I Am Grateful

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

PSALM 107:1

When I was a little girl, I liked to sing the fun song that starts like this: "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart…" I sang that song all the time. My family sang it in church, at home, and in the car. But it took me a long time to realize that even when things around me were sad and life was hard, I could still have the joy I was singing about. I could still find things for which I could be grateful.

A lot of sad things happened where I grew up. My neighborhood wasn't very safe, and my family didn't have a lot of money. My father left our home when I was a baby. My mother, my brother, and I lived with my grandmother. My home was warm and dry, but it wasn't fancy. Still, even with these not-so-good circumstances, my grandmother always seemed to have the biggest smile on her face. Even though other people lived in safer neighborhoods and had more money and "normal" family situations, my

grandmother still praised God and was grateful for all He had given her.

For a long time, I had a hard time understanding how my grandmother could be thankful when so many other people seemed to have a better life. In fact, even now I can get kind of grumpy when I have to fold the laundry or go get groceries. I forget to be grateful for warm clothes, a car that works, and food to eat. So how did my grandmother manage to keep smiling in her difficult situation?

She relied on God to give her the strength she needed, and He gave her His joy. My grandmother knew she was God's child, and because of that, she had joy inside her. And she had hope. Even though her life was not picture perfect, she chose to be grateful for what she had instead of choosing to complain about what she didn't have. When we choose to have a heart of gratitude, we will notice the good things God has brought into our lives, and we will be filled with joy.

Dear God,

Sometimes I wish that I lived in a nicer home or that my family took fancy vacations or maybe even that my mom or dad didn't have to work so many hours. It's easy to complain about things I see in my home or family, but that's not how You want me to live. You want me to have

a heart that is grateful for all You have given me. Please help me to notice all Your gifts and to have a heart of joy and gratitude. Thank You that Your love never changes!

In Jesus's name—amen.