

## LORD MAKE ME TRULY THANKFUL

By Mariana L Brierton

With each passing year I become more aware that Thanksgiving is an ambiguous time. While pausing in this special season to reflect on God's considerable blessings to me and my family, there is also the painful reality of those around us who are not quite so blessed – the many victims of world famine as well as America's own hungry children, the oppressed who are still denied basic human rights and dignity, the bereaved, the lonely, the dying – none of whom have earned their fate any more than I have earned my blessings.

Certainly this does not diminish my blessings, but it does put them in a context that requires my intense thankfulness to my Heavenly Father. As just a small testimony and private spiritual exercise, this is my litany of thanks:

For the Divine gift of new life through the grace of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour, and for the constant insistence of the Holy Spirit that this new life gives expression to love and forgiveness freely given to others as it has been so mercifully bestowed upon me, ***Lord, make me truly thankful.***

For the strong, wise and loving parents I was fortunate enough to have, and for the maturity to recognise their God-given influence on my life. For finally having gained enough insight to realise that any worthwhileness in me is due more to Mum and Dad than any effort on my part, ***Lord, make me truly thankful.***

For such a very good-natured, faithful, hard-working husband who offers love without restraint or condition, and who, because he demands the best of himself, often makes me see myself in proper perspective. For the man who has weathered so many hours spent sitting patiently beside me in a hospital and giving endless encouragement, for that one person who always restores my ego when it's necessary – an ability I don't reciprocate often enough, but for which I can humbly say, ***Lord, make me truly thankful.***

For the hundreds of books it has been my joy to read since early childhood and the loving grandmother who read to me endlessly before I was able to perform this happy task for myself. Without the exciting world of books with stories that sent my imagination soaring, brilliant pictures I can still remember, growing up would indeed have been a dull and dreary process instead of the happy one I experienced. For all the heroes and heroines I have laughed and cried with, for all the authors I have loved, ***Lord, make me truly thankful.***

For every problem of life that I have had to at least *try* to turn into a possibility, for the aggravations that have become inventions with God's help. For all those things that drive me crazy, frustrate me ... they must be a part of my Creator's plan somehow – if only to make me appreciate it more when things go well and to realise how limited is my influence when they do. For the Bible's teaching that yes, problems *are* real, but so is victory in the power of ***Lord, make me truly thankful.***

Christ over every battle in life, for the promises of the Master which, remembered with great joy each day, give me the courage to know that in Him I can overcome, **Lord, make me truly thankful.**

For the friends that have touched my life over the years, those of other faiths who have helped my own faith to grow by their beautiful example, those who have helped and comforted making the happy times even better, the hard times bearable. Our Lord knew both the importance of having friends and being a friend and gave us all His supreme compliment, "... I call you friends now, because I have told you everything that I have heard from the Father." (John 15: 14, 15 ) for His friendship that sustains forever, and for those satisfying human relationships that run deep and true, **Lord, make me truly thankful.**

For those of the past and present who have inspired me because of what they were able to do and what their lives represent, the lovely people who are famous, some who are merely great. For the countless contributions of humankind that make my everyday living more pleasant, more healthy and more convenient as well as those who made the ultimate sacrifice so that all of us can enjoy the benefits and privileges of a free society. For each man and woman who laboured faithfully, who worked yesterday for my today, **Lord, make me truly thankful.**

As I continue my "blessed listing," another realisation dawns. I could go on for many more pages, so perhaps most of all this is what I have to be thankful for. I humbly invite each of you to do the same ... grab a pen and see how easy it really is! Without any doubt, the burden of our blessings becomes immense.

There is also another thanksgiving that everyone can gratefully echo: for each person committed to sharing his or her faith, and who joins with others in the often imperfect but always invigorating speculations about how God's church and Christ's gospel can be applied to the world we live in so that all may participate more fully in the blessings of health and the pursuit of happiness. For every single soul dedicated to making God's will a joy-filled reality that provides a climate of love as well as justice, **Lord, make me truly thankful.**

### **NINE GOLD WINNERS**

At the Seattle Special Olympics not long ago, nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled assembled at the starting line for the 100 yard dash. At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win.

All, that is, except one little boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and looked back. Then they all turned around and went back.....*every one of them!*

One girl with Down's Syndrome bent down and kissed him, and said "This will make it better." Then all nine linked arms and walked together to the finish line.

#### **What Really Matters!**

Everyone in the stadium stood; the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story. Why?

Because deep down we know this one thing: What matters in this life is more than winning for ourselves. What matters in this life is helping others win, even if it means slowing down and changing our course.