

# The Growth Journal

## Special Thanksgiving Edition 2022



**Growth Ministries Inc.**

*Changing the World One Person at a Time*

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### Words to Grow By

By Linda Lewis

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#### What are You Thankful For?

#### **STOP**

What you're doing right now and

#### **THINK**

About what you have to be thankful for.

The Gift of Life?

The Gift of His Presence?

The Gift of Jesus?

The dawning of a brand-new day?

The ability to inhale and exhale?

Health and Strength?

Family?

Family who loves you?

Family that you love?

Friends?

True friends?

Food, shelter, water, clothing?

I would imagine that the list could go on and on, in spite of trials and tribulations.

As you think on these things,

I would like to encourage you to turn your attention

To the **Giver** of all things, Jehovah-Jireh and thank Him! *Philippians 4:19*





# ***...And I'm STILL HERE!***

***By Lisa Henry***

***"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born I set you apart."***

***-Jeremiah 1:5***

I have to confess, there are still days when I wake up and I can't believe I'm still here. I can't believe I'm alive. I can't believe I can talk clearly, walk on my own, think clearly, take care of myself... I'm still here.

December 9th will mark the one-year anniversary of my burst brain aneurysm. This time last year, I was in a hospital bed, not knowing whether I would live or die. The initial prognosis wasn't good, and the doctor had already told my son to plan for the worst. From the time I landed in the hospital until my completion with physical rehabilitation, I spent a collective 45 days in the hospital, away from home and away from people who I love and who love me.

And I'm still here!

Getting back to normal is still an ongoing process. I'm better than I was one year ago, my physical stamina is getting better each day, but I've come to accept that "normal" no longer means what it used to mean to me. I am now labeled as "disabled" and I have a handicap placard hanging from the rearview mirror of my car. Nothing will ever be normal for me ever again.

And I'm still here!

My complete testimony would take up the entire issue of this newsletter. The fact that I can weave these thoughts together, coherently in writing, after having a combined burst aneurysm, stroke, heart attack, and pneumonia (yes, that was an extra "surprise" when I got to the hospital), is nothing short of what I'd call a miracle.

Each day I've been blessed to continue on this earthly journey, I am even more convinced that we all have an assignment to complete, and we all are still here because God is graciously giving us the extra days, hours, minutes and seconds to complete our assignment. Our circumstances may change, but our assignment remains. Our bodies and health may change, but our assignment remains. And it stands to reason that, if we are still here, we are the only ones to complete our individual assignments. God clearly wants us here for a reason. He wants us to complete our individual assignments.

"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart." This verse from Jeremiah 1:5 says it all. And what a beautiful thought, to be known and set aside by God. God knew me even before I got here on the planet. He knew I was going to make those awful decisions. He knew I was going to struggle unnecessarily. He knew I was going to be stubborn and disobedient.

And I'm still here!

Until now, I always believed my life's assignment was music related. I've been performing teaching and touring for over 30 years. My musical journey has been a blessed one. I've had the opportunity to live out many of my dreams, and travel around the world. But this current brain aneurysm journey has me wondering... What if the music was just a vehicle to get to the REAL assignment? Or what if the REAL assignment is buried inside of the musical assignment?

I have so many questions now. And all of you reading this should have questions as well. After all, this all powerful omnipotent God has granted you extra time on this earth. YOU are STILL HERE! What will you do with this opportunity of continuous life? What is your assignment?

Be Blessed Always,  
Lisa

We at Growth Ministries are always amazed at how many talents, skills and giftings are behind the walls of the correctional facilities. Here is a drawing depicting Daniel in the Lion's Den. A story that reveals how God can bring about miracles even in the midst of certain defeat, even in the midst of captivity. We thank Brother Patrick Stewart of Lansing Correctional Facility for sharing his talent with us.



## The Leper Jesus Touched

Our Culture would have us believe holidays (especially Thanksgiving and Christmas) are the “Most Wonderful Time of the Year!” But for many of us they aren’t. Holidays can be a painful reminder of what is missing in our lives.

In the first century, when Jesus lived on earth and interacted with people, he recognized the unique pain created in a person’s heart when something vital was missing. And as he moved among people, healing their bodies, he did so in ways that also ministered to their hearts and spirits. The WAY he healed reached into those empty places and brought peace and love to aching hearts, even as he also healed physical bodies.

