



Dear Friend:

Greetings from all of us at Focus on the Family! I hope you're enjoying a wonderful fall season and looking forward to the holidays ahead.

With Thanksgiving, of course, comes an increased focus on gratitude. As believers, we strive to emphasize this discipline year-round — but Thanksgiving certainly offers an opportunity to be reminded of its importance. Over the past couple of years, it's become especially clear that giving thanks is vital to our emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being. The world often feels as if it's spinning out of control, but we can rest assured our sovereign God is lovingly superintending every last detail on earth — right down to the death of each and every sparrow (Matthew 10:29).

That awareness alone should prompt an outpouring of gratitude. After all, if our all-loving, all-wise, omnipotent God is in control, what do we have to fear? We can be certain He will, indeed, ensure that "*all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*" (Romans 8:28).

A Life of Gratitude

Beyond that, it's worth bearing in mind that we are actually commanded to give thanks over and over again throughout Scripture. Expressing humble, reverent thanksgiving to the Lord — regardless of our circumstances — is a way for us to align our hearts with His will, give Him the worship that's due Him, and demonstrate our trust in His faithfulness to the promises in His Word.

I love how Ann Voskamp puts it:

We only enter into the full life if our faith gives thanks.

Because how else do we accept His free gift of salvation if not with thanksgiving? Thanksgiving is the evidence of our acceptance of whatever He gives. Thanksgiving is the manifestation of our Yes! to His grace.¹

And Paul offers this astonishing assertion in Romans 8:32: "*He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*" If our Heavenly Father sacrificed His only, beloved Son, why do we so often doubt that He will provide us with "*all things that pertain to life and godliness*" (2 Peter 1:3)?

That assurance should flood our souls with tremendous peace and gratitude.

To be sure, in this life it can often feel as if God is not coming through for us in the ways we would hope. At the time I write this letter, many are still struggling to escape violent and uncertain conditions in Afghanistan. A number of our courageous servicemen have been killed or wounded by attacks at Kabul's airport. I can't begin to imagine the grief, fear, and desperation being experienced by all those who are impacted by these tragic events.

It's easy to give thanks when life is going smoothly and earthly blessings are flowing. Do we also

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¹ Ann Voskamp, *One Thousand Gifts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 39.

rejoice in our salvation and in God's unchanging character when we're facing unspeakable suffering — and possibly even death? It's natural to think we would shrink back under such circumstances, but I believe the Lord gives us the supernatural strength and courage we need only at the very moment we need it.

Just consider one of the most famous and beloved saints of all time, Corrie ten Boom. If you've read *The Hiding Place*, you know the story: she and her sister Betsie were being held at the notorious Ravensbrück concentration camp. Conditions were atrocious, and Corrie was understandably discouraged — especially when she discovered that the barracks to which she and her sister had been assigned was swarming with fleas.

However, Betsie encouraged her with this passage of Scripture: "*Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances...*" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Together, Corrie and Betsie began to thank God for each of the blessings he had bestowed upon them even amidst the unimaginable horrors they were enduring. Corrie even begrudgingly thanked God for the fleas — and eventually learned that God was using the flea infestation to keep the abusive guards out of the barracks.²

Can we do that? Can we thank God in the face of our biggest trials, trusting that He is truly orchestrating all things for our good and His glory? I'll admit that's a challenge for me!

But as we turn our hearts toward God with humble gratitude, we find that He really does fill our hearts with that divine peace that defies explanation.

Thankful that God Works through You

Our team here at Focus has many things to be thankful for. Despite all the upheaval in our world, God has made it clear that our ministry's work through you is far from over. Marriages still need saving, parents still need biblically based advice and wisdom, and babies are still at risk from abortion. That's why we are committed to helping meet the needs of families for as long as the Lord enables us to do so through your support.

One of Focus' pillars, or founding values, is the permanence of marriage. I know you agree with this perspective:

We believe the institution of marriage is a sacred covenant designed by God to model the love of Christ for His people and to serve both the public and private good as the basic building block of human civilization. Marriage is intended by God to be a thriving, lifelong relationship between a man and a woman enduring through trials, sickness, financial crises and emotional stresses. Therefore, Christians are called to affirm and proclaim God's marriage design and to minister in Christ's name to those who suffer the consequences of its brokenness.

Your support provides husbands and wives all over the world with sound, practical, Christ-centered advice related to marriage. By all accounts, your action is paying off! Not only do our surveys indicate that you are helping to strengthen and save thousands upon thousands of marriages each year, but we regularly hear from those who tell us that they've benefitted personally from the ministry you provide. Following is just a brief sampling of the testimonials that have arrived at our offices in recent days:

The last 10 years of my marriage have been extremely challenging. Through your ministry, I have been encouraged to fight for and pray for my marriage. I have learned so much. And not only that,

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2 Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2006), 209-210, 220.

