



# Wings of Gratitude

By Elisabeth Sichrovsky (15)

Sometimes we become so embroiled in life's petty troubles, so focused on our own personal problems, that we take for granted the great blessings we enjoy. Such was my state that hot August morning. My older sister would return to her job in a few days, school was starting, and I had a great deal of work in helping to care for the house and my seven brothers and sisters, plus volunteer and missionary work. Few of my friends lived nearby, free time was scarce, and I was absorbed in self-pity.

*I must have it harder than any other kid, I thought, as I sat down at the computer for my weekly study of international news. Accounts of horror, poverty, and oppression soon appeared before my eyes. I had always been affected by stories like these and prayed hard for the innocents who were suffering. But today I was struck in an entirely different way. I read:*

*I was fleeing with my children when a firefight started. We tried to run, but the next moment there was a horrible boom and bodies and clothes flew everywhere. I screamed for my children—but it was too late. My four little flowers were gone, gone with the smoke. ...*

*The next article read: Life is a painful struggle for survival. My little sister was killed riding her bike near our home. Death hangs over us constantly. Each day might be the last. My mother can only cry all day. ...*

I could not read any more. Suddenly my life—with all its hassles and troubles—seemed wonderful. My family was a treasure, my work a privilege. I was healthy and strong. I awoke each morning with clothes to wear, food on the table, and a roof over my head. I had the joy, moral support, and faith that come from a strong Christian upbringing. In an instant, those things that I had considered so important dwindled before me. I was blessed with the greatest gifts of all: love and peace. It opened my eyes and I knew that was enough.

My life has been much easier after that day. Oh, the circumstances aren't any different. But I am different. I have found I can rise above any trial—on the wings of gratitude.




## A Life Change

Donald Deffner (Seasonal Illustrations)

Take the instance of a young woman of twenty who, after a horrible accident, was so crippled that she could only type with pencils tied to her hands. Writing to her campus pastor and thanking him for the 2,000 cards she had received from fellow students, she stated:

My condition isn't so bad. I can move my arms slightly, shrug my shoulders, turn my neck, and raise my wrists. I guess that doesn't sound like much, but in all honesty I like it this way. My whole personality changed with my accident and I became a better person. I used to lie in bed and say, "Please, God, let me walk." Over and over I said, "Please, God." And something or someone changed it in my mind and I found myself saying, "Suzie, why don't you 'please God'?" It was so strange how it happened. I truly think that it was a miracle. Sometimes I think people miss a lot out of life by simply not taking the time to realize that the whole concept of life is giving to others, no matter how much one has to give. My philosophy on life sure has changed.

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It is always possible to be thankful for what is given rather than to complain about what is not given. One or the other becomes a habit of life.—*Elisabeth Elliot (wife of Jim Elliot, a missionary killed by Auca Indians in Ecuador)*

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The Christian should be an alleluia from head to foot.—*Saint Augustine (?–604)*

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Topics: positiveness, gratitude, giving to others

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