

StewardLife LESSON 23



STORY:

"Tears came to my eyes as my grandson, Nicholas, opened four small presents," reflects Joan Leonard, Cypress, California. "He was trying to decide which was the best. He stopped before making his choice, looked at my husband and me, and said, 'My best present is having you here with me.'"

STORY:

Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter dinner were always served at Oma's house. (Oma is an affectionate German term for "great-grandmother.") Being in her 80s, Oma didn't do too much cooking, but she always prepared her famous cranberry sauce and the main meat dish: ham or turkey. She always took pride in the way the table was set, too.

Somewhere along in the meal, it was always the responsibility of Uncle Wally to begin "The Praise." He would wait for just the right pause in the table conversation and then he would say, rather loudly, "Everything is excellent, Oma." And that was the cue for everyone around the table to join in "The Praise"—grownups and kids alike—with their own expressions of thanks to Oma for a delicious meal.

But “The Praise” was always more than thanks. All of us kids knew that it was a way of giving honor to Oma for her long and faithful life as Christian mother, grandmother and great-grandmother to the family. And at every holiday meal we always looked forward to Uncle Wally's start so we could join in. Somehow we all felt really warm inside when “The Praise” was done.

Oma is gone now, and so is Uncle Wally. The family is scattered all over the country, but no one in the family will ever forget “The Praise.”

STORY:

Larry was all set for dinner. His eyes drifted over the table, filled with delicious food: corn, candied sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, stuffing, mashed potatoes, hot rolls and butter—all, that is, except for the ham. Grandpa had just finishing the carving and Grandma was taking her seat at the table. As Grandpa came in from the kitchen carrying the ham platter, Larry's eyes got bigger and bigger.

After the prayer of thanks, Larry grabbed for the sweet potatoes. Everyone began passing around the serving dishes. But soon there was a food jam at Larry's place at the table. He was so busy loading up his plate that he forgot to pass the food.

Soon the ham platter reached Larry. His father, who was sitting next to him, passed it right over Larry's head! Larry protested, but it didn't do any good.

“You are expected to pass the food, not hold it all at your place,” Larry's father said. “The more you hold on to, the more food we'll just have to pass around you.”

In the same way, we find Christians who refuse to pass on the blessings they have received from God. In doing so, they miss even better blessings from God. Those living the StewardLife know they can't hold on to blessings. God expects them to be passed.

EXERCISE:

Read John 6:41-43.

Grumbling can consume a great deal of time and energy. We are more prone to grumble inside than out loud to others. How can grumbling destroy a household? The church? How can you prevent grumbling from taking hold of you?

Create a fuzzy character out of yarn, etc. that can be made easily even by children. Call it a “Grumble.” It can be kept as a reminder not to grumble, and ceremonially tossed at someone caught grumbling as a light-hearted reminder.

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