



Love Languages

THE LANGUAGES OF LOVE

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(1 John 4:12)



The euphoria of "falling in love" is one of life's highest emotions. Being "in love" makes people willing to "climb the highest mountain," or "swim the deepest sea" just to be together. Why is it that within a few years of marriage, many people lose these high emotions? I believe the answer lies in failing to speak each other's emotional "love language." Falling in love and staying in love are two very different, though related, experiences.

"Falling in love" begins with warm, bubbly emotions for a member of the opposite gender and quickly escalates into an emotional obsession. Though the Bible does not focus on this romantic emotional experience, it does acknowledge its reality (Judg. 14:1-3; Song 4:1-7; 5:10-16). Research shows that this emotional obsession lasts about two years. A successful marriage cannot be built upon this temporary emotional high.

"Staying in love"—keeping warm emotions alive for the long term—is Scripture's challenge for couples. People's most basic emotional need is to feel loved. Husbands are instructed to love their wives (Eph. 5:25) and wives are to love their husbands (Titus 2:4). In the Bible, the word "love" does not refer to an emotion, but to an attitude and behavior (including both actions and words). Love is the attitude that stems from choosing to look out for the other's interest first; then loving behavior follows.

God is the supreme example of love. He cares about people, so He took action to meet our needs. Scripture instructs us to love one another as God has loved us. In fact, if we do not choose to love each other, it signifies that we do not know God (1 John 4:7, 8). God's love draws us to Him, and then to others (1 John 4:9-11).

In human relationships, love is very similar. People must *choose* the attitude of love and then express it by their behavior.

Such behavior touches the heart and emotions of those they love and moves them to reciprocate. In marriage the emotional need is met when husband and wife express reciprocal love. If one spouse is not showing love, then the other must still follow the example of God, who loved us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8).

SPEAKING LOVE LANGUAGES

We all need love, but we need for it to be expressed in different ways. What makes one person feel loved will not necessarily make another feel loved. Sincerity is not enough. People must learn to speak other people's "love language." It is common in marriage to genuinely express love to one's spouse while failing to connect emotionally.

There are five basic love languages. Each of us has a primary love language. The primary love language speaks more deeply to a person than the other languages can. Love given in people's primary love language makes them feel truly loved. The key to keeping love alive in marriage is learning the primary love language of one's spouse and speaking it regularly. The same is true with children.

Following are descriptions of the five love languages.

Words of Affirmation

This love language uses words to build up the other person. First Corinthians 8:1

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states that "love edifies," or builds up. One way to express love is to encourage the other person. Even the smallest affirmation goes a long way. Whether spoken or in writing, the goal is that the other person feels affirmed.

Gifts

This love language uses tokens of appreciation. Gifts (even inexpensive ones) tell people that they are thought about and loved. Sometimes thoughts about someone are best communicated in a gift, a tangible reminder of being loved.

Acts of Service

This love language does actions that one person knows the other person would appreciate. The Bible challenges people to not just say "I love you," but to love "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Even small acts count. Asking what can be done to help a spouse or child is a great way to start.

Quality Time

This love language gives undivided attention. Going to breakfast, sitting on the couch while talking, and taking a walk together are all examples. The activity is unimportant, but focusing on each other is. Time is a powerful communicator of love.

Physical Touch

This love language gives tender, caring touch. Jesus took the time to have children come to Him despite being busy (Mark 10:16). An embrace, a kiss, and a hand on the shoulder are all expressions of love. People are never too old for physical touch.

DISCOVERING LOVE LANGUAGES

Keeping love alive in a marriage and meeting the emotional needs of one's children requires learning and speaking each other's love languages. We can discover other people's love languages by asking three questions:

1. How do they most often express love to me? (Generally people give love in the way that they would like to receive it.)
2. What do they complain about most often? (Complaints reveal their inner needs.)
3. What do they request most often? (Usually their requests reveal a pattern which will indicate their primary love language.)

Discovering the primary love language of our spouse or child gives us the information necessary to effectively meet their emotional needs. The chances increase for reciprocated love if love is first expressed in the other's primary love language. Loving our spouse and children unconditionally, using their primary love languages, has the potential of working miracles in our marriages and families.

FURTHER

Other passages to study about the issue of love languages include:

- Proverbs 3:12
- Mark 12:30-33
- Luke 6:38
- John 3:16; 14:15, 21-23
- Romans 5:5, 8; 8:35-39
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Ephesians 4:32

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on love languages at 1 John 3:18 on page 1677. See also the personality profile of Mary on page 1336.

is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

SIN AND THE CHILD OF GOD

⁴Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. ⁶Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. ⁸He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

THE IMPERATIVE OF LOVE

¹⁰In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ¹¹For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹²not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

¹³Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother⁴ abides in death. ¹⁵Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

3:14 ^aNU-Text omits *his* brother.

