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## Daily Devotion



### How Do You Like Them Apples?

Recently someone shared an incident that happened to a fellow Christian in our area. Mary was her name. Mary has always been a very giving, loving person. She came from a large family and learned to share with others as a child. When she heard there was a need, she was usually among the first to step forward to fulfill that need. So, when she learned of a group of people who had little access to fresh fruit and food in general, she immediately swung into action with a plan.

Singlehandedly, she went to a nearby orchard, purchased several bushels of apples and then carefully sorted them into smaller bags just the right size for an average household. Mary joyfully transported the apples about 35 miles and carried them in to the distribution center where she hoped to find people who would be thrilled to receive the freshly picked apples.

While some were thankful to receive the blessing of the apples, Mary left the mission center downhearted and disgusted. She couldn't stop thinking about one woman she had met there. It was this one mother who looked at the apples and said, "Oh my son loves apples!" Excitedly, Mary offered her a small bag of apples adding, "Take these home with you. Cut them up for him. He will love them." The mother quickly replied, "Oh, I'm too busy. I don't have time for that." Those words were hard to hear! How could any mother, who claims to love her son, not be willing to slice an apple when someone who does not even know her son went to the trouble and expense of purchasing, transporting and carefully presenting a bountiful supply of healthy apples.

As I heard the story I wondered how I would have reacted. I wondered if Mary would choose to continue showering an ungrateful person with undeserved gifts of love? Within seconds, God's Holy Spirit led me to focus instead on Jesus. How does He feel when He provides us with all our food, gives us the skills and equipment to tastefully prepare it, but when it is time to thank Him for it, we are too busy to pray. I wondered how He feels when day after day we find it too easy to leave our Bible on the shelf rather than to read the Word He wrote with us in mind. Does He notice the traffic jams outside stadiums and the half empty church parking lots? How does He feel when we scream His name in anger rather than sing praises to His Name? Without a doubt, God has feelings too. I pray Mary continues to be a blessing to these people in need. Her example can be a witness to them and to us, but this woman and her family will likely live with or without those apples. None of us can live without Jesus. He provides our every breath and every heartbeat. Everything we are and have is a gift from Him. None of us are able to earn His love and goodness. None of us deserve the unending gifts He freely provides for us. Perhaps the most amazing gift He gives us is complete forgiveness for the many times we have knowingly and unknowingly hurt Him and still He daily provides us with all that we need to support this body and life.

God help us to be more like You and less like us without You! Help us to freely give as You have given to us. Forgive us for our own unthankfulness and fill our hearts with love for all people everywhere, even the ones who treat us the way we too often treat You.

By Elaine Bickel