

Reflections

Leave it to God

Read Psalm 100

I have discovered that if I don't make an intentional effort to choose to be thankful, I can always find stuff to complain about. In fact, it often seems that there's no lack of things to gripe about: If it's not power outage it's bad weather; if it's not bad weather it's poor health; if it's not poor health it's a lousy job or spouse or whatever. Unfortunately, ungratefulness is a universal problem. But we don't have to succumb to that natural urge to complain. We can choose to be thankful.

Yes, it will require a purposeful heart and a resolute spirit. Yes, it will mean biting our tongue a few times. Yes, it will doubtlessly take time and discipline. Yes, it will mean practice and a lot of hard work. But it is possible to develop a grateful attitude until thankfulness begins to come to us so naturally that it becomes our lifestyle.

We don't have to wait every year for that fourth Thursday in November to turn our thoughts to thanksgiving. Thanksgiving for us should be so much more than the observance of a day. Just being alive is reason enough to give thanks. And having eternal life should make us doubly grateful.

The more I think of having a heart of gratitude, the more I realize just how much of life is affected by a grateful attitude. When we choose thankfulness, burdens seem lighter; worries dissipate; fears cease; anger crumbles and peace takes up residence in our hearts. When we choose thankfulness, we find it easy to pray and to praise and to trust God's sovereign will for our future. Our very happiness depends on our ability to choose thankfulness even during those times when what we want most to do is to pout and whine and complain. A thankful heart is a happy heart indeed!

I can't think of a better antidote for a sullen disposition than that of thankfulness. It really doesn't matter what the issue is, we can always find a bright side if we try. Why else would we find grouchy people who seem to have so much and beaming folks who have so little by comparison? If we each decided to make a list of all the reasons we have to be thankful, I believe we would be amazed at the results.

Oh the things we take for granted! To love and to be loved in return; to enjoy the blessings that come with living in a free country; to be able to think for yourself and make intelligent decisions; to have the pleasure of a good night's sleep and then awake to breathe in the fresh crispness of the morning air; to be able to see and hear and taste and smell and move... Already my typing fingers have difficulty keeping up with my racing thoughts. How can I not choose thankfulness!