

Question: As our national time for thanksgiving comes around again, will you comment on the value of being thankful?

Thankfulness is an attitude that should be reflected in almost every aspect of our lives because it reflects one's attitude toward God and toward our fellow human beings. A thankful person recognizes that almost every moment of his/her life, especially in our modern world, is dependent upon the labor and generosity of others.

For example, we live in homes powered by electricity maintained by people who are willing to work with highly dangerous equipment for long hours—day and night, in heat, rain, sleet or snow. Our food is made possible by farmers who work from sunup to sundown while facing the possibility each year of losing everything through drought, flood, fire or storm. These people are paid for their work, but no amount of money can fully compensate them for all that they do. Giving a little thought to those who make our lives easier reminds us of ways we benefit every day from the simple courtesies of people like parking attendants, store clerks, school teachers, garbage collectors, auto mechanics, firemen, policemen and on and on and on. Where would we be without these people in our lives? All of them need to hear our words of thanksgiving.

A failure to express gratitude, which grows out of unselfishness, may be a sign of a selfish, self-centered arrogant person who feels the world owes him or her. Words of gratitude are life-giving. Those who seldom hear the words “thank you” or never receive simple tokens of appreciation may soon lose their sense of self-worth and hope. Feeling unappreciated and not needed can lead a person into the depths of sadness and depression. Feeling unappreciated can also cause some to quit their work and become angry and resentful people. They, in turn, may drag others down in frustration and discouragement. Without thanksgiving, we would live in a miserable and unhappy world at war with itself. As the wise man said: “The tongue has the power of life and death” (Proverbs 18:21). Thankful hearts and words are vital to a world of peace and harmony.

Above all else, thankful hearts understand that God alone is the giver of “every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17). He is the giver of life as well as creator of all things. He put fertility in the soil that produces our food. He placed the sun and the moon in the sky. He sends the clouds to water the earth. He has provided the

beauty of the earth, the seasons of the year, the food we eat, the air we breathe and the strength for our labor. Everything we see, hear or touch in this world is made possible only by the loving hand of God, our heavenly father. In addition, we have received his grace of spiritual healing through the gift of his precious son, Jesus Christ. Now, through Jesus we have forgiveness, inner power of the Holy Spirit and eternal hope for glories beyond our ability to comprehend. Let us join the psalmist who said: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

Furthermore, a truly thankful heart results in a spirit of generosity. We have not been blessed that we may be greedy but that we may bless our world through generous sharing and serving. In fact, the more we use what the Lord has given us the more he blesses us. He entrusts his greater gifts only to those who know how to use them to bless others. "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:10-12). May you have a happy Thanksgiving weekend.

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