

WHAT SHALL I RENDER TO THE LORD?

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Reading: Psalm 116

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord....

Psalm 116:12-13

These words tell of thanking the Lord for the many benefits or good things that He gives us. But more importantly, these words show us *how* to thank the Lord for all His benefits—how to give thanks to Him. We can think about the many benefits that the Lord gives us, but do we know how to thank Him for them?

We should learn how to thank the Lord, because if we thank Him in the right way, He will see that we really love Him. Then He will be able to bless us even more, by giving us greater benefits so that we may become even happier.

Now you may say, “I do thank the Lord in my prayers. When I think of my home, my friends, my food and clothing, the happy life that I live, I do feel thankful to the Lord. What else can I do to show my thanks?” Well, just saying “thank you” is only a small part of truly *being* thankful, and there is much more that we can do.

There is a big difference between *saying* thank you and *showing* our thanks. It is easy to say thank you, but it is much harder to prove it, that is, to show that we are really thankful.

Let’s take an example. Say that you are sick in bed and feeling miserable because you have nobody to play with. But suddenly one of your friends comes to see you and stays to play with you. He helps you to be much happier. And each time he comes, you thank him for coming over, and you are glad he took the trouble to stop and see you even though he might rather have done something else.

When you are well again, you might feel that just saying “thank you” was too easy. It was not enough to show how really thankful and glad you were. And so you might try to show your thanks by doing something for the friend who visited you when you were sick. You might wait for a chance to be do something for him. In other words, you would want to help your friend and make him happier. And I am sure you could think of many ways to do this.

So, how are you going to thank the Lord for all His benefits toward you? When you are sick, it is the Lord who makes you well again because He gives you

what you need to make you better. Now you may thank people who help you when you are sick and then try to show your thanks by doing something special at another time. But how are you going to thank the Lord by doing some special thing just for Him?

Let us see how the Word teaches us to show our thanks to the Lord. The Psalm we read answers the question, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). "Render" means to give. The Lord has given us everything that we have. What can we possibly give to Him in return?

The Word answers by saying, "I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (Psalm 116:13). This means that in order to show our thanks to the Lord, we must take all the things that He has given us to help save us from evil and allow us to go to heaven. And once we have all these things, we must use them for the purpose that the Lord gave them to us—for our salvation.

When we take the benefits that the Lord gives us and use them with care and thoughtfulness, then we have given Him the real thanks for which He asks.

Actually, it works the same way with everything you are given. You are not truly thankful for something unless you use it in the way it is meant to be used. Take the example of a bicycle. If you were given a bicycle, you would be glad and thankful at the time. But if you were really thankful, if you really enjoyed having the benefit of a bicycle, you would use it with special care so that it would serve you well.

If you just dropped the bike on the ground when you finished riding it, or left it lying outside at night, or didn't clean it, then you would not really be thankful for the bicycle! Then what would happen? Well, your parents might decide to take the bicycle away from you. But even if they did not, the bike might be broken or lost through your carelessness. Then you could not use it anyway.

In the same way, if we do not use something that the Lord has given us in the best way we can, it will be taken away from us. We should try never to let this happen in our lives. When we see any benefit that the Lord gives us, especially something that will help us come closer to Him and to heaven, we should make sure to use it well, for this is true thanksgiving to the Lord. This is what we should remember whenever we say the prayer, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

Amen.