

IN THE MARGINS: Be the reason someone's thankful this Thanksgiving

By Tony Martin
Editor

Have you ever thought about what makes someone *truly* likeable? Not just the kind of surface-level likability where people smile at you out of politeness, but the kind of deep, heartwarming connection that leaves people saying, "I'm so thankful for them."

Here's a little truth bomb: it's not their looks, talent, or even their charm. It's their *unselfishness*. The people we genuinely admire – whether it's a kind neighbor, a generous mentor, or even a celebrity who inspires us – stand out because they give of themselves. They pour out grace, kindness, and love in a way that leaves the world a little better than they found it.

On the flip side, selfishness is often the root of conflict. Think about the last argument you had. Chances are, at the heart of it, someone (maybe both of you!) felt that something was being taken away – your time, attention, resources, or even dignity. James 4:1-2 puts it bluntly:

"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel." (ESV)

When our desires take center stage, harmony gets shoved aside.

A Life of Giving

Contrast that with the example of Jesus. If there's one word

to describe His earthly ministry, it's *giving*. He gave sight to the blind, healing to the sick, hope to the hopeless, and ultimately, His life for sinners like us. Philippians 2:3-4 challenges us to follow His example:

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." (ESV)

Unselfishness is the secret sauce of harmony. When we live with open hands and open hearts, we reflect the character of Christ – and people notice. Have you ever been around someone who always seems to put others first? It's refreshing, isn't it? They're the ones who show up with a meal when you're overwhelmed, who listen when you need to vent, or who cheer you on without expecting anything in return.

Those are the kind of people who make life sweeter. And they're the ones others are thankful for.

This Thanksgiving, Be That Person

As we gather around our Thanksgiving tables, it's easy to focus on what we're grateful *for* – our families, homes, health, and blessings. But what if we flipped the script this year? What if, instead of just being thankful, we aimed to *be* the reason someone else is thankful?

Here are a few practical ways to live out unselfishness this Thanksgiving season:

- **Give Your Time:** Visit a friend or relative who's lonely. Offer to babysit for an overwhelmed parent. Time is one of the most precious gifts we can give because it's something we can never get back.
- **Share Your Resources:** Whether it's donating to a food bank, buying groceries for someone in need, or simply

being generous with what you have, there's always an opportunity to give.

- **Speak Life:** Words have power. Take the time to write a note of encouragement or tell someone what they mean to you. Proverbs 16:24 says, "Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."
- **Forgive Freely:** Holding onto a grudge benefits no one. Let go of resentment and extend grace, just as God has done for us (Colossians 3:13).

The Ripple Effect of Unselfishness

Unselfishness isn't just about making someone else's day; it's about planting seeds of peace and joy. When we give of ourselves, it creates a ripple effect. Your small act of kindness might inspire someone else to do the same, and before you know it, you've sparked a chain reaction of generosity and love.

This Thanksgiving, let's follow the example of Jesus and live lives that overflow with grace and giving. Let's be the kind of people who light up a room, not because we're seeking attention, but because our hearts are so full of Christ's love that it naturally spills out.

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus reminds us,

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

This holiday season, be the reason someone looks up and says, "Thank you, God, for putting them in my life."

Unselfishness changes everything. It's the glue that holds relationships together and the spark that sets gratitude ablaze. Let's choose to live generously, love deeply, and give freely—because that's the kind of life that reflects Jesus.

Happy Thanksgiving, y'all! Let's make it one to remember.