

November 2017

Dear Sustaining Partner,

***“From them will come thanksgiving and the sound of people celebrating. I will increase them; they will not decrease. I will honor them; they will not be despised.”(Jeremiah 10:19 CJB)***

There are many reasons why autumn is my favorite time of year. (Except that I suffer dreadfully from whatever is in the air in October & November.) During all other seasons, I have trouble slowing down, but as we move toward Thanksgiving, I am glad for the continual reminder to be grateful. It does not come easy to me to choose to count my blessings. I tend to focus more on my perceived empty places than on those areas of my life where God has abundantly blessed me.

Perhaps it's a part of my American upbringing where even those who are poor have more material goods and more to eat than most of the rest of the world. I don't know how many Americans I've heard say, "I'm broke" when there is (some) money in the bank, plenty to eat with enough left over for a venti Skinny Vanilla Latte with sugar free vanilla, with an extra shot. YES, with whipped cream. Coffee in any form is a cause for celebration in my world.

To combat my feelings of entitlement, for the past several years I have deliberately chosen to post on my Facebook page at least one thing each day for which I am thankful. It's my personal exercise to force my focus toward being grateful. My "Month of Gratitude" takes varying degrees of effort. In doing so each morning, my point of view becomes much more positive. Being thankful is a choice that molds my character (I pray!) to become more kind, more gentle and more appreciative of what I have and who I have in my life.

I've begun to realize that expressions of praise and thanksgiving are most often a result of discipline. If I run into trouble, I'm very aware of my feelings (ARGH! GRRR!), but to my shame, I too often take the good things and people in my life for granted. Whatever irritates me is always bouncing around in my head, but I'm tempted to delay extending even a word of thanks to those who bless me when I'm focused on something else. The truth is I am generally focused on the many tasks at hand. I try to remember I must deliberately stop and express my thanks to God and to the people in my life.

It's very important to me you know how very much we appreciate you and your choice to partner with us. The simple fact is that no matter how intensely we concentrate on the job we need to do, there is just no way we'd accomplish the mission God has set before us without you. I know you don't have to give to this or any other ministry, but I'm grateful that babies, families and honoring The Lord are important to you.

There is much wrong in the world to discourage and defeat our spirits. It is my prayer for all of us that this will be a season of Thanksgiving in its very purest form. No matter what happens, GOD is GOD and no one can change that. C.S Lewis said,

*"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can block out the sun by scribbling the word 'darkness' on the wall of his cell."*

I thank God for you and pray for you always as I process your gifts and sign letters. I pray peace, mercy and grace is abundant in your hearts and lives. It's all grace...

*I wish you and your dear ones a blessed holiday full of gratitude.*

For Life!

Lisa J Stiefken  
Executive Director