ESSAY · NOVEMBER 10, 2024

He Values When We Do This

Written by Bill Perkins

Recently while entering Safeway to pick up some grocery items, I held the door for a couple entering behind me. As they walked in the store, they failed to acknowledge my courteous act with a head nod or a “Thank you.” I considered chasing them down and saying, “Excuse me. I held the door for you, and you didn’t thank me.”

It Bothered Me Until

It bothered me that their failure to thank me bothered me. And then last night while reading the gospels I noticed how Jesus responded when nine men he had healed failed to thank Him. In Luke 17:11-17 we find the story where Jesus healed ten lepers. After healing them he told them to, “’Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went, they were cleansed.”

One of the men returned to Jesus, “Praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked Him —and he was a Samaritan.”

You might think Jesus didn’t notice the nine unthankful men. But He noticed and asked, “’Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?’ Then He said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.’”

Good Excuses

The other nine may have figured since Jesus told them to go to the priests they should obey. They may have reasoned that until the priest declared them clean, they couldn’t join their families and friends. I suspect they had good excuses for not praising God and thanking Jesus.

After reading the story I felt better about the annoyance I felt when the couple failed to thank me. After all, Jesus seemed annoyed by, or at least noticed, the failure of the nine. And then I realized something that bothered me more than their thanklessness. That is the knowledge that I’m often like the nine. But not always. I’m a good tipper and tell Cindy daily how much I thank God for her. If someone holds a door open for me, I’ll thank them. Or, if a driver lets me merge, I’ll thank them.

But I could do better. Much better.

Realizing that Jesus values it when I change course and take the time to thank Him for His goodness, prompts me to follow the Samaritan back to Jesus.

Did you know this about Jesus?