Squashing the enemies of gratitude

Everyone appreciates gratitude. Nobody wakes up hoping to become an ungrateful person. We value gratitude. We value it in others.

That little four-finger "thank you" wave when you let someone merge into traffic. The thank you card in the mail. A quick text saying, "I appreciate you."



TJ TORGERSON

These little things can brighten your day. These are small gestures that mean something.

And apparently, gratitude is good for us, too. In a 2003 study, people who kept weekly lists of things they were grateful for rated their lives more positively and reported greater optimism than people who listed life's irritations.

The first-century Jewish philosopher Paul of Tarsus — you might know him as the Apostle Paul — urged people to "rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances." He even said it was God's will for us (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18). Not just an occasional thank you, but a grateful way of life.

So, as Thanksgiving approaches, how do we build a grateful life? We start by confronting three habits that quietly rob us of gratitude: complaint, comparison and complacency.

Complaint happens when we put all our attention on what is wrong. Some complaints are valid. We live in an imperfect world. But the problem with complaining is that it is a self-centered focus on the negative and it is never the full truth.

To squash complaint, first we need to remember: the negative thing might be true, but it is not all that is true. Yes, this one thing or 10 things went wrong, but what are some things that went right? Next, look beyond yourself and rather than obsessing on the problem, ask, "How can I help?"

Comparison happens when someone else's life makes us less grateful for our own. You loved your car until you saw somebody else's newer one. You enjoyed your vacation until you saw someone else's pictures on social media.

Nothing changed about what you had, yet someone else's good fortune made you feel as if you had less. Comparison is self-centered thinking that reveals what we value.

Squash comparison by remembering what truly matters. It is not where you went on vacation, but who you spent time with. So, instead of envying your neighbor, celebrate with them because someone else's good fortune doesn't cancel the good in your life.

Complacency is different. Complaint notices what is wrong. Comparison notices what someone else has. Complacency stops noticing.

The sun rises every morning. There's food in the refrigerator. You have a friend who is always just a text away. We get so used to these things that we stop appreciating them. Worse, we start thinking we earned everything on our own, forgetting the people who helped us along the way.

Squash complacency by slowing down, remembering the good, and thanking God and the people who helped make it possible. A blessing doesn't become less of a blessing because you've had it for a long time. Slow down to notice and to celebrate.

This Thanksgiving season, which of these bad habits do you need to confront and squash? Let's squash it together and build a grateful life.

TJ TORGERSON is the pastor at Summit Church of the Nazarene and the director of the Ashland Community Kitchen.



Pet of the Week: Abby

SUBMITTED PHOTO

***The Daily Independent's* Pet of the Week is Abby. Abby is a 12-year-old long-haired Chihuahua. She is "mostly toothless, and barks at anything or anyone who dares to walk by or glance at her domain," according to her owner. "She loves looking fancy, snacks, naps and a heated blanket." Abby is one of hundreds of entries into the newspaper's Facebook contest.**

TOP FIVE STORIES, NOV. 9-15

Rank-headline

1. Rex Cooksey a rare gem
2. 'Coach for all seasons': Cooksey had immeasurable impact
3. Westwood man indicted on sodomy charge
4. Voters of all ages show up for midterms in Boyd, Greenup
5. Former aide pleads guilty to lesser charge in McKell abuse case

CONGRESSIONAL VOTES, WEEK OF NOV. 6-12

BY TARGETED NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON Here's a look at how area members of Congress voted over the previous week.

In addition to this week's roll call votes, the House also passed the Take Care of America's Veterans Act (H.R. 9237), to improve benefits for veterans and the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act (H.R. 8552), to increase, effective as of December 1, 2026, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and for survivors of certain disabled veterans.

The Senate followed the House in passing the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act without a vote.

HOUSE VOTES

House Vote 1:

RECYCLING NUCLEAR FUEL: The House has passed the Nuclear Recycling Efficient Fuels Utilizing Expedited Licensing Act (H.R. 3978), sponsored by Rep. Robert E. Latta, R-Ohio, to have the Nuclear Regulatory Commission apply its special nuclear material regulations for the licensing of spent fuel reprocessing projects. Latta said the change "advances a policy to maximize access to the additional energy available in spent nuclear fuel, which retains up to 90 percent of potential energy for future use." The vote, on Nov. 9, was 397 yeas to 2 nays.