SOUL NOTE



God's Own (3:1) No one can love more than God. The thought of God's astounding love bestowed on sinful humanity is beyond understanding. It's incomprehensible that while we were still sinners in rebellion against God, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Through that sacrifice, God brought His own to Himself, bestowing the title and relationship of "children." He allows us to call Him Father. No believer should ever feel alone, worthless, or unimportant. Everyone who has faith in Christ is a beloved child of God! **Topic: Self-Esteem**

KEY PASSAGE



Love Languages

BEING BILINGUAL

(3:18)

People say "I love you" in many ways besides speaking the words. In fact, while words are important, saying words without backing them up with actions will make the words meaningless. John wrote to believers, "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

When expressing love to a spouse, children, or dear friends, we should consider their "language." Certainly they will understand the words, but they will hear the message better through certain kinds of actions. For some people, their love language is physical touch; for others, a gift will show love; still others would prefer to have quality time. As we learn what "language" our loved ones speak, we then can add to our words the deeds that will show our love.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about love languages on pages 1680, 1681. See also the personality profile of Mary on page 1336.

sat at Jesus'^a feet and heard His word. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

⁴¹And Jesus^a answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴²But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

THE MODEL PRAYER

11 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

²So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,^a
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.^b
Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
Give us day by day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is
indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one."^a

A FRIEND COMES AT MIDNIGHT

⁵And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you?' ⁸I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

10:39 ^aNU-Text reads *the Lord's*. **10:41** ^aNU-Text reads *the Lord*. **11:2** ^aNU-Text omits *Our and in heaven*. ^bNU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **11:4** ^aNU-Text omits *But deliver us from the evil one*.

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Love
Languages

MARY: SPEAKING LOVE'S LANGUAGE

(LUKE 10:38-42)

People show their love in different ways. For Mary's sister, Martha, showing love involved having a hospitable home and good food for her guests. Jesus and His disciples enjoyed that hospitality several times during the course of His ministry. Jesus appreciated Martha's ability, but wanted her to use it without so much hurry and worry, and with a willingness to open her heart, not just her home, to Him.

Mary showed her love by sitting at Jesus' feet and drinking in His every word. This kind of love and devotion revealed a heart open to Jesus' message and ready to accept Him as her Savior. She listened well, for she seemed to understand, even before the disciples did, why Jesus had to die. At another visit that Jesus paid to this family prior to His death, "Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair" (John 12:3). Jesus explained that her sacrifice of love was in preparation for His burial: "She has done a good work for Me. . . . For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (Matt. 26:10, 12, 13).

Love has many languages. Both Mary and Martha had great faith in Jesus, and both loved Him dearly. As we show our love for Christ and for others, we may do so in different ways, depending on our unique personality and gifts from God. When we speak the language of love, everyone will hear and understand.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about love languages on pages 1680, 1681. See also the key passage note at 1 John 3:18 on page 1677.

KEEP ASKING

⁹"So I say to you; seek, and you will be opened to receive, and whoever knocks will be opened for bread^a for give him a stone he asks for a he give him instead of a stone he asks for a he offer him a stone^b If you then know how to give gifts to your heavenly Father those who ask

A HOUSE DIVIDED

¹⁴And He was mute. So he went out, that he might be amazed at the demons he casts out demons.

¹⁶Others, then, sign from heaven thoughts, said against itself house divided^c also is divided kingdom started demons by Beelzebub by Beelzebub them out? The ²⁰But if I cast God, surely upon you. ²¹Who guards his own ²²But when a soldier and overcomes armor in which spoils. ²³He will and he who does

AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

²⁴"When a man, he goes out and finding no house from which comes, he finds ²⁶Then he goes out other spirits

ELIMELECH'S FAMILY GOES TO MOAB

1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. **2**The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. **3**Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. **4**Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. **5**Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

NAOMI RETURNS WITH RUTH

6Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. **7**Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. **8**And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. **9**The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband."

So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. **10**And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."

11But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still

sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? **12**Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, **13**would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

14Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

16But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people *shall be* my people,
And your God, my God.

17 Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.

The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If *anything but* death parts you and me."

18When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

19Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

20But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi;^a call me Mara,^b for the Almighty has

1:20 ^aLiterally Pleasant ^bLiterally Bitter

SOUL NOTE



The Language of Love (1:16, 17) People say "I love you" in many different ways. It is often said best through actions. Ruth showed her love for Naomi by staying with her and by working hard to support them both (2:6, 7). Ruth loved and trusted Naomi, so she followed Naomi's advice in going to Boaz (3:1-9).

Boaz was also a man of action, immediately handling the matter of providing for Ruth and becoming the redeemer for these women (3:18). We may not always hear the words, "I love you," but, if we listen, we may hear them through another's kind actions toward us.

Topic: Love Languages

in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

INDWELLING OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

¹⁹"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord,

how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

²³Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

THE GIFT OF HIS PEACE

²⁵"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My

SOUL NOTE



Another Helper (14:15–18) Jesus' followers show their love for Christ by obeying His commandments. Jesus has set the pattern of love and obedience, and His disciples are expected to follow His example. Jesus reassured His followers, however, that they would not have to obey in their own power. He would send a helper—the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in Jesus' followers, helping them to remember His commands and to obey them. We do not have to go it alone—the Holy Spirit in our hearts helps us to know what is right and then to do it.

Topic: Presence of the Holy Spirit

SOUL NOTE



If You Love Me (14:21–23) Jesus repeated the statement (14:15) that His followers show their love for Him by their obedience to His commands. Love is more than words—true love involves action. Whoever says he or she loves someone and then ignores that person or acts rudely doesn't know the meaning of love. Words of love are important, but actions and behavior provide the proof. Do we obey Christ's commandments or do we live as if He made no difference in our lives? Do we draw close to Him daily, or do we ignore Him? Our love is revealed by our desire to follow Him. **Topic: Love Languages**

SOUL NOTE



Spiritual Growth (14:26) Jesus promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them, helping them to remember everything that Jesus had taught. Paul wrote, "We have received . . . the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God" (1 Cor. 2:12). The Holy Spirit is our source of spiritual understanding. We trust the writings of the New Testament, knowing that the Holy Spirit guided the writers. Then we allow the Holy Spirit to help us understand and apply God's Word to our lives.

Topic: Presence of the Holy Spirit