



REFLECTIONS

September 18, 2011

**give thanks in all circumstances, for this is
God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Heart of the Giver

The memory is still clear and the lesson unforgotten. I was always thrilled when I received a new package of BB's as a gift from Jack, a family friend. I always received them excitedly, and Mom would always offer a gentle reminder, "What do you say, Richard?" "Thank you, Jack," I would hurriedly respond before running to my room to fill my BB gun.

For Jack the gift was an expression of love for his little friend, so each time he came for a visit with Daddy and Mom, he brought a package of BB's for me. Over time though, the BB's became more of an expectation and less like a gift. Thank you seemed unnecessary or even unwarranted, so Mom's reminder became more and more necessary. "What do you say, Richard?"

All of us have been taught lessons in good manners, but saying thank you is not simply a matter of proper etiquette. Thank you should be an expression of appreciation for the heart of the giver. But too often thank you goes unsaid. It goes unsaid because gifts become an expectation and less like a gift. And sometimes even the giver is taken for granted.

A safe drive to work, the abundance of food and menu choices, close friends, a loving family, and shelter from the elements all can easily become expectations of daily life. An unexpected phone call placing a large order when business is slow, or a doctor's message that an ailment is curable are easily dismissed as ordinary events of life. And God's hand in it all can be taken for granted.

Although the gifts from Jack became an expectation, he gave me the BB's because he loved me. Mom taught me to say thank you because she loved me; and God has given me life and provision to meet my daily needs because He loves me. And still in my ears today, I can hear Mom's gentle reminder, "What do you say, Richard?"

In Christ Jesus, I thank God for his protective hand in my life. And I am blessed by the loving heart of the Giver.

*You are the light of the world,
Richard +*

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