Matthew 8:2-3 tells the story of a man with leprosy who came and knelt before Jesus and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus could have simply said to this man, “be healed” or he could have told the man to go away to perform some action that would bring healing. There are many ways Jesus could have healed this man. But Jesus did something extra-ordinary.

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man who had leprosy.

In their culture, those with leprosy were NEVER touched! God forbid they be touched by anyone who didn’t have leprosy! Can you imagine life if you had to yell “unclean” whenever you walked near people? People with leprosy had to live in isolation. It was THEIR responsibility to make sure they never got close enough to cause another person to accidentally touch them. The law made them be their own social jailor so to speak. A leper had a life sentence of social isolation. People shrank from them and avoided touching them at all costs!

Studies have shown that babies who aren’t held and touched fail to thrive, and eventually die...simply from the absence of the physical touch of another human being.



Jesus understood the pain of never being touched, hugged, caressed, patted, or even just feeling an inadvertent brush against someone else’s shoulder. And before he healed the leper...Jesus touched him.

Imagine how Jesus' intentional touch went into that sick man's heart. Imagine how it must have lifted his burden of loneliness and isolation. Before Jesus healed his body, before it was socially "okay", Jesus met the need beneath the need, the cry of the leper's heart beneath the words spoken.

"Jesus, IF you are willing...." That cry, that unspoken question hanging in the air.... ARE you willing? Everything hinged upon whether or not Jesus was willing.

I can just imagine all the stories running through that man's head, all the reasons he didn't deserve anything, reasons Jesus had to walk away. Why would Jesus even pay attention?

Jesus answered by reaching out to TOUCH the man when he was still unclean with disease. Then, after Jesus met his heart with beautiful action, Jesus SAID, "I AM willing."

In Psalm 139 verse 7, David asks, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" Even when we are isolated, even when we are alone and abandoned by every person, Jesus remains present. There is no where He cannot reach out and touch our heart, meeting our deepest need, meeting the need beneath the need, the cry behind the question, the unspoken plea hiding in the attitude and choices we make.

Perhaps during the holiday season, we may feel isolated and alone. We may even BE isolated from family and friends, but we are never really alone because Jesus is always present. Through His Holy Spirit we can sense His presence when we are willing to open our heart, ask our deepest question, and wait for His answer. He is willing and able to reach out and TOUCH every heart that feels isolated and alone.



*Dana Heston*

## Even Now!

### John 11 The death and resurrection of Lazarus

***John 11:20–22 (NKJV) — 20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”***

The situation was desperate. A miracle needed. The timing was critical. It had to happen right away and there was no time for delay. All other avenues and resources had been utilized and had failed miserably. There was only one hope remaining, but what a hope!!

So, they called on their miracle worker, the one they knew would never fail them. Mary and Martha sent for Jesus on behalf of their dying brother. They had seen Him heal the sick many times and worse cases than their brother's. Besides, He loved them. He would not let this happen. Jesus was only a day's journey away. If they acted quickly, there was still time. What hope when all else seems to have failed!

Jesus received the message the next day. He stated this sickness of Lazarus' was "not unto death" but for the "glory of God" and the "Son of man should be glorified through it". He then waited two more days! Afterwards, He explained to His disciples they would go to Judea, a very dangerous area for Christ, since Jews in that area seriously sought to kill Christ. The disciples objected because of the danger and Christ spoke in a veiled way to assure them He knew what He was doing. The disciples assented, with some confused about the condition of Lazarus and thinking that if Christ were to die, they would die with Him.

Imagine the grief they discovered when they arrived and found that Lazarus had been buried four days ago. The hopes of Mary and Martha had been dashed. Christ had not come! You can hear the grief and confusion in Martha's statement to Christ, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died!" Mary would repeat this statement, for no doubt they had discussed this among themselves at length. Why hadn't Christ come? They knew where He had been when they sent for Him and knew how long it would take for Him to arrive if He had left immediately. They had too much reverence and love for Christ to accuse Him, yet you could still detect that accusation within the question. Lord, you could have prevented this. All you had to do was be here. Why had He not come and by His very presence, prevented this tragedy from taking place? Now, it was too late. The moment passed, their brother was dead and for too long! Now, his body was rotting and beginning to stink from the decomposition. Too late to roll back the stone and open the grave. Impossible!

