

THANKING GOD WITH INTEGRITY

Volume II: Table Grace in a World Struggling
with Climate Change



THANKING GOD WITH INTEGRITY

Volume II: Table Grace in a World
Struggling with Climate Change

by Willard Metzger

© copyright World Vision 2010

May be reproduced for not-for-profit use provided the source is properly acknowledged.

Foreward

We live in a world of consumerism and affluence that struggles with the practice of thankfulness. Despite this, we find ourselves drawn to thankfulness as a way of life as irresistibly as a moth is drawn to a porch light. On some deep level of our psyche, we recognize that thankfulness is a practice of the heart, confirming our most intense intuitions that we need to develop our sense of the giftedness of life.

But many of us flounder for words when we try to express our thankfulness in language. So we need pathways into this space that can slowly and gently teach us how we can give expression to our thankfulness. One of the easiest ways of doing this is to use the words of others who have found the words that glow with the luminescence of their faith.

The prayers in this booklet are a delightful and engaging reminder of the importance of our acts of giving thanks when we share meals with our families and friends. Giving thanks for the gifts we receive from the Giver defines our very humanity, and invites us to live a truly fulfilling life.

Saying these prayers with our hearts could begin to change how we see our relationships with others, noticing those moments of grace and respect, the smiles and warmth of others around us.

Saying these prayers with our hearts could begin to change how we see politics and economics, transforming them into an opportunity for us to act as environmental citizens, advocating for those ways of life and justice that enhance the health of social and ecological communities.

Saying these prayers with our hearts could begin to change how we see our faith nested within the beauty of the Creation, deepening our sense of how everything belongs to the Giver.

Saying these prayers with our heart could begin to bring us into the centre of our hearts, where if “the only prayer you say in your whole life is ‘thank you,’ that would suffice.” (Meister Johannes Eckhart)

So let us begin.

*Rev. Dr. Mishka Lysack, assistant professor, Social Work
- University of Calgary and Anglican minister*

Introduction

Probably the greatest cause of climate change is the neglect of creation care. The earth is dependent upon our care just as we are dependent upon the earth for our existence. This is a mutual responsibility developed by the Creator. God intended that we remain good stewards of the very earth that feeds us (Gen. 1:26).

The problem is, we have taken the earth for granted. We assume it will always be there, and that it will always produce food to sustain us. However, reckless abandonment of our responsibility will only result in our own sorrow and increasing sorrow for our children.

These table graces are intended as a first step in recovering our sense of responsibility. Threat of our demise may prompt us into creation care action. Guilt may propel us

to reduce our impact on climate change. But what better way to begin to accept responsibility than by recovering a spirit of gratitude.

It is my hope that as we express gratitude for the love of God conveyed in creation, we will joyfully re-embrace our responsibility to care for that same creation.



This food does not come to us without cost. It comes to us through human effort – and we are thankful. But even more so, this food comes to us as a gift of the earth. Creation has given itself so that our lives can be sustained – and we are thankful. In our gratitude, oh God, we acknowledge the true cost of this food. And in our worship of You, help us renew our commitment to care for the earth.

Amen





ll we have is what You have given us, Lord. Life is a gift. Food is a gift. This earth is a gift. Help us live lives that express our gratitude for all Your gifts – life, food, and the beauty of this earth.

Amen



ord, you have instructed us to be like little children. So like adoring children, help us freely express our love to You. As grateful children, help us eat this meal with deep appreciation. And as obedient children, help us live as stewards of the earth. Receive our love, accept our gratitude, and strengthen our obedience.

Amen



oving God, in Your wisdom, You have made us dependent on our environment. Our well-being is linked to the health of the earth. Without You, oh God, we have no hope. And without a healthy environment, we have no future here. In humble recognition of our need, we receive this meal with thanksgiving, and respect our environment in praise. Keep our bodies strong and our environment healthy, so both will bring You praise.

Amen.





Oh God, Your mercy defends us and the gift of creation sustains us. In response to Your gifts of mercy and love, help us not eat that which we will not also defend. Help us not to embrace lifestyles that cannot also be sustained by the earth. Receive our commitment of praise and our expression of gratitude.

