



I Love You, Too

By **CHRISTY ADAMS**

A few years ago, my parents were in town, helping me move. As I was in my bedroom unpacking, my mom exclaimed, “Franz can talk!” I laughed as I walked over to where she and my 3-year-old parakeet were. “No, he can’t,” I replied. “That’s crazy!”

My mom emphatically said, “Yes, he can! He said, ‘I love you.’”

“I heard it too,” chimed my dad from the kitchen.

Sure enough, that night, Franz repeatedly said, “I love you,” “pretty bird” and “Whatchya doin’?”

I purchased Franz from a local pet store when he was a baby bird. Living alone, I’ve talked to him constantly. But I never thought he was listening, much less that he would repeat back phrases I have said to him.

Most of the time when I talk to God, I assume He isn’t listening either. In my head, I believe God hears me, but I have trouble believing it in my heart. When Franz says, “I love you,” it reminds me how much God loves me.

Psalm 116: 1-2 says, “I love the Lord, because He hears my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.”

Like Franz, God hears everything I say to Him, surprising me with reminders: answered prayers, for example, or those words in Psalm 116.

Today, when I say, “I love you” to Franz, he answers, “I love you, too.”

God is listening. And He loves me, too. ■

God Bless You

By **JEFF GRANT**

Across the room, my wife was having one of those sneezing fits that seemed like it would never stop. I never know whether to say, “God bless you” after each one or try to wait until I think they’re over.

“God wants us to reflexively turn to Him throughout the day”

That’s when I became annoyed at the whole concept of blessing sneezes, a silly superstition that thought people sneezed out their souls. To not say it would

be rude for some reason, so I decided to actually say a short, silent prayer of blessing for my wife.

That day, I decided to take every sneeze I hear as a reminder to actually pray for that person. I don’t always remember, but I do find myself praying more and being more aware of people, too.

Years later, I read a study on the Holy Spirit that said, “God wants us to reflexively turn to Him throughout the day” and engage in activities that set “an atmosphere in our hearts that cultivate the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit.”

It may seem silly, but people sneezing reminds me to love them and think of God.

For the full article on the Holy Spirit, visit www.tinyurl.com/cruspiritfilled. ■

