



## Authentic Thankfulness

A friend of mine in Los Angeles is totally blind. Impressively he makes his way from his home in Glendale to the heart of downtown Los Angeles to his job where he has an impressive record providing customer assistance for several years. His memory is remarkable, and his insight to problems along with a fitting and satisfying solution is nearly legendary to the patrons.

He admits, however, that he fails to match the attitude of Helen Keller, born both blind and deaf, who came to see her limitations as genuine blessings. My friend has a great attitude but confesses that what he enjoys most about being blind is the way people assume that when he is around he can't hear either. The juicy stuff he picks up every day is like a game that makes him laugh as he later recounts the inane conversations he has heard during the day.

Blindness, in all deference to Ms. Keller, is not a blessing. The added benefits that come from other heightened senses may very well be, but the blindness did not provide those benefits. In the end without the capacity to launch into life beyond the absence of sight, blindness is merely an impairment.

The expression "blind faith" has always annoyed me. People speak of it as if it were an embellished degree of faith. The confusion must come from a misconception about Hebrews 11:1 that asserts that faith is the "assurance about what we do not see." Please note that this does not depict a faith that is blind. There is assurance and certainty here. Faith sees what cannot be detected or measured in temporal certainty.

Faith is not based on blindness. It is about a sight anchored in a relationship that aligns us with the heart of God and His purposes. By faith we experience a certainty that far exceeds anything dimly comparable to any temporal reality.

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving, we need to be reminded that like faith, true thankfulness is not blind either. How often has our thankfulness meter plummeted, even if only for a while, because we are experiencing something temporal that is unexpected, uncomfortable, or even painfully irreversible? How often have we allowed our temporal experience to distract us from a realm of reality that trumps anything bound by the limits of the here and now?

A thankful heart does not dismiss any temporal blessing, but thanksgiving that balances on immediate gratification, on ease and comfort, on accumulated wealth or power is indeed paltry at best. Authentic thankfulness is tethered to our relationship with the One in whom all joy is an eternal reality.

## Taking Our Next Step Together

Father, create in us hearts that are filled with authentic thanksgiving. Help us not to be deterred by our circumstances. Prepare us with attitudes of gratitude even in the light of the prevailing cultural winds that increasingly subject us to hardships, false accusations and insults for the sake of your name. Let us know that you are indeed the One who lifts up our heads (Psalm 3:3). Embolden us with genuine thankfulness that allows us to experience even the blessing that comes from the fellowship of your suffering (Philippians 3:10).



*Be thankful in all circumstances,  
for this is God's will for you who belong  
to Christ Jesus.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT)*