

Use Holy Spirit's Unbeatable Weapon to Vanquish Holiday Greed

If you've read *Screens and Teens*, you know cultivating gratitude is something I think we should consciously do on a regular basis. Giving thanks cannot be something we do one day a year. Being thankful should be something we are.

What if we all determined to choose thankfulness between now and the end of the year and beyond? Yes, what if it truly becomes a habit that's a part of us? As I write on page 80, "Gratitude can be a built-in part of our identities. This is what allows us to be thankful "in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Rather than complaining about the entitlement easily observable in many individuals and throughout our culture, let's do what we can. We're not responsible for everyone else. We can't even change our own hearts, but Jesus can.

My hope for many people between now and Christmas is a change of heart. Is this relevant for you and/or your children? Would praying for God's perspective be helpful? Would it help to pray for eyes to see what you have instead of what you don't have? Would discussions and prayer about contentment be a good idea?

Truth can reign. We can model it, talk about it, pray for its acceptance and more. We can ask God to show us the conversations to have with children that will help shift their perspective.

What if these passages truly informed us during this season and beyond? Can you think of others to talk with your children about this season?

“And above all these things, embrace love, which is the bond of perfection. Let the peace of God, to which also you are called in one body, rule in your hearts. And **be thankful**. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3:14-17).

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything **give thanks**, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. If we have food and clothing, we shall be **content** with these things” (1 Tim. 6:6-8).

Scripture is, of course, vital to transform us more and more into the image of Christ. We can also take action. But waiting for the truths of Scripture to change hearts before stepping out in obedience isn't necessary. Acting on truths can help children, especially, see the truths. They'll believe the Scripture and continue to act on it.

For instance, what if we established something new during the upcoming Christmas season? What if, as we add new things to our home, we also give things away? This might happen the week after Christmas as we put toys, clothes, dishes and more away where they belong. Now we can talk about the expectation of giving.

I know some families who collect items during Thanksgiving week to give away to shelters and other charities. This makes room in their homes for new things. And, even better, organizations and struggling families looking for gently used items during December will benefit from what is given away.

We all have clothes we no longer wear, dishes we rarely use, toys that are no longer fun for our children, CDs we don't listen to, DVDs we don't watch and more. Others can benefit. But only if they're not collecting dust in our homes.

When we and our children recognize how much we have that we don't need, thankfulness should come more easily. Contentment can reign.

Let's make this our story. {eoa}

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