YEAS: Barr R-KY (6th), Guthrie R-KY (2nd), Massie R-KY (4th), Rogers (KY) R-KY (5th), Comer R-KY (1st), McGarvey D-KY (3rd)

House Vote 2:

ENRICHING URANIUM: The House has passed the American Enrichment Deployment Act (H.R. 9612), sponsored by Rep. Russell Fry, R-S.C., to allow builders of uranium enrichment plants to proceed without a license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Instead, the plants would be regulated by the NRC under the same framework that applies to other nuclear power fuel cycle plants. Fry said: "This legislation will help reduce delays, encourage private investment, and accelerate the deployment of domestic fuel infrastructure our nuclear industry desperately needs." The vote, on Nov. 9, was 394 yeas to 3 nays.

YEAS: Barr R-KY (6th), Guthrie R-KY (2nd), Massie R-KY (4th), Rogers (KY) R-KY (5th), Comer R-KY (1st), McGarvey D-KY (3rd)

House Vote 3:

HEGSETH IMPEACHMENT: The House has passed a motion to refer to its Judiciary Committee a bill (H. Res. 1655), sponsored by Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., that would impeach Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth for allegedly executing unlawful orders to prosecute the war against Iran without the required authorization from Congress. The vote to refer, on Nov. 10, was 211 yeas to 204 nays.

YEAS: Barr R-KY (6th), Guthrie R-KY (2nd), Rogers (KY) R-KY (5th), Comer R-KY (1st)

NAYS: Massie R-KY (4th), McGarvey D-KY (3rd)

House Vote 4:

RETIREMENT INVESTMENT PLANS: The House has passed the Retirement Fairness for Charities and Educational Institutions Act (H.R. 1013), sponsored by Rep. Frank D. Lucas, R-Okla., to allow those enrolled in 403(b) retirement plans, which are structured for employees of public schools, charities, and churches, to invest in collective investment trusts. Lucas said making the bill law would mean that "Americans who serve our communities can finally have the same retirement investment opportunities as every other worker." An opponent, Rep. Stephen F. Lynch, D-Mass., said the lack of transparency rules for the trusts would expose 403(b) enrollees to hidden risks. The vote, on Nov. 11, was 295 yeas to 128 nays.

YEAS: Barr R-KY (6th), Guthrie R-KY (2nd), Massie R-KY (4th), Rogers (KY) R-KY (5th), Comer R-KY (1st)

NAYS: McGarvey D-KY (3rd)

House Vote 5:

DISABILITY PAY FOR VETERANS: The House has passed the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102), sponsored by Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis, R-Fla., to provide full retirement benefits to veterans with disabilities incurred in combat rather than deducting their disability benefits from their retirement benefits level. Bilirakis said the bill rightfully cured the "great injustice" of reducing benefits for soldiers injured in service to the country. The vote, on Nov. 12, was 392 yeas to 18 nays.

YEAS: Barr R-KY (6th), Guthrie R-KY (2nd), Massie R-KY (4th), Rogers (KY) R-KY (5th), Comer R-KY (1st), McGarvey D-KY (3rd)

SENATE VOTES

Senate Vote 1:

PERMITTING RULES: The Senate has agreed to end debate on the motion to proceed to the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (H.R. 2347), sponsored by Rep. Lloyd Smucker, R-Pa., to change the framework for federal government reviews of permit applications, including by speeding environmental reviews; and also change various elements of reviews of energy infrastructure developments. A supporter, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W. Va., said the bill "creates predictability, consistency, and finality in securing a permit. and it will allow our laws to balance public health, the environment, and the needs of our economy." The vote, on Nov. 9, was 73 yeas to 25 nays.

YEAS: Paul R-KY, McConnell R-KY

Senate Vote 2:

ALABAMA JUDGE: The Senate has confirmed the nomination of Gregory Cook to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama. A judge on the state's Supreme Court since 2023, Cook had been a private practice lawyer for several decades, with a focus on commercial law; and a lawyer for various elements of the Republican party. A supporter, Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala., said of Cook: "I have every faith and confidence that he will use everything in his being to make sure that he serves the people of the Northern District and this nation to the very best of his ability." The vote, on Nov. 12, was 49 yeas to 27 nays.

YEAS: Paul R-KY, McConnell R-KY

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO BID

Pathways Inc. will be accepting sealed bids for the following vehicle types. Two (2) 2026 or current-year model ranging from 12-16 Seat Passenger Vans. One (1) 12-16 Seat Passenger Van with hydraulic rear entry wheelchair lift (retaining 10 seats in rear). One (1) Mini Van with a rear load wheelchair ramp. Parties interested in submitting a bid should email jarmstead@pathways-ky.org requesting a bid package. An intention to bid must be emailed to the above address no later than November 24, 2026. Sealed bids will be accepted until 5:00 PM EST on **Wednesday, December 16, 2026.**

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