

The Thanksgiving Article



by Bethany Notgrass

This is November, so it's a no-brainer that I'm going to write something about giving thanks, right? Well, don't roll your eyes and plan to get bored yet. I'm thinking about how we (both you and I) need to give thanks for the things that don't usually make it into the prayers said over turkey and pumpkin pie.

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Okay, Bethany. No surprises yet. You've probably heard that verse before, but did you notice the part about "all circumstances?"

Warm family times. Good health. Delicious meals. Sunny days. Laughter. Cute puppies. Ahhh, included in "all circumstances" are times when it's easy to give thanks. But then, there are those *other* times.

God, thank you when my parents won't let me do something I really want to do. I know you have given them to me for my protection and growth.

Father, thank you for my siblings that bother me and purposely get in the way of what I'm trying to do. I know you're giving me practice at being patient.

Lord, thank you for the girls that excluded me this morning. You're showing me clearly what it's like so that I can be ready to have compassion on someone else.

Holy Father, thank you for this math lesson that has taken me three hours so far. You're teaching me humility and that not everything I will do in my life will be fun.

God, thank you for this person ten years younger than I am that just brought down the house with her violin solo. I am learning that I am not the best at everything, and that one of my jobs is to appreciate the gifts You give to others.

Lord, thank you for the pimples that keep showing up on my face. I am learning to value myself and the person you

made me to be in a way beyond what I see in the mirror.

Father, thank you that someone just accused me of something I didn't do. You're giving me practice at showing grace and giving me a tiny glimpse of what Jesus went through for me.

Lord, thank you that I have no idea what Your will is for my life. And thank you for the people that keep asking me questions about it. You're teaching me to really trust You with the big blanks of the future.

Dear God, thank you for this serious illness that you have allowed into the body of someone that I love so much. I can see Your strength being made perfect in this weakness.

Dear Father, thank you that my clothes aren't as nice and didn't cost anywhere near as much as what other girls wear. You are teaching me to be content in all circumstances, because that's how much you love me.

God, thank you that I failed yesterday at something I've been practicing for a long time. You are teaching me how to get up again, and I know that will come in handy many times.

My Father, thank you for putting people around me who wear clothes I wouldn't wear, watch movies I wouldn't watch, and have priorities that are different from mine. I know you don't want me to judge, Father, and you're giving me a chance to learn not to.

Lord, thank you for the discussion I had with my mom this morning that turned into an argument. Thank you for giving me practice at being respectful when it's hard, apologizing, making peace, and sharing grace.

Dear God, thank you for the pain from my past that I still carry around with me. Please help me to make it available to people who have wounds that need healing.

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about this issue

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Let us
consider
how to
stimulate
one another
to love
and good
deeds.

Hebrews 10:24

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The Thanksgiving Article

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Dear Father, thank you that this person I really looked up to let me down and turned out to be just as human as anyone else. I know that I need my idols to be toppled so I can worship You alone.

Lord, thank you for the song leader at church that always leads the same three songs on every different key except the right one. You're teaching me that some things really don't matter in the end, and giving me practice at holding in my giggles when I have to.

Good Father, thank you for this situation that I don't understand at all. I have no idea what you're teaching me and I can't imagine how this could ever work

together for good. Thank you for giving me this real fear so that I have a chance to practice real trust.

What is the hardest part of your circumstances right now? How can you thank God for it?

I love to thank God for fun times, yummy food, good friends, happy moments, and other obvious blessings. On the other hand, when things are really not going my way, giving thanks, I admit, is not my natural reaction. I want to make an effort, starting now, to include the *all* in the *all circumstances* in which I've been told to be thankful.

Well, that's my article. But in hopes that "The Thanksgiving Article" isn't all hard to swallow, I'm going to include my favorite pumpkin pie recipe at the end.

