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This devotional is derived from *The 5 Love Languages* * *for Men.*

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Someone once said insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. If right, that means the approach many spouses take toward overcoming their language barrier is downright crazy. They double down on their own love language, trying over and over again to break through to their spouse in the only way they know. In other words, they work harder instead of smarter. They put the onus on their spouse to translate their actions into a language the spouse can understand.

It doesn't matter that your heart is in the right place, or that you're trying as hard as you possibly can, or that other women would feel lucky to have a husband like you.

You will not be able to fill your wife's love tank ing, without using her primary love language.

The way to build a thriving, exciting, unpredictable, awe-inspiring, life-changing relationship with your wife is to master her primary love language

The way to build a thriving, exciting, unpredictable, awe-inspiring, life-changing relationship with your wife is to master her primary love language, to embrace the challenge of becoming bilingual. The good news is that the process isn't nearly as challenging as learning an actual language. You don't have to worry about conjugating verbs or using the proper tense.

The challenge of becoming fluent in another love language might be better compared to perfecting a golf swing. If you've ever taken lessons from a pro, you know the first step is to "unlearn" all the bad habits you've developed over the years. In many cases, that involves starting from scratch. The process is awkward at first. Things just don't feel right. They feel unnatural. Little by little, though, that starts to change. With enough repetition, you start to see positive results.

The same goes for learning a new love language. If you're an Acts of Service guy, you're probably not going to feel comfortable giving Quality Time to your wife. Not at first, at least. Your initial efforts likely will feel unnatural and forced.

But with the right attitude—and with the tips and strategies outlined in the pages that follow—you will master a second love language. You will fill your wife's love tank and keep it topped off. You will make her feel uniquely and spectacularly loved. You will experience what it's like to be on the top of your game, not just as a loving husband to your wife, but also as a role model—to your children; to other young people who don't see that kind of behavior modeled in their own families; to other husbands who are looking for answers.

To become bilingual in the languages of love is to make a difference in other people's lives. •

Today's Verse

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

- 1 Peter 4:8 (NLT)

Your insights...

Some of the best opportunities

in life involve risk—the very real possibility of rejection, embarrassment, or failure. It takes a lot of courage to roll the dice and face the possible consequences. Those who choose to pursue those opportunities usually face no shortage of discouragers—people inclined to rain on their parade and argue that something can't be done or shouldn't be tried. These doom-and-gloom promoters can be pretty persuasive, especially if there's no one to counter their influence.

Cue the encouraging spouse.

Encouragement requires empathy—seeing the world from your wife's perspective. We must first learn what is important to our wives.

Your wife likely has untapped potential in one or more areas of life. That potential may be awaiting your encouraging words. Perhaps she needs to enroll in a course to develop that potential. Maybe she needs to meet some people who have succeeded in that area and can give her insight on the next step she needs to take. Your words may give your wife the courage necessary to take that first step.

Let's be clear: I'm not talking about pressuring your wife to do something that you want. I'm talking about encouraging her to develop an interest that she already has. A certain well-meaning husband may be tempted to pressure his wife to look for a more lucrative job. He may think he's encouraging her, but unless that's what she wants too, his words will sound more like condemnation to her. If she has the desire and motivation to seek a better position, her husband's words will bolster her resolve. If not, his words will come across as judgmental and guilt inducing. They will express not love but rejection.

If, however, she says, "You know, I've been thinking about starting a catering business on the side," then he has the opportunity to give words of encouragement ("If you decide to do that, I can tell you one thing: you'll be a success. That's one of the things I love about you. When you set your mind to something, you do it. If that's what you want to do, I'll certainly do everything I can to help you"). Such words may give her the courage to start drawing up a list of potential clients.

Encouragement requires empathy—seeing the world from your wife's perspective. We must first learn what is important to our wives. Only then can we give encouragement. With verbal encouragement, we're trying to communicate, "I know. I care. I'm with you. How can I help?" We're trying to show that we believe in her and in her abilities. We're giving credit and praise.

