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Lo and Behold!

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Lo and Behold!

*By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
(Philippians 4:6b NIV)*

How often do you approach your prayer time with a thankful heart? If I'm honest with myself, I often lead with my list of needs without taking time to reflect on the many prayers God has already answered. Paul reminds us that our "prayers and petitions" go hand in hand with a thankful heart.

One way to have a thankful heart is to lower my expectations. This may sound like I'm dialing down my hopes and dreams—which I'm not. I'm simply trying focus first on God's breathtaking blessings. I want to approach God with a sense of humility rather than entitlement. One Christian author said it well: "You're never thankful for that which you think you deserve." If I think God owes me, I'll live in a constant state of discontent. Life without gratitude is barren and thirsty.

There's a quaint old saying to express joyful surprise. You may remember it. "Lo and behold!" A person might say, "Lo and behold! There's my cousin Sarah. I haven't seen her in years!"

A woman shared with me how her grandmother helped her understand the meaning of "Lo and behold." "Grandma told me that 'lo and behold' means your expectations are 'low' that what you pray for will come true. Then, 'Behold!' and 'Thank you God!' when it does happen!"

I like her grandma's folksy wisdom. So, I'll continue to dream big and trust God with my fervent prayers and heart's desires. But I will try to keep my expectations "low." And I'll look forward to "beholding" what God will do.

The Bible teaches He's a God of wonder and majesty. He is also full of surprises. Beholding His goodness never fails to fill my heart with thankfulness.

[by Marilyn Chadwick, founder, SEEDS of Hope, Charlotte, NC]