

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
From *YouthWorker Journal* and YouthWorker.com

I'd Like to Thank...

To Whom Have You Said 'Thank You' Today?

By Paul Asay

What Happened:

On Feb. 24, Hollywood's elite gathered for the Academy Awards—collecting gleaming statuettes for achievements in acting, directing, writing and a whole bevy of other artistic and scientific disciplines.

Most of those who received awards spent time—sometimes too much time—thanking everyone who helped make the award possible: their families, directors, agents, second-grade teachers, pet ferrets, Twitter followers, childhood imaginary friends...

Statistically, who do Oscar recipients typically thank?

Rebecca Rolfe studied every Academy Awards ceremony since 1953. In her research*, major Oscar winners were more likely to thank a movie's fellow cast members than anyone else. They were mentioned a total of 313 times by actors, actresses and directors—nearly three times as often as agents.

*Found at www.RebeccaRolfe.com

Honorees thanked their mothers 59 times, fathers 48 times and offspring 104 times. In all, nearly half of honorees thanked family members—but more than 60 percent thank production reps; about 40 percent thank the Academy; only 5 percent thank God.

All that thanking makes some honorees a little weepy. About a fifth of winners cry, and most ramble for a while. The typical acceptance speech is nearly 2 minutes long, although the orchestra cuts in after 90 seconds.

Talk About It:

It's natural to thank those closest to you when accepting a major award, but you don't need to get a gold statue to be grateful to those who've made a difference in your life. Who would you like to thank for making you who you are?

Think about your best traits: Maybe you have a great sense of humor, a strong drive to succeed or a knack for dealing with people. From where do you think these traits come? Is there someone who encouraged you along the way? Who pushed you in a certain direction?

Now, think about what you enjoy doing—the music you listen to, sports you like to play or books you like to read. Who introduced you to your favorite band? Took you to your favorite movie? Helped you realize you like to write, sing or play baseball?

Do these people know the sort of difference they've made in your life? Have you told them? Have you done other things to show your appreciation? If so, what did you do? If that person were in the room right now, what would you tell him or her?

God is, of course, the ultimate source of all the good we have in our lives. He wires us in ways to appreciate the world around us—the world He gave to us. He brings people into our lives to help us on our journeys. Have you thanked Him lately? Have you acknowledged His gifts to you?

What the Bible Says:

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever” (Ps. 107:1).

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Col. 2:6-7).

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing” (2 Thess. 1:3).

Paul Asay has covered religion for The Washington Post, Christianity Today, [Beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com) and The (Colorado Springs) Gazette. He writes about culture for Plugged In and wrote the Batman book God on the Streets of Gotham http://www.amazon.com/God-Streets-Gotham-Screen-Ourselves/dp/141436640X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1353340739&sr=8-1&keywords=God+on+the+Streets+of+Gotham (Tyndale). He lives in Colorado Springs with wife, Wendy, and two children. Follow him on Twitter @AsayPaul.