



With Thanksgiving

Seven days of gratitude with FIVE18

Dear Friends and Partners,

How many times a day do you think you say “thank you”? My guess would be dozens – to a child who puts away their toys, a spouse who brings you a cup of coffee. We say it to a stranger who holds the door and a best friend who shows up when we need them.

What would it look like to go deeper than a quick “thank you” and move into genuine gratitude?

To me, gratitude is the thank you that comes from a deep well of thanksgiving. Gratitude for the gift of the child, the spouse. For the body that carries you through the door opened by a stranger. For the friend who has weathered the storm with you.

One of the ways I have experienced gratitude this year is through the clarity God has provided us here at FIVE18. When He laid the words of 2 Corinthians 5:18 on our hearts, they were met with intense gratefulness. This regrounding gave us renewed strength and clarity.

We are here for reconciliation. That is our heartbeat. As God pursues healthy relationships with us, we are empowered to pursue healthy relationships in the world around us. This reconciliation, just like healing from trauma, is long-term and ongoing. I can’t even begin to tell you the gratitude this time of rediscovery has sparked in me, knowing we get to continue in His work of mending futures for families in our community.

As you already know, that gratitude is mixed with a deep need for prayer. This work we’re doing is hard. We are trying to bring light to dark spaces. To blend a deep thankfulness with a deep longing for God to redeem all that is broken.

With that blending of gratitude and prayer, I would love to invite you to join us for this week of gratitude. We are setting aside seven days to remember our calling, and to express gratitude to the One who has called us.

It’s tempting to come to God with a list of all the things we need from Him, isn’t it? And those desires are welcomed by Him. But how beautiful, too, to carve out a week of remembering all of the gifts and the blessings. To sit in His presence, and remember all He has done. And all He is continuing to do in and through us.

To help guide you into this week, we are providing you with some prompts for each day, including a prayer, as well as something a little “extra” – everything from questions to explore to stories that will remind you of all that we have to be grateful for.

I hope this guide is a gift to you. That it is a reminder of the ways God calls us into relationship with Him. I can’t think of anything to be more grateful for.

May God bless you this week. I am thankful to serve alongside you.

God Bless,

Robert Day, CEO | FIVE18 Family Services



THANKING GOD FOR...

THURSDAY

The Ministry of RECONCILIATION

Just as God pursues reconciliation with us, we are empowered to seek reconciliation with the world around us.

FRIDAY

The HOPE for Mended Families and Futures

What a gift hope is, even in the face of challenges the families we serve together encounter.

SATURDAY

Community PARTNERS

God does not call us to do His work alone. Thankfully, he calls us to serve within community, together.

SUNDAY

Each PERSONAL Commitment

The calling to do this hard, redeeming work is personal, and we are grateful for those who have heard and answered the call.

MONDAY

Strength in UNITY

Our love for families and children unifies us, despite the temptations we face daily for division.

TUESDAY

Strength in DIVERSITY

Ministry to children and families is never one size fits all – through careful understanding and context, true healing comes.

WEDNESDAY

TRANSFORMATION

Stories of transformation sow seeds of gratitude. Meet a family overflowing with healing and hope today.

THURSDAY

Thanking God for

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

At FIVE18, we want to see mended futures for every family we serve. Leading a family through the powerful act of reconciliation requires long-term support. Thankfully, we serve a God who believes each of His children is worthy of reconciliation, both with others and the Father.

All this is from God, who **reconciled himself to us through Christ** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
2 Corinthians 5:8

Questions for Reflection

1. What does the phrase “mended futures” mean to you?
2. Which relationship is God currently mending in your life?

Dear Father, thank you for sending your Son as the ultimate act of mending your family back together. Thank you for believing in us, even at our lowest points. Help us remember your love for us as we seek to love and minister to families in desperate need of healing. Give us the words to speak and the hands to serve those you have allowed us to serve. Thank you for giving us the strength to be faithful to your call. To love those you love.

FRIDAY

Thanking God for

THE HOPE FOR MENDED FAMILIES AND FUTURES

Hope can feel out of reach. Imagine what it feels like to be a child hoping to be reunited with your family. A parent hoping for healing? But we are so grateful that God gives us the fragile, blessed gift of hope. It is the only path we know to mend families and futures.

Did you know?

Of the 5,184 children in foster care in Virginia, 51% are living in a non-relative foster home. Many have come from a world of neglect, abuse and abandonment. Let's hold hope that these foster homes will be a place of safety and refuge, leaving space for God to mend and heal their families.

Father, thank you for the gift of hope. We know it is a gift you have planted in us – we couldn't have come up with it on our own! Give us hope for the vulnerable children and families we serve. Give us eyes to see the possibility of mended families and futures. Thank you for letting us bear witness to the healing you are already doing in families and children, and for giving us the hope to believe you are still at work! When hope feels hard, Lord, remind us that you are not far off. That hope is only a prayer away.

SATURDAY

Thanking God for **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

When God calls us to this work of caring for vulnerable children and families, He does not intend for us to do it alone. Just as the Church is made up of many parts, so is any ministry. Our partners are the hands and feet of God's work, and we are grateful for their continued commitment.

Did you know?

FIVE18 is currently serving 3,615 children and 1,506 adults. This service is only made possible through the 254 volunteers who actively ensure each child and parent feels loved and cared for.

Partnership in Action

When Lisa Idewa became ill, she and her husband Pherice didn't know what to do. They have six adopted children, and desperately wanted each one to feel secure and loved. However, Lisa's sickness meant the couple struggled to maintain their home.

