

The Thriving Rhythms Project...



...challenges us to move with thoughtful purpose toward a deepened sense of identity—that we are spirited, creative, and connected people, called to be present, grateful, generous, and missional with our lives. We're exploring what it means to intentionally live into this particular series of life rhythms, which helps us bring some good to each moment, something better to each day, and our best to each other as we encounter the world around us.

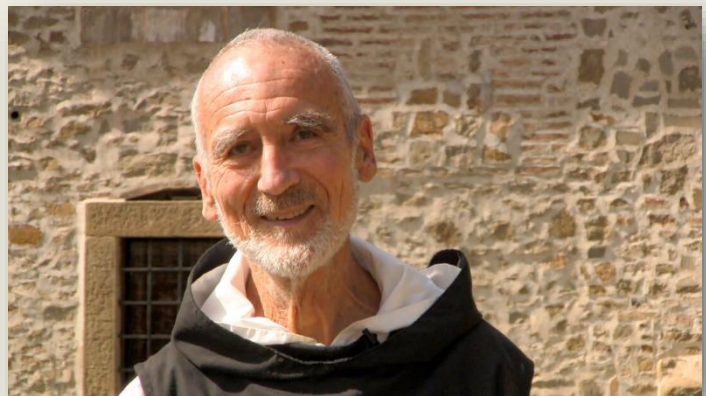
We are ... Grateful

As image bearers of the Divine, our calling extends to embodying a spirit of gratitude in all aspects of our lives. We thrive together as grateful people who practice gratitude as a spirited discipline, remembering with joy and thanksgiving that all we have is an expression of God's grace.

WELCOME | CHECK-IN |

CENTERING | GRATEFUL Thriving |

The best 5 minutes and 22 seconds of your week are waiting for you. This video, "[A Grateful Day](#)" was created by award-winning cinematographer, director, and producer, Louis Schwartzberg, and captures the essence of Brother David Stendl-Rast's life-long pursuit of gratitude. You can also enjoy the transcript here.



You think this is just another day in your life. It's not just another day; it's the one day that is given to you today. It's given to you. It's a gift. It's the only gift that you have right now, and the only appropriate response is gratefulness. If you do nothing else but to cultivate that response to the great gift that this unique day is, if you learn to respond as if it were the first day of your life, and the very last day, then you will have spent this day very well. Begin by opening your eyes and be surprised that you have eyes you can open, that incredible array of colors that is constantly offered to us for pure enjoyment. Look at the sky. We so rarely

look at the sky. We so rarely note how different it is from moment to moment with clouds coming and going. We just think of the weather, and even of the weather we don't think of all the many nuances of weather. We just think of good weather and bad weather. This day right now has unique weather, maybe a kind that will never exactly in that form come again. The formation of clouds in the sky will never be the same that it is right now. Open your eyes. Look at that.

Look at the faces of people that you meet. Each one has an incredible story behind their face, a story that you could never fully fathom, not only their own story, but the story of their ancestors. We all go back so far. And in this present moment on this day all the people you meet, all that life from generations and from so many places all over the world, flows together and meets you here like a life-giving water, if you only open your heart and drink.

Open your heart to the incredible gifts that civilization gives to us. You flip a switch and there is electric light. You turn a faucet and there is warm water and cold water – and drinkable water. It's a gift that millions and millions in the world will never experience. So, these are just a few of an enormous number of gifts to which you can open your heart.

And so, I wish for you that you would open your heart to all these blessings and let them flow through you, that everyone whom you will meet on this day will be blessed by you; just by your eyes, by your smile, by your touch -- just by your presence. Let the gratefulness overflow into blessing all around you, and then it will really be a good day.

– Brother David Steindl-Rast



ANCIENT WISDOM | PSALM 77:11-20

I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old. I will meditate on all your work, and muse on your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. What God is so great as our God? You are the God who works wonders; you have displayed your might among the peoples. With your strong arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; the very deep trembled. The clouds poured out water; the skies thundered; your arrows flashed on every side. The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook. Your way was through the sea, your path, through the mighty waters; yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

STORY | In Memory: Gratitude

Dwelling in gratitude happens by looking both backward and forward. Simply put, remembering where we've been informs and empowers us to go where we're going.

Psalms 77 is an ancient biblical passage of remembrance. It reached into the collective memory of the ancient people of Israel and challenged them to bring stories of God's faithfulness into the present to lead them into the future. To understand just how vital the act of remembering is, we must understand what it means in the Hebrew consciousness. A helpful way of understanding the power of remembering is to see the ancient Hebrew people backing into the future by remembering the past. Remembering was not dwelling in the past but rather re-membering the past, bringing smaller pieces of the past into the present to move more effectively into the future. That's a lot. Let me break that down for you:

For the ancient Hebrew people, "re-membering" was the opposite of dis-membering. To dismember is to take apart, and remember is to bring together. So, in Hebrew consciousness, to "remember" was to bring together individual pieces of God's past movement in their lives and history and bring all that together to move into the future. To remember where God had led them was to trust where God was leading them. In Psalm 77, the writer brings together several pieces of their historical faith narrative to create trust, hope, love, and faith in the story in which they were living. The Hebrew people knew that remembering the past, not dwelling in it, but bringing it all together, was a powerful way to move into the future. They remembered their rescue from generations of oppression in Egypt under Pharaoh. They remembered God's presence with them in the wilderness. They remembered God's provision: daily bread, water from a rock, forgiveness, healing, comfort, and love. They remembered that God guiding them into the Land Promised to them, a land flowing with "milk and honey," was a rich metaphor for God's ongoing provision of life and aliveness. When they got there, they often built what was called an Ebenezer, a pile of stones as a visual, physical, tangible memorial to acknowledge God's faithful, past presence in their lives as they continued into the future.

Remembering has important implications for us today. We are not called to dwell in the past. But we are challenged to move into the future. We back into the future by remembering God's faithfulness in every past and present moment. We can do this in two ways.

First, remembering God's past faithfulness leads to wholeness. The good news of the Gospel is that no matter how much we might feel like we're coming apart at the seams, God is constantly putting us back together. God is re-membering us. That's what it means to become a new creation in Christ. By remembering who we are, we place ourselves back into the daily care of God. The German Reformer, Martin Luther was famous for waking up each morning, and as his feet hit the cold stone floor, he would say aloud: "I am baptized!" It was a way of reconnecting himself to the promise that God had first made to him in baptism, that he was named, claimed, and loved by God. The same is so for us. When we remember who we are and to whom we belong, we have the confidence to step into the future of just this day. Remembering leads to wholeness. Remembering puts us back together again, puts us back into God. So do this: as you awaken to each new day this week, repeat this simple mantra: "I choose to remember that I am named and claimed and loved by God." Beginning each new day with this reminder reframes everything that comes our way.

Second, remembering God's past faithfulness leads to the future. The good news of the Gospel is that there is nowhere we can go where God is not. There is no place so small or dark or scary or painful or despairing or filled with death that God has not in the past, is not in the present, or will not in the future expand, lighten, comfort, assure, mend, and heal. There is no death into which God will not breathe new life. We know this to be true because we remember that God has been faithful, is now faithful, and will always be faithful. So do this: as you come to the close of each day this week, repeat this simple mantra: "To remember where God has led us is to trust where God is leading us."

Remembering that we are named, claimed, and loved by God gives us this reassurance: As God led us in the past, God will lead us into the future. Remembering where we've been empowered us to go where we're going. Gratitude is the response.

Grateful CONVERSATION

- Assuming that watching or reading "A Grateful Day" was the best 5 minutes and 22 seconds of your week, share about the second best 5 minutes and 22 seconds of your week. How does remembering those moments make you feel in this moment?
- How would you define "a day spent very well?" What percentage of your days do you spend well? How could practicing gratitude improve your score?
- As specifically as possible, share about how you are grateful for one or more of the following: your eyes and the things you see, the face of a person you met, an incredible gift that civilization gives you. What is one way you can "let the gratefulness overflow into blessing all around you?"
- Reread or recall Psalm 77:11-20. Which of God's "wonders of old" are you grateful for today? How has God "displayed [God's] might" in your life or in the life of an ancestor? In retrospect, where do you now clearly see God's footprints leading you through a time of wilderness wandering?
- Describe either a hard lesson that you are grateful to have learned or a challenge that you are grateful to have overcome. Have you ever felt grateful in the midst of a hard or challenging time? Share about that.
- "As God led us in the past, God will lead us into the future. Remembering where we've been empowers us to go where we're going. Gratitude is the response." Where are you going? How does remembering God's past faithfulness with gratitude empower you to go where you are going? How can we be praying for you?
- As a group, brainstorm a list of practical ways to thrive as a grateful person. Share and celebrate the ways you are currently thriving as grateful people. What is one idea you can take away from this conversation to help you grow as a grateful person?

A GRATEFUL MANIFESTO

We believe that practicing gratitude enhances the well-being of the entire human community. We believe gratitude begins with remembering where we've been and generates a sense of thriving wherever we go. We believe gratitude is a lively discipline that helps us recall with joy and thanksgiving that everything we have is a gift of grace.

MANTRA

As a child of God, I am a 'grateful' human being; I'm blessed not merely to be blessed but blessed to be a blessing to others.

INTENTION

Gracious God, we are your spirited people; you have created us in your image and called us into community together. As we dwell in the fullness of this moment, we acknowledge your generous love that frees us to be your missional people in the world. Inspire our creativity, animate our relationships, and enthuse us with your Spirit. In the name of Christ... Amen

BLESSING

May you experience the wonder of gratitude welling up in you as a life-giving gift of grace. May you remember that where you've been and what you've learned can create a sense of thriving wherever you're going and whatever you'll do when you get there. May you know that you are blessed not merely to be blessed but blessed to bring blessing to others. May you thrive this week as a grateful child of God who practices gratitude as a spirited discipline, remembering with joy and thanksgiving that all you have is a gift of grace.