

November Devotional: Live Simply – Remain Grateful

By Major Linnea Desplancke

Administrator for Program

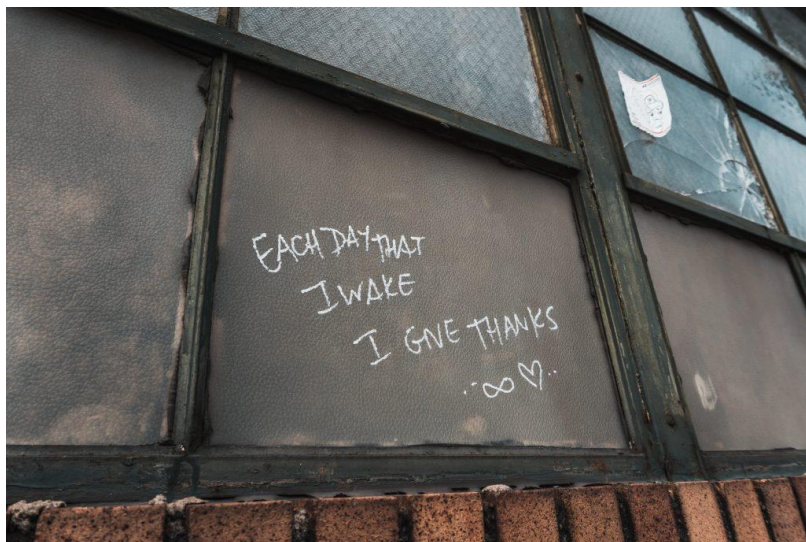
Canoga Park, CA Adult Rehabilitation Center

Live simply – Remain Grateful

I was walking by this shop, and this sign caught my eye. I stood there thinking about how true it is for us to live as simply as possible and more importantly, remain grateful. When ingratitude remains in our hearts, it is not possible for us to live a life of victory and serenity. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they were full of joy and gratitude to God for saving them from their captivity. But they consistently lost hope when the journey took too long, when Moses was on Mount Saini too long, and when they complained about the food God provided them. Not to mention, their shoes and clothing never wore out. One day Moses had enough of their complaining and said, ***“Quiet!” Moses replied. “Why are you complaining against me? And why are you testing the Lord?”*** (Exodus 17:2b)

So often we too complain to God about things and situations when something does not go our way. We question God asking where He is and why is He not answering our prayers. We start to think that we can take care of ourselves better than He can. Going back to the way we used to live seems like a good idea. But we are only fooling ourselves. Trying to do life without God will most certainly end in disaster. We will fall back into our old sins and many even start committing new ones. Failing to see the things in life God has given to us, makes us truly ungrateful. If we want to have gratitude in our lives, we need to let go of our ingratitude, ask forgiveness from God, and immediately start to look at the things God and others have done for and given us. Psalm 92:1-4 reminds us to give thanks to God and praise Him for all He has given us.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to the Most High. It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening, accompanied by the ten-stringed harp and the melody of the lyre. You thrill me, Lord, with all you have done for me! I sing for joy because of what you have done.



As far as living simply, this can be more difficult. We fill our lives with stuff, spending exorbitant time on our electronic devices, and other things that distract or take away from time with our families and more importantly, God. We spend money we do not have trying to keep up with our neighbors or to get the latest gadget. It is hard to slow down, check out our lives, and see where we can live more simply. We can fill our boredom with reading the bible or in prayer. We can call up a friend or take a walk. Being grateful is a great way to live simply. When our hearts are full of gratitude, there is no room for living large. The Beatitudes say it simply, ***“God bless those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.”*** Matthew 5:5

You may be thinking, that’s easy for you to say. But once I was in a place in my life that my gratitude slowly slipped away. Before I knew it, I did not think God was working in my life at all and all I could see was what He was not giving me and I was not getting what I wanted. This was a dark season for me. I was not a nice person to be around nor was I engaged in the ministry I have always loved. Like a bear with a sore tooth, I snarled and growled at anyone that dared cross my path. I started getting more involved with things, outside my ministry and family, that were not good and not helping me or others. Soon all I could see was what other people had that I did not, and this made me very angry. I started doubting my calling. Of course, my husband noticed this and asked me what was going on. I looked at my life and saw how far I had fallen from where I was meant to be. I did some soul searching with God and saw I had not been grateful for what He had done for me and given me. I also realized that my life was very worldly and that was a problem. So, I prayed, sought forgiveness and started to live simply and grateful again. Since that point I am at peace, loving my ministry wholeheartedly, and full of fresh love and vigor for His people. Daily I remind myself to live simply and remain grateful. It is a whole new and fresh world for me.

In case you were wondering, I went back to the shop and brought that sign.

