

## DAY TEN

*For God so loved the world that He gave...*

John 3:16

His name is Andre, Director of the orphanage in Kaigorodok, a small rural village approximately 600 miles northeast of Moscow. In 1996, Andre and his children were desperate with little hope of help for the barest of necessities, even food.

Through the generosity of God's people in the church, Andre was able to provide for the children's basic needs and see them through the cold Russian winter. The following year, members of the church that provided financial support visited Andre and his children -- finding them better fed, healthier, and happier. Andre was smiling from ear to ear. The children performed skits, sang songs and treated them to a wonderful feast: the reason, gratitude. Andre and the children were genuinely thankful and out of gratitude they wanted to, perhaps even had to, give.

After working in rural Tennessee with his youth group, a 16-year-old boy experienced this same type of response from an elderly woman for whom his group had been working. Even though she could afford very little, she had been deeply touched by the work that had been done for her and wanted to give something in return. The woman went to the dollar store and purchased socks for each of the kids. Normally the 16-year-old would have scoffed at such a gift, but he knew this gift was given with profound gratitude and was a real sacrifice.

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Generous and sacrificial giving begins with gratitude; gratitude for what God has done through the gift of His son Jesus Christ; gratitude for what God has done for us through the family of God we know as our church. For those who make incredible, truly sacrificial gifts, it is an expression of their deep gratitude for what God has done for them through their local church -- the family of God.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do I recognize the blessings that God has poured forth on my family and me?
2. How has God blessed me through the people in my local church?
3. Does my gift recognize the extent of God's blessings in my life; is it generous and sacrificial?
4. Is my gift grounded in gratitude?

## PRAYER

*Oh God, I have so much for which to be thankful. You have blessed me in ways that are too numerous to even count. Forgive me for not being always grateful. Forgive me for focusing on what I don't have instead of all You have given me. Fill my heart with gratitude and show me how I can give with generosity and sacrifice. In the name of Christ, Amen.*