

30 DAYS IN THE PSALMS



PRACTICING LAMENT AND THANKSGIVING
A DEVOTIONAL

HOPE STUDENTS

INTENT

The intent of this 30-day devotional through the book of Psalms is to open our hearts up to the spiritual practices of **lament** and **thanksgiving**. Oftentimes, we can find ourselves right in the middle of the two. We may not often prioritize the practice and expression of gratitude in our lives, or we may not always be willing to face and feel our pain either. We end up sitting in a space where we stay disconnected from ourselves, our lives, and God.

Practicing celebration, thanksgiving, and praise helps to build our **gratitude-muscle**, while practicing lament helps us to build our **honesty-muscle**. In our gratitude and honesty, we can experience communion with our Creator.

I want to invite you to this journey of naming and facing the really big and hard things in your life, learning that God is big enough to hold them and to sit with you in them. Hopefully this tool can be used to help us sit in the tension and mystery of Christ, while we experience what it's like to be human and hold both the beautiful and horrible all at once. Because it's all **worship**.

Each day will include a psalm of lament and a psalm of praise to read. There will be prompts for reflection and opportunities to practice both lament and thanksgiving.



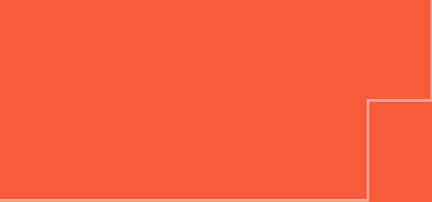
INTRO

I used to think that the book of Psalms just had all of the *feel-good* verses in it. Now, I realize, it has all of the *not-so-good* feelings in it too. I love all of the different emotions we find in this book. It's so much like life. I love that the authors go from being stuck in the pit to declaring that God is Holy, and back and forth again. It brings me hope. The pain and the truth all coexist together. It's real, raw, and powerful. It's life. It's worship. It helps carry us through the difficult things and it helps point us to the one who holds it all together.

May we begin this journey together, learning that our relationship with Christ can be one of true **authenticity**—one that can carry far more than we think it can.

"The heart of true, authentic worship is the bringing of one's life and concerns to God, so that they might be set before him and worked through in his presence. In a sense, authentic worship is seeing God, while looking life squarely in the face."

-Paul Pettit



“When we present our life to him in worship, we actually have a chance to put it in perspective—divine perspective. The psalms teach us this. For example, Psalm 88 is the bleakest of the lament psalms. There is hardly anything positive here. How is this worship? The answer is that the writer is presenting his heart and experience to God. It is an authentic call to God. There are times when there is really nothing positive to say. To try to say something positive when one is in such a state of mind is to compromise the authenticity of the worship experience. There is a lot of lament in the psalms because there is a lot of lament in life.”

-Paul Pettit



DAY 1

PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 3

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“How many are my foes?”

The psalmist asks, “How many are my foes?” and tells the Lord, “Save me!” What kind of questions might you have for the Lord? What is something you want to ask of him or tell him today?

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 9

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“I will recount all your wonderful deeds”

Take time to actively recount and document the wonderful deeds of the Lord in your life that you’ve witnessed recently.



DAY 2

PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 4

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“The Lord hears when I call to him”

Sometimes the answer of the Lord doesn't look or sound like what we think it will. The way he answers may vary, but whether or not he hears us, does not. It is a promise that he hears us when we call on him. Acknowledge to the Lord that you are here, you are listening, and you know he is listening. Ask him to help you trust him. Ask him to be your safe dwelling place.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 16

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“I have no good apart from you”

It is hard to imagine that the good we experience in life is nothing compared to the goodness found in him. It is hard to acknowledge that there is no goodness apart from him. Tell the Lord why he is good. Declare his goodness today.



