

BEING THANKFUL In these troubled times...

2021

As our society goes nowadays with all the turmoil, hatred, anger, and dissensions between groups, we can only wonder if it is possible to find something to be thankful for in our country. However, despite what's going on nationwide, when we compare our present situation to other parts of the world, we have much to be thankful for. No doubt the effects of Covid, not only on our economy, but also on our personal lives, cause stress and anxiety on a lot of people. For those who are jobless or have lost a loved one due to this pandemic, Thanksgiving may be a difficult time for them to celebrate this year. However, regardless of the challenges people are going through, there are always those who will find something to be thankful for.

No doubt, being grateful and giving thanks should be a top priority on our daily to-do list. Unfortunately, how many of us will admit it's an area in our lives that needs to improve? I'm one of them... However, this morning as I watched the sunrise in our backyard, I was amazed at the sight of the sun rays shining through gaps in the clouds that had already popped up on the horizon. I then thought about the people who are blind, and realized how blessed I was to be able to admire this breathtaking view. My heart was filled with gratitude, and thanksgiving towards God for this awesome display of nature, as well as for His presence in my life. Quite frankly, without Him I would be like a ship without a rudder and an anchor... I also acknowledged how easy it is to take things for granted, and I asked myself... *Why do some people think everything is owed to them, while others are constantly grateful and thankful for everything they have?*

My mind then focused on my husband, our children and their families. I realized how truly blessed I am to have them all in my life. And how fortunate I am to have true and trusted friends to fellowship with, to be fairly healthy at my age, and to have all my needs met. Obviously, I have my own challenges to deal with, but this morning my heart turned to the many people who are dealing with diseases, aches and pains in their bodies, or are struggling financially. And again, I asked myself... *When we come to realize that others are coping with worse challenges in their lives than we are, shouldn't we start counting our blessings rather than complain about our own circumstances?*

No doubt, the answers to my questions may vary from one person to the next. However, it all boils down to an attitude of the heart. Gratitude and thankfulness are usually instilled in us at an early age by our parents or caregivers. I remember my dad, who was not a wealthy man, saying to us kids as we were ready to eat: "We always have three meals a day, and we should be thankful to God for that." He was a very wise man, and his words stuck with me all those years. However, at the end of the day, it's always a personal decision to make. And when we really think about it, it's a gift we give to ourselves. Happiness, joy, peace, and contentment all flow from a thankful and grateful heart...

It's so easy to complain about the circumstances we're in, isn't it? Our job, marriage, kids, finances or health may be areas we mostly struggle with. I understand that in so many ways, life may not be kind to some people. They try their very best to deal with the overwhelming challenges they're facing, but whatever they do, nothing seems to work for them. They take one step forward, two steps back... My heart sincerely goes out to them. However, we will always find people who look at the glass in front of them as half empty instead of half full. They dwell on the negative sides of their circumstances instead of searching for the possible solutions to improve them. We have to understand that there will always be trials, and difficulties in our lives to complain about. However, I would hope that in these moments we turn to God, pray, trust in His goodness, and be grateful and thankful for the blessings we already have.

I might add that it is not something we should put in practice only on Thanksgiving. It's an everyday thing... And when we do, it can lift up our heavy heart. It can help us put aside our self-centeredness, and selfishness that usually make us grumpy, and discontent. It can make us realize that our life is such

a good one compared to others. Oh, the circumstances we're in may be challenging to cope with at times. The persons around us may not always behave the way we'd like them to. It's not an idealistic world we live in... But we *can choose* to have a grateful and thankful attitude as well as a giving heart.

I hope and pray that this day of celebration will be an opportunity for us to recognize the many blessings we already have, and to express our gratitude and thanks to God who is the source of them all. And let's not forget to extend our sincere appreciation to our loved ones, as well as to the people who play an important role in our lives. May we also have the desire to share our blessings with those around us who are less fortunate. For those of you, dear readers, who will not be able to celebrate Thanksgiving with your loved ones, I pray God to bless you in a very special way.

I'm closing with the following prayer. I think it reflects very well the kind of attitude we should have, not only as we celebrate Thanksgiving, but also throughout the year.

"O God, when I have food, help me to remember the hungry.

When I have work, help me to remember the jobless.

When I have a home, help me to remember those who have no home at all.

When I am without pain, help me to remember those who suffer.

And remembering, help me to destroy my complacency, bestir my compassion, and be concerned enough to help, by word and deed, those who cry out for what we take for granted. Amen."

(Samuel F. Pugh)

**TO YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES...
HAVE A BLESSED THANKSGIVING!**

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