



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

## How To Love

According to my friend, Costa Deir, there is a vast difference between love and infatuation. Infatuation is an emotion which controls us. Love is an act of the will — which we control.

Costa, who was born in Ramla when Israel was then Palestine, talks of the customs of the mideast. There young men and women do not "date." That kind of contact only stirs the emotions. Instead, they wait until they are ready to marry. Then, by an act of their will, they love the one chosen by their parents.

In "Fiddler on the Roof," after 25 years of marriage, Tevye finally asks Golde, "Do you love me?"

He sings: "The first time I met you was on our wedding day . . . But my father and my mother said we'd learn to love each other. Do you love me?"

Golde answers: "For 25 years

I've lived with him, fought with him, starved with him. Twenty-five years my bed is his; if that's not love, what is?"

We westerners know very little of that depth of love. We speak glibly of falling in and out of love. But according to the Bible, love is something you do, not something you cannot help — like catching the flu.

I "fell in love" as a teenager at Vero Beach High School. I later married that same girl. Now I realize I did not love her then. I was simply infatuated with her. It has taken me years to learn to love her. But now I do.

I was explaining this to our 14-year-old daughter and she asked, "You mean you could love any girl as much as you love me?"

I answered: "When your oldest sister was born at Indian River Memorial Hospital I loved her. But

I did not love you because I did not know you. When you arrived, six years later, I willed myself to love you as much as I loved her — and the other children. Because I wanted to."

I went ahead to explain how my parents adopted a little girl and loved her just as much as they loved their sons — because they wanted to.

I can love whomever I please — and to what depth I please. Love is not conditioned by how much I am loved back, or whether I am loved back. It is something I do of my own free will. It is not a whim or fancy which "comes on me" — that is infatuation. It is something I alone control.

Love is a deliberate act. I can love my neighbor, even if he throws his trash in my yard or sics his dog on my cat. I do it as an act of my will. And that makes it much more meaningful.