

Thanksgiving Devotions



Read Job 1:1-5, 13-22 - “ ... *the Lord has given and the Lord has taken away*”

Make a list one of a number of good things you have received for which you are thankful.

Make another list of things you have learned during difficult times.

Try to have a total of 40-50 items when both lists are complete.

For the next month or so focus on one item on either list each day in a few minutes of personal devotional time.

Thank God for what you have received or learned, for the blessings that are obvious and the ones that appear like light in the midst of darkness.

A Ladder of Giving

Maimonides, a twelfth-century Jewish rabbi living in Spain, created a ladder of giving for deciding how we might give. It works in reverse so that each “rung” below is a higher ethical level of giving than the previous one. Reflect on Maimonides’ ladder. Think of occasions when you have given in each of these ways. (Perhaps you haven’t been on each “rung”, but think of which ones you have been on).

1. *Giving grudgingly and making the recipient feel disgraced or embarrassed*
2. *Giving cheerfully, but very little*
3. *Giving cheerfully and adequately but only after being asked*
4. *Giving cheerfully before being asked*
5. *Giving generously when you do not know who benefits, but the recipient knows you are the donor*
6. *Giving generously when you know who benefits, but the recipient does not know your identity*
7. *Giving generously when neither the donor nor the recipient knows each other’s identity*
8. *Giving money, a loan, your time or whatever else it takes to enable the recipient to become self-reliant*



What made the difference? Was it the situation to which you sought to respond? Or the person? Was God a factor in your decision?

For pondering: “*I have never treated a generous neurotic.*” -- Dr. Karl Menninger