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The Thank You Habit

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The Thank You Habit

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. (Colossians 4:2 NIV)

Sometimes we move so fast, it's easy to blow past the ordinary blessings God sends each day. Who has time to drink in the magic of the blue sky? Or be thankful for the beauty all around us? And when was the last time you took an extra minute to look into the eyes of your husband, or children, or friends?

The Greek word in the New Testament for thankful, *eulogeo*, can also be translated "blessing." *Eulogeo* comes from *eu* which means "good," and *logeo*, or "to speak". *Eulogeo* literally means "to speak that which is good." So, a eulogy is how we honor someone with good words of gratitude. When we say a blessing, *eulogeo*, before our meal, we are also expressing thankfulness.

I am trying to become more thankful for the ordinary things in life. That's why I'm always on the lookout for practical tips to become more watchful and grateful. Here are some small ways I've discovered to increase my gratitude and reinforce what I refer to as my "thank you habit."

On your drive to school or work (or wherever it is that you go each day), why not take the scenic route? Refresh your soul as you give thanks for God's natural beauty. I often travel by way of the lovely tree-lined hill leading to the back roads of our neighborhood instead of the crowded main roads.

Find ways to enjoy little breaks throughout your day. Experts recommend about a half hour of sunshine daily to keep up our vitamin D supply. Why not pick a pretty spot and take a book? Or your Bible. Or go for a walk. A friend of mine carves out what she calls "Sabbath moments" every day, usually outdoors. She returns to her work more rested, alert, and thankful.

Maintain a daily quitting time. Plan to do something fun with family or friends. Read a good book by an open fire. Take a bath filled with essential oils. Stop your work and savor some downtime. Remember, rest is God's idea so give Him thanks.

Stop multitasking. That was the best piece of advice a counselor gave to my stressed-out friend who was seeking help. Easier said than done—especially for busy parents. But try to focus on each person or task with your whole attention, the

counselor urged. Then you can take time to truly enjoy every blessing and practice thankfulness. Besides, research shows the value of multi-tasking is an illusion—it's far less efficient than we think.

Finally, keep a thank-you journal. List your blessings at the end of each day. Be on the lookout for answers to your prayers and thank God when they happen.

How many little blessings do you simply miss because you are speeding through life?

[by Marilyn Chadwick, founder, SEEDS of Hope, Charlotte, NC]