

VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER 2008

THE SUN IS ALWAYS SHINING

Remember Roger Miller? He was very unique in his music and one liners. Once he looked at the bright shining sun and remarked, "God has His lights on bright today." That is a statement that has always stuck with me. The fact is that the intensity of the sun never changes, it's just the obstacles that block it such as clouds, fog, thunderstorms, smog and etc. I've ridden on commercial airliners and was able to see thunderstorms beneath me at thirty thousand feet. Some thunderstorms can reach an altitude of sixty thousand feet. The surety and predictability of the sun allows Christians to make comparisons of the sun and our Lord. He's always there and He never changes. We revolve around Him and not the Lord revolving around us. I often refer to the Lord as a constant unchanging God but that is such a comfort in unpredictable times. Just remember, only obstacles block the rays of the sun.

Pastor George Ferrington

HAPPY TURKEY DAY! BE THANKFUL AND BLESSED!

FOOD FOR MY FELLOWSHEEP

GRATITUDE: IT ISN'T JUST FOR THANKSGIVING ANYMORE

Turns out, when the great Psalmist—King David sang, "It is a good and delightful thing to give thanks to the Lord," he wasn't just whistling Dixie. Who woulda thought, thousands of years later, researchers are testing, measuring, and finding that the effects of love-related qualities—like gratitude—actually make us physically healthier.

Suppose thankfulness is among our most important positive emotions, included in a list of four *heart-strengths*: the ability to love and be loved, gratitude, hope, and zest. Suppose it is in our self-interest to feel gratitude because it makes us better people. What would happen if we extended the tradition of giving thanks, typically celebrated only during our Thanksgiving holiday, throughout the entire year? Such gratitude would be rewarded with **better health**, say researchers.

As you prepare to gather with your loved ones to give thanks this month, here are some discoveries to keep in mind.

1. Gratitude Defends

Just 15 minutes a day focusing on the things you're grateful for will significantly increase your body's natural antibodies. Grateful people, focusing on the positive, have more resistance to colds and maintain higher numbers of blood cells that protect the immune system. Negative thinking can actually weaken a healthy immune system.

2. Gratitude Sharpens

Naturally grateful people are more focused mentally and measurably less vulnerable to clinical depression. Grateful people—those who perceive gratitude as a permanent trait rather than a temporary state of mind—take better care of themselves and engage in more protective health behaviors like regular exercise and a healthy diet.

3. Gratitude Calms

A grateful state of mind induces a physiological state called *resonance* that's associated with healthier blood pressure and heart rate. Grateful people tend to be less materialistic in general, and suffer less anxiety about status or the accumulation of possessions. What a beneficial trait to have in our present society and economy! "Do not worry about _____ (you fill in the blank!)".....Jesus.

4. Gratitude Strengthens

Gratitude research is beginning to suggest that feelings of thankfulness have tremendous positive value in helping people cope with daily problems, especially stress. Stress is linked to several leading causes of death (e.g. heart disease and cancer) and claims responsibility for up to 90% of all doctor visits. Those who practice gratitude report higher levels of well-being; they not only feel better about their lives as a whole, they have fewer physical symptoms like headaches, stomach ulcers, and muscle stiffness.

5. Gratitude Heals

All mental activity, whether conscious or unconscious, has a powerful influence on our healing system (a system that works alongside, but is separate from your immune system). When your mind is in a positive state, immersed in thoughts such as love, joy, enthusiasm, and appreciation, beneficial chemicals known as *neurotransmitters* or *neuropeptides* that are secreted by your brain can actually infuse your body with positive energy, strengthening your healing system and improving your health. Recovery times from illness or injury are shortened.

6. Gratitude Uplifts

Grateful people are more spiritually aware and more likely to appreciate the interconnectedness of all life. When a person of faith thanks Father for life, he or she is expressing joy that comes from knowing, "*God wanted me to exist.*" Practicing gratitude helps us extract the most out of life; it is a spiritual shift when it makes us more aware of life as a gift.

Gratitude is an affirmation of the goodness in one's life and the recognition that the sources of this goodness lie at least partly outside oneself. A sense of thankfulness for life, for the help and achievements of others, for the chance to experience each day's sunrise, helps enrich our own life experience. And enhances our overall health. Thanksgiving, in this view, should be every day of every year!

