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one large hand wide. It does not open. Then again rarely does the door. This two inch thick glass is what I call my window to my world. From it I can view the other ten feet of my existence. Five feet to the left and five feet to the right.

When I was first punished I sat here wondering how long it would be before God would love me again and give me back my freedom. Then as I sat here one day counting my blocks, I started to notice things. Things I noticed in my boyhood room. In my childhood as I sat in my room, I was thankful I had so much that dad had given me. Such as a remote controlled car and games, lots of games to make think. In here I began to take notice of the company I have. Ha you say, I have gone mad being in solitary. No I am not, I have a family of ants! Yes, when you are all alone and kept out of touch it is hard to realize what a blessing and how good it is just to see something living even something as simple as an every day ant.

In the morning, I save sugar from my meal to feed them when they come for their daily visit with me. But their visit is only for a few short hours. One day, I noticed how hard the ants worked carrying their sugar away. I said to myself, I don't have to carry my food God gives it to me every day here in my room. One day during a rain, I thought the ant's house is getting wet yet my cell is dry and I have a soft bed and blanket. I read about people in foreign lands that are refugees with no where to sleep and nothing to eat and think how blessed I am.

As a child I began to realize I was a loved son. Dad only punished me so I would realize that my wrongs hurt the good he tried to give me. Now as an adult, yet a child of God, locked in my cell, God

shows me that has given me so much. Yet out there I lived too fast to see it. Too fast to eat a hot meal. Too fast to write a letter home. Too fast to appreciate a living creature like an ant. Now I see how blessed I am, a loving family waiting for me at home just as my heavenly family and God waits for me.

Simplistic gratitude. To you I say look at my simplistic gratitude and realize just how much you have to be thankful for. Your job, your house, freedom to walk in the sunshine, the smile of your loved ones and freedom to attend church and sing. Yes in my cell there is only me and my ant friends to attend church on Sunday. No songs to hear, no smiling faces to see. I read the bible verses to them. We pray for a better world and finally have supper together before they leave for the night. Then I sit here all alone in my cell.

Take a moment and reflect on all your heavenly father has blessed you with for he really has blessed you even if you are in the same position I am. Maybe, just maybe my position is even better than yours. For you may not have enough to eat or a place to sleep or have not taken the time to look at the love and blessings of God. If this is the case, and your earthly life seems too hard or complicated, I pray for you that God will send you a smile and a simple blessing. Even if it is just an ant.

*Inspired by God. Written by Russell Poston, an inmate in an unnamed facility.*



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## Simplistic Gratitude

I can remember my childhood room. The walls were painted blue with a plush carpeting of the same color. One of the walls of my room was covered with a sail boat print wallpaper. This room made me so happy. I was the envy of all the boys in the neighborhood. The room was always filled with a lot of toys and fun things to do. The only time that I did not like my room was when I was being punished. It was then that my room, the envy of the other boys, became my prison. When I did wrong, I would be forced to sit in my room. It was the loss of freedom that hurt. However, the real pain was the loss of love or at least, what I thought was a loss of love. I would sit in my room and count the sail boats on the wall waiting for dad to decide to love me again and release me from my prison.

The bright blue walls are gone. Now the color resembles a dirty yellowing white like a hundred smokers took a cigarette break in my six by nine cell. Three of the walls are made of cement block. There are two hundred and sixteen blocks that make up my walls. Although the drab paint is many

layers thick, I can still count each and every block, which is something I do daily. I look at each block as I call out its number. A ritual that I have performed each and every day since I have been sentenced here. Two thousand one hundred and ninety times, I have counted the blocks in the walls!



The floor is a concrete slab, no plush carpeting here. It is stained a black mildew color. The floor and the walls are always cold. I don't believe the temperature ever changes in here. I always feel damp and cold, as I sit here all alone, all alone in my cell. I can remember with a smile, mom always saying to me, "Son get your slippers on or you'll catch your

death," what an understatement that is here. I sure do miss her, it has been fifty two thousand five hundred and sixty hours since our last visit. Give or take a few minutes.

The fourth wall is a little different, it is made of solid steel. This wall holds my only window. My only view of the outside world. It is a long narrow window. I would say roughly five shoes high and