

“The Five Love Languages”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Dec. 21, 2024.

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—Since I did not give a presentation at our Bible study his past Wednesday night (Dec. 18), I will not write about the series (“The Emotional Bank Account”) that I am currently covering on Wednesday night. Instead, I chose to write about a subject that I covered in a presentation at our Saturday church service on Dec. 14. The title of that presentation was “A Glimpse at ‘The 5 Love Languages.’”

Since that presentation was designed to be merely a glimpse, I am actually quoting more information in this article than I orally expressed in that presentation last Saturday.

Through the years since 1992, Gary Chapman has written a variety of books about the subject of what he described as “Five Love Languages.” This article will be quoting excerpts about his main points from his earlier writing.

Keeping the love tank full

The subhead of Chapter 2 is “Keeping the Love Tank Full.”

On page 19, Mr. Chapman wrote: “Love is the most important word in the English language—and the most confusing. Both secular and religious thinkers agree that love plays a central role in life . . . Numerous philosophical and theological systems have made a prominent place for love. And the founder of the Christian faith wanted love to be the distinguishing characteristic of His followers.”

On page 20, he wrote: “The purpose of this book is not to eliminate all confusion surrounding the word *love*, but to focus on that kind of love that is essential to our emotional health. Child psychologists affirm that every child has certain basic emotional needs that must be met if he is to be emotionally stable. Among those emotional needs, none is more basic than the need for love and affection, the need to sense that he or she belongs and is wanted. With an adequate supply of affection, the child will likely develop into a responsible adult . . . I liked the metaphor the first time I heard it: ‘Inside every child is an ‘emotional tank’ waiting to be filled with love.’”

■ “When a child really feels loved, he will develop normally.”

■ “When the love tank is empty, the child will misbehave. Much of the misbehavior of children is motivated by the cravings of an empty ‘love tank.’ ”

Five love languages

Following are the five love languages mentioned by Mr. Chapman.

■ Words of affirmation

On page 39, Mr. Chapman wrote: “Mark Twain once said, ‘I can live for two months on a good compliment.’ If we take Twain literally, six compliments a year would have kept his emotional love tank at the operational level. Your spouse will probably need more.”

■ Quality time

On page 64, Mr. Chapman wrote: “Quality time does not mean that we have to spend our together moments gazing into each other’s eyes. It means that we are doing something together and that we are giving our full attention to the other person. The activity in which we are both engaged is incidental. The important thing emotionally is that we are spending focused time with each other. The activity is a vehicle that creates the sense of togetherness.”

■ Receiving gifts

On page 82, Mr. Chapman wrote: “A gift is something you can hold in your hand and say, ‘Look, he was thinking of me,’ or ‘She remembered me’ . . . The gift itself is a symbol of that thought. It doesn’t matter whether it costs money. What is important is that you thought of him.”

On page 83, he wrote: “Visual symbols of love are more important to some people than to others. That’s why individuals have different attitudes toward wedding rings. Some never take the ring off after the wedding. Others don’t even wear a wedding band. That is another sign that people have different primary love languages.”

On page 84, he wrote: “Gifts come in all sizes, colors, and shapes. Some are expensive, and others are free. To the individual whose primary love language is receiving gifts, the cost of the gift will matter little . . . Gifts may be purchased, found, or made.”

■ Acts of service

On page 97, Mr. Chapman wrote: “By acts of service, I mean doing things you know your spouse would like you to do. You seek to please her by serving her, to express your love for her by doing things for her. Such actions as cooking a meal, setting a table, washing dishes, vacuuming, cleaning a commode, getting hairs out of the sink, removing the white spots from the mirror, getting bugs off the windshield, taking out the garbage, changing the baby’s diaper, painting a bedroom, dusting the bookcase, keeping the car in operating

condition, washing or vacuuming the car, cleaning the garage, mowing the grass, trimming the shrubs, raking the leaves, dusting the blinds, walking the dog, changing the cat's litter box and changing water in the goldfish bowl are all acts of service. They require thought, planning, time, effort, and energy. If done with a positive spirit, they are indeed expressions of love."

■ Physical touch

On page 115, Mr. Chapman wrote: "Physical touch is also a powerful vehicle for communicating marital love. Holding hands, kissing, embracing and [romantic love] are all ways of communicating emotional love to one's spouse. For some individuals, physical touch is their primary love language. Without it, they feel unloved. With it, their emotional tank is filled, and they feel secure in the love of their spouse."

Discovering your primary love language

On page 136, Mr. Chapman wrote: "What is your primary love language? What makes you feel most loved by your spouse? What do you desire above all else? If the answer to those questions does not leap to your mind immediately, perhaps it will help to look at the negative use of love languages."

On pages 138-139, Mr. Chapman suggested three ways to discover your own primary love language.

- "What does your spouse do or fail to do that hurts you most deeply? The opposite of what hurts you most is probably your love language."
- "What have you most often requested of your spouse? The thing you have most often requested is likely the thing that would make you feel most loved."
- "In what way do you regularly express love to your spouse? Your method of expressing love may be an indication that that would also make you feel loved."

Love makes a difference

On page 153, Mr. Chapman wrote: "Love is not our only emotional need. Psychologists have observed that among our basic needs are the need for security, self-worth, and significance. Love, however, interfaces with all of those."

On page 159, Mr. Chapman wrote: "Can emotional love be reborn in a marriage? You bet. The key is to learn the primary love language of your spouse and choose to speak it."