



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Like loving one another, giving thanks is foreign to the basic nature of mankind.

This is the reason God has to actually command us to “give thanks always for all things,” just as He has to command us to love each other. Otherwise, as basically selfish beings, we’d grab and grasp, hoard and hog, and never share or stop to say to our generous Creator — thank you.

Recently I had occasion to observe human nature in its pure, primitive state. Below the equator in the Amazon basin live several tribes of Indians whose only contact with civilization has been to see the small planes of the jungle pilots flying overhead. We landed on an unbelievably short (650 feet) jungle strip. Word had come the chief of the tribe was near death. We had brought in medicine.

The pilot carefully explained to the chief’s wife the benefit of the medicine. Taking it would save his life. It was given free. Her eyes narrowed. She grabbed it from us and disappeared into the jungle. She never looked back. Never said thank you. She didn’t know she should, and even if she did, she didn’t know how. Expressing appreciation was not part of her nature.

Before we took off I let one of the little naked children (there were a score of them who had gathered around the plane) listen to the sound of my wristwatch. His face broke into a huge grin as he pointed to it and motioned to his friends to come and hear. “Tickety, tickety!” he giggled, pulling it close to his ear again.

Seeing I had a friend, I gave him a piece of American chewing gum. He smelled, licked, chewed and laughed. Then ran away into the jungle, his friends chasing him wanting to share the chewing. But he never once said “Thank you.” He didn’t know how.

Perhaps this is the reason Thanksgiving Day is special to me. It says something, not only about those early Pilgrims who not only turned away from the graves of their loved ones to thank God for life and provision, but taught their new friends, the Indians, how to join them in saying, “Thank you, God!” You can say all you want about America’s immorality, the nation still does something no other nation of the world (except Israel) does — that is pause for a national day of thanksgiving to God.

And, like loving my fellow man, the more I praise God and say thank you the more I enjoy doing it. Let every day be a Thanksgiving Day — oh, not with turkey and cranberry sauce — but by waking and sleeping with the words “thank you, Father God” running through our hearts. Then, when November comes, we can raise our voices in one accord and say with our Pilgrim fathers “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”