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## *I Am Thankful For All The Things I Do Not Need !!*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

*(The following is an abbreviated version of Sam Candler's sermon at the Buckhead Community Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 18, 2007.)*

It's that time of year. It's time to wear everybody down by asking incessantly what we are thankful for. From kindergartens to garden clubs, everyone will be pressing themselves to consider all the things we are-or should be-thankful for.

Isn't giving thanks a sweet activity? Well, not always. I pause to remember Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and tax-collector (Luke 18:9-14). If "giving thanks" is all there is to happiness and righteousness, then surely the Pharisee is there. After all, he was certainly "giving thanks." His problem, however, was what he was giving thanks for!

,During this upcoming season of Thanksgiving and Christmas, then, I remind myself that what we give thanks for can also affect our spiritual lives negatively. For example, there may be a problem with giving thanks for over-abundance and over-supply,. Therefore, I have decided this year to thank God in another way. ,In short, I want to thank God for all the things I do not need!

I do not know about you, but I have received about a hundred pounds of retail catalogs in the last few weeks. The same catalogs are in the doctor's offices. They are in the seat pocket of the airplane I flew a few weeks ago.

I thank God that I do not need all the products that those catalogs are offering. Have you noticed how much stuff is in those catalogs that you absolutely do not need?

Here's a few of the items I thank God that I do not need. I do not need an all-in-one breakfast machine. ,. I enjoy a breakfast that requires a little time to prepare. It's usually just enough time for me to wake up. Machines that claim to save me time usually cost me a great deal more anxiety.

I am also thankful that I do not need a fifteen-thousand dollar exercise machine that promises to make me lose weight if I use it only ten minutes a day. ,I am also thankful I do not need the fanciest GPS-global positioning system-in my car. ..For one thing, I like to know where I am going before I start driving the car. ,For a second thing, I really don't want a strange voice telling me about every turn and every local attraction we pass.

Here's another item I am thankful I do not need. It's a new kind of shoe with industrial grade absorption springs in the heel. The ad says it defies gravity. Yeah, that's just what I need. I hop over a crack in the street, and I end up bouncing into a plate-glass window. I am so thankful I do not need to wear gravity-defying shoes.

How about the world's largest write-on map mural? Do I need that? Nope. ,I am thankful that I do not need a runaway alarm clock. Have you seen it? Its cousin is an alarm clock that starts flying around the room when it goes off. The idea is that you have to get out of the bed and search for it in order to turn off the sound. That way, you are definitely awake. I am so thankful that I do not need that.

I am thankful that I do not need a "garage elevator." Apparently this device is a steel platform that you install in your garage. After you put all your garage clutter into it, you hoist it up to the ceiling, so it's out of your way. That way, I suppose, I can put more clutter on the floor and fill every cubic foot of the garage with other things I do not use. I don't need a garage elevator, and I cannot imagine how to install it anyway.

Think of all the things we do not need this year! I do not need to paint the kitchen another color. I do not need another sweater. I do not need another channel on my cable television menu. I do not need to spend more money.

I simply do not need all this stuff that the world tells me constantly I do need. I am thankful, so thankful, that I really don't need it! When I realize how much I do not need, I am that much more free to acknowledge the simple wonders God has for me right now-the simple gifts like love and family, friends and community.

Maybe this is what real thanksgiving feels like. Thanksgiving is freedom from the unnecessary clutter of our lives, freedom from what we do not need, so that we can know the simple gifts God has for each of us.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler