

REFLECTIONS

November 6, 2005

He who has ears, let him hear.

Matthew 11:15

Hearing “I Love You”

It really never occurred to me how much effect it had on the world, but since the Tower of Babel and the creation of the many languages of the world, the ability of people to communicate has been impaired. God didn't make communication impossible, just difficult sometimes. Even in the same language, good and simple things are easily misunderstood. One such example is expressing the three little words, “I love you.” Have you ever sent an expression of love that was not received in the way you intended?

Recently I observed a father's efforts to communicate his love to his children. He expressed his love by making gifts of things precious to him—things he had worked a lifetime for. When the gifts were not received as he intended, the father felt unappreciated and unloved by his children.

On the other hand, the children hungered for their father's love and over the years they sought to satisfy the hunger by gaining attention even in unappealing ways. Each of them longed for his approval and to hear their father speak the cherished words, “I love you.” The children craved his love but didn't recognize his gestures.

He was speaking with gifts. They were listening for words. Neither was hearing the other say, “I love you.” If the father could have heard his children's appeal for love and the children have recognized their father's response to their cry, how loving their relationships would be.

Communication is the melding of one's expression with another's interpretation to gain common understanding. We all have our ways of expressing ourselves but those expressions, whether by word or deed, fall deafly when not heard correctly.

When we listen we discover the beauty of the earth—birds chirping, rain falling, breeze blowing, rivers flowing. When we listen we hear people—telling us stories, asking for help, sharing their wisdom. But hearing goes beyond listening to the words and the sounds. Hearing uncovers the messages that go unspoken, those that are sent in other ways, often even saying something that is more important and poles apart from the words that were spoken.

Through his gifts, our Heavenly Father says “I love you” everyday. Wouldn't it be a shame if those words were spoken and we hadn't taken the time to listen—and to hear—and to say them back? If we do, how loving our relationship with Him will be.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +