

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

April 7, 2013

Spiritual Ponderings

5 Love Languages

I was recently hanging out with a group of young adults and they began talking about something that I had never heard before. They were asking each other and me what their “love language” was. I had to admit that I had no idea what they were talking about and after a few moments of gloating over the fact that they knew something that I did not know they explained what they were talking about and told me to read a book by Gary Chapman called: *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts*. I found the book and Dr. Chapman’s theory of love languages very intriguing and so I thought I would share and ponder with you his ideas for the month of April.

Dr. Chapman’s theory is that just as people speak different verbal languages like English, French, Spanish, etc. People also speak different love languages. Most problems in relationships especially marriage happen because couples do not always speak the same love language as the person they are trying to love. I was told by my high school French teacher that I spoke French like a Spanish Speaking Cow and because I cannot speak French or Spanish I cannot understand what a person speaking French or Spanish is saying. In a similar way if I am speaking one love language and the person I am trying to love is speaking another then he or she will not be able to understand me. Before we get into Dr. Chapman’s five love languages I think there are a few other ideas from Dr. Chapman that we should explore. Quotes from Dr. Chapman are in bold.

Dr. Chapman points out in his book: **“Psychologists have concluded that the need to feel love is a primary human emotional need. For love, we will climb mountains, cross seas, traverse desert sands, and endure untold hardships. Without love, mountains become un-climbable, seas un-crossable, deserts unbearable, and hardships our lot in life.”** He goes on to use the image of the “Love Tank” which can easily be compared to a gas tank. When a person’s love tank is full he or she they are ready to conquer the world but when it is empty they feel like they have been squished and beat up by the world. Just like a car can only go with gas in the fuel tank so a person can only go with love in its love tank. Sometimes our need for love can drive us to seek attention and love in bad ways if our love tank is empty: **“Much of the misbehavior of children is motivated by the cravings of an empty ‘love tank.’”**

Another key insight of Dr. Chapman is that “falling in love” and “real love” are actually two different things physically and emotionally. Listen to Dr. Chapman’s description of being “falling in-love” as a natural emotional high that comes from the idea that someone might want to make me the center of their world. We believe that we will always make the perfect choices and always be forgiving and always loving toward each other. Dr. Chapman goes on to point out though: **“Unfortunately, the eternity of the in-love experience is fiction, not fact.”**

The end of the “falling in love” experience though does not have to be the end of the relationship. Dr. Chapman points out: **“Research seems to indicate that there is a third and better alternative: We can recognize the in-love experience for what it was—a temporary emotional high—and not pursue “real love” with our spouse. That kind of love is emotional in nature but not obsessional. It is a love that unites reason and emotion. It involves an act of the will and requires discipline, and it recognizes the need for personal growth. Our most basic emotional need is not to fall in love but to be genuinely loved by another, to know a love that grows out of reason and choice, not instinct. I need to be loved by someone who chooses to love me, who sees in me something worth loving.**

That kind of love requires effort and discipline. It is the choice to expand energy in an effort to benefit the other person, knowing that if his or her life is enriched by your effort, you too will find a sense of satisfaction—the satisfaction of having genuinely loved another. It does not require the euphoria of the in-love experience. In fact, true love cannot begin until the in-love experience has run its course.

We cannot take credit for the kind and generous things we do while under the influence of “the obsession.” We are pushed and carried along by an instinctual force that goes beyond our normal behavior patterns. But if, once we return to the real world of human choice, we choose to be kind and generous, that is real love...

That is good news to the married couple who have lost all their “in-love” feelings. If love is a choice, then they have the capacity to love after the “in-love” obsession has died and they have returned to the real world.



Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

April 14, 2013

Spiritual Ponderings

5 Love Languages

As I mentioned last time, I was recently hanging out with a group of young adults and they began talking about something that I had never heard before. They were asking each other and me what their “love language” was. I was challenged to read a book by Gary Chapman called: *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts*. I found the book and Dr. Chapman’s theory of love languages very intriguing and so I thought I would share and ponder with you his ideas for the month of April. Before we get to the first love language though let us look at another foundational point in Dr. Chapman’s book.

