nyn9gI5dO_0

Does God Work All Things Together For Our Good? Not Exactly.

By Keith Giles

It's a very common misconception that nearly every Christian embraces without question: God works all things together for our good.

Now, it's easy to understand why we accept this idea when our English translations of the Bible pretty much say exactly this:

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” [Romans 8:28]

Seems simple enough, right?

I mean, right there it says very clearly that God makes everything work out for our good [and by “our” I mean “those who love God”].

But, the problem is that this isn't really what it says in the actual Greek text.

As famed New Testament Bible Scholar N.T. Wright explains, the verse should be translated a bit differently. Rather than to assume that what this verse intends to teach us is that “everything will work out in our favor eventually” [as we tend to read it], the verse should actually be understood like this:

“It's a very dense bit of Greek and when we look at it, actually God is the subject of the sentence – that's the first thing – it's God who will work all things together but then the “working together” – the verb Paul uses here – means that God is taking those whom God loves as His partners...and the previous two verses explain who those

partners are...because when he says “those who love God” he is referring to these who are lamenting, who are groaning in the groaning of all creation [v. 26-27], who are resonating with the pain of the World, and Paul says that the Holy Spirit is indwelling them and the Spirit, too, is groaning with inarticulate yearning.

“That means that something is going on here; that within the World there is the Church [and] there is the Spirit groaning. Those who are holding on to that in lament, Paul says they are the ones who love God, and somehow God uses that lament, that prayer which is often a wordless prayer, a cry of pain; of not understanding, God uses THAT within His purposes for good; for larger good to come to the World. Which, in the passage, is about the renewal of all Creation; the time when the whole Creation will be set free...

“...so it's a very dense verse, and it is full of hope, but it doesn't just mean we are passive and sitting back and saying, ‘well, this will all work out somehow’, but we are very much praying often in agony or in lament and we can be assured that God is working WITH US at those times...to bring good in the short and in the much longer term.” [emphasis mine]

In other words, it's not that God somehow makes everything work out in our favor in the end. It's actually saying that God collaborates with us – as we intercede in the Spirit with groans that words cannot express – and as we begin to awaken as the sons and

daughters of God to step into our identity as the incarnation of Christ in the world today [Romans 8:22] that we work together with God to fulfill mandate of bringing the Kingdom of God to earth [Matt. 6:10], here and now.

A better way to translate this verse might be something closer to this:

“For we know that God, working together with those of us who have been touched by God’s love, is yearning to bring good out of all the suffering and evil we see around us in our world today. This is our calling according to God’s purpose: To collaborate with the Spirit of God within us, to bring His Kingdom to earth, now.” [Roman 8:28, remix]

So, we should stop quoting this verse to say that God will make it all work out in our favor somehow. Instead, we should allow this verse to remind us that we are called to work together with God to bring joy, peace, healing, compassion, justice and love to the world around us.

We should begin to groan along with all Creation for more justice, peace and love. We should begin to groan along with the Spirit of God inside us for mercy, forgiveness and grace.

Once our hearts and spirits are aligned with all of Creation and with God’s Spirit within, we will be resonating with the frequency that becomes the carrier wave of God’s Kingdom to Earth.

This is who we are. This is who God is.

Working together with God we can transform the evils in this world into the good that God has always intended for us to experience.

This won’t happen if we do nothing.

The world will not change until we change.

Because, if we notice what Paul says in this same chapter a few verses earlier, the

suffering in this world is not to be compared with the glory that is within each of us, and all creation is groaning for this to be released and revealed:

“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. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.” [Romans 8:18-19]

See, we usually read these verses as if they are about Heaven to come, but they are not. Paul doesn’t place our future hope in the Second Coming of Christ, or the promise of Heaven after we die. Not at all. He explicitly says that there is a glory waiting to be revealed in us.

It’s not the return of Christ that all Creation is yearning for. It’s the moment when the sons [and daughters] of God are finally revealed and awakened into the fullness of our identity in Christ.

We are the hands and feet of Jesus today. We are His Body.

Whatever we are doing is what Christ is doing.

Let’s stop waiting for Jesus to come and fix it.

Christ – and all Creation – is groaning for us to wake up and start working all things together for good.

Rise up, oh sleeper. Awaken from your slumber.

The Christ in you must be resurrected and escape from the tomb of silence and complacency.

Roll away the stone. Step outside. Breathe deep.