Most of us have more potential than we'll ever develop. What holds us back is often a lack of courage. A loving spouse can supply that all-important catalyst.

Today's Verse

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

- 1 Thess. 5:11 (NLT)

Your insights...

DAY 3 Time may or may not be the most

precious asset we possess. (If you're scrambling to pay your mortgage or trying to figure out how to afford college, you can probably build a pretty solid case in favor of money.) But time is unique among our commodities.

Every day, every person who draws breath on this earth receives the same amount of time: 24 hours, 1,440 minutes, or 86,400 seconds, depending on which denomination you prefer.

At the end of every day, every person's allotment is depleted. Time cannot be rolled over or stockpiled.

When it's gone, it's gone.

Your wife isn't looking for Words of Affirmation or Gifts or Acts of Service. She just wants you.

Time cannot be stolen or transferred into another account. Its market cannot be cornered. The rich cannot get richer, where time is concerned. Its system cannot be gamed, hacked, or tampered with.

Time cannot be exchanged or refunded.

Time is extremely limited—yet insanely in demand.

Think of the things that are competing for hours—or even a few minutes—of your time.

- Your job.
- Your overtime demands and opportunities.
- Your commute.
- Your workout.
- Your responsibilities as a friend, neighbor, church member, and concerned citizen.
- Your kids' practices, games, recitals, and programs.
- Your hobbies and pastimes.
- Your body's requirements for sleep and relaxation.

So many options, so little time to explore them all.

No one understands that truth better than a person whose primary love language is Quality Time.

If you're married to a native Quality Time speaker, you should feel at least a little flattered. Your wife isn't looking for Words of Affirmation or Gifts or Acts of Service. She just wants you. She will experience love and affection—she will feel genuinely cared for—simply by sharing some of your precious time. A half hour here, an hour there, or a weekend on occasion is enough to keep her love tank filled.

Provided it's the right kind of time.

Today's Verse

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

John 15:13 (NLT)

Your insights...

The connection between love and gifts

is more deeply rooted than most people realize. How old were you the first time you picked a flower or dandelion and gave it to your mom as a present—a way of saying, "I love you"? How many knickknacks did you create for your parents at camp, in Sunday school, or in art class?

The instincts are there. Harnessing and perfecting those natural inclinations is the key to becoming fluent in the love language of Receiving Gifts.

What's important is that you thought of her—that you took the time to consider what would make her happy and then followed through. The notion that delighted your parents all those years ago (and perhaps still does) runs strong in people whose primary love language is Receiving Gifts. A gift is something they can hold in their hands as they say, "Look, he was thinking of me." Therein lies the appeal. You have to think of someone before you give her a gift. The gift itself is a symbol of that thought. It doesn't matter whether it costs money. What's important is that you thought of her—that you took the time to consider what would make her happy and then followed through.

Gifts are visual symbols of love. The importance of such symbols may be lost on non-native speakers of the Receiving Gifts love language. The difference between the native and non-native mindsets can be seen in people's attitudes toward the most common visual symbol of love in our culture: the wedding ring. Most wedding ceremonies include the giving and receiving of rings. The person performing the ceremony says something to the effect of, "These rings are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual bond that unites your two hearts in love that has no end." That's not meaningless rhetoric. Those words give power to the visual symbol of the union—especially where native speakers of Receiving Gifts are concerned.

That's why some people never take their ring off after the wedding. If Receiving Gifts is your wife's primary love language but not yours, she probably wears her ring more often—and spends more time thinking about it—than you do. She likely places great value on her ring—and wears it with tremendous pride—because you gave it to her as an enduring symbol of your love. She's also probably been moved by other gifts you've given her through the years. She views them as expressions of your love.

Today's Verse

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.

- 1 John 4:7 (NLT)

Your insights...

DAY 5 When it comes to Acts of Service, you're not judged by the amount of time you put in or even by how hard you work. You're judged by your effectiveness—the impact you have.

