

Daily Devotional, January 11, 2021 Thank You, I Am Blessed By You

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 (NIV)

I received a small card the other day that simply said “Thank you” in response to something that I just took for granted because it was part of what I would normally do. It was nice to feel appreciated. Not only did the card make me feel valued, but it reminded me of my need to express *my* gratitude to the people in *my* life.

The Apostle Paul wrote the two letters of 1 and 2 Thessalonians to a young church that he started with some of his fellow travelers in ministry. Their time in Thessalonica was successful in that they were able to share the good news of Jesus and several people were converted to the Christian faith. Unfortunately, their time was cut short when they were forced to leave town after they had stirred up trouble with the local authorities. Paul seemed quite disturbed that their presence in this community was not well received, and even more so, concerned that he had so little time to spend with the young Christians that had just recently come to faith under his guidance. This is the setting that we experience in 1 Thessalonians.

Paul could have spent his time fretting and complaining over his treatment and persecution in Thessalonica, but instead he chose to focus on gratitude. This is displayed in the conclusion of this letter, as Paul encourages the young followers of Christ to, “Give thanks in all circumstances.”

There is no doubt that we can all point to circumstances in our lives that would justify a bad attitude and a reasonable amount of complaining. The model that the Apostle Paul gives us is to choose gratitude. Our lives are filled with people and things that are most worthy of our gratitude. But it is so easy to let our eyes and mind focus on the things that are not going the way that we would like. It is when we focus on the intentional expression of our gratitude that we are able to shift our focus toward the things that are good and worthy of our attention.

When was the last time you wrote a note or sent a card to someone to express your gratitude? When was the last time you called someone just to say thank you? Taking time to share our appreciation is one of the kindest things we can do—especially when it is from the heart.

Today, I am going to take a moment to intentionally give thanks to some people in my life. I hope that you will also take some time and say, “Thank you.” Maybe it will be your first time to write a thank you card or call someone just to thank them, but I promise it will make a positive difference in your life and most especially in the life of the person who received your gratitude.

Prayer: To be known, and yet loved is a blessing. Thank you for all those who see me, who seek to understand, support and nurture me. I am forever grateful to be able to come just as I am, and to walk in closeness and love with others. This is the richest blessing, the greatest gift and the beautiful gift of your walk and life amongst us. Thank you so much for all my friends and loved ones. In Christ, Amen.