

5 Love Languages

Module 6 – Physical Touch

Physical touch does not necessarily = sexual intimacy. There are many forms of non-sexual physical touch: kissing, hugging, holding hands, ‘cuddling’ massages, slow dancing, tickling/poking, ‘playfulness’, etc.

Do not confuse sexual desires to mean physical touch is your primary love language. It may be, but if other forms of physical touch don’t mean much to you, then perhaps you have another primary love language.

Physical touch can have a big effect on a relationship. It can communicate love, but it can also show hate if it is withheld or used in a negative manner.

Dr. Chapman notes that loving touches almost anywhere can be an expression of love to your spouse if this is one of their love languages

Not all touches are equal

- Some bring more pleasure
- Your spouse is your best ‘instructor’
- Don’t make the mistake of believing that a touch that brings *you* pleasure will also bring pleasure to *your spouse*.
- We need to learn what makes our spouse feel loved – not simply assume it’s what we like or what we think ‘most spouses’ like.
- Each person (and each marriage) is unique. Making assumptions, whether related to Physical Touch or any other love language, can lead to problems. It is important to communicate and learn from our spouse what they do and do not like.

Dr. Chapman divides Touch into two types:

- The first is **Explicit touches** - those that demand your full attention such as a back rub, foreplay or sexual intimacy. They take more time – not only in the actual touching, but in developing your understanding of how to communicate love to your spouse in this way.

- The second is **Implicit touches** – those that require little thought or time such as sitting close while watching TV, touching briefly as your spouse walks through the room, a quick kiss or hug.

He also says, “To touch a person’s body is to touch them emotionally.”

His final point about physical touch is its importance in crisis.

- All marriages will experience crises at some point – deaths, accidents, diseases, disappointments, etc.
- If Physical Touch is your spouse’s primary love language, then being there and holding them as they grieve can be far more powerful than any words.
 - Dr. Chapman phrases it well by saying:

“Your tender touches will be remembered long after the crisis has passed. Your failure to touch may never be forgotten.”
 - Notice the cross-over to other love languages and similarity to something we heard before. In Receiving Gifts, he spoke of the “Gift of Self” and how important that can be in crisis.

Though not in his book, Dr. Chapman’s used the last 4 minutes of this video session to summarize the all 5 Love Languages. It contains several key concepts:

- He begins by asking “Where do we get the motivation to speak *any* of these love languages?”
- He next says, “It’s easier to just relax and be who you are” – but this may lead to empty love tanks.
- He then offers the following: **Love takes effort, information and a choice.**
- He notes it is hard to do on our own and says, **we need the “Attitude of Christ”**. This may be THE biggest takeaway of the entire series!

Dr. Chapman also humbly shared his personal testimony. He and his wife struggled in their early years of marriage. He attributed it to the fact that ‘she wouldn’t listen to him’ on how to have a good marriage. He finally confessed one day in prayer that he didn’t know what to do. God told him:

“The problem is you and your attitude”

Dr. Chapman stresses the importance of this prayer and urges each listener to “Pray for the Attitude of Christ”

He continues his story by saying he asked his wife these three questions:

1. What can I do for you?
2. How can I make your life easier?
3. How can I be a better spouse to you?

By doing this, he unknowingly was asking his wife to teach him her love language. This was before he discovered love languages – but this life changing event played a role in developing this concept.

Chapman ends by saying, “When we have the attitude of Christ toward each other, all we need is the information.” Serving others starts at home and with our spouse. And when we do, our love tank fills and we are free to do the other things we are called for in life.

Additional thoughts:

What is at the root of his statement: “The problem is you and your attitude”? Selfishness!

- We touched on this in the introduction of Module 5.
- We also discussed selfishness in detail at the end of Module 5. See ‘Putting it all Together’ for more.

Dr. Chapman says, “It’s easier to relax and be who you are”.

- This is selfishness because we are not caring for or seeking to serve our spouse.
- He mentions this leads to empty love tanks. Dangerous!
- We grow apart from each other.
- Intimacy can be viewed as ‘being fully known, yet accepted and loved’. Some people equate intimacy as being sexual in nature. ‘Sexual intimacy’ is more of a ‘subdivision’ of the bigger picture. True intimacy is relational, not purely physical, and it is dynamic - always changing in one of two directions. We are either growing closer to or drifting apart (separating) from each other.

Dr. Chapman says Love takes effort, love takes information and love makes a choice.

- Let's look at **Information** first. Again, this was covered in Module 5.
 - Requests give "Guidance to Love" (provides our spouse information)
 - Some principles to test for 'selfishness' and appropriateness:
 - Pray about it, then wait, listen and accept God's answer
 - Do not pressure your spouse and give them time.
 - Be willing to accept if they deny it without protest
- Now let's look at **choice**: If we have the information, or our spouse makes a request, there are 3 common ways in which we can respond - Ignore it, Deny it or Fulfill it. Technically there 2 choices – we either we do it or we don't. There can be other variations... make our spouse feel guilty for asking; make them withdraw the request; postpone fulfilling it immediately but do so later; etc.
 - Dr. Chapman used an example of the husband who refused to perform reasonable acts of service for his wife. He had the information, but chose to deny it. Dr. Chapman considers this man foolish.
 - Assuming your spouse's request is reasonable, it's not hard to figure out which of the three best reflects the attitude of Christ and makes them feel loved.
- Now for the third part – something tricky and often forgotten – **Effort**
 - As Dr. Chapman said, "It's easier to relax and be who you are". This implies a certain degree of 'laziness' when it comes to our marriage.
 - Family Life uses the advertising quote: "Great Marriages Don't Just Happen". Any thoughts on that?
 - When dating, we are willing to do almost anything. Why does that change after marriage?
 - Gary Thomas (author of numerous marriage books including Sacred Marriage, A Lifelong Love and Cherish) believes "We become bored with each other".
 - If we truly love and seek to serve our spouse (not to mention pursuing a 'better our marriage') isn't it worth our effort to fulfill their request?

- Again, citing Gary Thomas, if we view God as our Heavenly Father in Law and our spouse as His precious child, would we really want to be lazy or deny a reasonable request? Would we dare say no to God, who wants us to care for our spouse? How about Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church...”
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower you with wisdom to understand your spouse’s request, gentleness in handing it and the strength to carry it out if it is reasonable. Make the effort! Remember the Love Tank Game?
- And last, remember that if you choose to honor their request, do so cheerfully and without looking for something in return. This is unconditional love. This is the Attitude of Christ!