Read the full article here: <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/keithgiles/2020/07/does-god-work-all-things-together-for-our-good-not-exactly/>

10 Reasons Why I'm not a Christian Zionist

WholeheartedNess Podcast

Christian Zionism is a very hot and polarizing topic among Christians, and sadly, it often stirs up contention and even anger. But as Christians, we should be willing to have loving conversations about pretty much anything. We should be able to question our positions and hold them up to the light of Scripture.

In the end, if our positions don't align with what Scripture actually says, wouldn't we want to know that?

What Is Christian Zionism?

Zionism is generally presented to the public as the simple belief that Jewish people have a right to live in the land we call the Holy Land and to establish and maintain a Jewish homeland.

If that were all Christian Zionism was, I might be able to support it in some sense—though I'd still have qualms with some of the wording. But sadly, that definition is not the form of Christian Zionism we see circulated in the real world. So, while people like to argue about the definition, what we really need to observe is what Christian Zionists are—silently or openly—supporting and standing behind.

All Christian Zionists believe that the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. They see it as theologically significant and believe that Christians are required to give the modern political state of Israel political,

financial, and unwavering support. They teach that Christians who don't do this are disobedient to God.

Now that we're clear on that, let's look at the reasons why I—and many other Christians—have chosen to reject the idea of Christian Zionism.

Reason 1: It Takes the Promises to Abraham Out of Context

Christian Zionism takes the promises made to Abraham out of context. That might make sense if all we had was the Old Testament. But as Christians, we have the New Testament—the words of the Messiah, His apostles, and His disciples—which add dimension and clarity to what we find in the Old Testament, including the promise to Abraham.

The entire premise of Christian Zionism is built on one promise made to Abraham, repeated throughout Genesis 12, 13, 15, and 17:

“To your offspring I will give this land. For all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.”

Christian Zionists believe this promise refers to Abraham's physical descendants—the 12 tribes of Israel. But the promises were made to Abraham and his “offspring” (singular).

Galatians 3:16 clarifies:

“The promises were spoken to Abraham

and to his seed. Scripture does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but ‘and to your seed,’ meaning one person, who is Christ.”

Paul makes it clear that this promise was always referring to Christ. In verse 22, he adds,

“But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.”

So, the promise to Abraham is only received through Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are the heirs of that promise.

Reason 2: It Claims Jews Are the Only Heirs to the Promise

Christian Zionism teaches that Jews are the only heirs to what was promised to Abraham. But most Jews today deny Jesus. Some even explicitly say they believe Jesus is burning in hell.

Galatians 3:22 says the promise is

received through faith in Christ. Verse 29 adds:

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.”

So, if most Jews in modern Israel have rejected Jesus, how can they inherit what was promised to Abraham when Scripture says it’s only through faith in Christ?

Christian Zionism bestows covenant benefits on those who don’t qualify for them and denies them to those who do—believers in Jesus. Whether Jew or Gentile, anyone who is in Christ is an heir to the promise because we are in Him.

Reason 3: God Said the Land Belongs to Him

In Leviticus 25:23, God says:

“The land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine; and you are strangers and sojourners with me.”

God told Israel plainly: “You don’t own



this. I own it.”

Even the promise in Genesis 12:7—“To your offspring I will give this land”—ultimately points to Jesus, the true heir. The Israelites were stewards, not owners. This theme runs throughout Scripture. Adam and Eve were stewards of Eden, but when they disobeyed, they were expelled.

Reason 4: Possession of the Land Came with Conditions

Likewise, God warned Israel in Leviticus 18:28 that if they defied His commands,

“the land will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations before you.”

The land came with conditions. Disobedience meant loss of possession. Yet modern Israel, having rejected Christ, is still said by Christian Zionists to be blessed in taking and ruling the land. That defies Scripture.

God made it clear: covenant-breaking people do not receive covenant promises.

Random Food for Thought

Many Christians assume that when a nation prospers—wins wars or gains land—it must be blessed by God. But didn’t the devil tempt Jesus with “all the kingdoms of the world”? (Matthew 4:8–9).

We must ask: from whom does this “prosperity” come? The establishment of Israel in 1948, despite ongoing disobedience, cannot automatically be called a blessing from the Lord.

Reason 5: Those Who Deny Jesus Are Not God’s People

Only those who have faith in Christ are God’s people. Christian Zionism claims that Jews who deny Jesus are still

“God’s people.” That is biblically unfounded.

Jesus told the Pharisees—legitimate descendants of Abraham—that their father was the devil (John 8:44). He said that if they were Abraham’s children, they would do what Abraham did—believe Him. Because they rejected Him, they were not children of Abraham.

