

There was once a doctor who seemed to have a lot of unhappy, depressed patients. He developed a special “thank-you” prescription for them. Every day for six weeks, the patient had to say “Thank you” for every good thing that happened and record the event in a journal. Are you surprised that the cure rate was remarkable?

We know that gratitude is healthy in all ways – physical, emotional, and spiritual. Grateful people are healthy people. We know this, but it seems hard to practice. Thanksgiving, our national holiday to remember and give thanks for all we have received, is a forgotten holiday. As soon as Halloween is over, the Christmas decorations are out!

Our culture doesn’t help. Retailers don’t want to emphasize Thanksgiving because if you are thankful for what you have, you may be so content that you don’t rush out to buy more of the stuff that they have on display! Thanksgiving is countercultural!

Yet giving thanks is at the heart of our faith. Paul starts every letter with words of thanks. He gives difficult instructions to his congregations, saying things like “¹¹ May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light” (Colossians 1:11-12) and “Do not worry about anything, but in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

Every November, I see folks practicing gratitude on social media, posting something every day for which they give thanks. It’s a good spiritual discipline. Whether you share your gratitude on Facebook, keep a gratitude journal by your bed, or download one of a number of gratitude apps for your phone, practice thanksgiving, not just this Thursday or this month but all year. You might be surprised by how rich you are and even be content with what you have!