

Always Giving Thanks

"The sentence which has most influenced my life is, 'Some persons grumble because God placed thorns among roses. Why not thank God because He placed roses among thorns?'" -- The Rev. Benjamin Franklin

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; (Eph 5:18-20, NASU).

Each year in November, Americans celebrate a holiday called Thanksgiving. For most, it's a time to gather with family and friends around a table laden with good food. Various families celebrate with other activities, but generally, it's a good time where people eat too much, enjoy time together, and connect with one another. I've known a few old grumps who were no fun to be around and who seemed to think such events were a waste of time. It never seemed to me that those people were very happy. In fact, they had a tendency to fuss and complain about every little thing that happened. I can tell you this: such an attitude is no road to happiness.

I'm coming to believe even more strongly in something that many have written about. People who are thankful are also people who are happier than others. People who gripe and complain, fuss and fume, end up miserable because their negative mindset, attitude, and speech leaves them little to be happy about. They have listened to themselves for so long they've come to believe that there is little good. Too bad! To them, the rose is spoiled because it sits among all those nasty thorns.

Thankful people, on the other hand, can be honest about life's pains and ills, yet also see that there are some terrifically great things for which to be thankful. Thankful people are aware of God's blessings and are happy to express their gratitude to Him. They know the blessings brought by other people and with full hearts, know the joy of expressing their thanks. These people listen to themselves, too. They listen to repeated reminders of God's goodness, mercy and bountiful grace. They listen to reminders of precious loved ones, friends, and sometimes complete strangers, who have added immeasurably to their lives. In their gratitude, they make it possible for happiness to take deep root and flourish.

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