

gratitude

Gratitude. As children, we were taught to say “thank you” a lot—and most of us still do. But did you ever think about how often we use those two words but never really experience the “feeling” that should accompany them—gratefulness or appreciation for something that’s been done for or given to us.

Without thinking, we say “thanks” to the grocery store bagger, the FedEx guy, the telephone information lady, the dental hygienist, the fast food drive-up window kid, and the gray-haired Wal-Mart greeter. It’s a matter of habit. But it’s rare that we really stop and feel grateful for the bagger who lugged our bags to the car in pouring rain, for the FedEx guy who always remembers our dog’s name and brings him a treat, for the hygienist who worked into her lunch break to get us out in time for a meeting, for the correct order handled by the fast food server, and for the consistently good-natured humor of the Wal-Mart greeter.

Today, prayer is a common outlet for gratitude. We say we’re giving thanks for all our blessings—our health, our family, our job, and opportunities. I think many times the words are rote. Take a minute to really think about what you’re grateful for and experience the wonderful feelings arise. If we reframe our thinking a little bit, the things we gripe about can become things to be truly thankful for. “Wow. I woke up this morning. Considering the alternative, that’s definitely good.” “Thanks for the functioning kidneys that wake me up in the middle of the night.” “Thanks for the perfect hearing that allows me to hear my

teenager try to sneak in an hour after curfew, and the fact that he’s alive.” “Thanks for a job that gives me the opportunity to work forty-five hours a week and make a little overtime pay.” “Thanks that I have a mother who loves me enough to meddle.” “Thanks for my husband’s snoring—it assures me that he is alive.”

You see, not all blessings involve winning the lottery, losing thirty pounds, or retiring at the age of fifty. If you’re only grateful for the big stuff, you miss out on all those good feelings you could be having. Think about those blessings in disguise, and you’ll have endless chances to really feel gratitude—and that something to be grateful for!

