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## Speaking the Right Language

Over twenty years ago I pledged to love, honor, and cherish my wife until “death do us part.” Between that promise and today I have been continually learning how to best show her that I do, in fact, love, honor, and cherish her. When we first got married I thought had some ideas about what that might look like, but in reality, I didn’t have clue. Of course, I knew that I loved her, but I didn’t really know how to express that love in a way that was meaningful to her. In other words, I had to learn to speak her language – her love language – before I could effectively communicate my feelings and my commitment to her.

The idea of “love languages” comes from a book titled, “The Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman. The central premise of the book is that we all tend to express and receive love in different ways. For some people, receiving a small gift tells them that they are loved and valued. For someone else, nothing says, “I love you” quite like spending an hour or two together out in the garden or cooking a meal. Still others will get the feels when their spouse tells them, “I love you”, “you’re awesome,” or some other words of affirmation. Everyone speaks a different love language and if you want to effectively communicate your love to your spouse, it’s a good idea to learn the language that they speak.

I think this concept of love languages can extend beyond human relationships and that’s what I’d like to touch on next. Have you ever stopped to wonder if God has a love language?

We would all agree (I hope) that God’s top priority is to show us his love and to be loved by us in return. “For God showed his own love for us in this, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.” Similarly, Jesus said that the greatest commandment was to, “love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul.” Clearly, love is at the very heart of what it means to be a Christian. But what does it mean to “love” God? What does that really look like? If we were to go to God and say, “I really love you, how can I show you my love,” what would he say?

Here’s the main point: if you want to show someone that you care and that you love them, they get to determine what expressions of love are meaningful to them. We have to learn their language. I believe God has told us, through the Bible, a great deal about his love language.

If we look at the 10 commandment we can read about God’s love language. Those commandments are not just laws, they are an explanation of what we can do to prove to God that we truly love him. So, for example, if we truly love God, we will have no other gods before him. That means we make him the first priority in our life. He also says we can show him our love by not making any idols to replace him and by honoring his name and not treating that which is holy as something common. Finally, God says that if we love him, we should remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

I find it interesting when some Christians question the need to keep the Sabbath. Some think that it is legalism to worry about such things. Some think that it’s no big deal, that as long as I love God he’s not concerned about those details. But the truth of the matter is that God gets to decide what a meaningful expression of love is. In the 10 commandments (including the Sabbath) he’s telling us, “if you say that you love me, and you want to show me that you love me, here are the things I like.”

When we love God we will try to learn his love language. We will be Sabbath keepers, not because of legalism, but because God said that is something that he likes.

If your spouse tells you, “I don’t really like gifts but I really love it when you write me notes telling me how much you love me,” are you going to buy gifts or write notes? If you’re smart you’ll go to Wal-Mart, buy dozens of note cards, learn calligraphy and get to writing. If they tell you they prefer notes, why would you even consider buying gifts?

The same thing is true with God. He says he wants us to keep his Sabbath and that that is how we can tell him that we love him. So why in the world would we try something else or think that it doesn’t matter?

It’s true that being a Christian is all about love for God. But let’s not forget that love is expressed through actions. If we want to know which actions God receives as love, all we have to do is ask him.

Happy Sabbath  
Pastor Tyler

