

Chalkboard

By

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Thanksgiving. I suppose if our primary teachers were teaching this word in vocabulary building some austere student would note that the word is a compound made up of “thanks” and “giving”. “Thanks” can be a noun representing an acknowledgement of gratitude as in “She gave thanks for her meal.” or could be used as a verbal, or maybe an elliptical expression, as in “The fan said to the basketball player that he was a great outside shooter. The player replied, ‘Thanks.’ (I thank you)”.

“Giving” is even more versatile as shown in the following examples. “He has a giving nature. Giving gifts is more rewarding than receiving gifts. Don’t be giving me no lip, young’en!” You can decide which was a gerund (or was that a participle), which was part of the subject of the sentence, and which was just poor lingo.

Interestingly, the order of the two words within Thanksgiving could be reversed and make equal or greater sense. While not traditional, how about “Givingthanks Day”? Such shift might better remind us for what the day could be used.

Maybe our school curriculum should have a strand to teach students how to be proficient in performing the act of giving thanks. But if we did, the state would feel a need to test it. I see it now. “Below basic” would be the sullen or self-occupied child who would take his or her tray in the cafeteria and never even see the persons who served the meal. “Basic” would be the child who mumbled “Thanks” to another child who picked up a dropped napkin for the first. “Proficient” might describe the child who, after taking his empty tray to the wash window, said to one of the cafeteria employees, “Thank you for the delicious lunch.” Finally, “Advanced” might describe the child who also said “Thank You” to the cook and also understood in his or her heart that the meal did not happen by accident, that someone or ones else had labored so that he or she might be nourished.

If, as parents, we fail to teach our children to appreciate other people we will raise a generation of self-centered, selfish, adults who believe the world owes them something. If, as parents, we fail to teach our children to be grateful for their country then we risk losing our freedom as a nation. If, as parents, we fail to teach our children to be thankful for the things they have, there lies the possibility that our progeny will consume the very earth

on which they will live. If, as parents, we fail to teach our children to be thankful for life itself and the One who gave it, then soulless animals that see no god higher than himself or herself will populate the future.

Trite as it may sound, I am thankful that for the last “going on twelve years” that you have allowed me to be superintendent at your school and that you have made my family part of this community. I hope that this Thanksgiving Day will be, for you and your family and for me and mine, a day of giving thanks for all those reasons we have to do so.