

WEEK 7 • STEP 7 OF 9

Gratitude and Praise

Strengthening Faith Through Thanksgiving

"In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

— Philippians 4:6 (NKJV)

Notice what Paul did not say. He did not say wait until the situation is resolved, and then be thankful. He said: with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known. Gratitude belongs in the prayer — not after it.

This matters because gratitude does something structural to the heart. When we begin by thanking God for what He has already done, for who He is, for His faithfulness in past seasons — our attention shifts. The problem no longer fills the whole picture. It gets placed alongside the truth of God's goodness and character. And that reframing changes everything about how we pray and how we carry what we are facing.

There is a story in Acts 16 that I cannot read without being stopped by it. Paul and Silas had been publicly beaten and thrown into the deepest cell of a Roman prison. Feet locked in stocks. Backs torn open. No rescue in sight. No indication that anything would change.

It was midnight.

And they began to pray and sing hymns to God.

Not quietly and reluctantly. Not a whispered resignation. Singing. The kind of sound that carries through stone walls. The other prisoners heard it. The jailer — a man who had been doing his job in a place of suffering — heard it.

Then the earthquake came. Doors opened. Chains fell. And Paul and Silas stayed. When the jailer found them, he was ready to take his own life from terror at what had happened. Paul's voice cut through the dark: do not harm yourself — we are all here. And that jailer, who moments before had been at the edge of despair, fell before them and asked the question that changed his life: what must I do to be saved?

Their praise at midnight did not just open their own chains. It opened a door for someone who would never have encountered God any other way. Your gratitude in the difficult seasons has reach beyond what you can see.

Your praise in the dark does something in the atmosphere around you that you cannot measure. The people watching how you respond at midnight are listening for what you will do.

One Place to Start This Week

- Begin every prayer this week with two specific things you are thankful for before making any requests.
- Start a simple gratitude list: 10 ways God has been faithful to you. Let it become a record you can return to.
- Praise Him for who He is — not just for what He has done. Practice this for 5 minutes before you sleep.

*Want to go deeper? Step 7 of **How to Get Prayers Answered** takes you inside that Roman prison at midnight and tells the full story — including what happened to the jailer and what his question means for how we live our ordinary, watched lives.*

Gratitude strengthens individual prayer. But there is another dimension of prayer God designed that we were never meant to carry alone. Next week we talk about what happens when believers come together.

Coming Up → Week 8 — The Power of Agreement: When Believers Pray Together
