

Praying Without Ceasing  
a Meditation on Mr. Rogers by Bruce Springer

*Jesus said: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment.*  
(Mt 22:37-38)

*Paul said: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit."*  
(1 Thess 5:16-19)

Several months ago I was with a friend when I mounted one of my hobby horses and galloped off griping about the Media, and in particular the Media's hostility to Christianity. Immediately, my friend said, "What about Mr. Rogers?" My exposure to Mr. Rogers had been limited to a few 15-second glances at the TV over the shoulders of my children as they watched in the 80s, and I had not been impressed. I responded, "Well, what about Mr. Rogers?" My friend said, "I think he was almost Christ-like."

A few weeks later, my friend and I went to see the documentary, "Won't You Be My Neighbor?", about Mr. Rogers' career in children's TV. I heard Mr. Rogers say:

*"Love is at the root of everything, all parenting, all learning, all relationships...love or the lack of it."*

*"The space between the TV screen and whoever happens to be viewing it, I consider that very holy ground."*

*"This is what I give. I give an expression of care every day to each child, to help him realize that he **is** unique. I end the program by saying 'You've made this day a special day by just your being you. There's no person in the whole world like you. And I like you just the way you are.'"*

*"You don't have to do anything sensational for people to love you."*

*"The greatest thing is to let somebody know they are loved and capable of loving."*

The documentary portrayed Mr. Rogers' TV show as an expression of unconditional love for children and his career in television as one unceasing prayer to God by a person who lived every day in the joy of God's love received.

My friend was right, I am left to wonder how could I have missed Mr. Rogers.

*Jesus said: "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me."*  
(Rev 3:20)