



Key Texts:

Luke 17:11-19

Key Challenge:

We have an obligation to praise God for what He has done for us, and He notices when we do!

[Leader note: Begin the message with an illustration about a time when you or someone else greatly appreciated being appreciated. Share a story of a time that simply saying thank you made a huge impact. Below, you'll see the story of my father keeping a thank you letter for more than fifteen years. If you cannot find an illustration, feel free to use mine as something that happened to your friend Andrew.]

The Real: A few years ago, my parents were moving, and instead of hiring movers, they asked me to help. Growing up we moved a lot. I was born in Illinois, but we moved to South Carolina for my dad to go to graduate school, and then went back to Illinois. We moved to Pennsylvania for a few years, and then moved to Ohio for my dad to get a doctorate. When we moved to Florida the summer between second and third grade, we thought we were going to never move again, but when I was in high school, our house had a sinkhole under it, and we had to move again. Then, that home didn't really make a lot of sense for our family, because I was in college, and my sister got married, so my parents didn't need the space. So, they bought another home, in a new development, and the property value just about doubled in a few years, so my parents seized the opportunity to make some money, and they moved again. I tell you all of that so that you'll get it when I say; my dad isn't a real sentimental guy. He doesn't get attached to things, like houses. It's just not in his personality. So, my parents moved again, and they called on me to be the muscle.

I was pulling the drawers out of my dad's dresser, to make it lighter, and as I pulled out the underwear drawer, something grabbed my attention. I know, that is the weirdest sentence in the history of sermons. But, as I pulled out the drawer, I saw a letter tucked up against the wall of the drawer. I immediately knew that it was a letter, because I had seen it before. I wrote it. It was a letter I had written my dad in the summer of

2002.

For close to a year before I wrote that letter, I had been floundering. I had gotten dumped. I got hurt playing soccer, which was the one thing I had enjoyed about college, so my solution was to withdraw from classes and leave school. My dad, by the way, happened to be the vice president of said college. So, my just pulling out was not a good look for him. In that same timeframe, I had decided that the church I grew up in, where my dad was a deacon, was just too stuffy and rigid for me, so I started going to another church, which was almost as big of a deal as my leaving school. A lot of things were just up in the air, and I was kind of aimless. My mom was worried sick, and she let me know it regularly. My dad was probably just as worried, but he gave me space to process and the freedom to screw up. Towards the end of that season, the Holy Spirit began to do some pretty major work in me, or maybe I just began to notice the work that He had been doing in me, and things began to change. I re-enrolled in school with the goal of going into ministry, and I realized just how patient my dad had been with me during that time, so I wrote him a letter. I thanked him for being a godly example to me, and for the extreme patience and understanding he had shown me. I told him how much I admired him as a husband and father, especially since I hadn't grown up with his dad; my grandpa died when my dad was in third grade. And then I thanked him again.

My dad, the least sentimental person I know, had kept this letter that I had written him for more than fifteen years. Why? It is because everyone likes to be appreciated! Everyone enjoys knowing that his or her effort and input have made a difference. My dad didn't treat me the way he did so that I would thank him; he treated me like that, because he thought that it was the best way to love and encourage me. My letter meant something to him, because it acknowledged and validated the impact that his actions made. And more than a decade and a half later, he had hung onto it. My gratitude meant something to him!

The Rub: I think that sometimes a sincere thank you means as much or more to the person receiving it than even the thing that they are being thanked for meant to the original recipient. There is something to be said about knowing that your effort or your generosity was noticed and made a difference to someone else.

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com