

Title: "Love Bears All Things"

I Corinthians 13 (NT p. 175)

Introduction – The language of love

Read I Corinthians 13:1 from the NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE.

In his book *The Five Love Languages*, Gary Chapman says that "...people speak different love languages" and that we must learn the love language of the ones we love to effectively communicate love. Why? Because if we don't speak in another's love language, she or he will not understand that we are communicating love any more than you understood the ancient Greek text I was reading.....

I had a friend in high school named Warren. He always wore the newest styles in clothing. He had money to buy lunch every day and money to go to the drug store for an ice cream sundae on the way home from school. When I invited him to go fishing with me, his parents bought him fishing tackle that I could only dream about having.

I thought Warren had it "made in the shade" and I was quite jealous. Then one day Warren said, "My parents hate me." This was hard for me to believe, but he went on to tell me that his parents left for work early and came home late, so he had to make his own breakfasts and dinners and eat alone. When his parents came home at the end of the day, they watched TV while they ate and continued watching after the meal.

They took Warren with them when they went out to eat or socialized with friends, but Warren got sick of watching his parents drink and talk with other adults so he stopped going. I remember that Warren was stunned when my mother asked him about his interests. He was amazed when she invited him to share a home cooked meal at our house.

I'm sure, if asked, his parents would have said that they loved Warren. But Warren did not FEEL loved because his parents did not speak in his love language. What ARE Chapman's five love languages? They are words of affirmation, QUALITY TIME, receiving gifts, acts of service and physical touch.

What was Warren's primary love language? Looking back, I would probably say quality time. Warren's parents rarely, if ever, spent quality time with him. I finally had to stop hanging around with Warren because he began acting strangely in school and started to steal things from stores. I still wonder whatever happened to Warren.

Of all the love languages, quality time may be the one most needed by spouses, children, parents and others we love.

1. What is quality time?

Quality time means giving someone your UNDIVIDED attention. Quality time is not watching TV together. When you watch TV, the program has your attention. Quality time is sitting together, looking at each other and talking. Quality time is taking a walk together and talking about what you see along the way. Quality time is talking about things that are important to each of you when you go out to eat.

While my mother was here the past couple weeks, we watched TV, but we also put jig saw puzzles together. While doing so, we talked about the puzzles, which were undoubtedly constructed to confuse and frustrate anyone attempting to assemble them, but my mother also shared about her earlier life, which was fascinating.

When it comes to children, quality time means reading to them and asking them questions and listening to their answers. It means playing games together. It means asking about what went on in school as you help them with homework.

When our twin children were young, Carol and I had special days when we each would have a child to ourselves. We used to ask them what they wanted to do on that day and do what we could, within reason. **THOSE** are the times kids remember.....

Quality time means listening to our loved one with our hearts as well as our heads. Dr. Chapman relates a counseling session with Patrick whose wife has left him. He said:

“My wife would come home from work and tell me about the problems in her office. I would listen to her and then tell her what I thought she should do. I always gave her advice.The next day she would come home from work and tell me about the same problems. I would ask her if she did what I suggested the day before. She would shake her head and say no. So, I’d repeat my advice.”

What she wanted was concern, understanding and sympathy, **NOT** an intellectual analysis of her problems. To provide this support, we must learn to listen with our HEART as well as our head.

If you are not a feeling-oriented person, you need to learn how to probe and verify. We probe by asking, “How did that make you feel?” Then verify the feeling by saying something like, “Of **COURSE** you are angry and resentful, you **SHOULD** be under those circumstances. I’m sorry you have to put up with all that stuff and I really appreciate what you go through each day to help support our family.”

Listening with our hearts as well as our heads works wonders that analysis and solutions can never achieve.

2. Introverts and extroverts

There are two types of people. Chapman calls them a “Babbling Brook” and a Dead Sea. I call them extroverts and introverts.

Extroverts reach conclusions through conversation.....

Introverts make decisions by thinking quietly.

Extroverts go from one topic to another and another and another.....

Introverts prefer to discuss one or maybe two topics in more depth.

In social situations, extroverts get energized and want to converse even more.....

In social situations, introverts get tired and long for home.

How can these two personality types spend quality time together?

An introvert and an extrovert usually get along fine to begin with. One can talk and the other can listen and be happy he or she doesn't have to make small talk. As time goes by, introverts start to feel like they are being given WAY too much information and extroverts start to feel like they don't even KNOW the introvert.

Introverts need to learn to SHARE their thoughts.

Extroverts need to learn to give the introvert opportunities to talk by asking questions.

Introverts need to learn to listen and allow the extrovert time to reach conclusions...

Extroverts need to learn to watch the introvert's eyes for the “dead HAMPSTER look.”

Introverts need to be willing to discuss one or two topics, which is a LOT.....

Extroverts need to be willing to discuss one or two topics, which is HARDLY ANY.

One couple I knew were having a hard time spending quality time together. She was an extrovert, a “Babbling Brook.” She owned her own business and spent all day by herself. At the end of the day, she arrived home BURSTING with the need to talk.

He was an introvert, a “Dead Sea.” He managed a busy office where the phone never stopped ringing, people continually came in demanding information and the eight office personnel were constantly yelling to each other over the din. At the end of the day, he arrived home practically comatose.

They finally worked out a plan in which he came home and read the paper undisturbed while she made supper. When they sat down to eat, she told him about her day and he listened attentively, sympathizing with her problems. Each morning she would tell him to think about a project or a vacation or a concern that she had and that is what they discussed while they did the dishes together after supper. It worked out very well.

3. Quality time with God

We also need to spend quality time with God. If you are an extrovert, find a time and a place that can talk to God out loud. Some extroverts chose to have a prayer partner and they talk together, committing their concerns to God. Be open to what God may be saying to you through your conversation.

If you are an introvert, spend time alone with God. Convey to God your concerns. Then listen for God to give you direction.

Remember that the purpose of prayer is not to get what YOU want. The purpose of prayer is to get in line with what GOD wants. Therefore, we need to learn to discern the difference between what WE want, what OTHERS want and what GOD wants. In Romans 12:2 we read: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may DISCERN what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

To discern the will of God, we need to be WILLING to give up what WE want and what others want. Then, and only then, will we be able to discern God’s will. God’s will MAY be what we want or what others want, but we cannot be sure unless we are genuinely willing to sacrifice these in order to discern God’s will in the matter.

Quite a few years ago, when Carol worked for an eco tour company, we were offered a free trip to the Galapagos Islands. I have always wanted to go there. Unfortunately, I had a wedding scheduled for the weekend we would be away. What should I do? Should I take this once in a lifetime opportunity and ask a colleague to fill in for me?

I prayed about it and thought I should go. Then I gave up, REALLY gave up, my desire to go. Then, while praying, I pictured going on the trip and I pictured in my mind doing the wedding. I KNEW I should do the wedding. Do I have regrets? Yes. Do I have doubts? No.

Conclusion - Quality time with those we love

So, what is the conclusion? We need to do whatever it takes to spend QUALITY TIME with the people we love and the Lord we love. No excuses. The one will create relationships that last as long as we live, the other will create a relationship that will last forever and ever and ever.

Let’s now sing a hymn by a C. Austin Miles, who obviously spent a LOT of quality time with God. The name of the hymn is “In the Garden” #425.