

Be Thankful

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The median size of a new house in the United States is over 2000 square feet. Many houses in poorer nations of the world are barely one tenth that size.

In the United States we wash our cars and water our grass with water pure enough to drink. In many nations of the world thousands of babies die each year for lack of safe drinking water.

In the United States many people eat far more than they should and then complain about their weight. In many poorer countries of the world people go to bed hungry almost every night.

Half of all households in the U.S. invest in the stock market. For many of the people in the poorer nations of the world the only kind of stock they will ever own are a few chickens, or a burro, or a cow.

Do we really appreciate our blessings, or do we instead notice that there is always something that we do not have?

The Bible says, *"Whoever loves money never has money enough"* (Ecclesiastes 5:10). If our goal is money and possessions, we never reach our goal. Just when we think we have "arrived" we discover that there is a faster computer, a more comfortable car, or a bigger house just out of our reach.

Unclear goals and expectations produce stress and tension. People who base happiness on wealth and possessions have unclear goals. What people have today may be more than they expected to have yesterday, but it's not as much as they will want tomorrow.

If happiness were related to wealth and to possessions, we would be the happiest generation that ever lived. Even the poor people of today have televisions, vehicles, and kitchen appliances that would have been marvels of technology 100 years ago. Today we take electricity, central heat, indoor plumbing, hot water, and refrigeration for granted. They would have been unbelievable luxuries 200 years ago.

But the fact is, our generation is no happier than the ones before it. In fact, some people believe that the happiest days were "the good old days" when people didn't have to worry about things like computer crashes, atomic bombs, road rage, and school shootouts.

A New York Times/CBS News poll once asked 1038 young people to compare their lives with what their parents experienced growing up. While 23 percent said it was about the same, 43 percent said they were having a harder time. Only 33 percent said that their teen years were easier than their parents.

And yet, their parents had to do their math computations with paper and pencil, probably never had their own private phone line let alone a cell phone, and had likely never seen a computer.

Furthermore, the survey discovered that affluent teen-agers believed life to be harder and more stressful than did teens from modest homes. Money and possessions do not create happiness.

The secret of happiness lies not in obtaining things, but in being thankful for the things we obtain. That is why the Bible talks so often about giving thanks. Thankful people are happy people. It's a good thing to remember this Thanksgiving weekend.