Christian Zionism, therefore, directly contradicts Jesus’ own teaching about who God’s people truly are.

Reason 6: Jesus’ Interpretation Rejects Christian Zionism’s Interpretation

If the Pharisees—true descendants of Abraham—were not heirs to the promise, then Christian Zionism’s understanding is wrong.

Christian Zionism focuses on ethnicity, but even Jesus’ own lineage included Moabites and Canaanites. If a “pure bloodline” mattered to God, He could have made it so—but He didn’t. God doesn’t favor one ethnicity or lineage over another.

Just as my children aren’t saved simply because I am, neither are people saved because they descend from Abraham.

Reason 7: Its Ideology Has a Gaping Hole

If Christian Zionism were true, then the promise to Abraham would apply to all twelve tribes of Israel. Yet the Jewish people descend from only one tribe—Judah.

Many other tribes assimilated, but some didn’t. There are Samaritans today who worship Yahweh but don’t identify as Jews. Some descendants likely became Christians or Muslims.

So even by Christian Zionism’s own

standard, the “descendants of Abraham” are not limited to Jews. Their position excludes many who, by their own definition, would qualify.

Reason 8: It Promotes a Prosperity Mindset

Many Christian Zionists focus heavily on the verse:

“I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you.”

They use it to justify unconditional support for Israel—hoping to be blessed in return. But that’s not faith; that’s the prosperity gospel in disguise: Do X to get Z.

That’s not the heart God desires.

Reason 9: Its Fruits Are Rotten

Jesus said, “You will know them by their fruits.” (Matthew 7:16).

Looking at the fruit of Christian Zionism reveals corruption. It often leads to idolatry—elevating the descendants of Abraham above the descendant of Abraham, Christ Himself.

Some Christian Zionists are so focused on supporting Israel that they’re willing to violate the commands of God to do it. Others obsess over end-times prophecy, even sending red heifers to Israel to “help fulfill prophecy.”

When your theology requires disobedience to God, it’s a godless and idolatrous position.

And today, as atrocities unfold in Gaza—half of whose population are children—many Christian Zionists justify or ignore the suffering to “bless Israel.” They turn off their compassion and dehumanize people precious to God. This is a perversion of justice and a clear example of bad fruit.

Reason 10: It Conflates Judaism With the Modern State of Israel

Christian Zionism conflates Judaism with the modern political state of Israel, fueling real antisemitism today.

When a militarized state wraps itself in religious symbols—putting the Star of David on flags, tanks, and weapons—it fuses national violence with religious identity. Every act of war is branded with that symbol.

So, when Israel commits acts the world rightly condemns as evil, many associate those actions with Judaism itself. This conflation breeds hatred.

The modern political state of Israel has become one of the main contributors to antisemitism in our world today—and Christian Zionism, by supporting that conflation, carries the same torch.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_13x5NZ56w

Each day brings new headlines and developments in the war in Gaza, and many people are asking questions about Israel’s place in End-Time prophecy.

As a special supplement to this Wine Press issue, we’re including a Bible study titled “Abraham to Eternity,” which explores the biblical foundation showing how God’s covenant promise to Abraham finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and His followers. Our hope is that it will strengthen your faith and equip you to respond with confidence when you are faced with questions about Zionism and Israel.

Check It Out: Books, Apps etc.

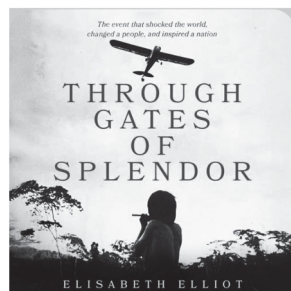
Please send in your recommendations of books, podcasts, apps or shows to:
contact@thewinepress.org

Books

Gates of Splendor

By Elizabeth Elliot

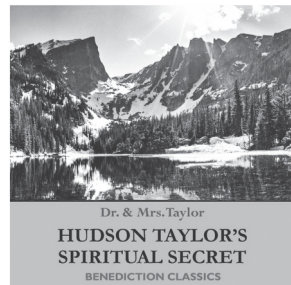
In 1956, five young men traveled deep into the jungles to establish communication with the fierce and isolated Waorani tribe. In a nearby village, their wives huddled around a radio receiver, eagerly awaiting news of the historic encounter. The news they received sent shock waves around the world and changed their lives forever.



Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret

By Dr and Mrs Howard Taylor

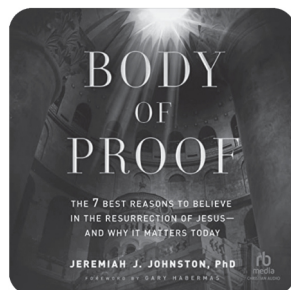
The classic biography of Hudson Taylor, missionary to China and founder of the China Inland Mission. Through many harrowing trials and tests of his faith, Hudson Taylor followed God and relied on Him only.



Body of Proof

By Jeremiah Johnston

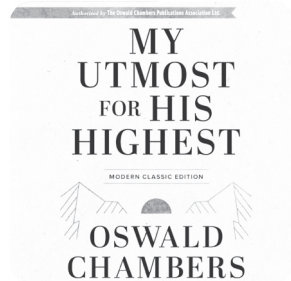
The 7 Best Reasons to Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus--and Why It Matters Today. Dr. Jeremiah Johnston sets out to show why Jesus' victory over death is central to a believer's faith. Straightforward, accessible, and practical, this book examines the latest archaeological and textual findings and explains why it matters today as the foundation of our hope in the face of suffering and grief.



My Utmost for His Highest

By Oswald Chambers

The beloved 365-day devotional first published by Oswald Chambers' widow in 1924. Full of powerful challenge to devote your all for God's highest glory, these readings open the way to deeper, stronger faith.



A Thanksgiving Prayer

Heavenly Father,

As we gather our hearts in gratitude this Thanksgiving, we pause to remember that every good and perfect gift comes from You. You are the Giver of life, the Sustainer of our days, and the Source of all that brings us joy.

Thank You for the blessings that surround us—the warmth of friendship, the love of family, the beauty of creation, and the quiet moments that remind us You are near. Thank You for the daily provisions that sustain us and for the grace that carries us through each trial. Even in seasons of lack or loss, Your faithfulness remains unchanging, and Your mercies are new every morning.

Lord, we confess that it's easy to let our gratitude fade amid the noise and hurry of life. Forgive us for the times we've complained instead of praised, and worried instead of trusted. Today, we choose to lift our eyes to You—the One who is always good, always present, and always worthy of thanksgiving.

We pray for those who face this day with heavy hearts—for the lonely, the grieving, the sick, and the weary. May Your comfort surround them, Your peace quiet their fears, and Your presence remind them they are not forgotten. Help us, Lord, to be Your hands and feet—to extend kindness, share our abundance, and shine Your light in a world that so often feels dark.

Most of all, we thank You for Jesus—Your greatest gift to us. Through Him we have forgiveness, hope, and eternal life. May our lives reflect His love and our hearts overflow with thanksgiving for all You have done.

With grateful hearts we pray.

Amen.



Living Your Life as a Thank-You Note to God

By Rick Warren

When Thanksgiving rolls around, most of us think of turkey, pie, and family gatherings. But God invites us to something deeper: to live every day of our lives as a personal “thank-you note” back to Him.

There’s an old saying: “Your life is God’s gift to you; what you do with it is your gift to God.” Thanksgiving isn’t just a holiday—it’s a lifestyle. When gratitude becomes the rhythm of your life, your happiness, satisfaction, and sense of purpose all increase. The psalmist wrote, “The sacrifice that honors Me is a thankful heart.” (Psalm 50:23 TEV)

If God were cruel, unfair, or distant, there’d be no reason to thank Him. But the Bible shows the exact opposite. God is great—“The Lord is great and worthy of our praise” (Psalm 145:3). He’s holy, pure and perfect in all His ways (Psalm 97:12). He’s loving, showing unfailing love that never quits (Psalm 107:8). He’s just, always fair and righteous (Psalm 7:17). And He’s good—the source of every good thing in our lives (Psalm 54:6; 118:1).

Because God is great, holy, loving, just, and good, we can always be confident in Him—even when life is confusing or painful. He’s not moody or inconsistent. He’s always kind and merciful. That’s reason enough to live in gratitude.

Gratitude doesn’t stop with what God has done; it continues with what He will do. You can face the unknown future with gratitude because you know the character, works, and promises of your God.

Thanksgiving isn’t just an earthly holiday; it’s the one celebration that continues in Heaven. Revelation 7:11–12 gives us a glimpse: “All the angels were standing around the throne ... and they cried out, ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength belong to our God forever and ever!’”

God wants us to start practicing now—so that when we get to Heaven, gratitude will already be our native language.

