

Making Prayer Fun

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Speaker: **C. Elijah Bronner**

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C. Elijah Bronner: When you have a grateful heart, it changes ordinary opportunities into blessings.

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(Music Playing)

And now for, 7771 Making Prayer Fun part three.

C. Elijah Bronner: Thank you for joining Brothers of the Word because brother, you need the Word.

We welcome all of you joining us by television and those of you joining us online at BrothersoftheWord.com and Facebook Live. Thank you for streaming us and tuning in to today's service. We'd like to share just a little humor. A young family that was celebrating their first Thanksgiving together just a young married couple and they had a little son. And so the wife was kind of nervous because she was a really inexperienced cook, and so she was going to try out her first Thanksgiving dinner. And she simply told her husband and her son. She said, "Look." She said, "Now, I'm going to do my very best and make Thanksgiving dinner for us." But she said, "If it's not good, we're not going to say one word. We're going to simply get up and go out to dinner, go out and eat." And so, she went in the kitchen and she prepared and when she came out, she brought the turkey out of the kitchen into the dining room and her husband and her son were sitting there with their hats and coats on.

Well, we have been sharing a series and entitled "Making Prayer Fun. Making Prayer Fun." And I wanted to talk about Thanksgiving in prayer. Thanksgiving in prayer, one of the components of prayer. This is a verse that we all know. I love this little set of scriptures because they're very short and I believe they are short for the purpose of being easy to remember.

And so, God gave us short instruction, but even though they are short, they are far-reaching as far as impact in our lives and directing our hearts. And so, to simply say, "Rejoice evermore, rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and then in everything, give thanks for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning

you.” Say that with me, “Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks.” This is one of the great series of biblical attitudes we gain from scripture. This is one of the greatest sets of biblical attitudes and I love it because it’s so short. But if you can do it, if you can remind yourself of it daily, it will carry you a long way in life. And so, it’s short, but it’s far-reaching. It has a far-reaching influence and impact in guiding our hearts and our lives if we follow the instructions.

I believed that the Holy Spirit made them short, so it will be easy to remember. And it didn’t want to burden us down with a whole lot of laws and whole lot of instructions. He made it really short, just so short and he says, “Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks.” And so, that’s a great biblical attitude. Say, “Be joyful, be prayerful and be thankful.” And that’s it. That’s all you have to remember. That’s all you have to remember as you walk around every day. Ask yourself the question, “Am I joyful? Am I prayerful? Am I thankful?” You just ask yourself that during the day, it’s like giving yourself a little test during the day. “Am I joyful? Am I prayerful? Am I thankful?” “Am I joyful? Am I prayerful? Am I thankful?”

I loved that little set of biblical attitudes that we gained there in 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 17 and 18. “Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and in everything, give thanks.” Be joyful, prayerful, and be thankful. Joyful, prayerful, and thankful. Be joyful, prayerful and thankful. So easy to remember. I just noticed, I just want to touch on each of this momentarily, but to be joyful, that actually is something that comes out of prayer. Because when you’ve been in prayer, when you’re prayerful, you’re automatically joyful because in His presence is a fullness of joy. And so joy is kind of built into the system of prayer.

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Joy is kind of built into the system of prayer. And so when you’re prayerful, you’re automatically joyful. And so, prayer is right in the center of that.

And then He says, “Pray without ceasing” and so that’s constant conversation. It’s constantly talking to the Lord. You pray without ceasing. Jesus said it this way, Jesus said, “Men are always to pray and not defiant.” So, Jesus said, “Men are always to pray and not defiant.” The Bible also says “Be instant in

prayer.” Be instant, instant. Instant means quick. Be quick to pray, be quick to pray. And so it’s a constant conversation. It’s something that we are able to carry on all the time. You know it could be little short prayers no matter where you are, just to say, “Lord I thank you. Lord I love you. Thank you that you’re with me. Thank you for your strength. Thank you for your mercy. Thank you for your grace. Thank you for your wisdom. Lead me God. Help me Lord. Let me be a blessing to somebody. Show me who I need to touch, who I need to bless. Give me what to say.” So, just a little short prayers and that’s constant conversation.

