

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS!

Sitting at my desk at 3:20 one morning and struggling with a horrific cold, I'm thinking So much for getting my flu shot this week to stay well. It is painful to breath and swallowing hurts so much that I have been trying to see how long I could go without swallowing—losing battle! I decided to make myself some hot tea and fix my thoughts upon other things. Tea made, I snuggled down into my rocking chair, with my favorite lap throw, my tea by my side and I opened a book on Thanksgiving that I had recently bought. I chose to enter into some praise and worship although my body was screaming otherwise.

I opened the book and read this poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson; I love his poems. "I am thankful for small mercies. I compared notes with one of my friends who expects everything of the universe, and is disappointed when anything is less than best and I found that I begin at the other extreme, expecting nothing, and am always full of thanks for moderate good."

I thought of the many sacrifices that walk hand in hand with thankfulness—the sacrifices of our armed forces defending our nation, family members and friends or the sacrifice of a mother who forgoes her own sleep, as she holds and comforts her sick child throughout the night or the sacrifice of giving up your "night out" to attend your child's school play; that smiling face says it all. We all make sacrifices from time to time as we bless and meet the needs of others. I realized that no good deed is possible without Your help Father, and I prayed, "Grant us a willing spirit to walk humbly before You and give thanks for all You have given and blessed us with today."

Suddenly, and I love God's "suddenly's", I remembered a quote I once read by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (yes, I don't know who he is either, but I liked what he said and it stuck with me). A single thankful thought towards heaven is the most perfect of all prayers. And as I am reflecting upon these words dancing within my heart and playing a ticker tape across my mind, I realize that I am breathing easier and the painful swallowing has eased considerably. I raise my voice to the Lord in thankful praise for His gracious love and healing touch. Isn't it amazing what happens when we get our minds off SELF and upon other things?

Gloom is dangerous and few people are attracted to people who have negative attitudes. Who wants to be around the mule-faced religion of the Pharisee? The genuine Christian radiates cheerfulness because he possesses it. And when your mind is focused upon the things of God cheerfulness and thanksgiving seem to go hand in hand. It is a privilege to be cheerful! It enables you to enjoy life. It doubles every blessing. It reveals the character of heaven. And last, but not least, it affects everything it touches as it fills our hearts with His joy and peace. It is truly the song of divine grace in your heart.

When the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce...joy.

Leviticus 22:29 says," And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord, offer it at your own will."

Psalm 34:8 "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him."