



# A SPOONFUL OF GRATITUDE

ONE GRUMPY MORNING, I LEARNED THAT YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND A REASON TO GIVE THANKS.

BY SARAH LAVER

**I** woke up one morning during my junior year in high school in a rotten mood. It was 5:30 a.m., it was cold, and it was a Tuesday—a day with a heavy class load. I'd already decided it was going to be a miserable day.

I bumbled around the kitchen and got my lunch ready. Then I plopped down at the table for some plain cereal and milk. Grumpy, I dug my spoon into the bowl and took a huge bite of breakfast. I scowled at the wall.

A small plaque caught my attention. My mother had received it from her visiting teachers. In cheerful letters it said, "Blessings brighten when you count them."

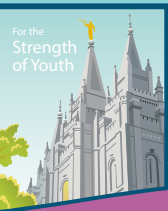
"No," I thought darkly. "I'm in a bad mood today and *nothing* is going to change it."

In my head, I started an argument with the plaque.

"Absolutely nothing can brighten this day," I thought. I took another bite of cereal and crunched it angrily. But my eyes were drawn back to the white writing: "Blessings brighten when you count them."

"You won't work," I told the plaque. "You can't work. I'm pretty sure even a box of puppies couldn't make me happy today."

"You don't like puppies," my brain argued.



**GRATITUDE**



“Exactly,” I said.

I like to be right all the time, and the plaque was challenging me. “Fine!” I said out loud, “I’ll prove you’re wrong.”

I looked around the kitchen, daring myself to find something I was grateful for. The obstinate part of me was still being unreasonable.

“It is 5:43 in the morning. I have nothing to be grateful for.”

I crunched another bite of cereal. Then suddenly I had a thought.

“It would be mighty hard to eat your cereal without a spoon.”

I stopped. I looked at my spoon. Then I looked at the cereal in my bowl.

“I guess you’re right,” I thought reluctantly. “It would be pretty hard to eat cereal without a spoon.”

“Now,” the thought came to mind, “imagine trying to eat your cereal without a bowl.” I actually smiled a little at the thought of a big puddle of milk and cereal on the table.

“What about without a chair to sit in?” I thought.

I felt the chair beneath me and gripped my spoon a little tighter, looking at the simple utensil with appreciation. My gaze drifted back to the plaque that still said, “Blessings brighten when you count them.”

This time, I gave a tiny smile. “I have a spoon. I have something to be grateful for. And a bowl. And a chair.”

I started to see dozens of things I was thankful for. Not only did I have food, but there was also food in the pantry and downstairs in the storage room. I would probably never have to go hungry. My parents worked hard to feed my siblings and me. They also worked hard to create a safe house for us to live in. And they loved me.

All of a sudden, many things gained new meaning: It was cold outside, but I lived in a warm house. It was early in the morning, but I had the opportunity to go to seminary

and to school. I was eating breakfast alone, but Tuesdays were my dad’s temple days, so I could rejoice that he was in the house of the Lord. I could be grateful that I had parents who were devoted to the gospel. Many times they got up early to go and serve.


“So, plaque, I guess you were right. My blessings did brighten as I counted them.” The dark mood from minutes before had evaporated. It had been replaced with a spirit of peace.

“No hard feelings,” I thought. I realized that I’d only scratched the surface of understanding how blessed I am. In fact, I was so busy feeling blessed that I was nearly late for seminary. As I walked out of the house, I was full of gratitude—for my family, my Heavenly Father, a wooden plaque, and the women who had given it to my mother.

And, yes, I was grateful for something as small and easily overlooked as a spoon. **NE**

*Sarah Laver lives in Utah, USA.*

**REASON TO BE THANKFUL**



“Brothers and sisters, have we not reason to be filled with gratitude, regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves?”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Grateful in Any Circumstances,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 77.