

Day 3

## ***In Everything Give Thanks***

The Old Book says, “In everything give thanks.” But you might say, “Oh yeah? How could I be thankful when all I see in the news is trouble in the world?”

On one hand, you have a point. But on the other hand, if you languish in desperation, pessimism, and self-pity, what benefit does it do?

The substance of man consists of resilience during times of trouble. But his ability to bounce back is subject to the condition of his heart and mind. If he always sees a half-filled glass of water as half-empty, frustration is his best friend. I choose to be on the side of hope not only for my own sake but for others’ as well. I know this is easier said than done.

So, how could one maintain an attitude of optimism in the midst of hopelessness? One way is to avoid reading newspapers, but that of course is a shallow and crude suggestion. It might work initially, but it just scratches the surface.

*Picket Fence: A Personal Journey*

*Essays & Stories for Meditation*

By *Utanes*

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Another way, may I recommend, is to simply count your blessings. Just count them one by one, taking one step one day at a time.

I recall the story of an elderly woman. She had bread for breakfast and so enjoyed it that she wanted to thank the store owner for selling such tasty bread. She went and thanked the store owner who said, “Don’t thank me. Thank the baker for baking such tasty bread.” So, off she went to the bakery. “I want to thank you for baking such tasty bread,” she said with a sincere smile. “Don’t thank me,” the baker replied. “Thank the miller for giving me such fine flour for baking,” he continued. So, the woman went to the miller and said, “Mister Miller, I want to thank you for making such fine flour,” she earnestly expressed. “Oh, old lady, don’t thank me. Thank the farmer who sells me choice grain and wheat to process.” So, the woman went to the farmer and thanked him for the fine crop. But the farmer said, “Oh, old lady, don’t thank me. Thank God who gives rain and sunshine over the crops resulting in good yield.”

The woman went back to her house, shut the door of her little room, knelt down, and said this beautiful prayer:

“Father, the One whose Hand is full of generosity, thank You for the rain and sunshine that enable the farmer to yield a good harvest. Thank You for the fine wheat to enable the miller

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to produce good flour. Thank You for the baker whom you enable to bake such tasty bread. Thank You for the store owner whom You enable to sell such good bread that I enjoy every morning. You are faithful indeed to give Your love and kindness even to an old lady like me. I praise You for revealing Yourself to me in ways simple enough for me to understand. Amen.”

I’m sure you got the moral of the story. The next time you read the morning papers, remember the thankful woman, and count your blessings no matter how small. And I hope this short essay serves as one.

## **STUDY GUIDE**

### **In Everything Give Thanks**

1. Is it easy to give thanks in and for everything? Why? Or why not?
2. What have troubles in the world anything to do with one’s attitude? Towards giving thanks?
3. Explain: The substance of man consists of resilience during times of trouble. Give examples in life or world events when this statement is applicable.

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4. Are you one of those who are affected by what you read in the daily newspapers? What do you feel and do when you hear bad news?
5. What lessons do we learn from the story of the elderly woman?
6. Read the elderly woman's story once again and look around you. Do you know of anyone like her among your friends, peers, and relatives? Could you explain why they are like the elderly woman?
7. Are you like the elderly woman yourself? If so, how can you maintain such state of mind? If not, how can you change, if you want to change?
8. Are you encouraged or discouraged by the story? Why?
9. What is the moral of the whole essay?