

Are Actions Louder Than Words?

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Maybe it's because we're exposed to so much political campaigning and to so many commercials, but it seems as if today more than ever, people say things they don't really mean. In religious circles, a common question is, "Do we walk the talk?" Do we back up what we say we believe with our actions?

I remember when my relationship with one of my sons was strained, my wife told me, "You and he don't communicate." I promptly told my wife, "We communicate all the time. We just don't use words." My son was always watching me, and I was always watching him. We were communicating with body language.

It's no secret that children, especially as they grow older, very closely watch the behavior of their parents. They are watching for indications of hypocrisy, of inconsistency between the standards the parents have verbally established and the parents' own behavior. Then the children use this information as weapons when the parents correct them.

A priest told me once about the teenage daughter of a protestant, single mom who worked at the parish. The daughter surprised her mother one day by telling her she wanted to become Catholic. When the mother asked the daughter why she made this decision, the daughter answered, "Any church that can get a man on his knees is for me." For this young girl, just seeing a man kneel sent a powerful message, that the man was acknowledging God's sovereignty over his life.

In 1 John 3:18 of the Bible, it says "Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." Jesus tells His disciples in Matthew 5:16: "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

Jesus, help us be aware of what we say and what we do. Help us practice what we preach. May our actions reflect the love we have for You and for each other.