

## What Do We Have to be Thankful for?



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on November 22, 2012

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something that is not a matter of faith but of fact: man's nature. We operate by certain psychological principles, and something is clear when taking them into consideration: faith works.

As to the aspect of Christianity relevant here, it's one that works quite well to remedy a problem of man's nature: that spirit of entitlement. For what do we really deserve? Christianity teaches that since we're all sinners, we actually deserve damnation. Yet its message is also that we won't get what we deserve because God sacrificed for our sins and is merciful. And there is that greatest gift of all He offers: salvation.

Upon accepting the above, everything does appear a gift because we realize that we, being losers who lost Eden, deserve nothing. All is icing on the cake, from the air we breathe to the pencil we use. Oh, this doesn't mean we won't ask our boss for a raise or seek better deals when shopping; there can be legitimate reasons for doing so such as the imperative of putting food on your family's table. It doesn't mean we may not sometimes protest. But a wise person protests not because he deserves something, but because the Truth, the good, deserves something: to be defended. And understanding what we really deserve certainly doesn't mean that we're unduly beholden to the government; it is just as wrong for the sinners within it to have a spirit of entitlement — to feel they have some special hold on the citizenry — as it is for anyone outside of government.

So while someone else close to me once complained about Christianity and said "they beat you down" (with clerics' talk of our sinfulness), she missed the point as well. It is a beat-down that builds up. It's only when our ego shrinks that our happiness can grow; it is only when we become less that what we're blessed with seems like more. This is why, contrary to the earlier pagan creeds, Christianity has always stressed humility. It is why one of the faith's symbols isn't a conquering Caesar flanked by centurions, but Jesus riding a lowly donkey. As the prophet Zechariah wrote, "Behold, your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious. He is humble and riding on an ass...." It is the triumph of humility.

So now perhaps we can know why Chesterton also said, "Thanks are the highest form of thought." When we're thankful, we're recognizing the reality that everything is a bonus; we're showing the gratitude owed by one who continually receives gifts. And this is easy to understand. After all, what do we think of someone who is done a favor and won't even say "thank you"? How lofty does his mindset appear at that moment?

We certainly don't want to be that fellow. Yet the attitude in question here isn't like being an optimist, either; the thankful person sees the glass as completely full because he is a realist. Our glass actually is full.

For whether God gave us arms and hands and feet and whether we feel good outside or not, He teaches us how to feel good inside. He gave us everything we have and the whole world around us, besides. What else a Father do, huh?

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