A starting pitcher in baseball may work on his delivery constantly, making sure the release point of his off-speed pitches matches that of his fastball. He may take hundreds of extra ground balls and line drives after practice in a quest to field his position better. He may study hours of film every night, learning the tendencies of various batters and base runners.

We need to let our wife guide us in determining what is and isn't an effective Act. We need to let her instruct us on how to make an impact. In the end, though, he's judged by one criterion: Does he get people out? If the answer is no, none of his other work makes much of a difference. What matters is whether he's effective where it counts.

Andre didn't make that connection at first. He worked hard—at the wrong tasks. And he failed to make a dent in his wife's lovelanguage needs.

For someone who takes pride in his work, that can be a tough pill to swallow. Most of us are wired with an instinctive desire to prove our worth—as husbands, providers, and caretakers. Beyond that, we want our work to mean something. And we want credit for the things we do.

In order to become fluent in Acts of Service, we need to kick that mindset to the curb. We need to let our wife guide us in determining what is and isn't an effective Act. We need to let her instruct us on how to make an impact.

- What does love look like to your wife?
- What actions make her feel genuinely and spectacularly loved?

The answer to these questions will guide your actions. Depending on her personality—and your relationship history—she may or may not feel comfortable sharing the answers with you. You may need to put her at ease, to help her recognize your genuine desire to meet her Acts of Service needs.

One way to do that is to invite her to compile her "Ultimate Honeydew (or Honey Do) List"—the four or five Acts of Service that would mean the most to her. Her list might include a household chore she absolutely despises, an idea for taking some pressure off her, a way for her to free up some time for herself, a project that she's dreamed of for years, or other service suggestions.

The list doesn't need to be comprehensive. It's just a starting point—a snapshot of your wife's current emotional-needs landscape. Once you have it, though, treat it like the valuable resource it is.

Today's Verse

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

Gal. 5:13 (NLT)

Your insights...

DAY 6 If you or your wife is a foodie, chances are you've heard of "supertasters," people whose sense of taste is so acute that they experience food differently than most other people do. For a supertaster, sugar is sweeter, sodium is saltier, fat is creamier, and bitterness is unbearable. Some supertasters can detect even the slightest differences in the fat content of milk and other foods.

The jury is out as to whether supertasting abilities are a blessing or a curse. On the plus side, with their enhanced taste buds, supertasters can isolate and enjoy the many ingredients that go into their favorite foods.

Supertasters make excellent food critics. On the minus side, supertasters are repulsed by certain foods—including healthy dark green vegetables—that other people enjoy.

Whatever there is of me resides in my body. To touch my body is to touch me. To withdraw from my body is to distance yourself from me emotionally.

If your wife's primary love language is Physical Touch, think of her as a "supertoucher." She can sense love and affection—among other things—in the slightest arm squeeze or back caress. Physical contact that wouldn't even register with most people has the potential to thrill her, change her mood, brighten her day, and—most importantly—make her feel loved and cared for.

The intensity of her tactile experience plays a large role in her relationships. The closer she is to someone, whether it's a friend or family member, the more she enjoys Physical Touch with that person—a bear hug with her brother, a kiss on the cheek from her mother, an arm around her shoulder from her best friend. Likewise, the *withholding* of Physical Touch by those closest to her has the potential to cause her more pain and anxiety than most non-native speakers of her love language can imagine.

From her perspective, physical touch can make or break a relationship. It can communicate love or hate. A slap in the face is shocking to anyone, but it would be devastating to someone whose primary love language is Physical Touch. A tender hug communicates love and affection to most people, but it *shouts* love to those who speak Physical Touch.

The thought process of such a person goes like this: Whatever there is of me resides in my body. To touch my body is to touch me. To withdraw from my body is to distance yourself from me emotionally.

When that touch isn't forthcoming, she takes it personally. She may lose self-esteem. She may worry about the state of her friendships and relationships. She may feel lonely, even when she's surrounded by friends and loved ones.

