

Does anyone know what a Portmanteau is? I'm not talking about a big suitcase. I'm talking about meaning #2 from the dictionary. To give you a hint, or an out, you're definitely familiar with the concept, but probably have no idea that there is an actual term for it. (Which is how I came across it...thinking, there has to be a term for this.) And while some of you are looking it up on your phones, or are now that I've mentioned it, let me give an example: the word *breathalyzer*. Yes, a *portmanteau* is a word blending the sounds and combining the meanings of two others. In fact, the word *portmanteau* is a *portmanteau* itself, a combination of *porter* (to carry) and *manteaux* (a cloak).

I know, that sounds an awful lot like meaning #1 from the dictionary – the big suitcase. But according to Encyclopedia Britannica¹ it was author Lewis Carol who first introduced the concept. In his 1871 classic *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice is trying to understand the nonsensical poem *Jabberwocky*. She seeks explanation for the word “slithy” from Humpty Dumpty. His reply: “Well, ‘slithy’ means ‘lithe and slimy.’ ‘Lithe’ is the same as ‘active.’ You see it’s like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word.”

And just in case Humpty Dumpty's explanation needs a little help, here are some examples. See if you can figure them out:

- Brunch – Breakfast / Lunch
- Blog – Web / Log
- Chillax – Chill / relax
- Chortle – Chuckle / Snort
- Glamping – Glamour / Camping
- Frenemy – Friend / Enemy
- Infomercial – Information / Commercial
- Ridonkulous – Ridiculous / Donkey
- Spork – Spoon / Fork
- Turducken – Turkey / Duck / Chicken

And one more...

- Forgetfulness – Forgetless / Blessedness
- Now, don't be surprised if you didn't get that last one. I just made it up last week as I started looking at this text and preparing for tonight's message. For me, it combines Psalm 103:1,2 into one *portmanteau*: Forgetfulness. **Bless**

the LORD,^{1a} O my soul. All that is within me, bless his holy name. ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits.

In some ways, the psalm could have ended right there. We could have given the psalmist the ol' double-barreled click and wink, a hearty “Will do” and moved on. But that's not what we're called on to do. In fact, if the psalmist is any indication, we are to take the time to be not a just a bit more inclusive in our remembrances, but take the time to remember all that God has done for you. And the psalmist helps us do just that.

If you haven't done so already, take out a Bible, and open it up to Psalm 103:1. (You can do this on your phone, but it will be, perhaps, a little more impactful with one of the hard copies in front of you.) Let's read just the first sentence together: **Bless the Lord, O my soul.** Now, turn to Psalm 104:36...and let's read that together. **Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord.**

Not only do those words indicate that these two psalms of praise are linked together, but if you don't know how to **bless the Lord**, here are our simple, divine instructions: **Praise the Lord.** And going back to Psalm 103 **Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits.** Essentially, all that is you...remember to continually praise the Lord...for all that is him...for you.

NPH first started publishing these *364 Days of Thanksgiving* books in 2015. If you're not familiar with them, they are devotional journals which acknowledge our tendency to give thanks on Thanksgiving Day. But then questions, What about the other 364 days? And so each day, lest we forget, there are journal blanks to fill in with thoughts of gratitude for all that God has done. And in case you need some help, periodically along the way, there are devotional thoughts, beautiful reminders God's **benefits.**

Essentially, this is what King David is encouraging us to do through these two psalms. Just scan down the headings of both psalms and you can see God's benefits for his people, now and historically, through his limitless mercy and the wonders of his creation.

Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits. And as, by faith, we live in this *forgetfulness*, I want to zero in on one illustration that seems to encapsulate it all: *Praise the Lord, O my soul...who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

For nearly all of us tomorrow there will be a moment – it might be as family arrives, or as dinner begins, or after it has all been served, or after everything has been cleaned up and put away, or after the day is done – there will likely be a moment when a satiated sigh of profound pleasure overflows your heart and escapes your lips, when the goodness of the situation will leave you completely satisfied, the kind of satisfaction that if God called you to your eternal home at that moment, all would be good.

Now God doesn't promise that *feeling* all the time. He doesn't promise it daily. In fact, he doesn't even promise the feeling occasionally. Though it does happen all because he does promise his *goodness* daily. He promises to respond to the *desires* of your heart with *good things*. Notice, he doesn't promise the desires of your heart, rather he promises *good things* in response to them, as Paul explains to the Ephesians, *...to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.* In other words, desire all you want from him, knowing that what he gives in response is *good*. And then, on the other side of his *good things*, you get to give thanks for them in gratitude for the renewing change that takes place.

- Weighted down by guilt? *[He] forgives all your sins.*
- Stricken with sickness? *[He] heals all your diseases* now or in eternity.
- Sunk in the depths of despair or the darkness of depression? *[He] redeems your life from the pit.*
- Targeted by hate and crushed by hurt? *[He] crowns you with love and compassion.*

Every time we go through hardship and heartache, every time we stumble and fall, every time we forget and forgo the way of the Lord, he is there to *[satisfy] your desires with good*

things. For all his goodness, we can't help but respond with the psalmist, *Praise the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget his benefits.* In fact, so *good* is God, that when Luther translated *benefits* he simply translated it *gutes, do not forget* God's *goodness* to you. And it is this goodness that satisfies you and fills you with *forgetfulness* so *that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

I don't know if you've ever taken the time understand that illustration. For most of us, we think of soaring eagles and probably never take it any further. It's enough. But there's more to it. You see, over the first five years of an eagle's life, and even to a degree throughout its entire life, the eagle molts and drastically changes. During its first four weeks of life, an eaglet's fluffy white down changes to a gray woolly down. At about five weeks, brown and black feathers begin to grow. It becomes fully feathered at 10 weeks of age. Then, as a juvenile, its plumage is a mottled gray and brown, leaving it looking rather old and bedraggled until it reaches adult plumage at five years. Even the beak changes from gray-black to a vibrant yellow. And then, throughout the rest of its life, the eagle continues to molt leaving it with new plumage and, at least visually, the appearance of renewed youth.

Now I'm sure that many of us hear those words and would like the *good things* God does for us to be things like fewer wrinkles, stronger muscles, hair where you want it and not where you don't, a springier step, or a sharper mind. And while medical advances can provide some of those things, eventually time catches up. As David writes later in the psalm (15,16), *As for man, his days are like grass. Like a wildflower he blossoms. Then the wind blows over it, and it is gone, and its place recognizes it no more.* But here is satisfaction. Here is renewal. Here is *goodness: [For] the LORD's mercy is from eternity to eternity over those who fear him, and his righteousness is with their children's children.* Here is, my friends, is eternal *forgetfulness.* And so, *Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits.* Amen.

ⁱ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/portmanteau-word>