

We dedicate this issue to our beloved friends and colleagues, Mark and Rebecca Carter, for their brave and inspiring battle against a cancer that can infect the body but not sicken the soul.

USA Today reports that researchers are finding gratitude as one of humanity's most powerful emotions. The mental health benefits are almost incalculable. "When you stop and 'count your blessings', you hijack your emotional system, and improve your mood and state of mind. The emotion of thankfulness is nearly equivalent to being victorious ... One of the reasons gratitude works so well is that it connects us with others." Heartfelt thanks connects us more intimately with whom we are thanking ... Multiple studies show that keeping a gratitude journal or regularly "counting blessings" resulted in significantly higher positive mood states and overall health and wellness.

Need Help? Talk to your roommate, a friend, your RA, your SRD, or stop by the Counseling Center!

We're located at:  
Owens Center, Suite 208  
Phone: 530.226.4106

# "Psyche Me Up"

Monthly Newsletter, Brought to you by Simpson University

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## Sinking Hearts and RAISING HOPE

*When I can thank Him for "even this", then even the ugly can become something beautiful.*

So, as God often does, rather than give us what we ask for, He gives opportunities to practice the thing for which we ask. Personally, I am continually challenged to **"give thanks in all things."** **All things.** So, here I am once again, and God has given me yet another opportunity to practice receiving the gift I ask for. With tragic news, **my heart sinks**, and I, as with many of you, am faced with huge disappointment, sadness, that hits far too close to home. I am having to ask God to help me see **what to be thankful for in this.** And **how?** How when people I love, **who love so much**, give so much, and, now, suffer so much, am I to be **thankful?** Thankful for THEM in my life, yes, but not for what they are suffering. Here is what I know so far:

**Losses can infect** every part of our life; we only see **what isn't**, what was taken, what we fear will be. Or will never be. When I don't trust God, **I won't open my hands** to freely receive whatever He gives. **Whatever** He gives. Sometimes the most **beautiful of gifts** are wrapped in some pretty **unlovely boxes.** Sometimes the **holes** in our lives actually become the **"seeing-through-to-God-places"** that scatter light to every other dark place of our lives.

Satan's message throughout all of human history is that **God isn't good.** That God withholds from us, that **He doesn't fully love us** or we would/wouldn't ... (fill in the blank). When we **doubt** His goodness, we **mistrust** Him and become **discontent** with what He gives. We want **"more"**, or at least **"other"**, than what He has given. Isn't our fall, beginning with Adam and Eve, right on through till now, **rooted in our dissatisfaction** with what He gives? **We doubt** His Goodness, **forget** who He is, and **fail** to thank Him for all He has done ... from creation to the Cross to the very breath in our lungs every moment of every day.

**Who am I**, really, to receive, **with thanks**, only the good from His hand and nothing else. Can I really understand the **ways and mysteries** of an infinite God and **reject** what He has for me unless I, finite, sinful me, deem it "good"? Can I **accept** that there are things in this life that I simply **don't understand?** Can I trust that **He does?** If I could, I have a suspicion that it just might **change everything** ... And so it does. Circumstances haven't changed, tragedies are no less tragic, but **what changes is me.** For every negative, complaining thought I **replace with thankfulness**, I am lighter, in moments, **even joyful.** A joy that is **rooted in a RAISED HOPE** that if God is truly good, and **He knows all**, even though I don't, I can trust that **this, too, will be redeemed** for His **glory** and my **good.** Even if, in faith, it **remains unseen** in this life.

Can I thank Him, **in all things**, no matter what? Even in the **darkest of times?** Even in the huge **disappointments**? Or even the **small inconveniences** that I love to gripe and complain about? *Is that the hissing of a serpent, I hear?*

**The Challenge:** Can we **exchange confusion** for trust, **negativity and fear for gratitude**, deep hurt for even **deeper joy**, self-focused narcissism for **God-focused intimacy?** Can we, daily, **give thanks generously** and receive **whatever He gives** graciously? Make the most of **moments**, count blessings, number them. **Name them.** Look intently, **search for** even the smallest of things to be grateful for. This is RAISING HOPE, **resurrecting it from the grip of death.** ... I dare you to try it. You just might find even the ugliest of life's challenges becoming **something beautiful.**

*Thank you, Mark and Rebecca, for showing us how to see the glory of God shine through holes in even the darkest of places. Your courage, hope and faith humble us all.*