

Sisters for Yah

Thankfulness as a habit

Watching the news recently, and viewing shocking footage of war-torn countries, I was suddenly overwhelmed with a strong feeling of thankfulness as I realized I was reclining on my favorite comfy chair in my safe and cozy home. It dawned on me that even though I experienced the normal trials of day-to-day living, things could be so much worse in my life!

Have you ever taken the time to write down every single blessing in your life? You'd be shocked at how many pages you could fill if you tried. Please try it sometime! I guarantee you will feel so much better about your life. Even if you are very poor, surely there are blessings in your life.

A survey was taken long ago, in which researchers were seeking to find the happiest countries and the unhappiest countries in the world. They were sure that the "richer" countries would be revealed as the happiest, but that was not always the case. In fact, some of the poor countries came out way ahead on the happiness scale! The researchers noticed that some of the poor countries felt blessed because they did not have all the physical distractions of the richer countries! Indeed, they found children playing happily outside, laughing and using their imaginations. While in many of the richer countries, they found gloomy-faced children indoors playing video games, while mindlessly reaching into bowls of unhealthy snacks. This should be a wake-up call for many parents.



Yahweh expects us to be thankful for all things, yes, including trials, because they serve a purpose in strengthening us. Get into the habit of thanking Yahweh every day. Even when you first wake in the morning. Start the day off right! Your entire day will go better if you begin in the right frame of mind. Morning prayers can be the most meaningful part of your day! Let us all have hearts that are overflowing with gratitude for the wonderful blessings poured upon us.

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Beauty obsessed?

Visit any mall and you immediately become aware of this world's obsession with outward appearance. What priority, if any, does Yahweh give to outward appearance? I believe He is very concerned with it! One evening, not long ago, my husband and I were flipping through the many religious channels on our TV, and stopped on one with a woman singing a beautiful worship song. The song was absolutely amazing and very Biblical, but we both noticed that woman's worldly appearance distracted from the spiritual words proceeding from her mouth. She was dressed in skin tight jeans, heavy makeup, and huge earrings that reached her shoulders. My husband made the comment that the woman did not belong, singing such a beautiful song. She probably belonged on a different channel altogether!

1 Peter 3:3-4 says, *"Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or nice clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to Yahweh."* (NLT throughout)

Admittedly, the woman on TV was very attractive physically, but what if she had decided instead to wear lighter makeup, more modest clothing, and smaller earrings while being filmed singing that song? She still would have been extremely attractive! Even more so in my opinion. Because then her outward appearance would have been compatible with the song's powerful words.

Please don't misunderstand. There is nothing wrong with wearing jewelry or having good taste in clothing. But don't allow your choices to give people the wrong idea. We want to strive to be good examples to the world. Yes, we are being watched. Check out Proverbs 31:30, which states that *"Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears Yahweh will be greatly praised."*

Outward beauty reveals what we look like. Inner beauty reveals who we are. Walking with Yahweh causes us to reflect His beauty. Appearances can be deceiving! Read 1 Samuel 16:6-7, which tells us *"When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, 'Surely this is Yahweh's anointed!' But Yahweh said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. Yahweh does not make decisions the way you do! People judge by outward appearance, but Yahweh looks at a person's thoughts and intentions.'"*

Also turn to Matthew 23:28 which reveals that, *"You try to look like upright people outwardly, but inside your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness."* Obviously, the condition of our skin cannot reveal the condition of our hearts. Always remember this promise in 1 Samuel 16:7: People judge by outward appearance, but Yahweh looks at a person's thoughts and intentions.



Interesting, but disturbing note: A recent news broadcast warned against dangerous levels of lead in almost all the store-bought cosmetics tested! If you do wear makeup, please consider purchasing the "natural" types found in health food stores. They are more expensive, but your health matters! You may also consider making your own at home, as there are many websites dedicated to safe, easy, do it yourself homemade lotions, cosmetics, and other beauty products. You can find numerous recipes and detailed instructions.

