

The Five Love Languages of the Christian Marriage

Part Three:

Last week, we started a three part series on the five love languages or the marital relationship. These are first introduced in the 1992 publication called The Five Love Languages by author and professional family counselor Gary Chapman. The author discusses how he has successfully counseled couples for decades with this strategy by encouraging the couples to learn and speak each others language of love. The five love languages of marriage are 1) Words of Encouragement 2) Quality Time 3) Gifting 4) Acts of Service and 5) Physical Touch. Last week we covered the first three over the first two parts. This morning in lesson three, we will cover the remaining two.

Acts of Service

Acts of service is the type of love that is demonstrated by the kind actions of one person toward another. They show their love to people by ministering to them through the sweat of their brow and the willingness of their heart to assist others. There is definitely a pattern of service that we find in the Holy Scriptures.

Examples of serving one another:

- Tabitha: She used to make tunics and garments for the widows. (Acts 9:39)
- Ruth served her mother-in-law Naomi: Ruth 2:2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."
- The Virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31: Prov 31:13-24 She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight. 14 She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar. 15 She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. 18 She senses that her gain is good; her lamp does not go out at night. 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle. 20 She extends her hand to the poor; and she stretches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. 22 She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells {them,} and supplies belts to the tradesmen.

Jesus, the supreme example:

- He taught this in His ministry: Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
- He lived it by example:
 - He served the people:
 - John 13:5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.
 - Phil 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, {and} being made in the likeness of men.
 - He fed the people: John 6

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- He healed the people: Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden,
- He prayed for people: John 17
- He gave his all for us: John 3:16

If one will just take the time to examine Jesus' life, we would find a Savior that really was a servant at heart. He had the power of the universe at His fingertips, but always found time to be a servant to the needy, the hurting and the everyday common man.

We also are to carry out acts of service for each other.

- Gal 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only {do} not {turn} your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- Matt 25:37-40 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? 38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, {even} the least {of them,} you did it to Me.'
- James 2:14-17 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for {their} body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, {being} by itself.

We can have all the love of God that we want, but if it does not manifest itself through acts of service in the lives of our fellowman then it really is not love. We in the church must carry out acts of service to others for it is what holds the body of Christ together.

There are many ways we can demonstrate this love to our spouse. According to Gary Chapman, it can include, but is not limited to the following:

“...cooking a meal, setting the table, washing the dishes, vacuuming, cleaning a commode, getting hairs out of the sink, removing the white spots from the mirror, getting the bugs off the windshield, taking out the garbage, changing the babies 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...” (The Five Love Languages, page 97)

I have always known this was my wife's primary love language, for she has always been a servant. She really enjoys carrying out acts of service for others, including the church family, her children and me. This is not my primary language; therefore it could be easy

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to neglect her in this way. I have learned over the years some of the things that bring her the greatest amount of joy through her to speaking her love language more fluently. Here are some of her favorites.

- I generally do the vacuuming and dusting in the house and have done so for a number of years. Once a week I lug out the Dyson and Swiffer Duster and go to work, knowing that she appreciates it.
- Many times a year I will work on her car to make sure that it is kept in proper running order. Every now and then I will actually take that filthy, four-wheeled chariot to the car wash and make it shine for her.
- She likes to have her work clothes to be pressed and neat. She does not like to do this for herself, mostly because there is never a convenient time to iron. Whenever I am doing some ironing of my own, I make sure to ask if she has a few things to iron as well. I hate to iron, but I love to iron for her because I know she will appreciate it and she will probably be nicer to me.
- Her favorite dialect of this language of love called acts of service would have to be meal-making. She works outside the home; therefore preparation of meals can be difficult for her. I do not mind cooking and do enjoy her reaction to being able to not have to be bothered with that task. It is not that I like to cook, but that she appreciated that I cook.

A True Offer of Acts of Service

On May 2, 1962, a dramatic advertisement appeared in the San Francisco Examiner: "I don't want my husband to die in the gas chamber for a crime he did not commit. I will therefore offer my services for 10 years as a cook, maid, or housekeeper to any leading attorney who will defend him and bring about his vindication."

One of San Francisco's greatest attorneys, Vincent Hallinan, read or heard about the ad and contacted Gladys Kidd, who had placed it. Her husband, Robert Lee Kidd, was already tried for the slaying of an elderly antique dealer. Kidd's fingerprints had been found on a bloodstained ornate sword in the victim's shop. During the retrial, Hallinan proved that the antique dealer had not been killed by the sword, and that Kidd's fingerprints and blood on the sword got there because Kidd had once toyed with it while playfully dueling with a friend when they were both out shopping. The jury, after 11 hours, found Kidd to be not guilty. Attorney Hallinan refused Gladys Kidd's offer of 10 years' servitude.

Even though the wife did not actually have to carry out the ten years of servitude, the husband greatly appreciated the idea that his wife would actually go that far as to be the personal maid for ten years for her husband. I am persuaded that the husband understood the love of acts of service.