DAY 3

PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 5

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness”

Intentionally ask the Lord to help you today. Ask for his guidance, his leadership. After all, he is our Good Shepherd. Invite him to speak to you today and to open your eyes to his ways.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 18

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Worthy to be praised”

The Lord is described as the psalmist's: Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Refuge, Shield, Stronghold, Horn of Salvation. Choose one or two of these titles to focus on. Why is the Lord your _____ ? (See verse 36) This is what the Lord does for you, even now. You are sitting in this “wide place” in his presence, experiencing him. Allow yourself to be present with him.



DAY 4



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 12 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“I will now arise”

The Lord loves justice. Pray for those who are oppressed, in need, or vulnerable. Ask the Lord to act justly. Ask the Lord what part you play in his justice mission. Talk to God about the problem of suffering. Ask him why injustice goes on if he is a God of justice. What is it like to wrestle with the Lord regarding these questions?

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 23 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“He restores my soul”

Memorize this Psalm. To have this Psalm quickly brought to your mind in times of trouble, anxiousness, or restlessness is so helpful. When you can't sleep, recite Psalm 23 to yourself.

DAY 5



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 13 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“How long, O Lord?”

What an honest, human, raw question? Have you ever asked the Lord that before? Ask him that today. Express your heartache, your weariness, and your brokenness. What is something you hold on to while you wait or question what the Lord is doing and the reason for his timing? What would your version of verse five say?

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 30 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

***“You have turned for me my mourning
into dancing”***

How has the Lord restored your life from the pit? How has he redeemed what is broken? How has he turned your mourning into dancing? Where has the Lord restored hope to you? Declare it. Thank him and praise him for it today.

DAY 6



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 17 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Hide me in the shadow of your wings”

The psalmist asks the Lord: “Keep me as the apple of your eye”.

How might you ask the Lord to keep you? Express to the Lord how you would like for him to hold you and keep you.

Ask God to reveal his likeness to you. Ask him to show up in your circumstances, relationships, or daily life.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 32 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“You are a hiding place for me”

What does it mean to you for God to be your hiding place?

How does he compare to other hiding places? Is there something you need to communicate to the Lord or to someone else? Is there something you need to process or acknowledge for yourself? Don’t keep silent and waste away.

DAY 7



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 22 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Have you ever felt abandoned by God? Have you ever felt like he had left? Tell the Lord about it. Take time to process that feeling, what it was like, and the implications of it. Consider Jesus on the cross, who quoted this Scripture.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 34 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!”

To taste and see the Lord’s goodness is to personally experience him in a real way. Where have you experienced the Lord’s goodness for yourself in a personal way? Be specific as you consider the truths described in this Psalm and how you can learn more about the Lord through this Scripture.

DAY 8



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 25 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“The friendship of the Lord”

The earnestness of this Psalm is striking. The psalmist is rehearsing what he knows to be true about the Lord while also asking him to listen to him and deliver him. Practice this for yourself. Remember what you know to be true about the Lord, while also asking him to meet you where you need him. Consider the friendship of the Lord to you, even while being honest and lamenting.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 40 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“He put a new song in my mouth”

(See verses 2-3) How do these pieces of imagery resonate with you, if at all? Take time to reflect on how the Lord has a) drawn you out of the pit and set your feet on a rock or b) given you a new song. Is there a different piece of imagery that comes to mind instead? Create your own version of verses 2-3 to the Lord.

DAY 9



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 27 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“That I may dwell in the house of the Lord”

To seek the Lord while we struggle, suffer, or grieve is an act of worship. It may not look like it or feel like it, but to bring ourselves to his feet is a courageous and vulnerable act of worship. This psalm is one that we can go to when we don't feel like we have the words or the strength. Let this psalm speak for you if you need it to. Read it and pray it to the Lord today.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 65 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“The hope of all the ends of the earth”

This psalm is teeming with the richness and fullness of God. Verse 9 says, “The river of God is full of water...” Consider how the Lord has provided or shown you his fullness. Where has God reached and where has he filled the cracks? How has the hope of the Lord brimmed over?

