

January 11/12, 2025  
"Out of the Desert"  
Pastor Jeff Manion



## **SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.**

### **2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths**

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

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## Day 1 [Matthew 6:19-21](#) | True Wealth

**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** Matthew 6:21

The Sermon on the Mount is one of Jesus's most important teachings. Speaking to crowds gathered on a hillside, Jesus challenges their understanding of true wealth and treasure. Rather than focusing on external religious behavior or financial success, Jesus points to the condition of their hearts. His listeners include people who carefully follow religious laws yet miss the deeper transformation God desires. This teaching is part of Jesus's larger message about the kingdom of God—where true wealth is measured not by earthly treasures but by hearts alive to God and aligned with his purposes.

Our relationship with money and possessions often reveals what we truly value. While we can master financial disciplines like budgeting, saving and investing, these practices alone don't guarantee spiritual health. It's possible to create healthy financial habits while harboring hearts full of pride, greed, anxiety or indifference to the needs of others. True wealth isn't found by growing bank accounts but by developing hearts characterized by gratitude, contentment, trust and godly love. These qualities form the foundation of spiritual riches that last beyond our earthly lives. Just as Jesus taught his first followers to examine the true treasures of their hearts, he invites us to consider where our affections truly lie.

**TODAY:** Begin a thirty-day gratitude challenge to help develop a heart of true wealth. Each day, write down three things you're thankful for. While thirty days can kickstart this habit, a lasting change of heart requires years of consistent practice. Start a gratitude journal today and ask God to transform your heart through daily thanksgiving. Consider setting a specific time each day—maybe over morning coffee or during an evening reflection—to establish this practice.

## Day 2 [Deuteronomy 8:10-16](#) | The Pull Toward Pride

**Then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.** Deuteronomy 8:14

Israel stands at a pivotal moment, poised on the edge of the promised land after forty years in the wilderness. Moses delivers a crucial warning to people who've only known wilderness wandering. They are about to enter a land of abundance—flowing with milk and honey, bursting with crops, filled with houses they didn't build and vineyards they didn't plant. Moses sees danger ahead. When they experience this unprecedented prosperity, they might forget that God rescued them from slavery, sustained them in the desert and brought them to this point. Their hearts could easily shift from dependence to pride.

Pride remains a subtle but powerful force today. When we sit down to a meal, a waterfall of self-sufficient thoughts can flood our minds: *I earned the money for this food. I drove to the store. I prepared the meal. I set the table.* Whether we're eating ramen noodles or a steak dinner, pride whispers that we are responsible for all we have. The gravitational pull toward pride tempts us to forget our daily dependence on God's provision. Like Israel, we need regular reminders that everything we have—from food to abilities to opportunities—comes from God's hand.

**TODAY:** Continue your daily gratitude journal with three entries. Today, express gratitude for your meals. Take time to pray before eating, thanking God not just for the food but for every person and process involved in bringing it to your table. If you have children, involve them in expressing thanks, helping them recognize God's provision in even the simplest meals. Let your mealtime become a reminder of dependence rather than pride.

## Day 3 [Deuteronomy 8:17-18](#) | God the Giver

**But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.** Deuteronomy 8:18

Moses delivers a profound truth to Israel about the source of their future abundance. Standing in the desert, he points them toward prosperity they have never known and reminds them how their ability to work and create wealth comes from God. Their future achievements in the promised land—building homes, planting crops, raising livestock—will all flow from the capabilities God has given them. The people must understand that everything, from their freedom from slavery to their skills and strengths, traces back to God's gracious provision. Moses knows their survival depends on remembering this truth.

True, biblical gratitude has two dimensions—thankfulness for specific blessings and gratitude to God, who is behind them all. Even something as simple as enjoying coffee involves countless gifts: the ability to earn money and buy the coffee, farmers who grew the beans, people who developed coffee roasting and ultimately, God, who created coffee beans with their unique properties while providing rain and proper conditions for them to grow. There is a “higher up and farther back” source for all we enjoy. Everything good in our lives, including our drive and practical skills, traces back to God's gracious provision.

**TODAY:** In your gratitude journal, focus on the people and circumstances God used to shape you. Thank him for parents, teachers, mentors or friends who helped develop your work ethic, taught you valuable skills, or opened doors. As you thank him, join Ada Bible Worship as they sing “[Goodness of God](#).” Let the words remind you of God's faithfulness throughout your entire life.

## Day 4 [Luke 22:19-20](#) | Gratitude is the Foundation

**And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”** Luke 22:19

The night before his crucifixion, Jesus gathers his disciples for their final Passover meal together. The Passover itself is a feast of remembrance instituted by God to remind Israel of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Jesus transforms this meal into something new. He gives the bread and wine new meaning, pointing to his coming sacrifice on the cross. Just as Moses instructed Israel to remember God's provision as they entered the promised land ([Deuteronomy 8:16-18](#)), Jesus tells his followers to remember his death through this meal. He knows remembrance fuels gratitude, and gratitude protects against pride and forgetfulness.

We regularly celebrate communion to remember and give thanks. The simple act of eating bread and drinking juice is a powerful reminder that we cannot save ourselves—that salvation comes through Christ's sacrifice alone. When we remember the cross, pride crumbles as we recall our complete dependence on God's grace.

Then, this foundational gratitude for salvation spreads into all areas of life. We begin to see each blessing—from daily bread to deepest relationships—as gifts from the God who gave his Son for us. The communion table is our training ground for gratitude, teaching us to remember God's grace in every circumstance.

**TODAY:** Focus today's entries in your gratitude journal on Christ's work in your life. Thank him for his death and resurrection specifically and for the people who shared the gospel with you and for the forgiveness you've experienced.



## Day 5 [Matthew 28:16-20](#) | Question 2: What is the Trinity?

**Answer:** The Trinity is the biblical truth that there is one God existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.** Matthew 28:19

Jesus is preparing to ascend to heaven. In this pivotal moment, he links the three persons of the Trinity so directly there is no room to doubt they are all part of the Godhead. The text presents a unified divine authority—one name (singular) yet three persons. This isn't a command to baptize in three different names but in the one name of the triune God. Jesus reveals the full nature of God, whose authority his followers will have in making disciples. The passage affirms both the unity of God and the distinction of persons (Father, Son and Spirit), capturing the essential truth of the Trinity.

This foundational truth shapes our understanding of God and ourselves. The Trinity isn't merely a theological puzzle. It reveals that at his core, God is relationship. The Creator of the universe is a community of three persons, characterized by self-giving love, unity and intimacy. This explains why we, created in God's image, are made for relationships. Our need for community isn't a weakness but reflects the very nature of God himself. When we grasp that God exists as Father, Son and Spirit in perfect unity and love, it transforms how we approach worship and relationships. We serve a God who is both beyond our full understanding in his greatness yet personal enough to be known in three distinct ways.

**TODAY:** In your gratitude journal today, thank God for how the Trinity demonstrates his relational nature and how he created us to reflect his relational nature. Small Groups will be starting soon. This is a great time to join a group, grow together in understanding who God is and learn how to live God's relational nature with others in our church. Learn more and sign up [HERE](#).