Physical Touch

There are many examples of this language of love in the Bible. Here are but a few.

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- Jacob and Joseph: Gen 46:29 And Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time.
- The Prodigal Son and the Father: Luke 15:20 "And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion {for him,} and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.
- Paul and the Elders of Ephesus: Acts 20:37-38 And they {began} to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, 38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

The Untouchables of Prison

One of the saddest things that I have ever personally witnessed was in a prison in Iowa. I was there on visiting day to see an inmate. There were many families there to see their incarcerated loved-ones in the open area with tables and chairs. I would see the fathers come out and the children run over to sit on “daddies” lap to be held and kissed. That was sad enough to know that their father would not be going home with them when the visit was over. I thought about how much some of these children were starved for the physical touch of their father and that a once a month embrace would not be enough for them.

There was a separate area of the prison for those that were considered a risk to the normal population. Perhaps they committed extremely violent murders or other crimes and the risk of danger needed to be removed. These families could only talk through a glass via a phone line. These children would go up to the window and put their hand up to it while the father would do the same. These children would cry because they could not sit in their father’s lap and be held like the others. Their relationship would be completely void of physical touch. My heart broke for them because they were not nearly as blessed as the children that I had seen first. As they would depart, some of the children and fathers would put their lips up to the window and kiss each other through the glass. Many of these children would never again experience the love of physical touch with their father for the rest of their life. What a void that must leave.

Jesus made a point to touch others:

Luke, being a physician and paying attention to detail, made it a point to focus on this quality.

- Jesus touched a leper (Luke 5:12-13).
- He touched the coffin of the dead (Luke 7:14)
- He touched a woman with a bad reputation (Luke 7:39)
- He came into contact with the woman with an issue of blood (Luke 8:44)
- He touched the ear of Malchus, having his ear healed back on. (Luke 22:51)

Other examples of the physical side of Jesus:

- John 13:23 There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.
- John 9:6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes...”

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- Mark 1:41 And moved with compassion, He stretched out His hand, and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Jesus was always touching people as a show of compassion and acceptance. There is something to be said of the love language of physical touch. It is actually quite beneficial to us all as mentioned below.

- Skin-to-skin contact between mother and infant has been shown to benefit the baby's physical development and contributes to a positive attachment relationship between the two. The practice of placing a diaper-clad infant skin-to-skin on the mother is so beneficial that it is now an intervention strategy for premature babies in neonatal intensive care units worldwide.
- A group of Korean infants under the care of an orphanage were provided with an extra 15 minutes of stimulation twice a day, 5 days a week, for 4 weeks. The additional stimulation consisted of auditory (female voice), tactile (massage), and visual (eye-to-eye contact). Compared to the infants who only received regular care, the stimulated orphans gained significantly more weight and had larger increases in body length and head circumference after the 4 week intervention period, as well as at 6 months of age. In addition, the stimulated infants had fewer illnesses and clinic visits.
- Gentle touch has been shown to facilitate physical and psychological functioning, particularly in terms of reducing stress, relieving pain, increasing the ability to cope, and general health ratings.
- Participants in a study examining the effectiveness of therapeutic touch as a treatment for managing pain due to fibromyalgia experienced a significant decrease in pain and reported a significant improvement in quality of life.
- The majority of nursing home residents suffering from dementia like Alzheimer's disease develop behavioral symptoms of dementia, such as restlessness, searching and wandering, tapping and banging, pacing and walking, and vocalization. Current treatment involves drugs, but a recent study showed that intervention consisting of therapeutic touch significantly reduces these behavioral symptoms. Impressive is that the therapeutic touch employed in the study was only provided twice per day, for three days. Each therapeutic intervention lasted only 5-7 minutes. (By [Margaret Chuong-Kim](#) on June 13, 2005)

Physical touch is one of the love languages that tends to be misunderstood in our culture. Yes it can mean relations between the husband and the wife, but it is much more inclusive to the following:

- Holding hands
- Foot or back rub
- Running fingers through the hair
- Kisses and hugs
- A massage

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We find some examples of relationships between the husband and the wife in the Holy Scriptures.

- The Caressing -Gen 26:8 And it came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah.
- The Embrace -Song 2:6 "{Let} his left hand be under my head and his right hand embrace me."
- The Kiss -Song 4:3 "Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely..."
- The Snuggling - Ruth 3:7 When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down.
- The Relations -1 Cor 7:3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

You can figure it out from there. Physical touch might not be your language of love, but then again it might be your spouse's. If it is and you are neglecting it, then you are damaging your marriage. If speak it well, your marriage will be blessed.

Conclusion

We have covered the five love languages of marriage.

1. Encouragement
2. Quality Time
3. Gifting
4. Acts of Service
5. Physical Touch

They are Biblical in nature, expected in relationships and adhesive in marriage. Find which one is your spouse's and which one is yours. You might have two of them that are at the top. Take the time to know each other in this way and take the time to use it for the good of your marriage.