

Love Builds Up (subtitle: The 5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman)

1 Corinthians 8:1 b New American Standard Bible

Knowledge makes one conceited, but love edifies people.

Introduction

I preached the same sermon 7 years ago. None of us would remember it, myself included. I decided to revise and preach it again for two reasons: first, because it is appropriate for the season--Valentine's Day is today. More importantly, when we practice the love languages properly, it will build us up and strengthen our relationship.

My sermon heavily relies on Dr. Gary Chapman's sermon on "The Five Love Languages." I listened to his sermon tape some years ago. His sermon was helpful for my relationship with my family. In fact, as I applied what I have learned from the sermon to my communications with my family, my relationship improved and grew stronger and healthier. I highly recommend you getting his book or CD of the same title. His audio book is also available on YouTube.

So, this morning, you are about to hear the same message on the Five Love Languages, only in my own words and with different examples. I hope and pray that you too learn something from the sermon, apply to your relationship, and see your relationship with loved ones grow and thrive.

Content

A little caution before I proceed. Dr. Chapman's 'five love languages' mostly cover the emotional side of love, not much of the spiritual aspect of love. In other words, anyone can practice the five love languages without the understanding of 'agape' love that we should practice in our daily life (E.g. 1 Corinthians 13 talks about 'agape' love). However, his points help in our relationship. So, keep that in mind.

Here's what he means by "Love Language." It is the language of love that people use to express their love for each other, to build up each other in love, and help each other feel loved. All of us have an emotional tank that is filled up by love languages. Properly used, the love language can build us up and strengthen our relationship. Faithfully practiced by the individuals, many a troubled relationship can be healed and even thrive. Poorly used, however, or even wrongly executed, it can frustrate, hurt individuals, lead them to unfulfilled relationship, and even to breakups such as divorce.

Five Love Languages --Gary Chapman

#1. Words of Affirmation: You don't need much explanation on this point. Simply put, say to each other, "I Love You." "You look fantastic." "You're the best!" Say it as often as you can. E.g.1: There was a boy who was born with a huge birthmark on his forehead. It grew bigger as the boy grew up. Some folks would hide such a mark. Not his parents. From the day one when their son understood the words spoken to him, they would tell him that it was a special love mark that God has put on his forehead to tell the world that he was special to God. The boy was so convinced with such an assurance that as he was growing up, he felt sorry, really sorry, for other children who didn't have a birthmark on their foreheads. E.g.2: I still remember what my high school music teacher told me, that I could sing.

#2. Quality Time: Spend time together. It is so beautiful to see married couples giving undivided attention to each other. E.g.1: a bad example: a husband and a wife both worked. They would eat T.V. dinners watching evening news on T.V. With no conversation. No quality time. Just watching the screen. Nowadays, the device has changed from T.V. to smartphone, but not the reality. A young married couple work full-time. They sit in their bed at night looking into their own smartphones. No talk. Just staring into the phone screen. E.g. 2: A son played quarterback for his high school football team. His dad never showed up at the games, not even once, because he was too busy with his work.

#3. Receiving Gifts: Flowers/Cards/Toys. E.g. One married woman asked her husband for a diamond ring on every fifth anniversary. Four years, she didn't mind getting nothing. But, on the fifth year, the husband faithfully bought her a ring with diamond. She felt so loved by her husband.

#4. Acts of Service: Talk is cheap. Show me your action. E.g. Jesus says, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15)."

#5. Physical Touch: Last, but not least. No need to explain on this one, either. But physical touch is important. One example is from Jesus our Lord. One day, some parents brought their children to Him so that He would touch and bless them, but the disciples rebuked the parents. Jesus got angry with the disciples and said to them: "*Allow the children to come to Me; do not forbid them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.*"¹⁵ Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."¹⁶ And He **took them in His arms** and began blessing them, **laying His hands on them** (Mark 10:14-16).

Case Study

#1. A pastor couple: 17 years of marriage. Their love languages: for the husband--words of affirmation. For the wife--receiving gifts. For years, they would speak to each other in their own love languages instead of the other's, so they had an unfulfilled marriage. For instance, the husband would long for the words of affirmation from his wife on his sermons. How much he longed to hear from her, "*How great the sermon was!*" Yet, he never got one. Instead, she kept loving him with her love language: receiving gifts. She would give him a new tie after another on his birthdays. The husband kept saying that he didn't need more ties, but she did it anyway.

As far as the wife was concerned, she would love to receive gifts such as flowers, chocolate, and rings on special days. Sadly, she never got them from her husband, either, except daily words of affirmation from him, "Honey, I love you. You look terrific!" They both wondered why their relationship was not fulfilling.

Then, one day they realized what they had been doing wrong, so they changed their love languages and started using the right one for each other: the wife would give a positive feedback on her husband's sermon--that made his day! The husband started giving her gifts— that made her feel like she was cherished and loved. Their marriage dramatically improved.

#2. Tom's family: Tom, husband and father--his love language was words of affirmation. Linda, his wife--her love language was acts of service. Tom always helped Linda with house chores because her health wasn't that great--vacuuming the house and doing dishes at night. She really appreciated him doing them. Tom's love language was words of affirmation. Whenever Lin complimented him on something that he has done well, he remembered the positive words for a long time with appreciation.

They had one daughter, Kim, whose love language was quality time. When she was a toddler, every night, her father would tell her made-up stories for bedtime story. She loved it. Even years later, she still remembered many stories and cherished those days of bonding time together!

Conclusion

Action point: this week, I encourage all of you to take time to listen to each other's frustrations. Carefully study, pray about it, and find the love language of your loved ones and practice them on a regular basis. If you do, your relationship will improve. You can apply the same principles to your relationship with your children. Even with friends and co-workers. Amen.