

SHOW LOVE AND GRATITUDE

REV. DON GUICO

What for you is the best way to show your thanks and appreciation to someone who has done a great thing for you? Is it through spending quality time with the person? Saying words of affirmation? Doing acts of service, giving gifts, or physical touch?

Last May, we celebrated Mother's Day. The malls and restaurants being packed to full capacity is a great indication of how thankful children (and husbands) were to the number one woman in their lives. This month, the fathers will have their opportunity to be celebrated, and grandparents will have theirs in September. These are the people who not only have touched our lives, but we owe a great debt of gratitude to for their love and many sacrifices.

But to the one who has loved us unconditionally and sacrificed Himself for us, the one who truly deserves our love and gratitude far more than any person in this world - the holy and perfect God who showed us profound mercy and grace - when do we show thanks and how?

As to the question of when, we do not only celebrate God on Sundays, Christmas and Resurrection Sunday. Nor does our celebration of Him revolve around worship songs alone. We are to thank God daily, in

whatever situation we are in, whether good or seemingly bad.

As to the question of how, I think that we can group into three categories the practical ways we can express our love and gratitude toward God - with our head, with our heart, and with our hands.

With our head, we can love God by:

- Strengthening ourselves in the Lord (1 Sam. 30:6): reminding ourselves who God is, what He has done for us, and what He has promised
- Letting our thoughts dwell on Him (Phil. 4:8)
- Choosing to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7)
- Not being anxious about anything (Phil. 4:6) and minding our attitude toward God, especially when our circumstances are difficult
- Walking by the Spirit and resisting the devil (Gal. 5:16-17)

With our heart, we can love God by:

- Seeking him daily through His Word and prayer (Jer. 29:13)
- Fully committing ourselves to Him (2 Chr. 16:9)
- Surrendering any idol that God

brings to our awareness (2 Kings 17:15)

- Not loving money, which is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10)
- Desiring to be more like Christ and surrendering to His will (Luke 9:23)
With our hands, we can love God by
- Obeying His commands (John 14:15)
- Loving others, fulfilling the "one another commands" (1 John 4:21)
- Serving others using the spiritual gifts we've been given (1 Cor. 14:12)
- Giving generously to God and others who are in need, especially those in the body of Christ (Acts 2:45)
- Leading others to personally know and follow Christ through our life and example (Matt. 28:18-20)

By no means are these exhaustive. But what is important is that we continually ask God how else can we honor Him with our lives with each day He will bless us. He is worthy of all our devotion, and to give Him our all at all times is the least we can do to show Him our love and gratitude.✠