

Grace and Jay Ministry

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My Thanksgiving 2015

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“That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.” (Psalm 26:7).

Thanksgiving is right around the corner. As I prepared to start my first year in college, I had more things to be thankful for. I would like to share with you my thanks to God for everything He has prepared for my family this year. His actions remind us of his never fleeting presence in our lives. This post is more about how God coordinates and takes care of our needs when we truly have faith in Him and how He blesses his children by touching their hearts to help each other.

“Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.” (II Corinthians 9:11).

When I graduated high school, many of my friends were getting ready to leave their families behind to live on their own as they start college. However, when I moved out of Robinson to Tyler, TX, so did my family. That means that my parents had to leave their business (a hair salon and bookkeeping service) and their customers behind.

There was one customer of my mom's that I wanted to share a story about. Steve, a good friend of the family and one of my mom's regular customers, along with his wife Melinda, are strong believers in Christ and they have shown great kindness and friendship to our family. They supported my parents' ministry. In fact, they were such close friends of the family that Jay and I even called them Uncle Steve and Aunt Melinda. It all started when God put a feeling in Uncle Steve's heart to go into my mom's hair salon every time he drove by. But, Steve didn't really want to because the hair salon was a little feminine looking with its purple window curtains and its "beauty" salon atmosphere instead of a "barber" shop atmosphere.

One day, he lost his inner battle and decided to go in because God wouldn't give up. Ever since then, he has regularly come to get his haircuts and to get spiritual "nuggets" as he would like to call it. He loved hearing my mom's stories and praises to God. He always takes something of importance away from her testimonies to apply what he has learned to his own life.

Uncle Steve was also very friendly to me and Jay and always had some wisdom to share. When he and his wife found out that my family was moving away from Robinson, they invited us to their ranch for a fun filled day together before we left. When we went to their ranch, we jet skied, rode ATV's, walked along their creek that

ran through their property, and even practiced shooting, things that we have never done before. Uncle Steve showed us his "exotic" pets such as Wally the wallaby, his kangaroo, his deer, and his dogs and cats. His property was very big and beautiful with a huge lake and green grass and big trees. We finally went inside to enjoy the delicious meal that Aunt Melinda had prepared for us.

My parents and Uncle Steve began to share their testimonies of how they came to believe in God. It was then that Uncle Steve revealed that he had a surprise for me. He led me to where he was keeping the surprise which was a 2004 Toyota Corolla that used to belong to his daughters. He had perfect timing since I need a car to drive for college! He even made sure that the car was in good condition and fixed the brakes before he let me drive it. I was honored that he would give this car to me, the car that he had passed down to his daughters. It was as if he had accepted me and my family as his own family.

Now, why did I tell you this whole story about this couple? God works everyday in our lives and has a plan for all of us. God brought Uncle Steve and Aunt Melinda to our family so that they can support our ministry and so that they can hear my family's testimony and learn more about God.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10).

We are grateful for their friendship, and I am grateful that I now have a good and functioning car to use while I am at college. I am also very thankful that God loves us and remembers us and takes care of us. What do I mean when I say that God "remembers" us? Well, I do not mean to imply that God had forgotten us in the first place, but I suppose it is meant as a verb that means that He actively blesses us because He loves us. I know that God remembers me and my family because of His gifts that He sends to us. Here are verses that might help you understand God's character and how He remembers us.

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” (Isaiah 49:15).

“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Isaiah 46:4).

Let me share with you two examples of such gifts. I turned 19 this year in September. I didn't really know anyone in college, and so no one knew it was my birthday. Suddenly, on my birthday, two women came by to our house to present an ice cream cake from Dairy Queen. It was a free ice cream cake from two women who did not even know that it was my birthday! It may have been for a promotion, but can you really say that this is a coincidence? And did I mention that it was made with one of my favorite chocolate candies, Reese's peanut butter cups! When my mom told the two women that it happened to be my birthday, they were shocked as well. I don't think they would have even predicted that they would such perfect timing when randomly presenting a

cake, but anything is possible for God, the mastermind behind everything that exists today.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Here is another birthday story from this year. My mom's birthday was earlier this November. My mom used to receive flowers from her clients when her birthday comes even though they didn't even know it was her birthday. They would just bring the flowers! She always believed that those flowers were from God for her birthday. However, this year, a few days before her birthday, she was thinking about, now that she's living in Tyler and is retired to focus on her work for God, how she wouldn't get to experience those miracles again because we didn't know anyone around town, but God already prepared a gift for her. I got a free bouquet of flowers from an honors dinner with the President of the university, and so I thought I'd give them to her for her birthday, so she ended up with a flowery surprise after all.

“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” (Psalm 37:4).

See how God worked in our lives? God used me to comfort my mother and to show her that she is not forgotten by Him. God also sent me a delicious cake to remind me that He is working in my life. It's very interesting to think if we did not believe in God, we wouldn't really see how wonderful little events like this one really are.

As Christians, we believe that everything has a purpose, that God does allow good and bad things to happen in order to help us shape our character and strength as followers of Christ. Jesus Christ also went through hardships and temptation, but He relied on the word of the Father and thus has become the model that all humans must strive towards, a model of holiness and humility. Nowadays, the world is full of bad news and heart ache and the world seems upside down, but even if you seem to have lost everything, remember God. He knows you, remembers you, and loves you, even if it doesn't seem like He does.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28).

The world is much more complex, but there is only one simple thing that you need to do and that is to trust and believe in the Lord. He is a working and jealous God, so don't forget about Him this Thanksgiving. I pray that all of you have a safe Thanksgiving. Thank you for reading!

I'd like to thank those who continue to support our ministries and those that inspire others to remain faithful to God. I'd like to thank my friends that share my experiences and who always know how to put a smile on my face. I'd also like to thank my teachers who prepared me for life as a college student.

My family would like to thank Uncle Steve and Aunt Melinda for what they have done for me and my family! We appreciate their friendship and their kindness towards us. We would also like to thank my mom's faithful clients who, like Uncle Steve, were joyful in receiving spiritual fruit and for also showing kindness and support to our family and our ministry.

Thank you to my parents and my brother for taking this big step with me by moving to Tyler. Also, thanks to them for the support and love that they provide for me. And finally, thank you, God, for creating us and loving us and for always bringing comfort and joy even in times of trouble.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” (Ephesians 1:3-6).

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