

“Deep Gratefulness”

By Robert J. Wicks

“Taking ourselves lightly allows us to recognize when we commit the mistake of entitlement. If we feel that life owes us more, we paradoxically wind up depriving life, ourselves and those whom we are called to guide (children, employees, students...). We fail to experience the spontaneous joy of reaping the benefits of what is already given to us. We live in a world filled with such very needy and demanding people. Such people, when faced with munificence, ignore it in order to inspect the overall situation to make sure they are getting what they feel they deserve. The following popular story illustrates the type of person about whom I am speaking.

A man would come in each day to a restaurant that served a small loaf of bread with its meals. Shortly after sitting down, he would ask for more bread to be served with his meal. After a few days of this, the waitress got tired of running back and forth, so she put two loaves of bread in front of him. Much to her surprise, he still finished them in record time and asked for more. She then gave him two baskets with four loaves when he came in next time – only to have him eventually demand more bread. Finally, she’d had it with him, so she talked to the baker prior to his next visit. The baker made a large loaf of bread four feet by two feet in diameter. She thought to herself, “This will shut him up!”

When he came in and was seated, she went back to the kitchen for the bread. Struggling as she carried it to the table, but still smirking all the while she did it, she dropped it on the table in front of him. He looked at it, paused, looked up and said in a whiny voice, “Oh, so we’re back to one piece of bread again, eh?”

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