Pumpkin Streusel Pie

Filling:

2 eggs

1 15-ounce can pumpkin puree

1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 unbaked pie crust

Streusel:

2 tablespoons flour

1/4 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 tablespoons chilled butter

1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat your oven to 425 degrees. Beat the eggs in a large bowl. Mix in the pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk, spices, and salt. Pour the mixture into the pie crust and bake for 15 minutes. While the filling is baking, mix together the streusel: combine the flour, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Mix in the butter with your fingers until the mixture is crumbly. Toss in the walnuts. After the 15 minutes baking time is done, sprinkle the streusel on top of the pie. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees and bake for an additional 40 minutes or until set. To test doneness, gently put the tip of a knife into the center of the pie. Knife should come out clean or with filling that looks completely cooked.

Please be safe in the kitchen! All appliances and knives require adult supervision.



Happy Thanksgiving

We Have Seen His Glory

a study of the book of John, part 11

1. Read John 17:1-5. What is the glory of Jesus and how did the Lord glorify him?
2. Read John 17:6-10. What did Jesus offer to His disciples?
3. What did Jesus say in this prayer about how His disciples responded to what He offered them?
4. Read John 17:11-17. What did Jesus ask His Father for on behalf of His disciples?
5. Read John 17:18-23. Why do you think that believers have had a hard time being unified in Jesus since Jesus prayed this?
6. What are some of the points, issues, or preferences that divide you from other believers?
7. How did Jesus describe the basis for the unity of believers?
8. Read John 17:24-26. What is it like to see the glory of Jesus?
9. What did Jesus do and say that made the name of God known to His disciples?
10. What does it mean to have Jesus and His love in you?



I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved me.

John 17:23

Letters from Rachel Starr Thomson

Boldness

This morning I sat in an adult Sunday School class where we watched a video about the death of Jesus, and then began to talk about the impact of His life. It was, said the teacher, a life that was like a stone dropped in the middle of history, creating a ripple effect that spread all over the world. The question was presented to us: How can we, as a church, live lives that will cause a similar ripple effect? How can we bring the Kingdom of God to the world in a way that will cause a stir, and affect the world around us?

We broke up into discussion groups, and attempted to come up with some good answers in the space of fifteen to twenty minutes. At the end of this “brainstorming session,” representatives from various groups stood up and shared some of their ideas.

Some said we ought to pray more. Others said that we ought to “use the power of God” more. But overridingly, every group had one answer: What we lack, they said, is boldness. Boldness in the workplace. Boldness on the street. We should confront sin openly, stand up for what we believe in. It is boldness that will create the needed ripple effect and change the world around us.

As I sat and listened to my brothers and sisters sharing this particular point, I couldn’t help feeling that we were missing the mark somehow. The more I thought about it, the more I realized why. For most of us, the word “boldness” is synonymous with the word “outspoken.” And the truth is that words are worthless. Without a living, vibrant foundation behind them, words are nothing more than a plastic sword that will melt as soon as a little heat is applied.

St. Francis of Assisi made an oft-quoted comment many years ago: “Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words.” In our modern Christian society, the idea of reaching the lost usually conjures up images of a style of evangelism that focuses on street preaching, handing out tracts, and accosting everyone we meet with the words, “Are you saved?” True, these methods have proved effective in the past. They have their place, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. But if we will honestly look at the teaching and examples of Jesus and the New Testament writers, I believe we will find that the Lord and His followers mostly agreed with St. Francis.

For instance, most of us have an idea that Jesus spent most of His time sitting on hilltops preaching at people. The truth is, this was not the focus of His ministry at all. Yes, He did teach – when people asked Him to. Most of His teaching to the masses came in direct response to a question or a circumstance that naturally led to teaching. Even when He did teach, His meanings were often cloaked in mysterious parables that only the true seekers were able to grasp hold of.

