



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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Subject: Love

GETTING THE MESSAGE, "I LOVE YOU," ACROSS

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 1 John 3:1

Some men find it difficult to say, "I love you," but in Bert Salva's case, what was tough was getting Mary Shiminsky--the object of his affection--to really believe him. For almost four years Bert courted Mary but didn't get anywhere. Actually, what he got was a clear message, "Get lost, Buddy, I never want to see you again." To make the message more explicit, Mary changed her phone number, and moved in with her parents who live in an isolated area, and left no forwarding address.

Bert, however, didn't go away. He really loved her and wanted her to know that. Trying to find out where she was, Bert could only get a few leads. He knew the general area where she was but he didn't know just where she was. He thought and thought, and then he struck upon an idea.

At least he knew one way, one slim chance by which he might convey the simple message, "I love you." He bought paint and a long handled roller. He knew the way she went to work, and though he wasn't terribly confident, he knew he had to try. In the darkness of the night he climbed on a three-story railroad trestle which spanned the highway near the place where Mary was living and painted the message. When she saw it, she knew who had painted it, but the irony of the story is that nobody else in the community knew.

Nobody had ever heard of Mary Shiminsky. But that desperate act--much like a quarterback's "hail Mary" in the last three seconds of a football game--is what got her attention and eventually turned her heart. She got in touch with him, and a month later accepted his proposal of marriage. A year later twins arrived and blessed their home.

Four years later with the mystery still unsolved in the community, Mary wrote to the newspaper admitting she was Mary Shiminsky and told the newspaper staff what had happened. Sensing a good story, they responded and sent out a reporter. Husband Bert told him he didn't know if he could do it again--hanging three stories in space holding on to the railroad trestle with one hand and a paint brush with the other, but he was convinced it was worth it. The message "I love you, Mary Shiminsky" got through.

Do you ever marvel at the length to which someone like Bert will go to get a message across? Why is all of this so important? Psychiatrist William Glasser was convinced that only by giving and receiving love can one of your deep emotional needs be met. It is as necessary to normal human survival as is oxygen to the lungs and proper nutrition to your body. You, friend, also have that need deep in your heart.

The cold reality, however, is not all women have a Bert Salva who is willing to hang by one hand from a railroad trestle to get that message across. Some desperately wish that the one they married would and could say those three words which make the difference. But they never hear them. Somewhere that love withered and died.

Others live alone, often feeling separated and neglected. There is one, though, who does love you, and He went to an amazing amount of trouble to get the message across. "God so loved the world," wrote John, that He sent His one and only son to our planet with the message of the Father who demonstrated that love.

The love of a husband or wife is important, but of far greater importance is the reality that God, whose love is constant and unending, will always love you. Today's guidelines that will help you come to grips with the importance of the Father's love and how to handle those nagging questions when you wonder if He really loves you. It's a message that gives security and comfort in an insecure and loveless world.

(Resource reading: 1 John 3)