

Don't be a Thanksgiving Turkey

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I've been called a turkey before. No one wants to be a turkey. Being called a turkey takes on an even deeper meaning when you realize the fact that commercially grown turkey is not one of nature's most intelligent creatures. As a matter of fact, the domesticated turkey has been described as being "as brainless as a baseball." Even drinking can put a strain on turkey intelligence. If a turkey is outdoors, looking up at the sky when it starts to rain, it can drown. They're often not smart enough to close their mouths in the rain. No one wants to be a turkey.

But at least the turkey has an excuse for being "bird-brained." There is less excuse for us human beings. Take the nine lepers Luke writes about in Luke 17. Jesus had healed them from a disgusting, painful, and unsightly skin disease. It was a tremendous gift. Even more so in that Jesus had made it possible for them to re-enter society and reunite with their families. Ten lepers were healed. But only one leper, and a Samaritan at that, came back and said, "Thanks."

Talk about turkeys! Ten received God's blessing, but only one stopped to say thanks.

What about us? Thanksgiving Day is here. In which group will we be found? Amongst the nine who took their blessing and walked off or with the one who came back to thank God?

If we want to avoid being "turkeys" this Thanksgiving, the behavior of that tenth leper might prove instructive. We are not meant to keep our blessings to ourselves. "Thanks," is only half of the word. "Giving" is the other half.

We can make generous giving a part of our thanks-giving. Remember, every time we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick or the prisoner, it's the same thing as doing it for Jesus (Matthew 25:31). The tenth leper may not have had much, but in his gratitude he shared what he had to give. This Thanksgiving, don't be a turkey. In English, the word "think" and the word "thank" both come from the same root. Nine out of ten forgot to think and forgot to thank God for their blessings. But the tenth leper saw his blessings, gave thanks for his blessings, and shared his blessings. So can we.