If we want to follow the example of Jesus, I think we’ll find that bold words are not the key at all. Instead, it is a boldness in our way of life that will create a ripple effect, and touch the world around us. People came to Jesus and asked Him questions about the Father because His life was a powerful demonstration of that Father. His actions spoke a thousand times larger than His words. “I have a

greater witness than John’s,” Jesus said, “For the works which the Father has given Me to finish – the very works that I do – bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” (John 5:36 NKJV)

If we are to follow the example of Jesus, then it is our lives – not our mouths – that should point the way to the Father. I don’t mean that we should all go out and start healing people, raising the dead, and turning water into wine. God has not necessarily given us all the power to do those things, right now. God has not called us to try and work miracles in our own power, but to imitate the character of Jesus’ life. The power to work miracles is a gift that God gives to His children, and perhaps we will all see miracles done through our hands. But God knows that most of us would use this power to draw people to ourselves, if we had it now. Before we can be given the power to be strong, we must receive the power to be weak – to live lives of humility, honesty, and obedience. The boldness we are called to seek does not lead to a flashy lifestyle or a soapbox mentality. Rather, we are called to seek a life of bold servanthood, quiet faith, and love.

Jesus did not say that His people would be known by their outspokenness, or by their carefully crafted methods of evangelism and their slick church services. Rather, He said, “By this will all know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.” Paul spoke of the emptiness of words without love in 1 Corinthians 13:1 – “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.” (NKJV)

I believe that a boldness of life is created through love. As we make love for God the primary focus of our life, the ripple effect will come to pass. As we love Him, we will desire to obey Him. A desire to obedience leads to a life of prayer, for it is largely in prayer that we come to see the steps of obedience it is necessary for us to take, and receive the power to take them. Prayer, as a constant act of communion with God, begins a change in our lives that opens the door for God’s love to flow through us to others: saved and unsaved alike. And therein is the ripple effect created. Miracles begin to happen, as faith works by love and brings the Kingdom of God into our lives.

Yes, we do need boldness in our lives. Boldness of obedience. Boldness of faith. Boldness of love. Rather than creating methods for evangelism and beating ourselves up because we aren’t outspoken enough, perhaps we ought to be focusing anew on our personal relationship with our Father. We need to live our lives as Jesus did, making love for our Father the primary reason for life. Everything else in His life flowed naturally out of the communion of Father and Son. And so it can be, in our lives. As we love Him boldly, we too will begin to know His love for all the world, and as we demonstrate that love, the needy around us will respond.

When love is the hallmark of our lives, people will begin to ask questions. And then, finally, we can talk. People will listen.

Our lives will have given meaning to our words.

Rachel Starr Thomson is the oldest of twelve children, a homeschool graduate, and the author of several books including the fantasy *Worlds Unseen* and its sequel *Burning Light, Tales of the Heartily Homeschooled*, *Letters to a Samuel Generation*, and *Heart to Heart: Meeting With God in the Lord’s Prayer*. She is a believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and hope of the world, and she loves to write about His goodness and grace. Rachel loves long walks, good books, and the fellowship of God’s people. She is an incurable tea-drinker and a counter-culture revolutionary who thinks life would be far, far better if we all chucked our television sets out the window. Visit www.rachelstarrthomson.com

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Priscilla Mullins Alden by Amy Puetz

A lovely girl of seventeen summers stood on the deck of the Mayflower, gazing at the receding coastline of Plymouth. Salty fingers of wind pulled strands of brown hair from Priscilla Mullins' coif. With a steady hand she pushed the stray hair back in place. This was not the first time they had set out for the New World. Twice they had put out to sea and were turned back because their other ship, the Speedwell, was leaking. "Perhaps we will have to return to England again," Priscilla speculated to herself.

Her father, William Mullins, had invested with the London Adventurers who were financing the trip for the Pilgrims. Instead of just investing in the colony, her father decided to join them and open a boot and shoe shop in the New World. With 125 shoes and 13 pairs of boots he set off for Virginia with his wife Alice, daughter Priscilla, son Joseph, and servant, Robert Carter. Priscilla sighed. Would she ever see her older brother, William, and sister, Sarah, again?

