

Grace Notes

"God's grace for everyday living"

One way conversations

By: Debora M. Coty

My husband, teen-age daughter, her boyfriend, and I were recently seated at the dinner table. The conversation went something like this:

Dad: Great dinner, honey. How about that Oklahoma State game?

Mom: Thank you. Would you like dessert?

Dad: Man, that Joey Graham is something else.

Daughter: What gooey graham? You mean you want a cracker for dessert?

Bf: Couldn't be no better, that Graham.

Daughter: Peanut butter? What? You want peanut butter and a gooey graham cracker?

Mom: No, dear. They're in *The Sports Zone*. It's a man thing. We might as well not be here. They can't hear us.

Dad: And Canseco...if we can see what Canseco can see, we'd see he can't see-saw on what he saw. Jose, can you see?

Bf: By the dawn's early light...play ball!

Daughter: Mo-therrr, what are they talking about?

Mom: They're on a sports frequency and their antennas can't pick up anything else. Watch this. Honey, how is your Uncle Frank's arthritis?

Dad: Athletics? Yep, Oakland clinched it 9 to 5.

Daughter: Clinched what?

Uncle Frank's knees?

Bf: No, the Yankees aren't doing so hot in the preseason. Them Sox skunked 'em in the Series and they've stunk up the place ever since.

Daughter: A skunk sprayed their socks? Why don't they wash them in tomato juice?

Have you ever participated in a one way conversation? The kind where you felt that no one heard what you were saying and the words that did get through were misinterpreted or worse, ignored.

Jeremiah, the "reluctant prophet," proclaimed God's message for 40 years to an unseeing, unhearing, unresponsive nation (Judah). Not only did they choose to disregard Jeremiah's admonition to repent and turn back to God, they cruelly attacked him to the point that he yearned to turn in his prophet badge and retire. Who could blame him? I would have resigned from that job after one day.

But he didn't.

Jeremiah continued prophesying to his tormenters, even after they were taken captive and sent into Babylonian exile. Knowing that their dire straits were a direct result of their pigheaded refusal to listen to his warnings all those years, Jeremiah still sent God's message to offer them hope: "Call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and

I will listen to you," (Jer. 29:12, NIV).



I will listen to you.

Of all people, Jeremiah knew the importance of being listened to.

He was intimately aware that unlike many human encounters, God *always* listens when we call on His name.

It grieves me to hear the name of my heavenly father used so callously in our society today, even among Christians. I wonder how many people realize, as they routinely take the Lord's name in vain in casual conversation that even, "Oh, my God!" is a call to the Almighty and He is indeed listening. After countless false alarms of summoning help - like the boy who cried wolf - how can we expect God's immediate attention when we *really* need it?

God wants to have two-way conversations with us, His children. "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things which you do not know" (Jeremiah. 33:3, NAS).

As Jeremiah learned, listening is the essential element to a successful human relationship, and how much more so in the most important relationship in our lives - that with our Creator and Savior.