**REVIEW OF THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES 5/3/20**

Have you ever had trouble communicating with your spouse? Your teenager? Your neighbor? You say or do something to affirm, “I love you,” and they look at you like you’re from another planet. Communication is many times the most difficult aspect of our family relationships.

Several years ago I built fence with a crew of three Mexicans who didn’t speak any English. I knew only three words in Spanish, “Uno, dos, tres.” There was much sign language, puzzled looks, and learning of each other’s language. After a month of working together, I thought the program was pretty obvious and I could let them work alone so I could move on to other tasks. Everything was fine until we switched from all wood posts to a mixture of steel and wood. Very carefully, I explained that we would place the posts twelve feet apart using five steel posts, then one wood post. Can you see me out there chopping my arms saying “twelve feet, twelve feet, twelve feet?” “Si, Si… ees OK.” I came back that evening to find only a short distance of fence completed, because every twelve feet contained five steel posts and one wood post. It looked like a picket fence! We were all trying to communicate, but nobody was speaking the same language! I could speak my language slowly, loudly, or with great fanfare and still not communicate at all.

Some time ago the Homebuilders class went through the book, [“The Five Love Languages,”](https://www.christianbook.com/languages-secret-that-lasts-new-edition/gary-chapman/9780802412706/pd/412706?event=ESRCQ) by Gary Chapman. If you have not read this book, I would recommend that you do so. The basis of the book is to show that people (couples, parents, etc.) often try to say, “I love you” through words or actions that don’t seem to be interpreted as intended. The author shows five ways that God, who *is love* (1John 4:7-8) loves us perfectly. Using these as our example, and understanding a little about human nature, we can learn to speak the same language with our spouse, children, or neighbor. If you have already discovered the love language of your spouse or children, let me remind you to speak it often and love intentionally. If you are new to this concept, please follow me through these simple ideas and see if you can recognize a need in your family members.

I think the following story will illustrate how useful this knowledge is. Long, long ago in a faraway land, there was a teen age boy. He was just like every other teen ager: He was searching for **his independence** - He wanted *his* freedom, *his* car, *his* music, *his* life. He was searching for **his identity** – He wanted to be known, not by his family name, not as Keith and Elizabeth’s son, but as himself. (By the way, those are things your teenager is searching for. Those are God-given instincts preparing them to leave father and mother.)

It’s spring, 1978, and love is in the air! Picture the front of a weathered old Missouri farmhouse with a gravel drive beneath a giant Maple. Parked there is a 1967 two door Mercury Monterey looking like a big white yacht on wheels. Sitting in the front seat is a very beautiful young lady of 15. Beside her is a 17 yr. old boy with blonde curly hair. (If you are the dad of a teenage daughter, this scene starts to make your trigger finger twitch.) These two redneck teenagers are comparing hopes and dreams for the future. “I’ve always thought I’d like to have 6 kids someday,” he says with a far away look in his eyes. She says, “Really? Me too!”

Ten years later, these rednecks have three babies and one on the way. They still love each other, but don’t seem to be able to connect. He buys her flowers to say, “I love you” and she says, “Why would you waste our money on these? I just want you to spend time with me!” He is hurt and thinks, “She is impossible to please!” She fixes him a big meal to say, “I love you,” and he responds, “If you really loved me you’d hold me like you used to.” She is insulted and thinks, “He is so ungrateful!” Both are trying, but neither one is getting through. Frustration, anger and resentment begin taking over. Thankfully, they are rescued by God’s amazing grace, a solid church, a loving pastor, and eventually an introduction to the 5 love languages. All of a sudden these two rednecks figured out how to say, “I love you” to each other in a way that each other understands.

Fast forward ten more years, now there’s five kids and two of them are, ugh, teenagers! Mom and Dad still love each other, but how do they love those messy, obnoxious, emotional, zit-faced teen agers? Hey, what about those love languages? The oldest seems to respond to *words of affirmation*. “Hey great job at the ball game today. I’m really proud of you!” You can see the words take effect in his countenance, his posture and his attitude. The next teen craves *quality time*. She enjoys chattering about friends and events at school while she is doing homework on the living room floor. All you have to do is listen and show some interest. Make eye contact and ask a question or two, she feels loved. The third one loves receiving gifts. She lights up with a gift of even the smallest trinket. And if you sacrifice to give her that gift: Oh my! She will glow like the sunrise! Number four needs lots of hugs and kisses to feel loved. She interprets *physical touch* as an act of love. Number five appreciates *acts of service*, like preparing a nice meal. He says, “thank you, Mom” after every meal because he knows it’s prepared with love.

Fast forward to today: our two Missouri teenagers are a lot older now, still love each other, but need to be reminded to love one another intentionally, using the other person’s love language. God has made their teenage dreams come true – they have six kids and thirteen grandkids. Is it really that easy? No, but things sure work better when we are all speaking in languages that each person understands.

The fact is, God created every human being with the need to give and receive emotional love. He uses these same dialects to express love to us. Each person has one of these languages that is meaningful to them, and causes them to feel loved. If you want to make a real difference in your family relationships, learn each person’s language and become adept at speaking it intentionally. Here is a recap of the five love languages, and examples of how God speaks all of them to us.

**1. Quality time**

John 14:2-3 *“…I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

Rev. 21:3 *“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”*

**2. Words of affirmation**

Jer. 31:3 *“…I have loved thee with an everlasting love”*

Matt. 28:20 *“…lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”* Heb. 13:5 *“…I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”*

Read Eph. 1:2-14 *“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ…”*

**3. Receiving Gifts**

John 3:16 *“God so loved the world that he gave…”*

2Cor. 9:15 *“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”*

Eph. 2:8 *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”*

James 1:17 *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights…”*

**4. Acts of Service**

Jesus came to serve, not to be served. He humbled himself and took upon himself “*the form of a servant”* (Phil. 2:7). He went everywhere, *“doing good, and healing all that were oppressed...”* (Acts 10:38) Jesus showed love to his disciples by washing their feet. John 13:4-5 *“He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”* v.34 *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”*

**5. Physical touch**

Throughout the gospels, We see Jesus’ touch healing, forgiving, blessing. Mark 10:13 *“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them:”* Matt. 20:34 *“So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight…”* Luke 7:13 *“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier … And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.”*

God knows how to show love. He speaks every love language and dialect perfectly. *“We love him because he first loved us”* (1John 4:9). He has gone to great lengths to prove his love, and only the spiritually could blind miss the many overtures of His expressions of love. 1John 3:1 *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God…”*

I hope this serves as a reminder to some, and an introduction to others of the five love languages. If you’ve not read the book, [“The Five Love Languages,”](https://www.christianbook.com/languages-secret-that-lasts-new-edition/gary-chapman/9780802412706/pd/412706?event=ESRCQ) by Gary Chapman, it’s an easy read and you have time to order it and read it by next Sunday. You will see yourself and the ones you love, as well as reach an understanding how to effectively speak their language. Lord willing we’ll dig a little deeper next week. May God bless you as you continue to love your family!