

DECEMBER 18, 2016



One morning after a terrible snowstorm, a man was outside shoveling her driveway. She stopped to wave hello to her neighbor, and he asked her why her husband wasn't out there helping her with the chore. She explained that one of them had to stay inside to take care of the children, so they drew straws to see who would go out and shovel. "Sorry about your bad luck," he said. Susan replied, "Don't be sorry. I won!"

Dr. Dale Robbins writes, "I used to think people complained because they had a lot of problems. But I have come to realize that they have problems because they complain. Complaining doesn't change anything or make situations better. It amplifies frustration, spreads discontent and discord, and can invoke an invitation for the devil to cause havoc with our lives." No wonder Asaph said in Psalm 77:3, "I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed (KJV)." I want you to look at the person next to you eye to eye and say, "Complaining makes us miserable."

Philippians 2:14-15, "14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky (NIV)."

A positive, thankful person is a great witness in this dark world. We only shine when we are thankful. Our light shines for the Lord when we are thankful, when we live it and express it! Instead of looking at the negatives in our lives and complaining, we must look at and for the positives and give thanks.

Giving thanks is God's will for our lives. Giving thanks to God and others is what pleases the Lord. I have three simple thoughts about thanksgiving:

We have what is good
We enjoy blessing so much
We express it so little

WE HAVE WHAT IS GOOD

1 Timothy 6:17 - "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." (NIV)

Sometimes we are becoming arrogant because we have reached a certain status in life. But regardless of what we have accomplished and achieved in life, we love to complain to God. We're seldom grateful and we're often unappreciative. Where did you come from? How poor were you when you were a child? What do you have now that you didn't have before? Many of you grew up with a whole less than what you have now.

WE ENJOY BLESSING SO MUCH

Sometimes we work so very hard to have fun in this life. We Filipinos will do almost anything to have fun, so to speak, then complain and can't get out of bed to go to work or go to church! Someone said, "We worship our work, work at our play and play at our worship." This is very true for many people in the Philippines.

God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment and we often enjoy it too much! I saw this in news-medical.net (June 2, 2005): "We have increased sedentary activities for children by 4.5 times since 1950. Children and adolescents now spend 45 hours each week watching television, working on the computer, playing video games or watching movies."

According to this medical bulletin it sounds like many children are enjoying too much of this life! They are taking in too much TV, video games, etc. and probably enjoying too much food as well. It's all right to enjoy the blessings of God but not to the point where this is our main focus! Friends, WE ARE NOT TO FOCUS ON THE GIFTS BUT RATHER THE GIVER OF THE GIFTS! James 1:17 - "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights... (NIV)" If it's good, it's from God. BUT LET'S NOT FORGET GOD!

We want more and more, without thanking the Lord for what we already have whether we receive any more or not. It seems like we are never contented, never satisfied with what we already have. WE ALWAYS WANT MORE. And this craving for more captures our minds and wills. The lust for more material things and more pleasure dominates and controls our lives to the point where God is put on the sidelines or pushed completely out of the picture of our lives.

SOME HAVE WANDERED FROM THE FAITH. When we lust for more and more of the things of this world, the things of God go out the window. Our faith is diluted or drained and damned. It's okay to enjoy the blessings of God but not to the point where they become the main focus of our lives and God is shoved to the sidelines or worse totally forgotten.

WE EXPRESS THANKSGIVING SO LITTLE

Whenever we think life is unfair to us, we need to think again. We could be a turkey at Thanksgiving! We could have been born and raised in some countries worse than Philippines where the people have little or nothing! Instead of thinking about how little we have, we need to count up what we do have and give thanks!

1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (NIV)."



1. *What do you have in your life that you are most thankful for?*
2. *Do you love what you have become this 2016, why?*
3. *How will you make 2017 different from today?*