Some Jews had a belief the spirit and soul of one who had died would hover near the body for three days in attempt for life to be revived and reenter the body. After three days, they would give up and pass on. So, Christ had missed the opportunity to prevent their brother's death. But the soul and spirit had passed on, so all hope was now gone. It was over! Final! Now only to accept the facts before them, grieve and go on. Yet in Martha's statement to Christ there existed still a glimmer of hope.

*“But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”* Life has a way, at times, to literally crush and overwhelm with circumstances and situations. We’ve tried to think of every possible solution, every way it could be corrected and fixed, but it’s hopeless. Every fiber of our mind and being looks at and feels those circumstances that surround our lives and are stunned into a depressed state with the impossibility of it all. There was a moment of time, a window of opportunity, that things could have been fixed, a solution that could have made the outcome different! But as we look over our life, all we feel is the despair of it all. It’s over! The moment has passed us by. Our time has passed. Anyone that tries to console us fails because they don’t realize my time is over. It angers me they are trying to give me hope. I want to pound it into them and shout angrily at them, “my time has passed”! Just leave me alone with my sorrow.

Jesus stands at the tomb watching all the wailing, the crying and feels the pain of the grief. Jesus weeps! He knows something that Mary and Martha, yes, the whole crowd does now know or grasp. But He plans to open their eyes in the next few moments.

John 11:40 (NKJV) — *40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”*

There are many stories in God’s Word that illustrates this same truth. This is just one of them. Right now, your life may seem a tangled mess that’s hopeless and completely out of anyone’s control. The holiday season is approaching, a time of rejoicing, but what do you have to rejoice about? It’s over for you. Others may have a chance, but not you.

Christ stands before that open tomb and shouts “Lazarus come forth!” While people gape at the stupidity of this man shouting before the tomb of a dead man, a faint sound is heard within the darkness of the tomb. There’s a murmur in the crowd, a heightened sense of anxiety in the onlookers. What is happening?? A shadowy figure begins to appear from the gloom and Lazarus, still bound in grave clothes, comes hopping forth out of that grave!

God’s Word does not give all the details of the incredible celebration that must have taken place. The doubts, fears, grief have been turned, in a moment, into incredible joy! The God you read about within the pages of the Holy Bible is not restricted by the circumstances of our lives. Impossibilities do not exist for Him. Even now, God can move in your life and what seems impossible to you can be transformed. There is much more to this story than can be covered here and now. But here Christ speaks to you, “if you would believe, you will see the glory of God!”



*Mike Doss*

# The Doctrine of Christ

Christ is not actually a name, but a title. “Christ” is the Greek translation of this word, meaning, “anointed one.” And from the Hebrew “*mashiah*”, meaning, “anointed”. Jesus Christ is a name combined with a title. He is Jesus the Christ. He is Jesus the Messiah (anointed one).



Alywin Mitchell

The Bible, the inspired, unerring, and infallible divine revelation from God, clearly affirms that Jesus was both 100% God and 100% human, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, who has always existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and who by His incarnation took upon Himself the form of man. In the one person of Christ, there are two natures, human and divine. Each in its completeness and integrity. They are discernable but indivisible so that He is fully man and fully God. It is this sinless union of the divine and human natures which qualifies Him to be the one and only sacrificial mediator between God and mankind.

The Old Testament predicts that the redeemer of fallen mankind would be both God and man. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is this divine-human redeemer. His humanity is apparent throughout the entirety of his life, work, and obedience to the Father. His conception, birth, growth, limitations, suffering, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, continuing priestly work, and final return give powerful testimony to the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.

The person of Jesus is at the heart of our Christian faith. From beginning to end the Christian faith and life is determined by the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **The Incarnation of Christ.**

Incarnation is the term that refers to the supernatural act of the triune God, where the eternal, divine Son, from the Father, by the work and power of the Holy Spirit, took into union with himself a complete human nature apart from sin. His Incarnation, suffering, death, and Resurrection were for everyone. The Incarnation is one of the most important events in history. The Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, now and forevermore exists as one person in two natures, our only Lord and Savior.

Jesus has two complete natures: one fully human and one fully divine. This is called the “*hypostatic union*”. Hypostatic means personal. The hypostatic union is the personal union of Jesus’s two natures.

## **THE NATURE OF THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST.**

The Bible directly states that Jesus is God in several passages. (John 1:1, 20:28, Romans 9:5, Phil. 2:6, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:8, 1 John 5:20)

The Bible ascribes the characteristics of deity to Jesus Christ. He is described as eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and immutable.

