

Dear World,

Another step toward soul-bliss is to thank God for everything in your life, which runs contrary to our tendency to moan and complain. I know. I complain sometimes. I do not like getting up every morning and going to work in an environment where making the cash seems to be the major issue, and Jesus is at best viewed with skepticism, if not being characterized as wholly unprofessional (whatever “professional” has come to mean). However, I try to bear in mind that if God had not given me life, I would have no problems about which to complain. You see, nothing quite hurts the tender heart of God like ingratitude. S/He longs to give us good things, in particular, peace for the soul. Not even *Bill Gates* could finance peace for his soul were it lacking. When I cease viewing problems as problems, view them as challenges, and at least thank God for the privilege of being alive, S/He likes it, and the peace thing starts to flow.

Therein lies the crux for me. Life is what it is, and life is beautiful, wild, and sweet, or at least it can be, regardless of one’s circumstances. So, I thank God for each meal (some have no food). I thank God for my paycheck (some have no job) and the shelter I have (some have no home). I happen to rent my mother’s basement, and though I have a legitimate job, I cannot afford the apartment rents in my area, let alone a mortgage payment! I have huge student loan payments, and I also contend with a disability. So what! I, like every other believer, have Eternal Life. I can feel Eternal Life coursing through my veins. One cannot purchase that or earn a degree to get it. For a Christian, before you start complaining rather than thanking, consider the alternative to Eternal Life with Christ... Although I hope unregenerate people merely die never to rise again, there is much in the Bible which counsels that the unregenerate go to a Hell, regardless of how rich, intelligent, “successful,” beautiful, or lauded they come to be on Earth. If the unregenerate either cease to exist or go to Hell, there is always cause to rejoice and give thanks if you are Christian because neither end applies to you.

Sometimes, I loose my way. Late-model Mercedes, BMW’s, and Cadillacs seem to abound next to my ten year old car. Fine houses seem everywhere, yet far out of my reach. I feel angry, resentful, jealous. This can go on for days, yet when I remember that God will one day collapse this universe and explode this Earth, none of that “stuff” seems to matter. None of that stuff brings lasting peace. If it did, our society would not be drugged and therapied to the hilt trying to escape inner pain.

What brings me peace is a close bond with God, YHWH, my Creator. I have sought and fought so long, who sought whom first I cannot say.

If you own little, be grateful for the sunsets, flowers, and cool breezes which God gave us in common. Marvel at a thunderstorm. Thrill at the stars. Listen to the birds. Even in winter, as much of a pain as snow is, let the whiteness remind you of God’s holiness and purity.

This may sound Poly-Anna, but what choice do you have? Even in the midst of trials, loss, and unmet expectations, what choice is there? Envy, rage, resentment, bitterness, regret, self-pity? None of it does any good. To live in those states of soul is to drink soul-poison, nothing more. In part, when I thank God for what S/He has given me, and quit complaining about what S/He has not, my spirit takes flight, and life is a wonderful experience.

Try saying “Thank you,” to God for something small, and listening for God to respond “My pleasure.”

Steve