DAY 10



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 28 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“I become like those who go down to the pit”

There really is no need to fake it with the Lord. There is no need to sound a certain way or try to have hope when you don't. Sometimes what we actually need is to tell the Lord that we're just in the pit and put a period on that statement. In your own way, communicate that sort of sentiment to the Lord today, whatever that might be for you.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 66 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Come and see what God has done”

Sometimes the work of gratitude actually involves us to invite other people in to witness and see what God has done or is doing. What would it be like to invite someone in to come and see what God is doing? Maybe it's to let someone into what is difficult or to rejoice with someone about what is wonderful.

DAY 11



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 31 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Into your hand I commit my spirit”

Full surrender to the Lord isn't something that comes naturally to us, it takes practice. It also requires so much grace for ourselves. Take a moment today to hold your hands open to the Lord, surrender what's on your mind, hand over what feels like too much, give up what you're holding really tightly to. Again, consider Jesus on the cross and the Scripture that describes his death like this psalm.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 91 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

***“He who dwells in the shelter of the
Most High will abide in the shadow
of the Almighty”***

The beauty about surrendering to the Lord is that he is the safest place for us to lay our hearts down at his feet. He is our hiding place and the only hiding place that offers us true freedom. Take time to sit in the dwelling place of the Most High. Take steps to draw nearer to Christ and to abide in him. What would it look like to hide in the shadow of the Almighty?

DAY 12



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 39 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Let me know how fleeting I am”

What a scary thing to ask of the Lord! I'm not sure it's something I want to ask of him. Either because I'm already so aware or because I feel permanent and I feel in control of my life. What is it like to think about your life as fleeting and temporary?

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 92 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“To declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night”

Routines help us stay tethered and connected to God and ourselves. You see that in this psalm. Start a new routine or practice. Each morning, in your own way, declare the love of the Lord. In the evening, in your own way, declare his faithfulness.

DAY 13



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 42 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you”

What a beautiful picture of what a relationship with Jesus can look like. A flowing stream of his mercy. A soul reaching out and a soul longing so desperately to taste and see his goodness.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 95 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!”

Is there a name of God that you would give him based on your personal experience of him? The psalmist here chooses all sorts of titles. Think about some titles and names you want to give him and reflect on those.

DAY 14



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 43 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

***“Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me”***

Sometimes the holiest thing you can do is ask for help. Ask the Lord to provide what you need. Do you need light? Do you need wisdom? Do you need strength? Do you need his comfort, love, or peace? Ask him to send it out and ask him to lead you.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 96 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“The Lord reigns!”

Another holy thing we can do is declare the sovereignty of God. When we feel like everything is out of control or when we don't know the answers, declare that he reigns. When we feel lost or alone, declare that he reigns. When we experience his goodness, declare that he reigns.

DAY 15



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 55 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“My heart is in anguish within me”

Sometimes the most worshipful thing we can do is admit to God where we are and be really honest with him. That’s a lot of what this devotional is about. Now that you’re halfway through it, take time to just be honest with God today– whatever that looks like, whatever that sounds like.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 100 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“It is he who made us, and we are his”

There is so much grounded-ness to acknowledging our Creator. Just like we’re honest about our anguish, we can come face to face with the truth of who we are– his creation. We belong to him. We are his.

DAY 16



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 59 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“A refuge in the day of my distress”

What does it mean to you for God to be your refuge? Is he a refuge to you in a storm? In a desert? In a conflict? In chaos? In barrenness? In your loneliness? In the darkness? Talk to God today about how he is your refuge or how you desire for him to be and what that looks like.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 103 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Who redeems your life from the pit”

There are a lot of imposters when it comes to redeemers from the pit. We tend to depend on or go to lots of things to pull us out from the depths of what holds us down. Name some of those things today. What does it look like to call Christ your true Redeemer from the pit instead?

DAY 17



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 61 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I”

Lift your gaze. Look higher. Ask for a larger perspective and for his eyes to be your eyes. We really can’t do it on our own. Ask for the Lord’s leading, his wisdom, and his communion. His ways are higher than ours. His thoughts are higher than ours.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 105 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“He remembers his covenant forever”

He is the only true Promise-Keeper. Reflect today on how he has kept his promises to you. Don’t be afraid to talk to him about where you’ve felt like his promises haven’t been kept too. His covenant to you is holy and set apart. What is it like to be a part of a promise that has nothing to do with you and everything to do with who Christ is?

