

November  
2020



GLOBAL TRAINING  
NETWORK

Our  
Itinerary



Nov 28-Dec 13: Rwanda  
Ministry

Dec 15-18: International  
Online Training

Jan 10: Valley Baptist  
Church, Yuma

Jan 12: Mandalay, Myanmar  
Online Training

Jan 19: Myitkyina, Myanmar  
Online Training

Feb 19-21: GTN Leadership  
Gathering



Entering into the Spirit of Thanksgiving

If you had to sum up the spirit of 2020 in one word, what would it be? Fear? Anger?

Anxiety? Most would certainly never associate the word “thankfulness” with this bizarre year, yet in a few weeks we will celebrate a national holiday dedicated to doing just that. Thanksgiving is more than a holiday. It is a biblical command. **“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18 and many others).** In order to fully follow this command, our giving of thanks must come from the heart. We have to enter into “the spirit of thanksgiving” if you will. This year that seems like a tall order. However, the ugliness of 2020 makes it all the more important that we do enter into that spirit.

We’ve only a few weeks. We had best start now. Here are five exercises to help you enter into the spirit of thanksgiving.



- **Relax your mind.** Attitude adjustments don’t happen on the fly. They take some quietness, reflection, introspection, Bible reading, and prayer. God has impressed this upon my mind by allowing me to suffer a hamstring injury that has sidelined me in a recliner for a couple of weeks. Forced inactivity has been difficult, but spiritually instructive. Forced quietness has affected my feelings about all that is happening around us. It has also led me to the second exercise.

- **Renew your perspective.** A new perspective involves seeing more than before. For believers it usually means applying

On the Road Again!

Recently I’ve been singing lines from that Willie Nelson ditty about his desire to be travelling once again. **In my case, the life I love is making disciples with my friends,** and I can’t wait to get on the road again. My last overseas trip was in March, approximately 700 years ago by my reckoning. Since that time what started as a sense of uneasiness has worked its way up into a full blown ‘continent fever’ in which I feel as though the coast-lines are closing in on me! The only cure involves a wide-bodied jet and some marginal food. It is true that God has given us opportunities to be productive during our forced stand-down. I’ve done some writing, goal setting, and teaching online. One happy result of online training has been that a good number of GTN staff have turned to TLT trainer Tom Shedd and me for mentoring in the Timothy Leadership Training Curriculum. At least eight GTN staff members are on their way to certification as basic and advanced TLT trainers.

Indeed, the roster for my next online TLT class lists more GTN staff members than international students so far. When the list is complete I am expecting students from at least ten different countries. Still, it is a great blessing that we are now multiplying U.S. trainers of pastoral skills in these days. All this is productive, yet my heart yearns to be with ‘my boys’—those determined young pastors in the majority world who preach the gospel undaunted by persecution, poverty, or personal circumstances. **Now GOD in mercy has offered me a cure for my ‘continent fever.’ I depart on November 28 for Rwanda to train a wonderful group of Rwandan pastors working alongside a new member of the GTN staff, Steward Toliver. ‘I just can’t wait to get on the road again!’**



## Entering into the Spirit of Thanksgiving (Cont'd)

known biblical truths to the situation in which you find yourself. As a result, you see things in a new and better light. To be specific, we know that God is good and that He is on his throne. We also know that nothing happens in this world apart from his permission. Therefore. **“... all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” (Rom. 8:28 BSB).** In this light, we start to ask ourselves questions like, “What does God want me to learn in this pandemic?” and, “Do I really believe that God will meet all my needs no matter what?” and, “What is the most godly way to view this election?” and, “How can I best glorify God going forward?” Biblical answers to these kinds of questions will renew your perspective and refresh your soul!



• **Reflect on your blessings.** This “tried and true” counsel requires deliberate effort. I advise taking on the first two exercises first and only then begin to reflect on all of the ways God has blessed you in 2020. Clear your head and get a better perspective. Then you will more easily see the many blessings that are so easily taken for granted. Get a pad of paper and write them down. Spend some time on it and, when you are done, read it out loud and experience the glow of knowing that God loves you enough to bless you with each item on your list. Save this list and come back to it regularly. Then you will be ready to pour out your gratitude on Thanksgiving Day!

• **Reconcile your relationships.** Jesus taught that we should forego worship until we have reconciled with our brother (Matt 5:23-24). This means that before we can glorify God with our thanks, we need to forgive and be forgiven, to make things right, to let things go, to make peace. You can't hold in your heart both a spirit of unforgiveness and of thankfulness at the same time. With the anger of our politics this year and the relational tensions of quarantining, I believe many of us have some work to do here.

• **Reprise your celebration!** God designed for Israel a kind of “discipline of celebration.” He required the remembrance of his historical blessings. Such remembrances involved a change in routine, special foods, social gatherings, and actions designed to remind people of truths too important to forget. This is precisely the purpose of Thanksgiving. It's not just a chance to eat a lot and watch some games on TV. It is a time to humble ourselves, to remember who God is, to be astonished once again at his goodness, and to set our course forward with these truths once again in the forefront of our minds. Get ready for a party celebrating the goodness of our God!

In some ways Thanksgiving is THE MOST important holiday. Let's begin to consecrate ourselves for the task of glorifying God on that day. What a difference it can make if we set ourselves apart in preparation for the giving of thanks—especially now. 



### Our Praises and Prayer Requests



- Praise God for plans firming up for a return to Rwanda Nov. 28.
- Praise God for His provision.
- Please pray for travel restrictions to be eased, enabling us to train in all of our countries.
- Please pray for our ongoing online training events for students in many countries.
- Please pray for good year end giving in preparation for 2021.

## Ministry Partnership

Your financial partnership is essential as we carry out our God given ministry. Please follow the instructions below or on the enclosed response card (US mail version).

*“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:17, 19)*

You may give online at:

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Come visit us at

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Please call GTN at 623-217-3867 if you need any assistance.