As the waves grew bigger and the land became smaller, Priscilla tucked her thoughts into the recesses of her mind and went below to the crowded and smelly 'tween decks where 102 people would be living during the voyage. Priscilla admired the devotion of the Separatist group. It was a little awkward at first because the Separatists called themselves "saints" and other people "strangers," but soon the two groups merged together. This small band of devout Christians had been living in Holland for many years and was braving the unknown in America for religious freedom. When Priscilla returned to their part of the ship her mother was talking congenially with Rose Standish, who was the wife of their military leader, Captain Myles Standish. Priscilla liked the pleasant manners of Rose and thought she was the complete opposite of her somewhat rough husband. Priscilla joined in the conversation and thus began the first day of their adventures.

Rolling from side to side, the Mayflower sailed through the rough waters of the Atlantic. Priscilla grabbed her stomach as if to calm it from sea sickness, but it was no use. She and nearly all the other passengers were suffering from the malady. When the sea was of a calmer disposition, Priscilla would gather the little children together and tell them stories of her girlhood in Dorking in the county of Surrey, England. With colorful words she would paint a picture of her father's boot shop and how the smell of leather greeted her at the door and how her father would work with his strong hands to create shoes. The children would ask her what it would be like in America. With a twinkle in her brown eyes she told them they would find out when they got there.

Finally, on November 11, 1620, they went ashore at Cape Cod in what is now Massachusetts. Before leaving the ship, the colonists signed the Mayflower Compact. Beaming with pride, Priscilla watched as her father put his signature on the document. Once on land Priscilla and her mother, along with the other women, washed clothes. After 66 days at sea Priscilla drank deeply of the fresh air and appreciated the firm earth beneath her feet. All too soon she was back on the ship and a search was made for a suitable site to set up the colony. Eventually they selected a place that was called Plymouth on John Smith's map. Bad weather kept them from going south to settle in Virginia as originally planned.

After all their months at sea Priscilla noticed that their provisions began to run low and people started to get sick. Some couldn't seem to get over a cold, others suffered from scurvy, and others became seriously ill with consumption and pneumonia. Priscilla helped care for the sick and looked after the children whose parents were unwell. Watching her father, mother, and brother slowly succumb to the sickness, Priscilla cared for them with all her strength, but she was soon weak with the illness, too. She was powerless to stop the inevitable and with the passing of her father, mother, brother, and family servant she clung to God. Gradually, the heavy-hearted Priscilla began to get well. All the suffering brought the colony closer together. The coming of spring seemed to bring new life into Plymouth.

Priscilla and two other orphaned girls, Mary Chilton and Elizabeth Tillie, probably lived with the Brewster family. On a bright day in

mid-March, Priscilla, Mary, and Elizabeth were preparing their garden spot for planting when they heard someone shout, "Indian coming!" Looking up, Priscilla got her first glance at an Indian. His name was Samoset, and he soon introduced them to another Indian named Squanto.

Work, work, work, there was always so much to do. And so much to learn about the New World! "This plant will help a stomachache," Squanto told the women and girls as they walked through the forest. Gently, Priscilla turned the green leaf over in her hand. Priscilla studied it carefully as she memorized the shape and smell of it. Squanto taught them that some herbs in the forest were good for flu and others were useful for medicine.

Priscilla entered the bustling kitchen with a basket of vegetables. Cheerful preparations were being made to celebrate their first harvest. "Priscilla, we gathered numerous baskets of blueberries!" Mary Chilton told her excitedly.

"We are going to make blueberry, apple, and cherry pies!" exclaimed Elizabeth Tillie.

When the Indians arrived for the feast, Priscilla wondered how they would feed 90 braves, but the Indians brought deer, wild turkey, and other game. The Indians taught Priscilla and the other women how to make hoeecake and pudding from cornmeal and maple syrup. The most novel food she was introduced to was popcorn! She giggled and laughed with the children as she discovered this new wonder. After the feast, the men competed in wrestling matches and foot races. The tall John Alden made a prominent figure next to the others. Eventually the three-day celebration ended and life returned to normal. In November the ship *Fortune* arrived with more colonists and no supplies. As winter dragged on, the food supply dwindled. Priscilla and the other colonists survived on five kernels of corn a day. By the miraculous hand of God no one died the second winter.