Brother Lawrence, he said, “There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God.” And so, pray without ceasing. Somebody asked Smith Wigglesworth. They said, “Do you pray long?” and Smith Wigglesworth said, “No. I never prayed longer than five minutes.” But he said, “I never go longer than five minutes without praying.” And so, that’s that constant conversation. That’s praying without ceasing is where you are always conversing with God throughout the day, that’s praying without ceasing. Then that final exultation, be thankful. In everything, give thanks. In everything, give thanks. In everything, give thanks.

I’ve always thought about the verse from the standpoint of no matter what type of situation or circumstance you are in life, give thanks whether times are good or whether times are bad, in everything. In everything, in sickness or in health, give thanks, give thanks. But then I thought about it just recently. You know as I was thinking about this subject, I thought about giving thanks literally in everything. In the house, give thanks. When you’re out in the street, give thanks, when you’re in the bathroom. You say give thanks in everything, so I literally begin to think about physical spaces. When you’re in the office, when you’re in the shower, when you are in the bathroom, when you are in the kitchen, when you are in the great outdoors, when you are in the car, in everything, when you are in the closet, in everything, give thanks. When you are in the cold, when you are in the heat or the sunshine, in every place, in every place, in everything, in every things.

I’ll just take it literally. I’ll take it literally in everything. In the good times and the bad times, when you’re in the bed, in the bed, give thanks. In the bed, give thanks. Even in the hospital, give

thanks. Give thanks when you're in the hospital. That's the time to rejoice and thank God that healing provision is available. Praise God! That's the time to thank God for Him being your great physician. Jehovah-Rapha. That's the time to give Him thanks for recuperating and recovering you and healing you and then what Jesus has provided for you. You give Him thanks. You give Him thanks in everything, you give thanks.

I like something that the great commentator, Matthew Henry, he said, a great theologian, biblical commentator. He was robbed one night. And after he was robbed, he prayed this prayer, he said, "I thank thee God first because I was never robbed before." He says, "Second, I thank thee Father because although they took my belongings, they did not take my life." He said, "Father, thirdly, I thank you because even though they took everything I had, it wasn't that much. Fourthly, I give you thanks Father because it was I who was robbed and not I who robbed."

See, he found something to give thanks for. You know, most of us would have prayed after that and we just said, "Father, strike him dead, Lord. Let the police catch him right away and let him be locked up forever." But no, he took a different approach. He found something to be thankful for, he found something to be thankful for.

So Ephesians Chapter 5, it says, something similar to this, but this is giving thanks always. And so, always means that it's a continuous action. Always means that it's a hard attitude. So, Thanksgiving is not something you merely say. It's not something you merely do. Thanksgiving, it has a spring forth out of the heart. It has to be a grateful heart, it has to be a grateful heart. It has to be a grateful life, it has to be a grateful life. And so our lives are to have this constant attitude of Thanksgiving. It's a constant attitude of the heart, a constant attitude of the heart.

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I like something that J.A. Shedd said. He said, "He who thinks but with the lips thinks, but in part the full and true thanksgiving comes from the heart and Johannes Gaertnersaid, he said, "To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant. To enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch heaven." And so that's what we, we are to be living gratitude that's emanates from the heart. It's living a life that stands from having a grateful

heart, having a grateful heart. When you're grateful on the inside, and you're grateful on the inside and then thanksgiving springs out of that fountain.

The bible says, "You know, out of the issues of your heart, you know, the springs of life flow out of the issues of your heart." And so, thanksgiving flows out of the fountain of the heart so we have to have a grateful heart. A grateful heart recognizes God's grace and it realizes the many blessing that we have in life both big and small. It always takes note of all the little things that we take for granted. Little things like being able to breath and being able to see, being able to hear, being able to touch and feel, being able to just experience the sunrise or sunset. Just to be able to listen to the birds singing. Just to be able to walk out into the grass barefooted, you know, just the simple pleasures of life. We sometimes take those things for granted, but you go lay up in the hospital for 6 months, hooked up to tubes and machine and you would give anything, you would give anything just to be able to walk out and walk around and go to the park and hear the kids playing and to go get a cup of coffee and just to watch a sunrise or sunset.

