

## JULIE'S STORY-GLIMPSES OF GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

# The Turkey Baster!



### SCRIPTURE STUDY

Psalm 100  
2 Corinthians 4:13-15  
Ephesians 1:15-23

### PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,  
Help me to be thankful for all the blessings You give. Help me to see the wonderful people you have placed in my life.  
In Jesus' Name,  
Amen

### TURKEY DAY

I believed, at the ripe old age of eight, that Thanksgiving was a wash-a “teaser” holiday that prevented Grandma from shopping for my etch-a-sketch. We got one measly day off from school and playing pilgrims and Indians paled in significance to a classroom filled with Christmas holly, decked halls, and jolly teachers. At Thanksgiving, our only art project was dressing a pine cones with little turkey-feather behinds and white button eyes.

I did love to be an Indian. While the shy children too afraid to protest were shoved into starched white collars and black stove-top hats, the Indians got to choose cool names like Eagle Feather and Limping Deer. We would don our paper-feather headdresses, beat the living daylights out of coffee-can drums, and scream like banshees at the top of our lungs.

The poor pilgrims had to stand in a straight line singing “We Gather together” to bored parents. It was a fate worse than death. I wore my feather headdress all day. It made the lunch-line lady laugh. I felt invincible striding into P.E. with my rubber red tomahawk. I must have looked menacing because very few of the “Red Rover” boys wanted to come over. However, I was just a lowly squaw in the tribe. George McCaleb got to be Chief Wampum. He hooped and hollered until the three o’clock bell sounded. We were so sick of his bullying, we started calling him “Chief Pee Pants.” At the end of the day, we surrendered our costumes to Mrs. Baird and headed for home.

The Wednesday night before Thanksgiving was spent in ritual preparations for the family feast. As preschoolers, my sister Kathy and I were assigned the task of napkin-folding. By first grade we graduated to carrot-peeling, and by middle school we had the awesome task of removing the raw turkey guts and shoving Stove Top stuffing up the gobbler’s behind. Daddy frantically removed the debris from the carport to make room for arriving guests. Mom shouted orders from the kitchen. The aroma of spiced cider and pumpkin pie filled the kitchen and wafted into my bedroom. I drifted off into candied yam and cranberry dreams. Occasionally through the night, I heard Mom open the creaky oven door and squirt the turkey baster.

Early the next morning, the entourage of extended family and invited guests began to parade through our front door. Grandma and Grandpa Tacker, Grandma and Grandpa Blakely, Aunt Ivelle, Uncle Paul and cousins Donna, Paula and Kim. Pastor Jones' family came, too. I was excited because I had a crush on Buddy, the eldest Jones boy. He didn't know I was alive. All he cared about was who would get the gizzard.

Bedlam erupted as all the cousins tore through the house. Aunt Ivelle and Grandma Moy guffawed with giggles so loud they broke the sound barrier. The men would slap each other on the back and fight over who would carve the turkey. (The carver had squatting rights to pre-dinner turkey tasting.) The dads wrestled the TV remote away from the kids as the Macy's day parade lumbered down Broadway, quickly flipping channels to find the big game. Those thanksgivings were celebrated before the days of multiple flat screen TVs and video games, so my cousins, sister, Buddy and Betsy played hide and seek and told ghost stories until the dinner bell rang.

At noon my father sanctimoniously gathered the troops from the sofa and backyard. We all held hands and bowed our heads for the blessing.

This was my big debut. Every year one child was chosen to say the pre-feast prayer. I closed my eyes and began to thank God that I could still hold my sister at arm's length when she tried to punch me in the stomach. I praised God that Mom always left one warm chocolate chip cookie on the cookie sheet for me to scarf. On rare occasions, I could grab a ball of raw cookie dough without her reproach. I glorified God that my buck teeth wouldn't be shackled with rubber-banded braces until I was eleven. I was pleased that the ushers didn't mind if I chomped my chewing gum during church, and I was especially blessed that Grandma B allowed me to dump as many marshmallows as I wanted into the sweet potato casserole.

Just as I started to get rolling, Daddy elbowed me and quietly suggested that I be thankful for more important things. (After all, Pastor Jones was listening, too.) So I puffed out my chest, took a deep breath and pontificated in hallowed tones.

"Dear LOOOORRRRDDDD, I thank Thee for Thy beauteous bounty and Thy sanctification." Sanctification was a big word I often heard in church and I assumed it had something to do with Santa's vacation. He would definitely need one after Christmas was over. I pleaded with God for the welfare of the children in Africa, beseeched him for every sick person I knew and even interceded for the President of the United States (even if he were a Democrat.) Dad cleared his throat to urge me to wind it up, but I was on a roll. Finally, when the turkey was iced over and the biscuits were burnt, I said "Amen." For some reason, no one ever asked me to bless the food again—at least not on Thanksgiving Day.

After dinner, I plopped down into my bean-bag chair, bloated and bulging. But in a moment of quiet reflection (and between burps) I did recall a few blessings of real significance. Mom and Daddy had taken me to church since before I could crawl. I met Jesus at seven. Lana Rouse, my best friend, asked Jesus into her heart when I told her how much He loved her. We were baptized on my birthday in matching dresses. I was so thankful my parents loved each other, and that I had a cute little sister. I was so thankful I had nice teachers at school and friends who hung out with me even when I was cranky. Mom read me *More Little Visits with God* at bedtime. She told me that Jesus put little children in His lap and held them tight. At that moment, I felt like He was hugging me tight, too.

My heart warmed as I felt God's smile and His peace. Maybe Thanksgiving wasn't such a lame holiday after all. Maybe it was the best day ever!

- Study Psalm 100. What are the verbs in this chapter? How should we come before God? What are the attributes that He possesses that cause us to adore Him?
- Write a Thanksgiving blessing. List some of the ways God has touched your life in the past year. You may write a poem, a song, or combine scripture verses with your own thoughts.
- Read 2 Corinthians 4:13-15. What causes God to be thankful? How can we gladden His heart, according to this passage?
- Read Ephesians 1:15-23. Paul was praying for the saints. Who are some people in your life for whom you are thankful? Why do you cherish them so? Pray Paul's prayer for the significant people in your life. Insert their names where Paul uses the pronoun "you."