**Eternal** (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2, John 1:1–2, 8:58, 17:5, 24, Colossians 1:15, 17, 1 John 1:1, Revelation 1:8)

**Omnipresent** (Matthew 18:20, 28:20, John 3:13)

**Omniscient** (John 2:24, 25, 16:30, 21:17, Revelation 2:23)

**Omnipotent** (Isaiah 9:6, Philippians 3:21, Revelation 1:8, John 5:17, Hebrews 1:3, Matthew 28:18)

**Immutable** (Hebrews 1:10–12, 13:8)

Jesus Christ is equal with God the Father. He is worshiped as God. (John 20:28, Acts 7:59, Hebrews 1:6, Exodus 34:14, and Matthew 4:10)

He claimed that to know Him was to know God, to see Him was to see God, to receive Him was to receive God, to believe Him was to believe in God, and to honor Him was to honor God, while to hate Him was to hate God. (John 8:18, 14:7, John 12:45, 14:9, Mark 9:37, John 12:44, 14:1, John 5:23, John 15:23)

In John 10:30, Jesus claims that he and the Father are one; a clear indication that he believed himself to be equal to the Father. As Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17:5, he asked that God would “*glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*” Jesus’ claim to have shared in God’s glory before creation is another clear indication that he believed himself to be God. He wasn’t just looking forward to what might be. He was also looking back at what was.

**He is called “God”.**

**He is called “the Son of God”.**

**He is called “The Lord”.**

## **THE NATURE OF HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST.**

The humanity of Jesus is as equally important as the deity of Jesus. The concept of the humanity of Jesus Christ co-existing with His deity is difficult for the finite mind of man to comprehend. However, Jesus’ nature, entirely man and entirely God are biblical truths that cannot be denied. In his incarnation, the Son of God assumed a complete human nature, body, soul, mind, and will, into personal union with himself. Being born of a woman Jesus Christ submitted to the conditions of human life and a human body, and became humanity's son by human birth.

The Gospels describe Jesus’ human needs including sleep (Luke 8:23), food (Matthew 4:2, 21:18), and physical protection (Matthew 2:13-15, John 10:39). Other indications of His humanity are that He perspired (Luke 22:43-44) and bled (John 19:34). Jesus also expressed emotions including joy (John 15:11), sorrow (Matthew 26:37), and anger (Mark 3:5). During His life, Jesus referred to Himself as a man (John 8:40), and after His resurrection, His humanity was still recognized (Acts 2:22).

Jesus was not a human who took on divinity. He was divinity taking on humanity. Finite humanity cannot absorb infinite divinity. But infinite divinity can easily add to the qualities and characteristics of humanity.

God did an incredible, extraordinary work in sending His only begotten Son into the world and providing us with salvation we couldn’t earn and don’t deserve. Praise the Lord for that moment in which “the Word became flesh.” We are now redeemed “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”.

Jesus has done it all. All praise, glory, and honor to Jesus Christ alone.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that*

*whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”.* John 3:16

## **What Does Being Thankful Really Mean for Us?**

So often, if not all the time, we think our situation is so much worse than everyone else has it. I'm here to tell you that is usually never true. I can tell you from experience, not just from when your parents told you, “Just remember, it could ALWAYS be worse. At least you can walk. What about those people who don't have legs or are confined to a wheelchair?” that in all things there is a reason to give thanks to God.

It is absolutely true that no matter what we are personally going through there is ALWAYS someone who is far worse off than we are. Have you ever wondered why we don't stop to think about that? I believe we become so self-centered that we can't see anything else. We decide to make it about us and not about the situation. The good news is that EVERY situation changes. Sometimes it takes longer than we would like; well probably most times if we were being honest, but the constant is that the situation ALWAYS changes. I remember breaking my arm when I was six. I had to sleep in a chair for six weeks and for most of it, I couldn't even get up to do anything. My dad carried me to the bathroom and my mom tried to keep me entertained and comfortable but I wanted it to be removed now! As we get older, we say we become more patient, but is that really true? I have to laugh at that statement because I'm sure many of us would say we might even be more impatient now than we used to be.

As children, when our parents tell us we are almost there, it won't be long now, etc., we believe them and it relieves our anxiety and frustration for a little while. That is one reason why God calls us to be like little children. Our true Father in heaven wants to console us and tell us hang on! This will only be for a little while and then the situation will be over. I bet you're wondering what in the world this has to do with being thankful? Well, it has EVERYTHING to do with it.

When we thank our Father in our darkest times, He will be there for us, give us peace, grace and the ability to even feel joy during these times. Praise and worship changes the atmosphere of your situation, your mind and most importantly your spirit. God is ALWAYS ready to help us through it but we have to participate. If all we ever do is complain, beg, pray and wait how does that fit into what God asks of us? In scripture it tells us God calls us to be the body of Christ. How can the head function without the body or vice versa? It cannot. It is impossible. That is why giving thanks to our God in the most weary and desolate times brings about situational change faster and more efficiently. The head and the body have to align. We are meant to be conjoined or one with God in all that we do. If we do that, Satan has no opportunity to stop the change from happening.

My point is that even though you may feel alone, you are never alone. In your thanksgiving comes change. God will take you out of just surviving to thriving in ANY situation. Even if we aren't physically in jail, most of us have our own prison(s). In fact, I can think of three different stages of my life where I was imprisoned spiritually. The first one lasted 16 years, the next one was 22 years and the last one was seven years. I had some good days, but felt utterly alone, scared and couldn't function in the way God had called me because I didn't speak thankfulness MORE than I spoke death over myself. So, most of my life has been some sort of prison. Once I found that the key to unlocking my cell was thanking God for every little thing I could think of, I became transformed by His love. His love is so strong it can break any chains, all bondage, all strife and all sadness. That doesn't mean you won't have a bad day because Satan always tries and tests us. It is NOT God that does that. When we are tested, Satan is doing it because somehow, we have given him a legal right to do so. I encourage you to watch your words. It takes practice, but you can do it. Speak life, love, thanksgiving and prosperity over yourself. Call upon it as the prayer goes; "On earth as it is in heaven". You have the power and authority to call heaven down to earth but that doesn't happen when your tongue is working against you.

So, what does being thankful really mean for us? It means that we have the strongest power and force in the world on our side! God's words are life and truth. He states plainly in the bible that if God is for us, who can be against us? That is truth because God is not a man that he can lie. Just think how special you are for him to create you and send you to earth! That means He has great things planned for you. He is just waiting for you to find your destiny that he created you for. Maybe you are sitting there right now and have an incredible invention that you will share one day. Maybe you will be a great writer. All I know is that you can't let Satan, others or ANYONE other than God define you. Being thankful is the first step to completing your destiny. May you have a blessed Thanksgiving and know that I love you and so does God!



*LeAnn McGranahan*

## I Am So Thankful

The holidays are coming up, Thanksgiving being the first. And just sitting here and thinking about the holiday season and thinking about Thanksgiving. I begin to think what all I'm thankful for, and there's so many things that we can be thankful for, like being in our right minds, having the love of family and friends, having good health and most of all being in the right relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ who gave us the Holy Spirit. There is just so much to be thankful for.

God is such a loving father and a kind compassionate God towards us. Ephesians 1: 3-11 says it best to me about the kindness of God. I'm going to read out of the New Living Translation. "All praises to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly realms because we are united with Christ". Just being connected to Jesus Christ gets us a spiritual blessing. Did you hear that? Wow!

"Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes". God chose us to be holy in Christ. What a good God. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. Man, you are talking about an awesome God. It gave Him great pleasure to adopt us! "So, we praise God for the Glorious Grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son".

There's the condition you must belong to his dear Son. "He is so rich in kindness and Grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins". There was no amount of money that could have been paid for our salvation, nothing man made could have been used or qualified or good enough to pay for our salvation. God had to use the Precious Blood of His Son to buy us back from sin. Praise be to God! "He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. God has now revealed to us His mysterious will regarding Christ which is to fulfill His own good plan". And this is the plan: at the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ; everything in heaven and on earth.

Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and makes everything work out according to His plan. What a mighty, mighty, good God! He did it all for us beforehand, those that would accept Jesus Christ as their lord and Savior and believe in Him and obey His teachings. This is the kindness of God. Be encouraged and know that God has done all of this for you because of His great love for you, and the promise is that God will never leave us nor forsake us. Amen, amen.