And so, we take so many little things for granted and so a grateful heart, it recognizes all the little things, all the little things. Just so grateful that I'm not in pain and I'm not hurting. I'm grateful that I can walk. Grateful that I can talk, grateful that I can sing even though my pitch is a little off, but I can sing and I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful that I can love. I'm grateful that I can work and serve. I'm grateful that I can use my gifts and talents. I'm grateful that I can study and learn. I'm grateful that I can bless others, grateful that, you know, so you're just grateful for all the little things in life. Being a grateful heart is grateful for us and the spiritual things that we have, spiritual things that God has gifted us. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I'm grateful for the name of Jesus. I'm grateful for the blood of Jesus. I'm grateful for the Holy Spirit. I'm grateful for the love and joy and peace. I'm grateful to be an heir of God and join there with Jesus. I'm grateful for the anointing. I'm grateful for the ability to have wisdom and I'm grateful for God's grace. I'm grateful for his mercy. I'm grateful for gentleness and goodness and kindness and patience, peace. I'm grateful for all of these spiritual blessings. I'm grateful for my position in Christ. I'm grateful that I'm adopted in the family. I'm grateful that I'm presented Holy

and blameless in his sight because he chose me in him before the foundation of the world.

Lets say, that's a grateful heart where you are grateful of not only all of your natural blessings with your grateful of your spiritual blessings and so that's why you can always give thanks no matter what's going on the way. You can always give thanks. If for no other reason you can give thanks because God loves you like nobody's business. He loves you like nobody and gave himself for you and is called you by his name. That's why you can give thanks always. I can always give thanks because he died. Shed his blood for me and delivered me and he grace me with eternal life and he lives on the inside of me and he's a custom companion and I'm never alone and I'm never forsaken. That's why I can always give thanks and so that's the root men of having a grateful heart. That's our fountain that flows out of our grateful heart.

But when you're grateful you just have a wonderful spirit about you. It makes you feel good. I mean, when you have a grateful heart, a grateful heart can turn on an average day into an extraordinary day. It can make a dull job enjoyable and full of life and vigor and vim and vitality and vibrancy. It contains something routine into something spectacular. When you have a grateful heart, it changes ordinary opportunities into blessings. All because you have a grateful heart, it changes life and so it removes tension and fear, relaxes you. It fills you with the presence of God.

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It gives you joy and peace and it makes your heart sing. It makes your heart sing. In fact, the Ephesians 5:19-20, it talks about how it makes your heart sing. It says, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess but be filled, be being filled with the spirit speaking to yourselves in songs, hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things under God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." And so, it makes your heart sing.

In Colossians 3:15-16, talks about the same thing, it talks about being thankful and having a heart full of grace that sings, that celebrates with singing. And so, something about thanksgiving, it makes your heart sing. Let me give you some quick things about thanksgiving, I haven't even talked about it, I was supposed

to talk about thanksgiving and prayer but I'm so excited about Thanksgiving I haven't even made it to the thanksgiving and prayer.

But listen, let me just tell you some quick things about thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, it increases your humility because you realize that everything belongs to God and the only way that you have anything is because God had to give it to you, he had to allow you to have it. And so, thanksgiving, it increases your humility, thanksgiving breeds contentment.

Contentment is not having everything you want but it is wanting everything that you have. And so, that's true contentment, so, thanksgiving breeds contentment into our lives. Thanksgiving gives you a positive attitude because it forces you to think about what is right instead of what is wrong in your life. And so, you're positive - there's a positive spirit.

In fact, psychologists say that the highest and happiest emotion comes from Thanksgiving because it just makes you feel so good, it makes you feel so happy and so positive. Well, that's because you're focusing on the positive, you're focusing on all the things that are right in your life. Thanksgiving, it builds trust in God. Thanksgiving, it recognizes the work of God in our lives and his grace and we remember his faithfulness and we can trust him to provide for our future.

So, thanksgiving, it increases our trust in the Lord. And also, helps our relationships. When you have a grateful heart, Thanksgiving it makes you more understanding with others. Makes you more empathetic and more compassionate toward others. It makes you more appreciative of others, you begin to appreciate other people. Makes it easier for you to forgive people when your heart is grateful, when your heart is full of gratitude, people don't get on your nerve as much because your heart is so full of gratitude you begin to appreciate even if you're married and your wife is fussing at you.

