**Lesson 2: When We Recognize God’s Loving Presence, We Naturally Thank Him**

The second logical step is that once we realize what God is to us, what He does for us and how much He loves us, the only decent, polite, obvious and spontaneous response is not only to say, "Yes, You do," but also "Thank You, God my Father, for loving life, being, and a share of your own nature into me. Thank You, Jesus, God the Son and my brother. Thank you God the Holy Spirit, for living on in me." Gratitude is an obvious, spontaneous outflow of being aware of what God is and is doing for us.[[1]](#endnote-1)

As an analogy, if a person is very good to me and unselfish and financially supports me, but I do not know him or realize this, I cannot respond to his goodness and love. But if I find out that my support is coming from him, that many good things which make my life much better are coming from him, personally, uniquely to me, it's one thing when I begin to realize and acknowledge it: "Yes, he does. Yes, you do." And something more when I say: "Thank You."[[2]](#endnote-2)

Do you notice the focus of this response? It is essential for gratitude that there be an awareness of receiving from another. No one opens a door into a strange and dark room where he sees nothing, and begins to converse into the room just in case there might be somebody there. Rather we are first conscious of someone; we look into someone's eyes; we are assured that if we talk into this microphone, there is a radio audience waiting on our words; or if we look into that camera there is a TV audience present; or if we put our words on tape, somebody will listen to them. We speak and respond only to some kind of personal presence.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Prayer is like that. Sometimes in our good and holy desires to communicate with God we "junk-up" our prayer. We begin immediately to make acts of faith, hope or love, of contrition or sorrow; we ask for things or just say something, because, after all, we can't just sit there and let nothing happen; so we do something we say something! This could be called "junking-up" our prayer. If we do that before we are really conscious of God being present to us, it is like opening up a dark room and talking because there might be somebody there who might possibly be listening. It is important that we take time peacefully and quietly (even if we have only a few minutes to pray), first to make ourselves aware of the loving, creative, sustaining, divinizing presence of God, because prayer is a personal response to God's presence.[[4]](#endnote-4)

The first step then, is to acknowledge God's loving presence; the second is to thank Him for His presence.

1. Armand M. Nigro, S. J., “Prayer: A Personal Response to God’s Presence” para. 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid., para. 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., para. 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., para. 14. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)