

Becoming A Better “Lover”
Valentine Theme – February 19, 2006
(based on the books by Gary Chapman)

There are three things that will endure - faith, hope & love - and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 13 (878)

I am always aware of your unfailing love... *Psalm 26 verse 3 (424)*

We know how much God loves us... *1 John chapter 4 verse 16 (943)*

Let's stop just saying we love each other; let's really show it by our actions. *1 John chapter 3 verse 18 (942)*

1. Affirming Words

What is it? Focusing on words to tell of our love

Why? Because words hold power in our lives. “Sticks & stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me!”

There are different kinds of Affirming Words...

Words of affection - I love you, you're so special

Words that build up / praise - You did a great job, I appreciate the way you work so hard

Words that encourage - I know you can do it, you'll be great at it

These words must be - said eye-to-eye, sincere & genuine expressions of your love, said in a loving tone & demeanor, not be done to manipulate

Do I have this? These people feel loved thru words...“I feel loved because my wife always tells me she loves me,” “I know my parents love me because they always cheer so loud for me at my games,” “I know my boyfriend loves me because he tells my friends how great I am.”

- These people feel something from the words spoken to them / about them, they love to get & then hang on to notes, cards, emails, etc.

How to do this - Start where you are...be honest - How have I been shaped in this area?

Start with the basics, be intentional - Purpose to speak your love / appreciation for the person

- Make a list of everything positive - she does the dishes, he hasn't missed a day of work, she is trying so hard in school, he puts so much effort into his sports, she's always so cheerful when she comes to work, etc.
- Don't just focus on what they do, focus on their personality / character

Make a plan - Once a day, give a sincere praise -leave a note, send an email or card, call them to share your love

- Realize that teens & kids are looking for sincerity with these words, or they don't feel the love
- For every criticism, give 5 sincere complements / praises
- It's great to praise the effort...regardless of the outcome
- Each week, add to the list you're keeping
- After a few weeks, if I think it (positive!), say it!

2. Quality Time

What is it? Giving someone your undivided attention

What's it look like? - Turning the TV, radio & computer off, putting the newspaper / book is down

- It's not just being together...it's being together with focused attention!
- Not necessarily eye-to-eye contact (while driving, etc), but rather connection on an emotional level
- The activity is not crucial but simply a way of bringing about the emotional connection
- Takes place in an uninterrupted context

Do I have this?? - Your loved one tells you, “You never have time for me,” “you spend too much time at work,” or “when is our time together?”

- Kids keep asking you to come to their games & events, or if “just the two of you” could do something together
- When these people talk about events / memories, they concentrate on the people that were there
- They know they are loved because of what you did with them (with a positive attitude!)

How to do it

It won't happen unless you put it on your calendar - Make a date with your spouse / child / friend

- Make a big deal about the date...let them see it on your calendar, talk about it, countdown to it
- Multiple kids need individual time with you
- Don't buy the lie that “It's not the quantity but the quality” of time spent together...these people need both!

When together - do what they want to do...yes, even if it's shopping or watching a game

- ask specific open-ended questions about their day, be prepared to actively listen & interact
- let them talk, don't interrupt, don't do something else while you're listening
- keep tucking your kids into bed, doing homework with them

3. Receiving Gifts

What is it? - The gift is not just a material object, it's a tangible expression of love

These gifts, can be purchased, found, or made, something they can hold in their hands & feel your love from, are not a substitute for the other love languages, are not given for services rendered, to influence an outcome, to smooth ruffled feathers, or to buy love

Do I have this? - These people place value on their birthday, other holidays, anniversaries

- When get a gift, they open it, make a fuss about it, then put it in a special place...and keep making a fuss about it
- They're the one's who tend to hang on to objects from their past
- They are the one's who go thru trauma when their possessions are broken, destroyed or misplaced

How to do this - Don't wait for holidays / anniversaries to give gifts, get in the habit of giving gifts regularly

- It has nothing to do with the amount of \$\$ you spend...it's got everything to do with the thought behind the gift
- Learn the person's interests, because these people love personalized gifts
- They love getting packages in the mail, surprises in their lunch boxes, gifts sent to their workplace, etc., because to them the presentation is huge too!

4. Acts of Service

What is it? - expressing your love in something you do, to please someone by serving them willingly, not because you have to, service freely given out of choice, not out of fear

Do I have this? - When asked, these people say they know they are loved because of things done for them...when I was sick the church brought meals, my parents helped me with my project, my friends helped me move in

- This is the wife who puts the "honey do list" together ...and gets incensed when it isn't done / thrilled when it is
- These people make a big deal about a simple task that was done for them

How to do this - These require thought, planning, time, effort & energy

- Must be done with a positive spirit, or they don't count
- Sometimes these people are the one's who complain the most about what's not being done... opening the door for them, picking up your clothes, jobs around the house, remembering important dates, etc.
- So ask the questions, "What is it that I can do for you that would make you feel loved by me?" & "Do you feel loved by me when I do _____?" Take your cues from them about what is important to them
- Look for opportunities (big & small!) to serve them, surprise your kids by doing one of their chores

5. Physical Touch

What is it? - Expressing your love thru non-sexual physical contact

What's it look like? - Holding hands, walking arm-in-arm, sitting close, giving a massage, a shoulder rub, high-fives, etc.

- For kids, it could be snuggling, wrestling, patting their back, etc. Like Jesus with the little kids who came to him

Do I have this? This is the person who loves to sit close, have their back or shoulders rubbed

- Very often, these are the "huggers" in the group...they are giving love in the way they want to receive it
- These are the teens who keep "high-fiving" each other, smacking each other
- These are the kids who want to sit on your lap or want you to sit on the floor with them

How to do this - Ask how you can best show your love in this way

- To those who are married...if your spouse needs this from you but you didn't grow up in a "touchy feely" family...choose to love your spouse more than you love yourself!
- If the one you love has this "love language," it's crucial to hold them when they cry...holding them as they cry is more important than anything you can say or do
- For all of the non-touchy-feely-types...remember, it's not about you! How can you SHOW your love??
- Start simple...hold hands, sit close (with no strings attached!)
- Families...do group hugs, hold hands during prayer, snuggle while you watch a movie, etc.
- Dads, don't withdraw from your teenage daughters!! All daughters, especially those with this love language, need their dads to keep showing them love & affection
- Boys have this love language too, they may show it / ask for it in different ways...like wrestling with you, bumping into you, trying to lift you up, etc.
- Special caution to all singles...
- Remember...if you have this love language & the one you love doesn't have it, don't impose this on them...you'll drive them crazy!!

How to determine your primary love language - Which of these makes you feel most loved? Which resonated the most with you during today's talk? Which of these have you most craved or requested from parents growing up, those you dated, or from your spouse? Which do you use to most often express your love to others? It tends to be our own love language!