

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

120. Here Is a New Concept: Celebrate “Thanksgivings”

You are listening to episode 120 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, Here is a New Concept: Celebrate "Thanksgivings." Welcome to the podcast today. I'm grateful you are here. Well, here we are. It's Thanksgiving week in the U.S. The week where we are reminded to pause and give thanks. I found something recently that caught my attention, and I'm sharing it here in today's episode. If you're interested in celebrating Thanksgiving with a fresh perspective and maybe a new concept, listen in and together we'll find timely hope and encouragement. Not just for this week, but for every week of our lives. So let's get to it.

I'll begin this episode with this: I truly don't understand how it can be Thanksgiving week already. 2023 has felt like it has been moving faster and faster as the year has progressed. For you, too? I mean, it feels like we should still be somewhere in between August and September to me. Truly, it's a mystery how it can be Thanksgiving week!

Nonetheless, here we are. And really that has nothing to do with this week's episode, but I just can't help myself as I am in disbelief this week!

As I think about Thanksgiving Day approaching, I'm reminded of my episode this week last year: Episode 68, Living as if Thanksgiving is More Than a Day. My heart's desire is to live a life of thanksgiving, and to have a grateful and thankful heart every day. But I'll be the first to confess I don't always live that out so well. I'm not always giving thanks, and I don't always have a grateful heart.

Maybe you can relate.

Or maybe you follow through with your good intentions of living in thankfulness better than I do. I hope that's the case.

So I'm grateful for the Thanksgiving holiday. It's a day set aside that helps those of us who forget or who don't always live our thankfulness out so well. But of course it's much more than that.

You know me, I looked up the definition of the word thanksgiving, and here is what I found.

- a public celebration in acknowledgment of divine favor or kindness.
- the act of giving thanks; grateful acknowledgment of benefits or favors, especially to God.
- an expression of thanks, especially to God.
- a day set apart for giving thanks to God.

Thanksgiving is an act, or practice, or expression, but it's also a day. And don't these definitions encourage you to look at thanksgiving, the act and the day, with a renewed perspective? I mean, pause for a moment and think about all the many blessings in our lives for which we are grateful.

When was the last time we thanked God for them?

A friend sent me a Thanksgiving card in the mail last week and before she signed it, she wrote, "We have much to be thankful for." Goodness, do we ever.

Also last week, I don't exactly remember what I was searching for online regarding Thanksgiving, the day, but I found this profound sentence on britannica.com, and I can't unsee it or get it out of my mind.

Highlighting how the holiday began, it read, "The New England colonists were accustomed to regularly celebrating 'Thanksgivings,' days of prayer thanking God for blessings such as military victory or the end of a drought."

Days of prayer thanking God for blessings. Sounds kind of like our Thanksgiving Day of today. I don't know about you, but Thanksgiving over here isn't always full of prayer and thanking God. I sometimes make it about others things, like making sure the meal is timed perfectly, or making sure the house is spotless for our guests. I know I've made things way to complicated regarding Thanksgiving. What if we just simply made it a day full of prayer and thanksgiving?

Then also there's this: we don't have to wait until Thanksgiving rolls around to "celebrate 'Thanksgivings,' do we?

I want to be like one of these New England colonists. I desire to regularly celebrate "Thanksgivings." Because many days of prayer thanking God for all His many blessings sounds like very good days to me. You, too?

Because again, God has blessed us with much.

Thanking Him for running water, a warm home, food on our tables, and clothes on our back.

Thanking Him for the special people in our lives.

Even thanking Him for our jobs, our schools, our vocations.

What about thanking Him for the growth He blesses us with during trials?

Or the answers to our prayers.

Or even the sunshine and timely rain?

We each have much for which to be thankful.

What if every day was for celebrating "Thanksgivings"?

Friend, I think it is, and I think our lives would greatly change if we considered our days this way.

Thanksgiving is more than our traditions (as wonderful as they are) on a holiday. Thanksgiving is what happens when gratefulness fills our hearts. And celebrating "Thanksgivings," a day we could title every day, would greatly impact our lives and those around us.

The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving. Psalm 28:7 NLT

I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. Psalm 69:30 NIV

This reminds me of when our children were young and still under our roof. Every night before bed we would gather in one of our bedrooms and pray as a family. Some evenings we would share what we

termed "thankfuls"--what we were thankful for that day. Of course various blessings were mentioned as "thankfuls," such as our farm cats, our friends, our family, our toys, our jobs, schools, and teachers, and even our comfy beds. This became a beautiful habit that sadly ended when our kids grew up and moved out on their own.

Goodness, as I sit here and recall those times, I miss those evenings together.

Friend, what if we every evening thought back over our day and shared our "thankfuls" with God? Or shared them with our family? Something happens when we remember and thank God. Something happens when gratitude fills our hearts. Our perspectives change, our attitudes change, our lives change. We glorify God when we live in gratefulness and thanksgiving.

So, what are your "thankfuls" today, and how are you giving thanks to God? Write them down. Share them with a friend. Share them on social media. Or just keep them between you and God. Let's fill our minds, our hearts, our lives, and our corners of the world with thanksgiving.

Today can be a day of Thanksgiving.

I'm reminded, on my site in my Free Resources, I created a printable of 15 Bible Verses Perfect for Thanksgiving. I read them every year, but after this episode, I think I should read them much more often. I'll share the link to these Resources in the show notes.

But what else helps you be thankful? How do you consistently thank God for the many blessings in your life? We're talking about this in our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Hop on over there to join in the conversation this week. The link to the group is also in the show notes.

One more thing. If you live close to me, our next Real Encouragement LIVE! women's event is next week in Cedar Rapids on November 30. This may favorite one all year long--our Christmas event. Come prepare your heart for the holidays and learn how Right Now Matters at Christmastime. This may just be your most memorable holiday season yet! The link for details and tickets is in the show notes.

I know it's a full week as we prepare for Thanksgiving, but let's not let the preparations pull us away from giving thanks. Let's begin today. Friend, for what are you giving thanks today? Let's make today--and every day--be a day of thanksgiving. Remember this week, I am thanking God for you. You are a blessing. Thanks for hanging out with me here. God bless you and happy Thanksgiving!

Links in this episode:

Episode 68, [Living as if Thanksgiving is More Than a Day](#)
[Definition of thanksgiving](#)

[Celebrate "Thanksgivings" statement](#) on britannica.com

[Psalm 28:7](#) NLT

[Psalm 69:30](#) NIV

[15 Bible Verses Perfect for Thanksgiving](#)

[Encouragement for Real Life Community](#) on Facebook

[Right Now Matters at Christmastime](#) - Real Encouragement LIVE! women's event

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