

# Thank God for His Wonderful Gifts

I recently celebrated a birthday and was blessed with a barrage of cards and gifts. Well-wishing friends and relatives called, sent cards, gave gifts and took me to lunch.

I thoroughly enjoyed the entire experience. I felt loved and special. The years, which are considerable, seemed richer as I faced yet another chapter of my life.

Although I received some wonderful gifts, what I valued most was the love expressed by those around me. I realized that the greatest gifts were not the things I had received but the people God had brought into my life.

Material things come and go—they wear out, go out of style, depreciate, and get old and worn. But love and its expression among those of like faith is eternal. This special love from God, which the Bible calls “agape,” and these relationships will go on forever.

They will not wear out or grow old; they will grow richer. They are priceless treasures that will only increase in value.

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, Jesus (see John 3:16). Jesus so loved that He gave His life in order that we could be forgiven and become adopted sons of God and joint-heirs with Him. But beyond that and as a special bonus, He gave us each other and joined our hearts in His love.

What if, after all that, we refuse to accept His gifts? What if we receive the gift of eternal life but are not willing to love the people He brings into our lives or allow them to love us? What if we choose to keep these expressions of God’s love at a distance, as I once did? We will miss so much!

As I looked across the table at the friends who have weathered many a storm with me, who are growing “older” as well, and gracefully I might add, I cherish them more and more each day. It’s as if God wrapped each one in a special package and presented them to me as His very own array of gifts.

How thankful I am, Lord! Not just for the tangible expressions of Your love given through Your people but for the intangible expressions as well—wise counsel, prayer support, laughter, sharing in good times and bad, admonition, instruction and mentoring.

I understand now that each person is a gift from the Father to someone. Each one comes in a different package, a different shape, size and color. But each one is a reflection of His love.

In becoming more like Him, let’s share the love He so generously pours into our hearts toward others (see Rom. 5:5). And let us gratefully receive those He brings into our lives as special gifts from Him, regardless of the packaging.

This Thanksgiving, when we express our gratitude to God for His salvation, His presence and all the material things He has given us, let’s not forget to thank Him for our family and friends—and the gift of love He has blessed us with through them.

Prayer Power for the Week of November 22, 2015

This week receive all the “love” gifts God sends you through family, friends, new relationships, outreaches and opportunities to connect with others. Pray for their salvation, healing, wholeness, deliverance, prosperity and blessing. Ask God to show you how to specifically reach out to the lonely, lacking and needy. Thank Him for leading you to the ones He desires you to bless and carry His love and presence to them in tangible ways. Continue to pray for our nation, its leaders, all those serving our country, and those

who have suffered severe losses this year. Lift up the persecuted church and pray for the protection of Israel so it can fulfill God's mandate in this season. Before you embark on the busyness of the week, schedule time alone with God to make Him a priority, seek His counsel and receive His peace (Rom. 5:5-8).