The following year Priscilla continued to help with the cooking, planting, and the spinning and weaving of wool and flax. In 1623 Priscilla Mullins became the wife of John Alden. They moved into a small house on the north side of town that John built for his new bride. This same year Plymouth Plantation went from a communal system of planting and harvesting to one of private property, which solved the constant food shortage. Cheerfully, Priscilla entered her new role of wife and she soon became a mother. All together the Alden's had 11 children – Elizabeth, John, Joseph, Sarah, Jonathan, Ruth, Rebecca, Zacharia, Mary, Priscilla, and David.

In the 1630's the Alden family and the Myles Standish family began a settlement in Duxbury. The two families remained close for the rest of their lives. When the Alden's daughter, Sarah, grew up she married the Standish's son Alexander. Although the date of Priscilla's death is not known she died shortly before John who passed away in 1680.

Author's note:

There are many different ways to spell the names of the people in this article. I have adopted the spelling used by William Bradford in his book *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

Amy Puetz is the author of *Uncover Exciting History: Revealing America's Christian Heritage in Short, Easy-to-Read Nuggets* and *Countdown to Christmas: Memory Making Stories and Activities for Every Day from December 1st to the 25th*. As a columnist for Home School Enrichment magazine, she shares stories about historical events from a Christian worldview. She especially loves to dig for little-known stories that show God's providential hand. Visit her web site at www.AmyPuetz.com. Join her mailing list and receive a free e-book!

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BRAIN BENDER

Fill up your brain (not just your belly) with good things!

Gather up your family for some silliness. Don't read the story at the bottom yet! First, fill in the numbered blanks with a word from the category listed. You can go around the room letting everyone take turns thinking of the words. Don't tell anyone the title or what the story is about. When you have filled in all the blanks, read the story aloud, filling in the words from the list. Have fun, and be careful about laughing on a full stomach.

1. number _____	21. food _____
2. plural noun _____	22. number _____
3. plural noun _____	23. noun _____
4. plural noun _____	24. noun _____
5. plural noun _____	25. piece of furniture _____
6. plural noun _____	26. plural noun _____
7. food _____	27. plural noun _____
8. name _____	28. plural noun _____
9. tool _____	29. past tense verb _____
10. room _____	30. adjective _____
11. plural noun _____	31. adjective _____
12. adjective _____	32. food _____
13. noun _____	33. sport _____
14. number _____	34. game _____
15. activity _____	35. movie title _____
16. name _____	36. room _____
17. animal _____	37. adjective _____
18. noun _____	38. name _____
19. time _____	39. city _____
20. food _____	40. adjective _____

A Memorable Thanksgiving

It was the day before Thanksgiving at the Thomas house! There were (#1) _____ people bustling in the kitchen. The counters were cluttered with (#2) _____, (#3) _____, and (#4) _____. In the sink was a mound of (#5) _____ and (#6) _____. Kelly Thomas was making (#7) _____, her favorite part of the Thanksgiving feast.

"(#8) _____! Where's the (#9) _____? I can't finish this without it!" Kelly called above all the noise.

"It's in the (#10) _____!" someone answered.

Kelly left the kitchen in search. She found her two younger brothers making paper (#11) _____ to decorate the dinner table. "Those are (#12) _____!" Kelly told them. She passed the bathroom where her older sister Megan was scrubbing the floor with a (#13) _____. "How's it going?" Kelly asked.

"Well, I've been in here for (#14) _____ hours. I'm ready take a break and (#15) _____."

"I'm sure you are!" Kelly sympathized.

Kelly found her dad in the backyard with (#16) _____, the family (#17) _____.

