

Did You Say, “I Love You”?

Jim Elliff

An elderly, deep-south, retired couple sat on the porch. The man was reading the paper intensely, as he did every day. The woman was staring at the old man to whom she had been married for 60 years, conjuring up memories of good times and even difficult seasons which they had suffered through together.

With moist eyes, the sweet old lady finally uttered a simple uncluttered declaration. It was kind of a summary of her tender emotions following her romantic revelry.

She said, “I adore you.”

The crusty old southerner didn’t move his paper, nor his eyes off the paper, then grunted, “I’m a’ tored a’ you too!”

How are you doing in expressing your love?

In the acclaimed musical which is still the favorite of many, *Fiddler on the Roof*, the central couple of the plot, Tevye and Golde, come to a revealing moment. The theme of the song is introduced by Tevye, the milkman husband, but echoed by Golde, both a product of an arranged marriage now far along in years. He asks the question, “Do you love me?”

(Golde) Do I love you?
For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes
Cooked your meals, cleaned your house
Given you children, milked the cow
After twenty-five years, why talk about love right now?

(Tevye) Golde, The first time I met you
Was on our wedding day
I was scared
(Golde) I was shy
(Tevye) I was nervous
(Golde) So was I

(Tevye) But my father and my mother
Said we'd learn to love each other
And now I'm asking, Golde



Do you love me?
(Golde) I'm your wife
(Tevye) "I know..."
But do you love me?

(Golde) Do I love him?
For twenty-five years I've lived with him
Fought with him, starved with him
Twenty-five years my bed is his
If that's not love, what is?

(Tevye) Then you love me?
(Golde) I suppose I do
(Tevye) And I suppose I love you too

(Both) It doesn't change a thing
But even so
After twenty-five years
It's nice to know

Do you express your love, or just assume that your love will be seen in your actions alone? John wrote, “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 Jn 3:18). But he did not mean that we are *not* to express our love. He does otherwise himself, referring to his readers as “beloved” five times in this small letter of 1 John.

Perhaps no one in history has openly repeated the sentiment of love like the apostle Paul. Over and over again, he speaks of it. For instance, he said this to the Thessalonians:

Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. (1Thess 2:8)

Here is love both in word and deed. We should learn by his model, especially toward those we care for the most—like a spouse or a family member with whom you have shared life for years. Live your love, certainly, but also say it often.

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