*Marshelle Lyons*

## Fleas and...Thanksgiving?

Posted in: [Walking with God](#) | November 15, 2015

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**Praise is a choice. It's all about perspective. So many times we get focused on what we can't have, on our limitations, we fail to see the tremendous opportunities God has placed in front of us.** Sometimes He redirects us in a new way, setting our feet on an unforged path that will ultimately bring more honor and glory to Him. Some of the greatest adventures and rewards come when we are willing to embrace that step, or leap, outside of our comfort zone.



Consider Corrie Ten Boom. She and her sister Betsy were prisoners in a German death camp during World War II. They entered their new barracks and were horrified to discover the bunkhouse was overrun with fleas. Fleas everywhere! Corrie began to cry but Betsy responded, "We are going to stop right now and thank God for these fleas!" Corrie, of course, thought she was crazy. But at her sister's urging, they both bowed their heads and thanked Him for...fleas.

Over time, Corrie wondered why the rules were so lax inside their bunkhouse. No guards came to check on them inside and because of that, they were able to conduct a Bible study every night. Many women were saved as a result. Later, Corrie was shocked to discover the reason no guards ever came into their bunk house...they were terrified of the fleas!

Sometimes it's the bad stuff that refines us, grows us stronger, forces us to learn lessons we never would otherwise, allows Him to work things out for the greater good. And it reminds us of our dependence on God.

*I praise You, Lord, when I'm hungry or thirsty, for it reminds me to hunger and thirst after You.*

*I praise You, Lord, even when I'm in pain because it reminds that I have a Savior who knows exactly how I feel and has purchased victory over sickness and death.*

*I praise You, Lord, when I'm exhausted because it forces me to stop and rest in You.*

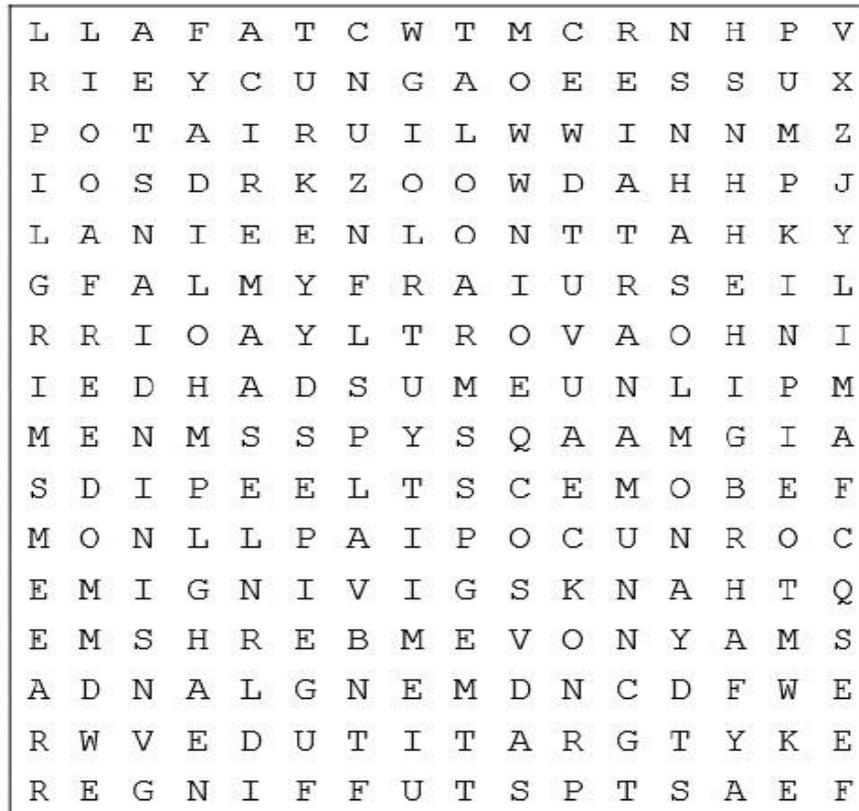
*I praise You, Lord, for the disappointments that pepper my walk. They remind me that pursuing goals and personal satisfaction is not my main goal in life. But seeking You is.*

Try it. Praising Him for the hard stuff will open your heart and spirit up to His touch in ways you've never experienced before.