This foundational point is a very simple one. In order to communicate love to your spouse or friend you must do so in his or her love language. Dr. Chapman points out that there is a lot of frustration in marriages and relationships because one spouse is trying to show love and the other one is not receiving the love and this ends with one feeling unloved and the other feeling rejected. It is therefore important to know the other person well enough to know his or her love language. For example a hug does not do much for me in the ways of conveying love because my love language is not physical touch but I have friends who love to hug because their love language is physical touch. No matter how many times these friends hug me I am not going to feel the love that they wish to convey through their hug. Let us now explore the five love languages.

The First Love Language: Words of Affirmation

When talking about the first love language, Dr. Chapman points out: “One way to express love is to use words that build up.” People whose primary love language is words of affirmation need to be affirmed in order to have their love tank filled. The words of affirmation must be sincere and true “encouragement requires empathy and seeing the world on your spouse’s perspective.”

As we give words of affirmation we must be constantly sincere in what we say and aware of our body language. I know that I have the habit of crossing my arms subconsciously but my crossing of my arms often conveys anger and force to others even though I do not mean it.

Sometimes we may find it hard to affirm someone because it makes us uncomfortable but Dr. Chapman quickly points out: “The object of love is not getting something you want but doing something for the well-being of the one you love.”

Sometimes we discover it hard because we do not feel like affirming because of a past hurt. Dr. Chapman answers this by stating: “Forgiveness is not a feeling; it is a commitment. It is a choice to show mercy not to hold the offense up against the offender.”

One last quote from Dr. Chapman: “Psychologist William James said that possibly the deepest human need is the need to feel appreciated. Words of affirmation will meet that need in many individuals.” And a bonus tip: “You may also want to try giving indirect words of affirmation—that is, saying positive things about your spouse when he or she is not present. Eventually, someone will tell your spouse, and you will get full credit for the love.”

Suggestions on how to speak “Words of Affirmation:

1. To remind yourself that “Words of affirmation” is your spouse’s primary love language, print “Words are Important” three times on a 3x5 card and put it on your mirror or another place you will be sure to see it.
2. For one week, keep a written record of all the words of affirmation you give your spouse each day.
3. Set a goal to give your spouse a different compliment each day for one month.
4. As you watch TV, read, or listen to people’s conversations look for words of affirmation that people use. Write those affirming statements down. Read through them periodically and select those you could use on your spouse.
5. Write a love letter, a love paragraph, or a love sentence to your spouse, and give it quietly or without fanfare!
6. Compliment your spouse in the presence of his parents or friends.
7. Look for your spouse’s strengths and tell her how much you appreciate those strengths.
8. Tell your children how great their mother or father is. Do this behind your spouse’s back and in her presence.



Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

April 21, 2013

Spiritual Ponderings

5 Love Languages

Let us continue our exploration of Dr. Gary Chapman called: *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* by looking at two more of his love languages.

The Second Love Language: Quality Time

Dr. Chapman points out: "By 'quality,' I mean giving someone your undivided attention. I don't mean sitting on the couch watching television together." Elsewhere he goes on: "It isn't enough to just be in the room with someone. A key ingredient is giving your spouse quality time is giving them focused attention, especially in the era of many distractions."

To be spending quality time with someone though does not mean that you have to spend every moment gazing into each other's time. Sometimes we can be having a quality conversation which involves sharing and listening. Dr. Chapman points out: "a relationship calls for sympathetic listening with a view to understand the other person's thoughts feelings and desires." Here are some tips to creating quality time: 1) Maintain eye contact 2) Don't listen to your spouse while doing something else 3) Listen for feelings and ask questions about those feelings 4) observe body language & 5) refuse to interrupt.

Suggestions on how to speak the love language of quality time

1. Ask your spouse where she most enjoys sitting when talking with you.
2. Thank of an activity your spouse enjoys, but which brings little pleasure to you. Tell your spouse that you are trying to broaden your horizons and would like to join him in this activity sometime this month.
3. Ask your spouse for a list of five activities that he would enjoy doing with you. Make plans to do one of them each month for the next five months.
4. Plan a weekend getaway just for the two of you sometime within the next six months. Be sure it is a weekend when you won't have to call the office or have a commitment with your kids.
5. Make time everyday to share with each other some of the events of your day.