Why diets don't stick

Being a thin person my whole life, I've never had to diet. But I have met so many people on diets in my lifetime that complain to me about why their "diets" have failed them. Here's a few problems.

"I feel so deprived!" I agree that giving up too much, too soon, is a problem. It's hard to resist a "forbidden" food. Better to have a small taste of what you are craving. Restricting calories so much that you feel hungry is a recipe for failure.

"I never exercise." You lose more weight with a combination of proper diet and exercise.

"I can't see the big picture." Remember that quick fixes rarely work. Your real solution is making lifestyle changes that last.

"I eat when I am stressed." There are many other ways to relieve stress. Try a nice walk in the park, or soaking in a warm bubble bath.

Most importantly, never give up! If you fail, just pick yourself up and keep moving forward.



The value of a listening ear

In James 1:19, it says, "But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger." Are you familiar with the Swiss psychiatrist Paul Tournier? He was famous for his advice to married couples, "Be pre-occupied with listening in your marriage!" It's also been humorously said that "Yahweh created people with one mouth and two ears, therefore we should listen twice as much as we speak."



Sometimes timing is everything. I've learned to never try to discuss things when my husband first comes home from work. Recently, I read a cute story about a frazzled mother who was being badgered by her 3 small children. She told them, "It would be better to talk to your father, children, but not right now. He isn't home yet."

"Yes, he is," cried the children, "He's sitting right over there!"

"Yes, we know he's right there, but he doesn't know it yet. Be patient with him." And sure enough, after Dad has a few minutes to relax, he can usually give his focused attention. It's been said that active listening helps us to focus. To practice active listening, try sending back messages of empathy that let your spouse know you are trying to put yourself into his or her shoes. Once you establish communication with your mate, you can then seek clarification by asking questions. Asking the right questions can help too. Try not to be in

"attack mode." Keep the conversation light, and allow it to flow smoothly. Always ask questions to gain understanding, not to make judgments. Also, praying for guidance beforehand can do wonders for conversations!

Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua
2963 County Road 233
Kingdom City, Missouri 65262

Main Line: 1-573-642-4100
Toll Free: 1-877-642-4101
Fax Line: 1-573-642-4104
Website: www.SistersForYah.org



PUMPKIN POWER!

Have you ever found yourself with leftover pumpkin from a can after making a recipe that called for canned pumpkin? Most people just throw it out, but here are some ideas on how to use up any leftovers!

1. Make pumpkin oatmeal! Prepare your plain oatmeal the usual way, then stir in canned pumpkin to taste, add a little brown sugar and a dash of pumpkin pie spice. It's like having pumpkin pie for breakfast!
2. And for dessert, try a pumpkin pie milkshake. Just combine in your blender 2 cups vanilla ice cream, 1/4 cup pumpkin, dash of pumpkin pie spice, and 1/4 cup of milk. Delicious!



A New Lunch Idea: salad in a jar!

Bored with taking sandwiches to work for lunch? Try this neat idea instead! If you like hearty salads, but find that they get soggy, here's a terrific solution

1. Purchase a quart sized mason jar.
2. Pour about 2 Tablespoons of your favorite salad dressing in the bottom of the jar. Use more or less according to your personal preference.
3. Next, add several layers of your favorite items, such as cherry tomatoes, peppers, carrots, cucumbers, corn, broccoli, chickpeas, beans, hard-boiled eggs, or cooked pasta.
4. Then add your favorite greens, such as lettuce, spinach, or a combination of different greens. You can also add "toppings" to this layer such as shredded cheese or sunflower seeds.
5. Be sure to leave a few inches of space at the top of the jar.
6. When ready to eat, simply shake the jar to coat the whole salad with the dressing on the bottom. Pour on a plate and enjoy! Don't forget to pack a spoon with you.

If you still decide to take sandwiches, spice it up to keep things interesting. For instance, swap hummus for mayo, or add ingredients to your mayo to change the flavor, such as chopped garlic or sliced roasted red pepper.