As her husband, her primary source of love and affirmation, the responsibility for giving her the Physical Touch she desires is yours. Some might call that pressure. You can choose to look at it as a challenge—and an opportunity. •

Today's Verse

Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.

1 Peter 5:14 (NLT)

Your insights...

DAY 7 Do you have a go-to tool on your

workbench? One that feels just right in your hand? One you reach for first when you've got a job to do? How about a go-to move on the basketball court? Something you save for crunch time, when you really need to shake a defender or score a bucket? Perhaps a crossover dribble at the top of the key or a step-back three pointer? Or maybe you have a go-to strategy in chess—an opening gambit that often catches your opponents off guard.

The right go-to move can snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. The right go-to strategy can mean the difference between success and failure.

With one action—
one go-to move—
you can take a
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each other's love
language.

In the past few days, we've talked about ways to become fluent in your wife's primary love language. You can't prevent the temptations and frustrations that will threaten your intimacy. You can't take back harsh words that have already been spoken. You can't undo mistakes that have already been made.

But with one action—one go-to move—you can take a giant stride toward strengthening your relationship, restoring intimacy, and creating incentives for learning each other's love language.

If your objective is to make things right with your wife, your go-to move is the apology.

Done well, an apology can bring closure to tensions, conflicts, and hurt feelings that have been sore spots for months, even years. It can change the way your wife thinks of you—the way she looks at you. It can break down barriers faster than any other words or actions can.

The question is, what does it take to do an apology well?

What most people look for in an apology is sincerity. They want the apology to be genuine. The problem is, people have different ideas of what constitutes sincerity. What one person considers to be sincere is not what another person considers to be sincere.

In my years of counseling and leading seminars for married couples, I've discovered that just as there are five languages of love, there are also five languages of apology. For most people, one or two of these languages convey sincerity more effectively than the others do.

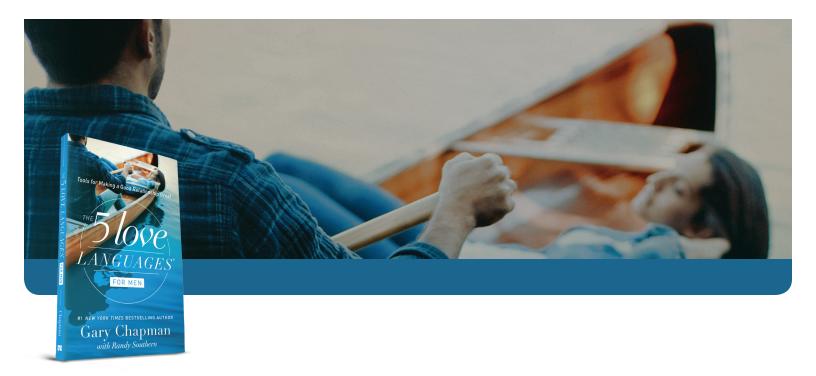
You can discover your apology language at 5lovelanguages.com.

Today's Verse

So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT)

Your insights...



The Love She Craves, The Confidence You Need

At the heart of a man is a desire to master what matters. Getting a complement at work or on the court is nice, but nothing beats hearing your spouse say, "You make me feel loved." If you haven't heard that in a while or feel like you're not bringing you're A-game into your relationship, this book is for you.

The 5 Love Languages® has sold 10 million copies because it is simple, practical, and effective. In this edition, Gary Chapman speaks straight to men about the rewards of speaking their wife's love language. You'll learn each language, how to identify your wife's, and how to speak it clearly. Packed with helpful illustrations and creative pointers, these pages will rouse your inner champion and empower you to master the art of love. •



Gary Chapman author, speaker, and counselor has a passion for people

and for helping them form lasting relationships. He is the bestselling author of The 5 Love Languages® series and the director of Marriage and Family Life Consultants, Inc. Gary travels the world presenting seminars, and his radio programs air on more than 400 stations. For more information, visit **5lovelanguages.com**.



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