# Thanksgiving Day

Fourth Thursday of November



AMERICA  
CANOE  
COLONY  
CORNUCOPIA  
ENGLAND  
FALL  
FAMILY  
FEAST  
FREEDOM

GRATITUDE  
HARVEST  
HOLIDAY  
INDIANS  
MAIZE  
MAYFLOWER  
MILES STANDISH  
NEWWORLD  
NOVEMBER

PILGRIMS  
PLYMOUTH  
PUMPKIN PIE  
PURITANS  
SQUASH  
STUFFING  
THANKSGIVING  
TURKEY  
YAMS



## Closing Words - I Am Thankful for You!

### ***1 Thessalonians 1:2 ESV We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers***

I have a lot to be thankful for. I have a wonderful wife, healthy kids and grandkids, a great job, love and respect from my friends and co-workers, and many other things that I do not deserve. However, today I want to talk to you about something I am truly grateful for you may not know of. **I am thankful for you;** for every inmate, prisoner, parolee, and person being detained by any kind of correctional facility, who is reading this magazine.

I am thankful because many of you inspire me. We get 50 to 60 letters every month. Letters that tell us despite your circumstances you continue to press forward. Stories telling us how you don't let your situations keep you from seeing God for who He is; a redeemer, a healer, a restorer, a peace giver, a peace maker, a deliverer, and so much more. I am so moved by the stories of your ability to overcome challenges, that I constantly share them with my volunteers, friends, and coworkers.

There are people in the "free-world" that buckle under pressure and fold at the slightest trial. I am talking about Christians who profess (when times are good) that they can do all things through Christ. Oh, but when the chips are down, they fall apart and go to pieces. During my many visits to various correctional facilities I have seen more strength, hope, and perseverance than I have ever seen out here. For that reason, my friends, my Growth Ministries Family, I am grateful for you. When things get tough for me, I often think of some of you. I think of how you never give up hope. How you never stop believing God is working on your behalf.

I bet you didn't know many of you were my role models. Yep, I look up to a lot of you. So, keep on pushing through your problems and keep believing God and I will continue to pray for you. Please continue to write us letting us know how we can pray with you through those challenges. We also want you to let us know how God is being God in your life and giving you victories. I want to continue to be inspired, and I want to continue to inspire those around me with your triumphs.



***Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.***

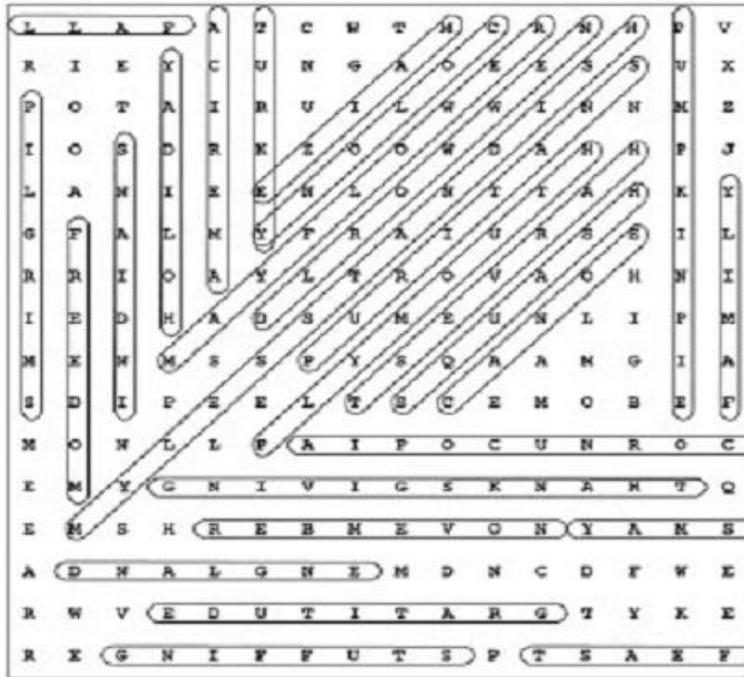
***Amen***

***Lonnie Johnson***



# Thanksgiving Day

Fourth Thursday of November



AMERICA  
CANOE  
COLONY  
CORNUCOPIA  
ENGLAND  
FALL  
FAMILY  
FEAST  
FREEDOM

GRATITUDE  
HARVEST  
HOLIDAY  
INDIANS  
MAIZE  
MAYFLOWER  
MYLES STANDISH  
NEWWORLD  
NOVEMBER

PILGRIMS  
PLYMOUTH  
PUMPKIN PIE  
PURITANS  
SQUASH  
STUFFING  
THANKSGIVING  
TURKEY  
YAMS

