3. A "Thank you" Will Do

It is good to faithfully, honestly, sincerely GIVE thanks. But it is also important that we graciously and courteously ACCEPT honest, sincere expressions of gratitude. In Acts 20:35 the apostle Paul, quoting Jesus, says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Giving AND RECEIVING, Jesus says, are BOTH blessed. While giving is MORE blessed, it is also blessed to receive. There is a graciousness in giving, but there is also a graciousness in receiving. Most of us don't know how to accept a compliment. We're like Ray. Compliment Ray on a nice piece of furniture that he has made and his immediate response will be, "Aw, I could have done better." And then he will proceed to point out areas where he should have done this, that, or the other thing. Ray - like most of us - finds it difficult to simply say, "Thank you!"

We know how it hurts our feelings when our good deeds and favors are not appreciated, perhaps even criticized. From this we ought to learn to appreciate acts of kindness shown us and to be grateful for them and to express our thanks simply and honestly.

A sincere sign of appreciation really does warm us. Those who say "I don't want any thanks" are really not being honest with themselves. It is a deep, basic human need to receive expressions of gratitude and appreciation - a few words, a warm handshake, a little hug, a letter, a card, a smile, a telephone call - all, go a long way to encourage and inspire us. I don't believe that anyone is untouched by genuine appreciation. Mark Twain once wrote, "I can live for two months on a good compliment." Most of us warm to his remark. I repeat, a compliment is a very precious gift and it should be received as such. A simple, forthright "Thank you" is sufficient and in order.

Giving and receiving words of appreciation from others is one of many reasons why people are special gifts from God. This brings up a few questions to consider:

⇒ Are we always mindful of these special gifts of people whom the Lord gives us?
⇒ Do we graciously accept their compliments and words of love?
⇒ Do we let these people know what they mean to us?
⇒ Do we faithfully thank the Lord for them?

When mindful of these special gifts of people we ask with Paul, "How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?"
1 Thess. 3:9
A "Thank You" Will Do

We Begin

L: We gather together in the name of Him Who makes us one;
G: In the name of Jesus, who makes us one with Him and one with each other.

We Search Scriptures - I Thessalonians 1:2-3; 3:9 & II Thessalonians 1:3; 2:13-17
Leader (L) and Group (G)

L: We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.
G: We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
L: How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?
G: 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.
L: But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.
G: He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
L: So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.
G: May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

We Meditate
Follow this outline as the meditation is presented

"Tis more blessed to give than to receive" - Acts 20:35
Both giving and receiving are blessed
How to accept a compliment: A "THANK YOU" WILL DO

Do we need gratitude and appreciation from others?
Do we graciously accept it with a "Thank you"?
Do we say "Thank you" to God for the blessings of others?

We Respond

L: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,
G: That we should be called children of God!
L: And that is what we are!
G: Dear friends, let us love another,
L: For love comes from God. God is love.
G: Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.
L: In this way, love is made complete among us.
G: We love because He first loved us.

We Pray

Sometimes, Father, we forget to say "Thank you" to You and to one another. Thank You for the love You have poured on us in rich measure. Thank You also for the love we receive from our fellow believers. When they encourage us or compliment us, help us to accept their love with a gracious "Thank you." Continue to bless us as we give and receive mutual Christian love. Amen.