



Abundant Living

MINISTRIES

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In two days, our YOUNGEST child is turning 40. Whoa... am I getting almost OLD??? Three months ago, our oldest grandchild got married to a real sweetheart. Sharon and I realized that... who knows... in another year or so we could become GREATgrandparents. I commented to Sharon that being a GREATgrandpa didn't seem so old, BUT thinking that I would have a daughter who is a GRANDMA... THAT had me feeling my age!

Older people say it so often... how the years seem to fly by faster and faster. Now, I hear myself saying that same thing. How the years have just flown by!

I remember our boys learning to walk. Sharon would support the wobbling child. I would extend my arms toward him and enthusiastically coax him, "Come to Daddy! Come on! You can do it! Come to Daddy!" He would shuffle around a bit and then manage to move one leg in a half-step. And then... the tumble! Down on his diapered bottom!

Sharon and I never once rebuked him, "Oh, why don't you just give it up! You'll never learn to walk!" No, we simply immediately placed him back on his feet and resumed the enthusiastic coaching, "That's okay. You can do it. Come on! You can do it! Come to Daddy! Come on!"

Before they learned to walk confidently, they had a zillion tumbles. Why did Sharon and I not get perturbed about those many stumbles and falls? **It was because** we both had a confident awareness of our child's future. In our mind's eye, we saw our child not only taking a successful step, but we saw him running, hopping, skipping, jumping... riding bike, skiing, maybe even mountain climbing! We understood that today's stumbles and tumbles were part of him learning to do so much more!

I think this illustrates our heavenly Father's attitude toward His children. Sharon and I meet with people who, it seems, don't want to try even that first step, because they're afraid of another tumble. They have stumbled and tumbled so often they don't want to get back on their feet. They think they will never learn to walk. They are afraid of their Father's displeasure, should they fail *one more time*.

But **HE** is our biggest cheerleader! He's holding out His arms toward us as He enthusiastically encourages, "Come on! Come to Daddy! That's it! You can do it! Come on!"

May I act as a spokesman for the Lord as I write this letter? I encourage you to **not give up!** No matter how often you stumbled yesterday, don't give up on walking! God knows your future! He sees you not only walking... but hopping, skipping, jumping... even mountain climbing! But, courageously, you need to start with today's step!

We are confident of this... that
*"He who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*
Philippians 1:6

Let's enjoy the walk... and the mountain climbing!

John Charles (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



As households all across our nation celebrate Thanksgiving, many family members will be given an opportunity to share something for which they are grateful. This is a great tradition, although it is often apparent that not everyone is used to verbalizing their thanks. Some *hem* and *haw*, finally saying something quite generic, like, "I'm thankful for my family," or, "my health," or even, "for everything." These are all worthy reasons for gratitude but a little practice might make the task less painful.

Use the following guide to encourage your family in the *practice* of giving thanks. Select one category each day (perhaps at dinner time, or bedtime) and see how many items your family can list in that category. As Dad, Mom, and children call out dozens of things, you will all be amazed at how abundantly God has blessed your lives!

How many items can you list in each of the following categories?

- Good things made possible through Jesus' death
- Beautiful parts of nature (mountains, deserts, etc.)
- The books of the Bible (there are 66 of them)
- Spiritual benefits God gives (peace, joy, etc.)
- Species of animals
- Conveniences our family enjoys
- Family members and relatives (Can you name them?)
- Types of birds
- Everything you know about Heaven
- The miracles Jesus performed on earth
- Pastors and missionaries your family knows
- Varieties of flowers

- Good Christian books you or a family member has read in the last year
- Miracles your family members have witnessed or experienced
- Hobbies and talents of family members
- Favorite foods and dishes your family has enjoyed in the last year
- Blessings experienced due to daylight and nighttime
- Names of oceans, rivers, lakes and streams
- Beneficial subjects taught in elementary, junior high, high school and college.
- As many churches as you can name in your town
- The good authorities in your lives (teachers, government, etc... how many do you know by name?)
- Different types of fruit
- Things that make us smile
- Capabilities of the human body
- Different kinds of vegetables
- People whom you consider friends
- Benefits of suffering and hardship
- Sins which God, because of Jesus, has forgiven
- Good character traits God is building in us.

The list of good gifts God has showered on us is endless. As Scripture reminds, **"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights" (James 1:17).**

And, **"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Timothy 6:17).**

Prepare for a great Thanksgiving by setting aside this entire month to reflect on dozens and dozens of good things that God has provided.

Then, when the day for celebrating finally arrives, you will enjoy an absolutely **thanks-giving celebration!**

Written by
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