

LETTING PEOPLE KNOW WE APPRECIATE THEM

As I write this message Father's Day has come and gone. What I loved most about this Father's Day were two cards I was given. The first card was given to me by two girls who were in Sunday School that day. At the end of the service, they presented me with a Father's Day gift. One of the items included was a piece of paper that listed some of the things I enjoy in life, but also what these girls have come to appreciate about me. It was so great to hear from them how they enjoy my sense of humour when I do crazy children's stories to help them learn about God. It made me smile to think they appreciate how I try to find fun and creative ways to help them come to know God.

The other card I was given on Father's Day came from my daughter. She is really good at making personal cards for her friends on their birthdays or for Nadine and I on special occasions. Something Coral does each time she makes a card for somebody is to include pictures of things she knows that person likes. Coral had pictures of a coffee and a peanut butter and jam sandwich on the front of my card; two staples in my diet I love every day. On the inside of the card, she included a picture of my favorite basketball coach and team. Then on the back of the card she put a picture of my favorite music performer.

If Coral wrote nothing in the card, these pictures that she included would be enough for me to know she appreciates me. Along with these thoughtful pictures, she also writes inside each card quite a bit about what she appreciates about that person. To sit there on Father's Day and read everything that Coral wrote about the things she appreciates about me was the best gift she could have given. I know how much she loves and appreciates me, but to see it written out and said in a card is very touching.

These two cards got me thinking about whether we do this often enough in our lives for others. We get so caught up in our busy lives that we often take the people in our lives for granted. We think these people already know how much we appreciate them and feel we do not have to take the time to remind them of this fact. We all need affirmations from others that we are appreciated and valued. Affirmations like these can also be the key to developing positive and lasting relationships in our life. We see an example of this in the life of Moses.

While Moses and the Israelites were living in the wilderness making their way to the Promised Land, Moses was visited by his brother-in-law Hobab. Moses recognized how his brother-in-law had strong knowledge about the best camping places in the wilderness. Hobab wanted to return home to Midian, but Moses complimented him by telling him how much he appreciated this gift and ability he had. Instead of returning back to Midian, Hobab stayed with Moses and blessed the Israelites with his wilderness knowledge and skills. If Moses had not communicated to his brother-in-law how much he appreciated him, the Israelite community would have missed out on all that Hobab had to offer them in their wilderness journey.

We cannot assume people know how much they are appreciated and valued by us. If Moses had assumed Hobab realized this and had not expressed it in words, the Israelites may have missed out on his unique abilities. Moses would have missed out on a lasting, and blessed relationship with his brother-in-law as well. Like Moses we all have people we value in our lives. Think about some of the people who have helped us in the past few months. How many times have we let them know we appreciate and value them? We may say they know, but do they?

The best gift we can give to these people is to follow the example of the two girls at Sunday School, my daughter, and Moses and let them know how much we appreciate them. Send them a note or a card. Pick up the phone and tell them in words how much we appreciate them. Make them something special or do something out of the blue for them to let them know how much we appreciate them. Yes, it requires a little effort and thought on our parts. If we truly appreciate and value these people, should we see it as an effort, or rather as an expression of love and appreciation? If we truly want lasting and blessed relationships with these people we value, then let us make sure we are letting them know from time to time how much we do appreciate them. The two cards I received on Fathers Day cost nothing, but they were the best gifts I could have been given on that day.

Knowing we are appreciated is what so many people need right now. Let's make sure this is a gift we are giving to the people we value and appreciate in our lives.

Keep Safe and God Bless, Pastor Dean