I have passed on the hope I have received to many others. Thank you for being there every day to bring important issues into the light and for providing hope during the dark times. —Valerie, Ohio

I've sometimes felt there was no one to steer me in the right direction — there have been times when my husband and I have literally stood alone without anyone to seek advice or wisdom from. Focus on the Family has always been a source from which we glean advice and principles — advice for daily living marinated in the love of Jesus! —Erin, Missouri

My husband and I separated after seven years of marriage, and at that time I was new to Christian radio. I listened in the morning, and it seemed as though every message was on divorce and how as Christians we need to go to God instead of giving up on the marriage. So I continued to seek out ways that I knew I could change, because I couldn't change my husband. I remember hearing one pastor's wife say that if God could part the Red Sea, He could change her husband's little bitty old heart. That was when my prayers changed, and we have been married 27 years this year. Hearing Focus on the Family on the radio uplifted me every day and helped me focus on what to pray for courage and strength, and gave me Scriptures to keep me grounded, steadfast, and immovable. There are so many more testimonies that I could tell about that year of separation, but I'll just leave it at "thank you, Focus on the Family, for bringing the power of God's message and His truth through the radio to help us stay focused and grounded in the Word." —Marsha, Iowa

Three years ago our life was turned upside down with the revelation of an affair. Our neighbor invited my husband to church, and we began counseling. Through our counseling our pastor told us to listen to Focus on the Family. We began listening daily and the Lord truly touched our lives through your ministry. There have been so many times that we've felt that the Lord was speaking directly to our hearts and gave us exactly what we needed to hear. We continue to listen frequently and thank you for providing this beautiful resource to families. —Keile, Hawaii

Even as we give thanks to the Lord for using your support of Focus to nurture marriages, we're also incredibly grateful for the ways He is saving lives through your generosity. Indeed, God has moved in so many hearts as we have urged people to consider the immeasurable worth of life in the womb. In fact, since our *Option Ultrasound* program was established in 2004, we estimate that more than 472,000 precious, preborn babies have been saved from abortion!

I get excited when I think about a single little one being spared — but it's absolutely amazing to consider nearly *half a million* children who are now growing, learning, and celebrating birthdays as a direct result of *Option Ultrasound*!

You can GIVE FAMILIES HOPE!

I know you're rejoicing with us over all God is doing to advance these two causes, as well as the various other initiatives we have under way at Focus. But there is still much to be done, especially after the challenging year this has been. With the resurgence of the pandemic, many couples and families are in crisis. However, you can GIVE FAMILIES HOPE this Christmas season!

Your gift today will save marriages, strengthen families and even rescue lives from abortion. And now you can DOUBLE YOUR DOLLARS to make twice the impact through a \$4 Million Matching Opportunity provided by generous friends of the ministry.

As a non-profit ministry, we depend on the financial support of friends like you to make our ministry happen. So, please consider a generous gift before the December 31 deadline to see your support

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doubled — dollar for dollar — through this Match to GIVE FAMILIES HOPE.

You'll help us finish the year strong and be ready to foster thriving marriages and protect life in the womb in 2022 with even more opportunities in the vital work God has entrusted to us.

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, it's my hope that the Lord would fill your heart with abundant gratitude for His love, provision, and blessing — whether through ease and plenty or pain and adversity. I pray you would sense our Heavenly Father's tender care and involvement in every matter — no matter how small — that concerns you.

I don't know anyone who expresses things quite so well as C.S. Lewis. He once wrote this about the discipline of gratitude:

We ought to give thanks for all fortune: if it is “good,” because it is good, if “bad” because it works in us patience, humility and the contempt of this world and the hope of our eternal country.³

So as you gather with friends and loved ones for feasting and fellowship later this month, may you enjoy the many blessings granted here on earth, look ahead to the infinite joy that awaits you in that “eternal country,” and seek to introduce as many people as possible to the hope and healing found through faith in Jesus Christ.

We would be so grateful if you would say thanks for your blessings with a gift to GIVE FAMILIES HOPE this holiday season. Remember, your generous year-end gift by December 31 will be doubled through our \$4 Million Matching Opportunity.

May God's richest blessings be yours. Happy Thanksgiving!



Jim Daly
President

P.S. Thank you for allowing me to share my heart with you. I hope we can hear from you again. Don't forget that your year-end gift today will go twice as far through our \$4 Million Matching Opportunity to GIVE FAMILIES HOPE. If we can serve you in some way, please visit our website (FocusOnTheFamily.com) or call 1-800-A-FAMILY (232-6459).

³ Martin Moynihan, *Letters: C.S. Lewis/Don Giovanni Calabria* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1988), 49, 51.