

# I Love You

By Therese Marszalek

*Love* is in the air as young and old alike prepare Valentines for their sweeties. For more than a century, romantics have crafted love letters using hearts imprinted with endearing words like “Will You,” “Be Mine,” “I’m Yours,” “Love You,” “Your Girl.” Whether expressed in a creative love-laced letter or through sentimental words, people long to hear the words “I love you.”

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Elmer, 95, and Ruby Smith, 91, today



1954: Ruby and Elmer going strong after 20 years

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Engagement photo, 1934

It's human nature to love to be loved. A person's innate desire to know he or she is loved is no surprise, considering our Creator, the Author of love, IS love (1 John 4:8).

"I love you" evokes various pleasant emotions. "I love you, Daddy" can melt a father's heart after a stressful day at the office. Heard from a first love, "I love you" is captivating, even magical. When a friend phones to say, "I just called to say I love you," loneliness and discouragement fade. A spouse's "I love you" chases uncertainties away and makes anxiety vanish. Three powerful words warm the heart, generate a sense of security, and stir deep emotion when spoken from one to another.

We can weaken the meaning of "I love you" if the phrase becomes a mere habit instead of a heartfelt expression of devotion, when "Love you" ends every phone conversation and "Love ya" accompanies all goodbye waves.

God says, "I love you" countless times in countless ways every day. But unlike human love, God's love always retains its rich meaning and never loses its life-changing impact on each one it touches.

Expressions of love benefit physical health and well-being.

"People who believe they are loved are happy and relate better to others," psychiatrist Dr. Adalina E. Carter says. "When people know they're loved, they liberate

endorphins, a substance that makes us feel good. It also boosts the immune system, enables the body to fight illness and helps the cardiovascular system function well."

A healthy dose of "I love you" every day can keep the doctor away!

### *Does "I love you" adequately communicate true love?*

As the saying goes, actions speak louder than words. God agrees. First John 3:18 says, "Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" (NIV). God's

divine love, which He poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5), reaches beyond emotion to unite words of love with actions of love. Natural love often falls short in effectively displaying sincere love, but God's supernatural love, resident within every believer, is ever available to activate and put love in motion.

"Talk is cheap," some say when they question the authenticity of people's claim to love others. Demonstrations of love empower the expression of the words "I love you," paving the way for people to believe and receive those words as genuine. Without an exhibit of love, "I love you" can be hollow and meaningless.

Gary Allen, director of Ministerial Enrichment for the Assemblies of God, agrees.

"From a biblical standpoint," Allen says, "the highest form of love is agape love, which is more than words or emotion. Agape love is an act of the will, a choice that must be supported by trust, respect, confidence and emotional security."

Serious consequences can result when expressions of love aren't backed up with action.

"In God's economy, anything that can grow can also die," says Allen. "If a profession of love is not reinforced with a demonstration of love, love can die."

### *A lifetime of "I love you"*

Elmer and Ruby Smith keep love very much alive and have reaped the physical and emotional benefits of the countless expres-

sions of "I love you" they've exchanged throughout their 72 years of marriage. In their 90s, this amazing couple from Phoenix, Ore., enjoy remarkable health and vigor. Ruby has yet to take an antibiotic in her 90 years.

These lovebirds don't take "I love you" lightly, and believe their heartfelt words must be fueled with a continual demonstration of love.

Like ping pong players, Elmer and Ruby take turns sharing cher-

## tpe extra

In his song "When Did You Fall," Christian music artist Chris Rice shares a lighthearted look at romance. Visit [tpe.ag.org](http://tpe.ag.org) to download a special acoustic version of this song.

ished memories of ways in which their life partner has displayed love throughout their marriage.

"I love Ruby more than I love myself," Elmer says. "If both mates put the other ahead of themselves, they'll both be blessed!"

The joy bubbling from this committed couple affirms they practice what they preach. As Elmer says, they're blessed because of it.

"If you tell someone 'I love you,' it means you'll make sacri-

**one choice**  
a world of  
**change**

“ I knew this is where I was supposed to be, but I was still surprised by how much people really love you and want to help you succeed. I felt really welcomed here from the first day I arrived. ”

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# TEACH 101

## Assemblies of God faculty positions now available

Assemblies of God Higher Education continues to develop a national database of all interested persons who would like to be considered for faculty positions at endorsed AG colleges and universities.

The greatest area of need is in the non-Bible and theology disciplines, particularly math, science, behavioral science, business, and music. However, all interested persons are encouraged to apply regardless of discipline.

Previous college teaching experience preferred but may not be required in all situations.

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- AG pastor's recommendation
- Doctorate preferred, Master's degree minimum

Online application available at  
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For further information, please contact:

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# I Love You

Ruby and Elmer Smith with  
great-grandchildren Bennett  
and Kaitlyn



fications for them," Elmer says.

Ruby wholeheartedly agrees, recalling numerous sacrifices Elmer has made for her and their family over the years.

"Ruby has demonstrated 'I love you' all these years by putting her desires aside in order to stand behind and support me and the family" Elmer says. "She's always ready to serve me. Always."

Ruby is quick to jump in.

"Elmer's the one who continually goes out of his way for me," she says. "He's so unselfish, always wanting to make things better for me."

This match-made-in-heaven team claims the key to their 74-year love affair is keeping Christ

at the center of their marriage.

"We want to imitate Christ," they both say. "His love enables us to make sacrifices for each other."

When Elmer and Ruby chose to imitate Christ, they discovered the most significant demonstration of love the world has ever known. "God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). **tpe**

THERESE MARSZALEK is a freelance writer in Spokane, Wash.

E-mail your comments to [tpe@ag.org](mailto:tpe@ag.org).

# ABCs OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

## A. Admit you are a sinner.

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

## Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

## B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

## Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

## C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

If you would like someone to pray with you concerning your decision to follow Jesus Christ, please contact the church indicated on the back cover or call:

# 1-800-4PRAYER

Assemblies of God National Prayer Center



# TRAIN UP A CHILD

Train a child  
in the way he should go,  
and when he is old  
he will not turn from it.

proverbs 22:6

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## Train them to be

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