



A few weeks ago, at youth group, we did an exercise in thankfulness. Each person was asked to make a list of 10 things they were thankful for, and also list why they were thankful for it. I think this was an incredible activity for our youth, and one that all of us should do on the regular. So often, we are unaware of the blessings that surround us daily.

We take for granted so many little things. While most of our youth started off with family and friends, by the end of the list we got into some pretty interesting things that might well go overlooked. Being in a state of thanksgiving takes time, and it is a mindset that must be cultivated. Yet, what I have seen time and time again, when we focus on the blessings, when we are intentional about giving praise for the blessings in our life both large and small, there becomes a reciprocal effect. I can't say for sure that the blessings increase, but I can say for sure that when this mindset is cultivated, people truly feel more blessed. Our eyes are opened, and we are more aware of Christ's love around us. As funny as it sounds, we can even be thankful for the order of the universe, which was created in just such a fashion, in just such a perfect balance, as to create and sustain life, and to which the ends of the universe have yet to be discovered. This is a blessing that often goes overlooked, yet it is one which leads to the inevitable understanding of the almighty God, who breathed into creation the vastness of all creation, also being the loving God that breathed the very breath of life into our lungs, and brought us into being. This divine love has no equal, from the very moment of our creation, God has shown us unparalleled love. If there was ever a doubt of that love, we need not look any further than the cross, to understand the depths of this love.

Friends, as I do almost every November, I encourage you to take part in a month of thanksgiving this November. The UWIF have a thanksgiving calendar available in our narthex this month to aid you, if you should choose, or you can

just do another activity, perhaps reaching out to a different person each day to tell them you are thankful for them, and why. Recognizing people is one of the simplest, yet most overlooked things we can do to express our thankfulness. And the impact of being recognized is immense! When was the last time somebody gave you a genuine compliment, not about a shirt you wearing, but about a real matter of substance, perhaps a project you had been working on, something about your character, something important to you, something about your very essence. Those types of compliments really make a difference in somebody, and encourage them to be the best person they can be, filling their spirits with love.

So Let's be thankful this November, and lets spread the thankfulness all around. May God grant us grace, that we may so grant grace to others. May we be so filled with the love of Christ, that all those we touch may also see Christ.

Amen.

For a Prayer of Thanksgiving, see 1 Chronicles 16:7-36

Pastor Matt