

Heard For Their Many Words

How many Valentines do you give your spouse on Valentine's Day? How many beautiful cards do you send your mother expressing your love for her on Mother's Day? How often and how many times must you express your thoughts and feelings in order to mean them? How much embellishment must you give your feelings for them to be real?

While Lea was in elementary school, one boy gave her thirteen Valentines! He wanted to gain her favor. Needless to say, that was a one-time deal. Sometimes extravagant expressions of emotions are given a spouse, and that is fine. Yet, if every Wednesday were designated as Valentine's Day, thirteen Valentines each Wednesday would be a stretch – especially if done for the next forty years. Such a routine could easily become a dutifully performed function intended to meet expectations and to gain attention and affection.

Jesus' instructions are sobering: "And in praying, do not heap empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matt. 6:7f). Then he introduces a model prayer that addresses half a dozen matters in half a minute!

Tantalize emotions – enjoy "highs" – a good cry.

Do such commend us to God?

Gain God's love?

If a little is good, more is better

extremists, radicals, zealots

Intellectual acceptance is not just ritual. It is stronger than emotional.

Praise – extravagant?

One line in Lord's Prayer

Every week for 40 years.

Importunate widow. Lk 18.