

10 Basic Blessings You Should Be Thankful For

We Americans are a blessed people, but we are also spoiled. I know I am. I can get flustered over the stupidest things—like when my cellphone doesn't get a good signal, when a flight is delayed or when my computer takes too long to load a website. Most people in the world don't have iPhones, can't afford air travel and don't have computers. My impatience reveals my ungrateful spirit.

So how can we avoid this virus of selfish immaturity? Thankfulness is the antidote. It melts our pride and crushes our sense of entitlement. It reminds us that everything we have comes from God, and that His mercy is the only reason we are blessed.

As you celebrate Thanksgiving Day, I pray you will invite the Holy Spirit to convict you of any whining. Here's a list of 10 blessings that many people in the world don't have. Go over this list and then see if you still have anything to gripe about.

1. Got clean water? The next time you uncap a bottle of water or grab a drink from the tap, remember that one in eight people in the world (that's 884 million people) lack access to clean water supplies. Millions of women around the world spend several hours a day collecting water. When you take a five-minute shower, you use more water than a typical person in a developing country uses in a whole day.

2. Do you have a bathroom? About 40 percent of the world's population (2.6 billion people) do not have toilets. Lack of sanitation facilities spreads disease and is a major reason why more than 2 million people die annually of diarrhea.

3. How's your electricity? The power in my house might be

interrupted briefly three times a year because of Florida storms. But 1.6 billion people—a quarter of humanity—live without any electricity. And, because of unreliable infrastructure, at least 2 billion people on earth don't have any light at night.

4. Got a roof over your head? One billion people live in slums. That's almost one-sixth of the world's population. Of this total, 640 million children live without adequate shelter; they live in cardboard boxes, tin-roofed shacks, one-room mud huts or filthy, crowded tenements. It's been estimated that 1.4 billion people will live in slums by 2020. Meanwhile here in the United States, between 2.3 to 2.5 million people are classified as homeless.

5. Is there food on your table? In the United States we are battling an obesity epidemic. Yet according to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. Approximately 790 million people in the developing world are chronically undernourished, and almost 28 percent of all children in developing countries are estimated to be underweight or stunted.

6. Got a stove? In developing countries, some 2.5 billion people use fuelwood, charcoal or animal dung to meet their energy needs for cooking. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 80 percent of the population depends on these crude, traditional means for cooking, as do over half of the populations of India and China. The really sad part: Indoor air pollution resulting from the use of solid fuels claims the lives of 1.5 million people each year, more than half of them below the age of 5.

7. Got regular income? You may have had to take a pay cut during the recession. But keep in mind that at least 80 percent of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day. The world's average income is about \$7,000 a year. Still, only about 19 percent of the world's population lives in countries with per capita incomes at least this high.

8. Did you go to school? Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names. Enrollment data shows that about 72 million children of primary school age in the developing world were not in school in 2005 (and 57 percent of them were girls).

9. Are you generally healthy? Americans face illness like people in other nations—and more than 12 million Americans are battling cancer in any given year. But many of us have access to health care. In the developing world, more than 2.2 million children die each year because they are not immunized. An estimated 40 million people in developing countries are living with HIV/AIDS. Every year there are 350–500 million cases of malaria, with 1 million fatalities, mostly in Africa.

10. Are you free to worship God? More than 400 Christians die for their faith every day around the world, and most of these believers suffer in Islamic countries—although the top hot spot for Christian persecution, according to Open Doors International, is the atheist regime of North Korea.

What will you be grateful for this Thanksgiving? In these tough economic times you may feel the urge to complain. Be thankful instead! God calls us to live above this negativity. When we give thanks in all things, God gives us a supernatural attitude adjustment. When we thank God for all He has given us, acknowledging that we don't deserve His goodness, our grumbling melts into gratitude and our impatience turns to praise.

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