

An Attitude of Gratitude

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What are the things in your life for which you are most grateful? Is it having a place to live? Do you have enough food to eat? Is your refrigerator full? How about your cupboards? Enough clothes for winter? Do you find comfort in this place and happy to be with this church family? How about your relations - everyone getting along? At least for the most part? I have a relative that recently stated that all churches are cults! So I looked up the word "cult" in the dictionary. It is a "system of religious worship especially as expressed in ritual or a devotion or homage to a person or a thing." I guess he is correct - at least technically. I don't argue with him because he is always right so why bother? So I smiled and told him I don't argue politics or religion because I have the freedom to have my own ideas. I said I prefer to use the word "faith". I can hold my own in an argument with him - if I have to. He just says outlandish things to goad me - and I know his game. So I just walk away and when we left he gave me a hug - all was forgiven.

Jesus certainly had a great way of answering questions. He used parables. He put his answer in such a way that the other person had to think about it. He was the ultimate teacher, wasn't he?

In all the moves we endured while Howard was in the Air Force, we met lots of people from different cities, states, and countries. I always made friends wherever we lived. And I found good things about wherever we lived. My big concern was always if we would have curtains to fit the windows! Would the kids need new clothes?

Some of the people we met - especially the wives - were so negative about wherever we were. The advantage of moving a lot is that it was only temporary and eventually either we would leave or the obnoxious people would. One neighbor in Australia made herself miserable by constantly complaining. No place to shop - we had a grocery store and Sears and Penney's catalogues, a small library and hospital. All the housing was fully furnished - we just took our dishes and clothes and pictures, etc. and the rest of our belongings were put in storage. Everything was adequate for all of us. She complained we didn't have a telephone - nobody did! No clothes dryer - we all had a washer and clothes lines. It just wasn't good enough for her. And all of us got used to actually talking to people face to face and having dinner parties. I enjoyed it immensely. Howard called her Sunshine - not to her face, of course.

Another woman I thought of was in northern Minnesota. Her name was Sandy. We called her Eeyore. When our kids were little, I used to read to them. They loved the Winnie the Pooh books. Christopher R was a boy who had a collection of stuffed animals. They had some wonderful adventures. There was Owl - they took their problems to him as he was the wise one. There was Kanga and her baby Roo. And Winnie the Pooh was the bear - sweet and absent minded and Tigger was a tiger that bounded through his life full speed, always filled with interesting questions and not always thinking things through. And then there was Eeyore, the donkey. Slow to speak and always finding fault, Oh dear, oh my, were his favorite words. And this woman, Sandy, used those words often. It was hard to keep a straight face. She worried about what would happen with COVID before it occurred. Always using negative examples. How were those women raised? I wonder if either of these women - Sandy or Sunshine - ever felt joy? How sad that they never seemed to realize they were Children of God and He loves them. What a sad, sad way to live.

All you have to do is look outside and witness God's creation – the green grass in the summer, the birds – put up a bird feeder! Smile and wave to a neighbor, see the flowers or the neighbor kids building a snowman. Listen to music. Don't dwell on the negative! Be grateful..

In the book of Galations, Paul has great ideas on how to live a Christ-filled life. The fruit of the spirit is my favorite part – Chapter 5, verse 22. It is very uplifting.

I have a book about the Apostles. It describes their personalities, although I question the validity of the information. It says that :

- Judas regretted his betrayal of Jesus and committed suicide. That is in the Bible.
- James, the brother of John, a son of Zebedee, was supposedly very wise. He was a missionary to Spain.
- Philip was bilingual – he spoke Greek.
- James, the lesser, was very knowledgeable about the law.
- Thomas, the doubting one, ended up in India where he died.
- Judas, brother of James the lesser
- Peter (Simon) ended up as a missionary in Great Britain.
- Matthew, strong willed in his belief in Jesus
- Bartholomew (Nathaniel) was martyred in Armenia. Very imaginative.
- Andrew – great spiritual strength
- John - wrote the book of Revelations – last book in the new testament. Full of symbolism and sometimes hard to understand
- Peter – Jesus called him the Rock because of his strong faith.

How did all of these personalities get along? They all had one thing in common - they were followers of Jesus!

Jesus, the source of our faith in God, the ultimate teacher who wants us to love everyone, God's only son.

So, ladies and gentlemen, develop and live with an attitude of gratitude to God. Be thankful for what you do have not what you think you need. And trust that God will provide. And don't forget to pray a thank you to Him!