Have a blessed and happy Thanksgiving, from Marcia Williamson, RN, Faith Community Nurse

Dear Friends and Family,

I just wanted to say thank you for all of the prayers you lifted up for me while I was on the mission field in Brazil. It was an awesome time for me. God reminded me that it was in Brazil in August of 1986 where I actually began to fulfill the call He has upon my life. I was a very shy, timid person. I took a zero on a book report rather than speak before a crowd of people. In 1986, the Lord miraculously led me to Rick Bonfim. He asked me to go to Brazil and God made the way for me to go. At our first service in Brazil, Rick called me to the pulpit to give a testimony. I said, "No, I can not!" He would not let me say no, He took me by the hand and made me come up to the pulpit. With my knees knocking in fear, I began to speak. The anointing came upon me and the words flowed from my heart. There was a young woman at the service who was possessed with a demon. When I began to speak, she disrupted the service with loud outbursts. We prayed for her and she was set free that very moment. She wrote her name and the names of my children in Portuguese in my Bible on the page of John 10:10. That was the scripture the Lord gave her, "The thief comes to kill, steal, and destroy, but I have come that you may have abundant life." Her life was changed that night and so was mine.

It was so awesome to see the mission that Ray and I helped to build. The project was started in 1987. Ray and I were there working on the foundation. When I went into the church for the first time this year, all I could do was cry. I thank the Lord for allowing me to see the finished project and to be a part of this place where many have come and met the Lord. The Word is taught there and also demonstrated by works. The Word says faith without works is dead and this mission is very much alive. There is a feeding program that serves five thousand meals a month, a medical clinic, and a dentist. The clinic is in need of medicines and medical supplies. On this trip, I met a retired army nurse who has been twice to the mission for six months each time, to serve as the nurse in charge. She is going to send me a list of things that would be helpful. There will be another team going in January. I believe the Lord will guide us and make the way for us to restock the clinic. Be in prayer and if you have any ideas let me know. I will keep you all posted as a plan is developed.

This time in Brazil was refreshing to me. I had some time to meditate and bask in His presence. My heavenly Father took me back to the place where I began the call, to confirm to me He is calling me into full time ministry. My life has been a school of how to really trust Him in the midst of the storm. I have had a lot of practice. The Lord told me that the only way to trust Him is to know Him and the only way to know Him is to spend time with Him. He also told me, "You can not give something that you do not have." I have learned to trust Him, and not myself, by spending time in His presence. Being a strong willed person made this very difficult. I can do OK taking care of things for a long time, but then the burden gets heavy, I get exhausted, and can not keep up the pace. The Lord showed me that the reason things were so hard was because I was trying to get things done my way, in my time, not following Him in His time. He knows so much better than we do, but we just always want our way, in our time. I have learned it truly is easier when I trust Him and follow His lead and stop trying to do it my way. His Word says His burden is light and His yoke is easy. He wants us to come unto Him and He will give us rest, but that means trusting Him and not ourselves. That rest comes when you leave your burden with Him and trust Him for the outcome.

Our day job at the mission was in the maintenance of the property. We cleaned mold and mildew from walls and painted. It looked nice when we were finished. Every night we had some awesome services. The anointing was present on the praise as well as the Word, the Bread of Life, which was served to the people who were present. We saw people saved, healed and set free. Praise His Holy Name! The Word in Mark 16:15-18 says, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and those who believe shall be saved. And these signs shall follow those who believe, in my name they shall cast out demons, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not harm them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Praise the Lord, we saw these things on this trip. It is so wonderful to see people come to know the Lord as their Savior, to see them set free from things that have caused so much pain in their lives, and to see people healed from sickness in their bodies. Our God Reigns! His Word does not return unto Him void but it accomplishes what He sent it to do. It is living and sharper than a two-edged sword, dividing what is of the soul and what is of the Spirit, the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. I am so thankful to my precious Lord for giving me the opportunity to serve Him by serving others. There is nothing more rewarding than sharing the love of Christ with others.

I feel the mission to Brazil was a success. We saw the Word of God at work with the manifestation of His love

through the Spirit in the lives of the people. What an honor to be a servant of the most high God, Creator of all of the universe. I wanted to share with you all a little testimony of some of the things our Father did on this trip. All of you are just as much a part of it as I am. Your financial help and your prayers enable me to go. You may not be there in the flesh, but in the spirit you are always with me. I need the help of my brothers and sisters, financially and prayerfully. The mission field is very demanding and difficult but also the most rewarding part of my life. I wish you all could see the faces of the people who are helped every time I go. You would surely be blessed. Many times, the Lord brings faces to me that I have seen on the mission field. They are faces that were filled with pain, hurt, hardship, devastation, every rotten thing that life sometimes brings; but after one touch of the Lord's love, that face turns into a face of love, light, peace, contentment, joy, and has a wonderful smile. Many have come to the knowledge of our Lord through this ministry and I am very excited to be partners with you in the mission field. Thank you again for your love and support.

Please keep me in your prayers as I prayerfully ask the Lord for guidance as I prepare for the next trip. I have had invitations to go to a lot of places and I want to do what the Lord wants me to do. It is an honor to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and to serve you as a missionary. I am ready for our next mission abroad but in the meantime, I am honored to be a missionary here in the good old USA.

Much love to you all,

Your Missionary, Bess Graham

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

994 Willie Hill Road

Gilbert, La. 71336

**GIVE THANKS WITH
A GRATEFUL HEART**