The Third Spiritual Language: Receiving Gifts

At first I thought that this love language sounded a little selfish but Dr. Chapman points out two important truths: "I examined the cultural patterns surrounding love and marriage and found that in every culture I studied, gift giving was a part of the love-marriage process," and I had to agree with him. We give gifts to symbolize our love to people all the time: marriage, birthdays, Christmas, etc. The other thing was that he pointed out is that our love language is not something we necessarily choose but rather is something that is formed in us from genetics and our upbringing so if our parents and grandparents showed us their love by giving us gift we will internalize it in some way. Gift giving also does not equate into expensive. The gifts we can give include our time, homemade projects, and our presence. Here are two more important quotes: "It is a verbalizing a significant truth—symbols have emotional value," and "visual symbols of love are more important to some people than to others." While receiving a gift may not be important to you it may be very important to the person that you are in relationship with.

Suggestions on how to speak the love language of Receiving Gifts

1. Try a parade of gifts. Leave a box of candy for your spouse in the morning, have flowers delivered in the afternoon, give him a gift in the evening.
2. Let nature be your guide. The next time you take a walk through the neighborhood, keep your eye open for a gift for your spouse. It may be a stone, a stick or a feather. You may attach special meaning to your natural gift.
3. Give your spouse a gift everyday for one week. It need not be a special week.
4. Discover the valuable of "handmade originals." Make a gift for your spouse.
5. Keep a gift idea notebook.

6. Give a lasting tribute. Give a gift to your spouse's church or favorite charity.



Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

April 28, 2013

Spiritual Ponderings

5 Love Languages

As we conclude our look at Dr. Chapman's theory of the five love languages, I hope that you have found it helpful. I hope that you have been able to see why that sometimes when we think we are telling someone that we love them that they still walk away feeling unloved. I also hope that you may have been able to identify someone in your life who has been trying to love you but has been doing so in the wrong language. We still have two more love languages to look at.

The Fourth Love Language: Acts of Service

Dr. Chapman very early on in chapter seven points out what he means by "acts of service": "By acts of service, I mean doing things you know your spouse would like you to do. You seek to please her by serving her, to express your love for her by doing for her." These actions can be such things as cooking, setting the table, washing the dishes, vacuuming, changing a dirty diaper, etc.

In his treatment of the fourth love language Dr. Chapman points out three important truths about this love language. The first truth is that "what we do for each other before marriage is no indication of what we will do after marriage." The second truth is that: "love is a choice that cannot be coerced." You may be able to nag your partner to do something but that does not mean that he or she loves you by doing it. The third truth is that: "my spouse's criticism about my behavior provides me with the clearest clue to her primary love language. People tend to criticize their spouse most loudly in the area where they themselves have the deepest emotional need."

I learned in my life that making a fifteen minute phone call to my mom shows her love in ways that goes beyond the words "I love you." While I did not always feel like making that call in the business of my everyday life and my desire to be an independent adult when I was in college, I learned that making that call showed mom I loved her and so I did. Make the choice to love.

Suggestions on how to speak the love language of Acts of Service

1. Make a list of all the requests your spouse has made of you over the past few weeks. Select one each week and do it as an expression of love.
2. Ask your spouse to make a list of ten things he or she would like you to do during the next month.
3. While your spouse is away get the children to help you with some act of service toward him or her.
4. What one act of service has your spouse nagged about consistently? Why not decide to do that item?

The last of the love languages is Physical Touch

"Physical touch is also a powerful vehicle for communicating marital love. Holding hands, kissing, embracing, and sexual intercourse are all ways of communicating emotional love to one's spouse. For some individuals, physical touch is their primary love language. Without it they feel unloved. With it, their emotional tank is filled, and they feel secure in the love of their spouse," according to Dr. Chapman.

It is important to realize that "physical touch can make or break a relationship. It can communicate hate or love. To the person whose primary love language is physical touch, the message will be far louder than the words "I hate you" or "I love you."

Suggestions on how to speak the love language of Physical touch

1. As you walk from the car to go shopping, reach out and hold your spouse's hand.
2. Walk up to your spouse and say "Have I told you lately that I love you?" and give him or her a hug.
3. While your spouse is seated go over to her and give her a back massage.

4. Make sure to touch your spouse by holding hands or putting your arm around him when others are around especially other family members.

5. When your spouse returns home make sure to give him or her hug and a big welcome.

