

How do you enter His Gates?

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Scriptures

Psalm 100:4

Psalm 95:1-2

Psalm 136:1

Psalm 44:8

Psalm 106:7

Psalm 107:8-9

Psalm 86:12

Ephesians 5:20

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Colossians 3:17

Romans 5:8

Colossians 3:17

Romans 5:3-5

James 1:1-4

Oh my goodness, we could just keep going, couldn't we?

Have you ever wondered why there are so many exhortations in Scripture for us to be thankful, to live with thanksgiving in our hearts?

When I was a child, we were taught that it was very bad manners to simply get up from the table when we had finished our meal, and this sort of teaching never leaves you. We always said, "Thank you for my dinner, please may I leave the table?" and doing it every day meant that it became a part of who we are, it builds your character. In lots of ways, being thankful to those we see around us is not an alien concept. But, do I treat God in the same way?

God desires our presence, He wants us to enter His gates with thanksgiving in our hearts and His courts with praise, not because it changes Him in any way, but because it changes our ability to receive and absorb more of Him. In Old Testament times, there was a physical gate, there were physical courts so praise and thanksgiving was sung or recited while passing through. Today, we are the Temple of Holy Spirit so how do we enter these gates and courts? The only way is to look at Jesus and how He lived in communion with God whilst living as a man here on earth.

Jesus would often take time to be alone with His Father and His instruction to us is to also spend time alone with God, away from all distraction and the busyness of our lives.

As we make this time to still our hearts, the next step is to then begin thanking God for Himself, for all He gives us every day, for His blessings that surround and support us. The more we thank, the more we lose ourselves in worship, our hearts and minds begin to open to what He wants to show us and what He longs for us to receive from Himself. Entering into His gates is a joyous, precious time, a time that we need for

our survival in this world of noise and bustle, a time that, truly, we have to cherish and guard.

My dear Mam passed on to Glory when she was 88 years old and I remember learning from her the simple routines that began and ended her days. Each morning, before setting foot out of bed, she would count her blessings and thank God for them all. Each night, until her old knees prevented her, she would kneel at her bedside, hands folded and head bowed, and give thanks to God for having got her through the day, for her family and mostly for His Love for her and her family.

To develop this habit of beginning and ending each day with thanksgiving and worship is a goal worthy of every follower of Christ. How it must warm God's heart to listen to voices lifted in praise and worship as we remember the myriad of little things He has done for us, and will do for us. Suddenly that long list of our woes and our wants recedes into the background and our hearts swell and overflow, full of the Love He has for us and total gratitude that His Presence is always with us.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank You for every blessing you bestow upon us, thank you for carrying us through this earthly life, for giving us strength and courage to keep going, for being our ever-present Father, our Victorious Jesus Christ and our Guide and Teacher Holy Spirit.