Amen



Separating the consumption of our food from environmental care is no more possible than, separating Your grace, oh God, from our forgiveness. Our forgiveness is dependent on Your grace so is our food dependent on a healthy environment. May our grateful feeding today strengthen our commitment for a healthy environment tomorrow.

Amen.



All of creation belongs to You, God. Let us never consume in such a way to suggest that we deserve more than others. Rather, let us live our lives in clear acknowledgement that all You have created is intended to sustain all You have created. Cause this food to feed our determination to share more equally and live more justly.

Amen.





Le pause to give You thanks, God,
because we know that food is a gift.
Help us never to take it for granted,
nor to disregard the earth from which it
comes. Help this pause of gratitude produce
uninterrupted lives that bring You praise and
provide care for Your earth.

Amen.

As Your children, oh Lord, we never
want to scorn Your grace and mercy.
So this gift of food compels us to give
You thanks. As Your people, oh God, we never
want to scorn Your gifts. So this food compels
us to express care for Your creation. For both
the earth in which we live and the food which
we enjoy are gifts of Your grace.

Amen.



Without You, oh Lord, there is no fullness of life. You have created the earth and all its fullness. By it we are fed and nourished. Forgive us when we see ourselves as the centre of all life, and neglect our responsibility to care for the rest of life. In gratitude for this food, help us care for all the earth, that we may bring You fullness of joy.

Amen.



If a fallen sparrow never fails to attract Your attention, then neither does the wilting of a plant escape Your notice. As Creator, You love all that You have created. In our receiving of this food – necessary for our survival, and in the expression of our gratitude – critical to our fulfillment, help us care for that which You have created and never allow its illness to go unnoticed.

Amen.



We crave for You, oh God, as we crave for food. As our bodies need nourishment so our souls need to be fed by You. You are our life and joy, as food is life and joy to our bodies. Increase our craving for environmental justice and our hunger for the well-being of all creation. For when we align ourselves to Your efforts of restoration and seek the health of all You have created, You are filled with joy and delight, and our craving to bring You praise is satisfied.

Amen.



racious God, we will not neglect to give You thanks for this food. Neither will we neglect to remember the earth that has provided this food. For the sincerity of our gratitude is displayed in our commitment to care for the earth. Grant us strength in our efforts of gratitude.

Amen.



h God, although creation freely gives itself to feed us, we must not assume that the gift of food is free of responsibility. Our children depend upon us to maintain the health of an earth that will sustain them. Your demand for justice, oh God, requires that our lives contribute to the well-being of the earth. In gratitude for this food so graciously supplied, help us live in such a way that the health of the earth will continue to be able to feed others.

Amen.





ear God, it is when we share a meal with others, that we are reminded of our common need. All of us are dependent on the grace of Your creation. Help this shared meal together feed a joint desire to express our thankfulness, by making care for the earth, a common experience.

Amen.



od, every meal provides us with an opportunity to give You thanks. And every day supplies us with reason to offer You praise: Life sustained by the earth. Do not allow neglect of the earth to rob us of the opportunities to give You praise. Strengthen our efforts to sustain a healthy earth so that every day provides regular opportunities to give You praise.

Amen.

As we gather around this meal, oh God, we are reminded that everyone needs to eat. So in Your mercy, You have designed an earth that can adequately provide enough food for all. However, in Your wisdom, oh God, You have created an earth that also requires our care to preserve its ability to feed everyone. Let this meal feed us with the strength to joyfully fulfill our responsibility.

Amen.





od, every breath we take is evidence of Your loving mercy. And every meal we eat is evidence of Your nurturing care. Help our gratitude and love for You to be equally evident. Not just in the words we speak, but also in our care for the environment, and with lifestyles that can be easily sustained by an earth we share with others.

Amen.



oving God, this meal is a demonstration of our love for You and Your creation. In a world that suffers from over consumption, we will not take more than we need. In a globe where producing enough food for all has been frustrated, we will not nurture apathy. Instead, in grateful celebration of this meal, help us strive towards an earth that is healthy enough to assure the well-being of everyone.

Amen.





1 World Drive, Mississauga, ON L5T 2Y4

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. As followers of Jesus, we are motivated by God's love to serve all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.