



November 2017

***I give THANKS to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and will glorify Your name forever! (Psalm 86:12)***

Thanksgiving Day is just around the corner! Many think of turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy and dressing (or perhaps you call it "filling"), colorful vegetables and all the other trimmings which accompany the delicious family meal. Mmmm, the very thought has my mouth watering!

What a wonderful day... to be reminded of the many blessings in our lives for which we are grateful. Yes, plenty of delicious, healthful food is one of those blessings! An even greater blessing is the friends with whom to enjoy the meal!

Since I am actually writing this letter a couple of weeks *before* Thanksgiving Day, I can't report on the delight of our family get-together but I can tell you that I sure am looking forward to seeing our children, grandchildren, and other friends who will join us that weekend.

I'm thankful for family... for Sharon (my wife) who has, for over 44 years, been my biggest cheerleader and encourager. Loyal and true, kind and gentle, she's a sweetheart! I'm thankful for our four children and their spouses. And what an absolute joy to see our 12 grandchildren learning to honor the Lord with their lives. Their presence in the room adds light and laughter!

I'm thankful for the ALM ministry entrusted to Sharon and me and our staff. We have many opportunities to share in churches as well as to talk with individuals/couples/families through the counseling services. For 39 years, the ALM team has been so blessed to see God at work in the lives of those who seek Him.

I'm thankful for the many individuals and families which support this ministry through their prayers and with their finances. It's actually pretty amazing, when you think about it, that ALM has never had a required fee schedule for the counseling services. We have only been able to continue this ministry because of the kindness and generosity of so many of you. Thank you!

I'm thankful that, even in the midst of economic hard times and political turmoil, our Father's eyes are upon us. Jesus told us we do not need to *worry* about life and its details. We should notice how our Father cares even for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field!

***Give THANKS in all circumstances,
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thess 5:18)***

***Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness
and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)***

May we express our gratitude to God AND to others!

John Charles, director (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

P.S. Don't overlook Sharon's children's poem about the goat and the sheep. It's cute... with a good lesson for all of us!

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THANKSGIVING MANNERS

Across our nation families and friends will gather on November 23 to celebrate Thanksgiving. Almost all of these events will include eating a meal together. Undoubtedly some guests will use better table manners than others. Did you ever wonder about the origin of some of our rules of etiquette? Perhaps your guests will be interested in the following smattering of table “tidbits.”

From the 13th century:

- “A number of people gnaw a bone and then put it back in the dish – this is a serious offense.”
- “Refrain from falling upon the dish like a swine while eating, snorting disgustingly and smacking the lips.”
- “Do not spit over or on the table in the manner of hunters.”
- “When you blow your nose or cough, turn round so that nothing falls on the table.”

From the 14th century:

- “A man who clears his throat when he eats, and one who blows his nose in the tablecloth, are both ill-bred, I assure you.”
- “You should not poke your teeth with your knife, as some do; it is a bad habit.”

From the 15th century:

- “Do not put back on your plate what has been in your mouth.”
- “Do not chew anything you have to spit out again.”
- “It is bad manners to dip food into the salt.”

In 1530 a Christian philosopher and educator Erasmus of Rotterdam, wrote a book about the importance of instilling manners at an early age. It was titled *De civilitate morum puerilium*, or *On Civility in Children*. This book went through 30 editions and continued to be reprinted into the 18th century. It became a standard school book in Europe. So, it is reasonable to assume that the early settlers brought many of these ideas along with them to North America. Perhaps they even practiced this decorum at the first Thanksgiving feast. Here is a sampling of Erasmus’ advice...

- “If you cannot swallow a piece of food, turn round discreetly and throw it somewhere.”
- “Do not be afraid of vomiting if you must; for it is not vomiting but holding the vomit in your throat that is foul.”
- “Turn away when spitting lest your saliva fall on someone. If anything purulent falls on the ground, it should be trodden upon, lest it nauseate someone.”
- “You should not offer your handkerchief to anyone unless it has been freshly washed. Nor is it seemly, after wiping your nose, to spread out your handkerchief and peer into it as if pearls and rubies might have fallen out of your head.”
- “To lick greasy fingers or to wipe them on your coat is impolite. It is better to use the tablecloth or the serviette.”
- “Some people put their hands in the dishes the moment they have sat down. Wolves do that.”
- “As you wash your hands, so too, clear troubles from your mind. For it is not good manners to be gloomy at dinner or to make anyone else miserable.”

We may laugh at some of these, but we might consider Paul’s advice to “Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10). Although the Bible isn’t a manners manual, using good etiquette is a practical way to show thoughtfulness to others. Manners are so much more than knowing which knife or fork to use... they are a way of showing honor, courtesy, kindness and consideration to others. So, enjoy your turkey dinner this year... with a big helping of gallant behavior and unselfish regard for the rest of the gang gathered at your table! They’ll be **thankful** you did!



Arthur the Goat

By Sharon Charles

Arthur the goat was an interesting creature.
May the lessons he learned, serve as our teacher...

He lived on a farm in a barn made of stone
And acted as though the whole world was his own.
He was selfish and stubborn, a bossy young bully
Who looked down his nose at all critters woolly.
Sheep! Sheep! Sheep! Art hated the lot!
They were so much beneath him, at least that's what Art
thought.



One particular lamb, who was
named Little Joe,
Art despised and mistreated
and called him his foe.
Why Arthur detested this
sheep was a puzzle
'Cause Joe gave him always a
warm smile and nuzzle.

But Arthur the goat lived for fun, food and play
And pestering lambs and stealing their hay.
Every day... that was his delight
And it made all his barn-mates cringe at his sight.