DAY 18



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 62 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Pour out your heart before him”

To pour out our hearts to him with all of our questions, doubts, and emotions is a way of displaying our trust in him, not the opposite way around. Our honesty is a beautiful picture of the authenticity of our relationship with him. Bring your whole self to him today, not because you don't trust him, but because you do.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 106 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Remember me, O Lord”

Do you ever feel invisible? To God? To others? Do you ever feel like people see you, but they don't actually know you? Reflect on what it means to be seen by God. If you don't feel like that's true, ask him to see you and remember you. What is it like to sit in his presence and ask him to consider you?

DAY 19



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 63 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“My soul clings to you”

To be desperate for the Lord is a complicated place to be. On one hand, we often feel so close to God when we're desperate. On the other, when we're desperate, we often feel pretty low and depleted. What if, to be weak and needy, is one of the most meaningful places we can be? To cling to the Lord means we're desperate for him. Take time to cling to the Lord today, whatever that might mean or look like to you.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 107 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“He turns a desert into pools of water”

He is the Great Redeemer. Reflect on how the Lord has redeemed your life. Where has he turned the deserts in your life into pools of water? Where has he made a way where there was no way? Tell him how he is your personal Redeemer today.

DAY 20



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 69 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“The flood sweeps over me”

The grief and brokenness of life tend to overwhelm us. Like an ocean wave overtaking us— we can be swept away by what’s hard and painful. It’s the reality of life. It’s not because we’re at fault or because we’re not dealing with it correctly. We’re simply humans. We’re messy, but we’re so dearly loved. Reflect on what sweeps over you. Consider both the pain and the good that is capable of sweeping over us.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 113 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“He raises the poor from the dust”

The Lord delights in rescuing us. He desires to breathe life into our lungs. He longs for our saving and redeeming. Where have you felt his rescue in your life? Where have you longed for his rescuing, but haven’t experienced it?

DAY 21



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 71 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Forsake me not when my strength is spent”

We are loved so unconditionally, it's hard to accept the truth of that. We are still his, still accepted, still held even when we have nothing to show for it, and even when we have nothing to give in return. Rest in his arms today and rest in the truth that you don't have to do a single thing to earn your place there.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 116 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Return, O my soul, to your rest”

By grace, we have access to the Father, who is the Prince of Peace. Rest in him today. Place what is heavy at his feet and rest your soul in his perfect presence.

DAY 22



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 79 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“How long, O Lord?”

Have you ever asked the Lord this question? It's such a brutally honest one. Being honest with the Lord is such a pure form of worship. Is there an honest question you have for the Lord? Take a risk and ask it today.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 117 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“For great is his steadfast love toward us”

His love runs after you like a river. His love is a force always available to you and moving towards you. You don't have to chase his love down. His love is great towards you. Sit in his love today. Reflect on the ways his love has run after you in your life.

DAY 23



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 85 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Surely his salvation is near”

He is the God of our salvation! He is a Savior. He is always doing the work of saving, rescuing, and redeeming. Where have you experienced the salvation of the Lord in your life? What has he saved you from? What has he saved you for?

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 118 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“He has made his light to shine upon us”

What a gift to be saved by the Lord and to be restored by his resurrection. He is the Lord of Light! Where have you experienced his light being shown in your life? Where have you seen his light in other people? What does it mean to shine the light of Jesus? When have you felt his light shine on you?

DAY 24



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 86 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Unite my heart to fear your name”

When we experience hard things, we often feel separated from the Lord. We might have questions for him, we might be angry at him, we might feel so alone like he isn't with us anymore. What would it be like to practice lament by asking the Lord to unite his heart to yours?

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 121 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“I lift up my eyes to the hills”

Sometimes we can feel like we can't keep our eyes above the waves. Sometimes all we can do is lift our eyes. Lift your eyes to the Lord today, whatever that might look like for you. How could you look up today or this week? Where do you feel like you aren't able to lift your head or your eyes?