If she's fussing at you with a grateful heart, it's no longer fussing. You're saying, "Wow, I'm so grateful because to hear my wife fussing that means she's alive and well." You know what I'm saying? You're thankful, it makes you thankful. And so, you're so grateful that you don't react out of the flesh and you say you appreciate people, you're grateful for people, you're forgiving,

you're understanding, it makes you more generous. When you're grateful, it makes you want to give to others, bless others. And so, thanksgiving is directly tied and connected to generosity. And so, those are just some of the benefits of Thanksgiving.

Now, I really came to talk about thanksgiving and prayer but man, I've used up all my time talking about thanksgiving. But anyway, the Bible talks quite a bit about Thanksgiving and prayer. Colossians 4:2 talks about continuing in prayer and watching in the same with thanksgiving.

Also, Philippians 4:6 says, "Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication let your request be made known to God with thanksgiving." So, thanksgiving is an important part of prayer. I always include it in prayer. I found that in prayer, primarily Thanksgiving is you're not only thanking God for what he's done and you're thanking God for what you have, you're thanking God for who he is. But there's a thanksgiving in prayer that also begins to thank God in advance for the answer. Whatever you're praying for, there's a Thanksgiving that it receives it in advance and you begin to praise God in advance.

And so, thanksgiving is a trigger. Thanksgiving is literary a trigger for your faith. And so, it trigger -- it causes something to happen; it causes a reaction. In fact, the Holy Spirit said this to me, I wrote it down. He said, "Gratitude in the heart causes miracles to happen." Gratitude in the heart causes miracles to happen. Thanksgiving is a trigger. It triggers your faith, it triggers something in prayer. It causes it to work, it cause it do go into action. You'll find Jesus praying in several instances and Jesus always gave thanks.

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When he got ready to feed the multitude, first thing he did, they gave him the fish and the loaves. The Bible says he took them and he gave thanks. He gave thanks, he gave thanks and he had a grateful heart, "Father, thank you, thank you."

Now, it wasn't enough to feed the people but he gave thanks for the little that he had. And because he gave thanks for the little that he had, God begun working in a miraculous way that

provided for everybody. Thanksgiving triggers miracles to happen in your life. Jesus triggered miracles by using Thanksgiving.

When Jesus got ready to raise Lazarus from the dead, first thing he did, he gave thanks to God. He said, "Father," Now I want you to notice this. He gave thanks to God while Lazarus was still dead. Lazarus was still in the tunnel and Jesus stood out there and he said, "Father, I just want to thank you. Thank you that you've already heard me. Thank you that you've already answered my prayer. Thank you Lord God!" And he said, "Lazarus, come forth." Thanksgiving is a trigger. Thanksgiving calls his miracles to happen. Gratitude in their heart causes miracles to happen.

So, gratitude mixed in with prayer is a powerful force. That's why throughout the scriptures you will always see gratitude and prayer cooked up together. Jonah, when he was in the belly of the whale for three nights, he was in this great fish that God had prepared to receive him.

So, Jonah, he's in this whale and he decides to pray. You ever thought about what it must feel like to be in the belly of a whale for three days? You ever thought about that? You're just looking around, just wet everywhere. Can you imagine just looking around in the walls of this thing, man? I would have been like "Anybody got a light?" Can you imagine looking around in this thing? He's in there for three days, so he had time to walk around and explore a little bit. And he's swimming in all this gastric acid. But after three days, it came to him he said, "I might as well pray while I'm here."

And Jonah began to pray and you know what he decided to do in the middle of his prayer? He decided to offer the sacrifice of Thanksgiving. You will find this in the book of Jonah 2:9. He decided to pray and he prayed and he offered the sacrifice of Thanksgiving. And the moment he started giving thanks in his prayer, man that whale vomited him out on dry land.

Folks, I'm here to tell you, thanksgiving and gratitude in the heart causes miracles to happen. Thanksgiving is a trigger. It releases your faith, it does something in prayer. That's why you will always find that little connection there in prayer and thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is always included in prayer. It is

powerful; it is powerful, praise God. I'm going to stop right there. At least I can get to share a little bit with you about thanksgiving and prayer. I pray that you got something from that but thanksgiving is the powerful force in our lives, it's a powerful force in our prayer lives to have a grateful, grateful heart. Praise God.

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