Except for Little Joe who just would not quit
Being kind to the goat who butted and bit.

As weeks turned to months, Arthur started to tire
Of his life in a barnyard surrounded by wire.
Life had grown routine and boring for Artie.
He wanted goat friends with whom he could party.
He wanted more fun, more adventure, no sheep!
So he made up his mind he would soon take a leap...

And therefore one day when out in the yard
He noticed the sheep dog was not on yard guard.
So giving a run and a huge goat-ly jump
He cleared the fence rails without one single bump!
He'd escaped! He was thrilled, excited and proud!
No more would he live with that old barnyard crowd.
And off to the mountains he bounded with glee
So glad of Joe and all sheep to be free!

At first life was great and Arthur was glad
He had run from the life he thought was so bad.
"Ah! Such fun in the heights!" the young goat concluded,
"Those dull sheep in the barnyard are blindly deluded!"
He met other goats and joined up with their herds
And he charmed them with his self-puffing words.

As new-goat-on-the-rock he was greatly admired
He was sure he had found the life he desired.
But as weeks turned to months all his new friends could see
That the only one Arthur cared for was "Me!"
So waiting until Arthur slept one dark night
They slunk away quietly before it was light.

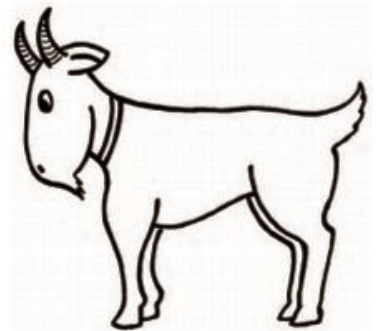
Arthur awoke friendless, alone and confused
Convinced he was faultless and unjustly abused.
He thought, "Who needs the farm, the mountain or
buddies?
I'll be so much happier without those fuddy-duddies!"

But then as he stomped his hoof in disdain
He felt one big drop on his head... it was rain!
And oh how it rained, it stormed on for hours...
It drenched the rocks, the trees, the flowers.
It soaked Arthur's fur; he got chilled to the bone.
He started to whine and shiver and moan.
He needed some shelter... there was none on his ledge.
So he crept to the cliff and peered over the edge.
And then all at once his footing gave way
And in a flash, at the base of the mountain he lay...
Broken-legged, bleeding and likely to die
Friendless and hopeless ... Arthur started to cry.
He cried in the downpour, a sad helpless billy
Who longed for the barnyard which no longer seemed silly.

Meanwhile back on the farm, all Art's barn mates were glad
That pesty old Arthur had gone when he had.
Ah! Life without that difficult ram
Seemed much better to all, save one little lamb...
For Little Joe loved that mean, selfish kid
In spite of the mean, selfish stuff that he did.
And so Little Joe chose to watch and wait
And pray for Arthur to come through the gate.

Weeks turned to months and then came that day
When torrents of rain pelted down on the hay.
The animals snuggled warm and dry in their stall
But Little Joe couldn't rest at all.
And braving the deluge and cold and the wind
He ventured out to find
his friend.

How one small lamb-y
managed to spy
A mud-covered goat,
scared and waiting to die,
In a deep mountain gully,
alone and afraid...
Well it was no doubt a
miracle made!



continued on back page

'Arthur the Goat' continued

"Oh Arthur!" Little Joe "baaed" to the goat...
"Here, snuggle next to my warm, woolly coat.
I'm so glad I found you! You mustn't leave... never!
Please come back to us Arthur... we'll love you forever!
The farmer is coming. He'll know just what to do
To fix you up as good as new!"

And sure enough before nightfall came,
Arthur was back home with all those he'd treated with shame.
And cheered on by Joe, all the livestock forgave
And welcomed the lost goat the young sheep had saved.
And that's how Arthur, undeserving, dejected,
Was found by the lamb he had one day rejected.

Was Arthur different? Why yes, yes, he was!
'Cause that's what seeing the truth often does.
He began to be kind and no more was a bully.
He'd been changed by a sheep who loved him fully!
And Arthur learned he could still have such fun,
But never at one sheep's expense, no not one!
And the world he once craved, he knew now to be bitter
While the walls of his barnyard protected each critter.
Arthur the goat never more chose to roam...
His heart - thanks to Joe - was finally home!

And so the lesson
we all should
now keep?
**Better less like a
goat, and more
like a sheep!**



Lay Counselor Training Course

Sharon and I, along with visiting teacher Dr Jim Johnson enjoyed sharing with the 22 students who joined us for six Monday evenings, eager to sharpen their skills as "people-helpers!" Most of the participants want to more-effectively help those within their own churches, communities, and families. Topics ranged from "How to get started" to addressing specific issues such as depression and anxiety. The sessions flew by as we learned together and cheered each other on. A strong challenge was that we might recognize, each day, that "Today, I am an able minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ!" (2 Corinthians 3:6)



Some feedback from a few of the students:

"The class was very beneficial and Biblically based, and I learned a lot about how to help people with their struggles."

"The combination of textbook and real-life examples promoted real-life application."

"You encouraged me to use the Word of God in helping others."

"I came away motivated and inspired to love more... laugh more... learn more!"

Open Arms Childbirth Class

**Five Consecutive Thursdays at 7:00pm
January 4 - February 1, 2018**

Taught by an experienced childbirth educator, this class covers the same information offered in a hospital course, but includes a distinctively Christian perspective. You will have the opportunity to meet and connect with other expectant couples and you will gain many practical helps as you prepare for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course. Please register by contacting the ALM office.



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