

SAYING “THANK YOU” TO THE LORD

Adapted from a Family Talk by the Rev. Kenneth O. Stroh

How many times in a day do you say “Thank you” to somebody? How often do people do things for you—help you to put on your coat, hold the door open for you, pass you food at meals, give you presents? And your parents teach you to say “Thank you,” when they and others do things for you. But why do you think they teach you to do this? They love you and will take care of you no matter what you do or say, especially while you are little. Then why do you suppose they want you to say “Thank you” to them and to other people?

They want you to learn this, not for their sakes, but for your sake. They teach you this, not because *they need to hear it*, but because they know that *you need to say it*. For if you want to be happy, you need to learn how to receive love from other people, and how to give it back in return—you need to open your heart to them. And one of the most important ways of doing this is by showing your thankfulness for things they do by saying “Thank you.”

And how much more you need to be thankful to the Lord! For it is the Lord who has given you your parents and your friends. He has given you your homes and clothes and food. He has given you His Word, so that you may learn from it what is good and right, so that you will know how to find the way to heaven. And He builds a beautiful home in heaven for all people who want to live there when they leave this earth. Everything that is good and right and true is given by the Lord, freely.

The Lord gives you all these precious gifts because He is your Heavenly Father. He loves each one of you very much and wants to make you happy. And because He loves you so very much, He will do everything that He possibly can for you, no matter whether you thank Him or not. For the Lord does not need our thanks. He does not need praise or honor from people, because the Lord never changes. He is always the same. And His love for all people—His love for you—stays the same, no matter what you do or say.

Yet, in His Word, the Lord asks that you be thankful to Him. And He demands this thanks, not for *His* sake, but for *your* sake. For when you come before the Lord with praise and thanksgiving, then you can open your heart and mind to Him. And when you do this, the Lord can give you His blessings most fully. He can give you all the good things and all the happiness you could ever wish for. This is why you should say “Thank You” to the Lord every day of your life.

Amen.