"Hi, Dad! What are you doing?"

"I'm giving (#16 repeat) _____ a bath so she doesn't smell like (#18) _____ tomorrow!"

"Oh, good idea!" Kelly answered. She soon found her (#9 repeat) _____ and finished her cooking.

The Thomas family was busy all day. It was (#19) _____ before they went to bed.

There was enough time the next morning for a nice family breakfast of (#20) _____ and (#21) _____. By dinnertime (#22) _____ relatives and friends had arrived to share the feast. The coat closet was overflowing with (#23) _____ and (#24) _____. Before dinner, they took turns around the (#25) _____ saying something they were thankful for.

Grandma said, "(#26) _____."

Uncle Bill said, "(#27) _____."

Cousin Tammy said, "(#28) _____." Everyone looked around at each other and (#29) _____.

Everyone enjoyed the meal and said it was (#30) _____ and (#31) _____.

"I especially enjoyed the (#32) _____!" Grandpa said.

All the kids went outside in the afternoon to play (#33) _____. The older folks stayed inside to play (#34) _____ and talk. In the evening the cousins lazed around the living room watching (#35) _____.

Kelly and Megan lay in bed talking after everyone went home and the (#36) _____ was clean and neat.

"This was a (#37) _____ Thanksgiving," Kelly said.

"Yeah. It's always good to get together." Megan answered.

"Aunt (#38) _____ said next year we would celebrate in (#39) _____!" Kelly told her.

Megan answered sleepily, "That sounds (#40) _____ to me as long as you still make the (#7 repeat) _____!"

The End

Christmas Blessings

It's time again for Christmas Blessings! Let's get together and give! This is our fifth and final annual project to give help to people in need. We hope you'll choose to participate this year.

Here's the history of Christmas Blessings:

Christmas Blessings 2005: We collected and donated bibs, blankets, and clothes for babies to victims of Hurricane Katrina in cooperation with the Friendship Baptist Church in Grand Bay, Alabama.

Christmas Blessings 2006: We collected and donated pens, pencils, and colored pencils to the Healing Hands International humanitarian aid organization based in Nashville, Tennessee.

Christmas Blessings 2007: We collected Christmas gifts for at-risk inner-city children served by Cottage Cove Urban Ministries in Nashville, Tennessee.

Christmas Blessings 2008: We collected school supplies for impoverished orphans cared for by the Maria Atkinson Orphanage in Mexico, partnering with New Life Church of God in Arizona.

Christmas Blessings 2009

House of Hope is a home for orphaned and abandoned girls in Tabarre, Haiti. Since 1976, this ministry has been working to "train children in a loving Christian environment, providing for their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs, and preparing them for their future in Haiti." This year, we have the opportunity to partner with them in helping to provide for the needs of the girls of House of Hope.

Here's what to do:

Purchase an item or items from this list:

- travel-size shampoo
- travel-size lotion
- toothpaste (large and travel-size)
- toothbrushes (for children and adults)
- washcloths
- hair accessories

Mail to:

amie network
370 S. Lowe Ave, Suite A
PMB 211
Cookeville TN 38501

IMPORTANT: Please do not purchase items that are decorated with specific cartoon, TV, or movie characters.

- Keep in mind that these are for children; fun and colorful is good!
- Everything must be brand-new and good quality.
- Please leave items in original packaging.
- Please do not send used, cheap, easily broken, or low-quality items.
- You can send one item or as many as you wish.
- All donations (large and small) will be appreciated! It's great to involve your family, friends, church, Sunday school class, and homeschool group.
- Ship your gift to the **amie** network by US Postal Service, Fed Ex, or UPS, and the **amie** network will send them to the Amer-Haitian Bon Zami organization that oversees the House of Hope.
- Please ship your gifts by **December 7, 2009**.

Any questions? Please ask! bethany@notgrass.com

We hope you will take this opportunity to give Christmas Blessings!

Can you help?