

Writing divine thank you notes

By [Allan R. Bevere](#)

July 12, 2012

The custom of writing thank you notes is a good and necessary one. I make it practice every week to send two or three thank you notes to parishioners for their service to Jesus Christ, his church and its mission. It is important to let people know that their contribution matters.

In his letters, St. Paul, in all but one instance, offers thanks concerning the recipients of his letters, but he never gives thanks to them; he gives thanks for them. To the Corinthians he writes, "I thank my God always for you, because of God's grace that was given to you in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:4).

And to the Philippians he writes, "I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy" (1:3-4).

One more example from Colossians will suffice: "We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. We've done this since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all God's people" (1:3-4).

Nowhere in his letters does Paul directly thank the recipients; instead he directly thanks God for them and their faithfulness, etc. I wonder how our thank you notes to others in service to Christ and his church would sound different if we took Paul's approach instead of what is usual and customary for us?

I am not suggesting that this style would be appropriate for all the thank yous we write. I am not sure this is a good idea when we are thanking our neighbor for the birthday gift we really don't need... "I thank God for the vintage set of record albums you bought me." But perhaps to thank others for the kingdom work they do involves the kind of thanksgiving that recognizes that while all good work is important, kingdom work takes on a greater significance. Perhaps, therefore, in those expressions of thanksgiving for kingdom work, great or small, we should thank God for those who do such work, and let them know that we do thank God for them and their commitment to God's purposes in this world.

And, frankly, when we offer our thanks in this way, we give the recipients of such thanksgiving an even greater honor in acknowledging that God is indeed using them for his work in the world. We are affirming that their faithfulness has a divine stamp.

I have taken my own advice and have started writing my thank you notes in this way; and I must say, it just feels more biblical.

Originally posted at [Bevere's blog](#)