DAY 25



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 88 PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“My companions have become darkness”

There isn't much of anything positive here in this Psalm. What is it like for you to just sit in the bleakness of this Scripture? Do you feel like it's hard not to wrap up these verses with something more positive? Take time today to consider what it means to cease your searching for meaning or positivity in your life. Lament is worship too. Practice the discipline of lament today by sitting in the dark. You might just find a companion there.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 124 PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“If it had not been the Lord who was on our side”

Praise the Lord for his friendship toward us. He is a God familiar with the dark and sits with us in it. He is acquainted with grief, sorrow, and suffering. Praise him who pulls us out of the pit, who saves us, who is always on our side. Reflect on times in your life where you've experienced the Lord sitting in the dark with you? What did you learn in that space?

DAY 26



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 102

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“You will remain”

When all else fades, he remains. What a beautiful gift that is. There's not much we can claim in this life that will always remain. Actually, there isn't anything we can say that about—other than our Father in Heaven. Take time to reflect on what that means in your life today. Where have you experienced the steadfastness of the Lord?

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 136

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“For his steadfast love endures forever”

Where have you seen his goodness lately? How have you personally experienced his steadfast love? Make a list of all the ways he has shown you his glory and faithfulness recently, even just today. Intentionally reflect on a few to individually thank the Lord for.

DAY 27



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 120

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“In my distress I called to the Lord”

When was the last time you genuinely called to the Lord in a time of need? Maybe it was just now, maybe it was yesterday, maybe it was months ago. Whatever it is for you, reflect on what it feels like to call on the name of Jesus in your distress, frustration, anger, questioning, or trouble. Take time today to call on the Lord and tell him what’s on your heart and mind.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 138

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me”

Your Creator wants to commune with you today. He wants to hear your voice, your heart, your mind. He wants to know you and minister to you. Will you let him? Will you allow him to hear you, see you, be with you? The Lord longs to fulfill his promises and his purposes for us and in us.

DAY 28



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 130

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“In his word I hope”

What are some things you are putting your hope in or you tend to put your hope in when things get hard? When have those things felt like they helped you? How have those things let you down? Is there a particular Scripture that brings you hope when you need it? Write that Scripture down and pray it to the Lord today. Ask for his help to draw near to him and to find hope in his word.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 145

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“His greatness is unsearchable”

It's hard to believe that we won't ever truly know or understand the greatness of God until we meet him in his full glory. Consider today the vastness of God— our Creator, our Father, our Savior. What is it like to sit in the mystery of it all? What is it like to feel small compared to the Lord?

DAY 29



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 139

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Even there your hand shall lead me”

Are there any areas in your life that you feel like the Lord can't be a part of? Are there any things you've faced or are facing that you believe the Lord isn't in? What is it like to consider that there isn't a place you can go where he is not also with you? What is the thing that feels like, “even there” in your life? It's true – even there, even in the darkest places, even in the deepest valleys, he is with you.

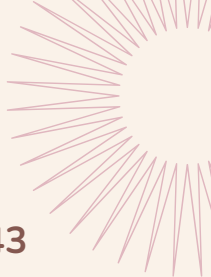
PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 148

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Praise the Lord!”

What is a way you can praise the Lord today? What is a promise of the Lord that feels praise worthy to you? Take time to express your gratitude today, whatever that might look like.

DAY 30



PSALM OF LAMENT | Read Psalm 143

PRACTICE LAMENT + HONESTY

“Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!”

Invite the Spirit into your day today. Tell him what you need and where you lack. Tell him where you feel self-sufficient and where you feel like you don't need him. Ask him to guide you, lead you, hold you, and love you today.

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING | Read Psalm 150

PRACTICE PRAISE + THANKSGIVING

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!”

Praise the Lord! Praise his holy name! What a gift it is to have freedom in praising the Lord – there's no better way or right way to do it. All he asks is that we bring our whole selves, authentically, to his feet. Take time to practice that today. Praise him!