Through FIVE18's partnership with CarePortal, the Idewa family's needs were pushed out to eager volunteers, and within days their home was filled with partners who scrubbed their baseboards, fixed flooring, repaired windows and hung doors.

More than 72% of the children and parents helped by FIVE18 have benefited from our partnership with CarePortal.

"We are so grateful that Passion Community Church responded to a simple CarePortal request ... and that they decided to show us Christ's love by creating a meaningful relationship with our family," says Lisa.

Lord, thank you for creating us for community and for bringing the right people at the right time to do your work. Thank you for the churches, organizations and partners who have seen the needs of the families we serve, and have given sacrificially to help. Thank you for the gifts you have given these partners, and help us each see how those gifts can be used to further your Kingdom. And thank you for those individuals who are stepping into hard places, caring for children and families who have so often felt unloved and abandoned. Help us to lift each other up, Lord, as we lift up these precious families.

God, we are so incredibly grateful for all who say “Yes!” when you call. We see it in our own lives through a phone call or an act of service. And we see it in all who have stepped forward to minister to children and families in the midst of trauma. We pray for wisdom to hear and respond to your call, Lord. And when the burden feels too heavy, help us remember that our purpose and motivation come from you. You will give us what we need to carry out your work. Let our answer be yes!

SUNDAY

Thanking God for **PERSONAL COMMITMENT**

Isn't it amazing that God gives us the passions and gifts to answer His call? And that when we say yes, we realize that He has placed a whole community of people around us who have also answered that same call? God invites us to join Him in life-changing work. We must only say yes.

“Be who God meant you to be and it will **set the world on fire.**”

Catherine of Siena

Commit your life to the Lord.
Here is what he will do if you trust in him.
He will make the reward for your godly life shine like the dawn.
He will make the proof of your honest life shine like the sun at noon.

Psalms 37:5-6



Father, thank you for binding us together in unity as we follow your mission to care for the “least of these.” Let our unity with one another spark collaboration and innovation.

Remind us of all the things we have in common – our passion for this ministry, our love for your children – and let our strength in unity lead to real, life-changing impact. Help us to see the needs, and listen to the ideas of others.



MONDAY

Thanking God for

STRENGTH IN UNITY

In a world where there is so much to pull us apart, unity can act as a tremendous source of strength. And unifying around the cause of ministering to vulnerable children and their families is one that makes the Father smile.

Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, **being one in spirit and of one mind.**

Philippians 2:2

Christ, we are grateful that your Kingdom is not one-size-fits-all. Our world is filled with unique needs, and each volunteer, staff and partner you have placed within this ministry is part of your grand plan for redemption. We ask for boldness to share our experiences and for the listening ears to hear and implement change. Take away our pride, Lord, and remind us that each gift is from you, and to be used for the redemption of others.

TUESDAY

Thanking God for **STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY**

Just as there is strength in unity, there is also strength in diversity. God created each of us with unique hearts, minds and experiences. Each family we serve needs individualized care.

Diversity in Ministry

Each family served by FIVE18 has unique needs. That's why we offer four distinct paths:

Family Care

Helping families get back on a path to resilience

Camps

Building relationships and transforming lives

Counseling

A safe place to talk when life is messy (which is always!)

Connect

A gateway to connecting children and families with support

Did you know?

FIVE18 has three unique opportunities for families seeking mending and healing:

Dare 2 Dad

A 12-week program designed to help cultivate confidence in fathers

CarePortal

An online platform that connects child-serving agencies with local churches and community members who are eager to help

FIVE18 Volunteers

Individuals who provide short-term respite and safe care for children while caregivers address a complex struggle

God, you are a God of transformation, and we are so grateful for that! Not one single person is beyond your care. No one is so broken that they cannot be healed. We pray for your transformation in the children, parents and foster parents we serve. We pray their lives will be filled with those who believe healing and transformation are possible. Thank you for your love and the gift of renewal you give us each morning.

WEDNESDAY

Thanking God for **TRANSFORMATION**

Als there anything we can be more grateful for than transformation? How wonderful to serve a God who wants more for us – to see us be more like Him as we love others well?

Ashley's Story

"I grew up in a severely dysfunctional home. Throughout my very abusive childhood, I felt like I was walking through a thick darkness all the time.

I started drinking at 14 to numb my pain – even stealing alcohol from neighbors. The buzz helped me endure my mom's yelling that was always waiting for me at home. When I turned 16, I started popping pills – anything and everything to make me feel good.

But in the Fall of 2018, the Lord providentially intervened, and a year later I moved to Lynchburg as a Liberty University (LU) student. Unfortunately, I brought my addiction with me.

I had nowhere to go as the Spring 2020 semester ended, so my LU [counselor] connected me with the FIVE18's Expanded Families program. And [they] found Wendy. Even after I shared my story with her, Wendy agreed to answer God's call to care, inviting me to spend the summer in her home. It was in these months that she shared the Gospel with me, and I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior."

Because of FIVE18 I was able to graduate from LU. I now celebrate over three years of sobriety and am living on my own for the first time since being clean. Because of God, Wendy, and my Lynchburg family, I choose life."



**WE ARE
SO GRATEFUL
FOR YOU!**

*Thank you so much for joining us
in this week of thankfulness. I pray
that each day you were reminded
of all we have to be grateful for,
and how we get to give back
through the gifts we've been given.*



FIVE18
FAMILY SERVICES

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