

THE FRIEND CONNECTION



CULTIVATING TRUE FRIENDSHIPS

[Sermon preached on Sunday 15th April 2018]

Resources needed: Bibles, a large sheet of paper, A5 sheets of paper and pens, facility to show a video clip.

As Christians, we are comfortable with the idea of helping meet our brothers' and sisters' physical or spiritual needs. Have we ever thought about what it means to meet their relational needs? This week we are going to focus on developing the friendships within our Life Group. We can then apply what we learn to our other significant relationships.

WELCOME

Reflect and be accountable: How did you get on with trying to extend friendship to someone last week? If you didn't manage it, how about trying again this week?

BIBLE FOCUS

1. What reasons do the following verses give for cultivating true friendship?
 - a. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (productivity, restoration, mutual benefit, protection)
 - b. Philippians 2:1-11 (becoming more Christ-like)
 - c. 1 John 3:16-18; Acts 20:35 (gratitude; evidence of the love of God in our life; obedience)
 - d. 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 (we are connected and affected whether we like it or not!)

UNDERSTANDING ONE ANOTHER

1. How well do you know one another?

Ask everyone to write a one-sentence explanation of what they think true friendship is, and then get the group to guess who has written each one.
2. **Ten Relational Needs:** Everyone has these relational needs, but the priority of these needs is different for each person. If we are to meet one another's needs well, we need to understand that everyone is different and that others' needs might be different from our own.

To Do: Read through the list of relational needs on the sheet provided and select the three that are typically important to you. Share your thoughts with the group (this will work better in groups of no more than 8 people).

3. **Love Languages:** Everyone has a primary love language (and sometimes a secondary one) which makes them feel loved (see the 1:50 min video at <https://vimeo.com/231134423?from=outro-embed>). If we know what they are, it can help us to show love to one another in a meaningful way.

To Do: Either do the love languages questionnaire attached (if short of time you can do this at home) or look at the chart explaining the 5 love languages and decide which one or two of them are most important to you. Share your thoughts with the group.

Q. What have you learned that will help you to love one another better?

CULTIVATING TRUE FRIENDSHIPS

1. Do you think you place too high or too low a value on friendships? Do you have high or low expectations of your friends? Why do you think this is?
2. Three foundations of good friendships are:
 - **Quality time** (consistent commitment to spending time with others and giving them your attention).
 - **Openness** (being honest and vulnerable, and trusting enough to bring challenge and accountability).
 - **Devotion** (demonstrating sacrificial love and care that encourage and build up).
 - a. How are these expressed in your Life Group?
 - b. Do you need to work on giving more in any of these areas?
 - c. Would you appreciate receiving more in any of these areas?

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

THANKFUL

Read Philippians 1:3-6:

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Using a large piece of paper and pens, write the word **T-H-A-N-K-F-U-L** in large letters across the middle.

Encourage each person in the group to write on the paper a word that describes something they are thankful to God for regarding their friends, starting with one of the letters in ‘thankful’ – in the style of the scrabble board game. You can extend this by then adding other words and see how you can fill the paper with things that you are thankful to God for regarding friends and friendship.

For the group: Pray for those in our group, church and society who are feeling lonely.

For individuals: Commit to being a good friend to people in this group and to your other friends. Appreciate and express thanks to God for one another.

TEN RELATIONAL NEEDS

ACCEPTANCE

Receiving another person willingly and unconditionally, especially when the other's behaviour has been imperfect. [Romans 15:7]

AFFECTION

Expressing care and closeness through physical touch; saying "I love you." [Romans 16:16; Mark 10:16]

APPRECIATION

Expressing thanks, praise or commendation. Recognising accomplishment or effort. [Colossians 3:15b; 1 Corinthians 11:2]

APPROVAL (Blessing)

Building up or affirming another; affirming both the fact of and the importance of a relationship. [Ephesians 4:29; Mark 1:11]

ATTENTION

Conveying appropriate interest, concern and care; taking thought of another; entering another's world. [1 Corinthians 12:25]

COMFORT

Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings, and touch; to hurt with and for another's grief or pain. [Romans 12:15b; Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; John 11:35]

ENCOURAGEMENT

Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal; stimulating toward love and good deeds. [1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24]

RESPECT

Valuing and regarding another highly; treating another as important; honouring another. [Romans 12:10]

SECURITY (Peace)

Harmony in relationships; freedom from fear of threat of harm. [Romans 12:16,18]

SUPPORT

Coming alongside and gently helping with a problem or struggle; providing appropriate assistance. [Galatians 6:2]

LOVE LANGUAGES CHART

LOVE LANGUAGE



WHICH LOVE LANGUAGE?	HOW TO COMMUNICATE	ACTIONS TO TAKE	THINGS TO AVOID
 WORDS OF AFFIRMATION	Encourage, affirm, appreciate, empathize. Listen actively.	Send an unexpected note, text, or card. Encourage genuinely and often.	Non-constructive criticism, not recognizing or appreciating effort.
 PHYSICAL TOUCH	Non-verbal - use body language and touch to emphasize love.	Hug, kiss, hold hands, show physical affection regularly. Make intimacy a thoughtful priority.	Physical neglect, long stints without intimacy, receiving affection coldly.
 RECEIVING GIFTS	Thoughtfulness, make your spouse a priority, speak purposefully.	Give thoughtful gifts and gestures. Small things matter in a big way. Express gratitude when receiving a gift.	Forgetting special occasions, unenthusiastic gift receiving.
 QUALITY TIME	Uninterrupted and focused conversations. One-on-one time is critical.	Create special moments together, take walks and do small things with your spouse. Weekend getaways are huge.	Distractions when spending time together. Long stints without one-on-one time.
 ACTS OF SERVICE	Use action phrases like "I'll help...". They want to know you're with them, partnered with them.	Do chores together or make them breakfast in bed. Go out of your way to help alleviate their daily workload.	Making the requests of others a higher priority, lacking follow-through on tasks big and small.

GRAPHIC BY **FIERCEMARRIAGE.COM**

BASED ON "THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES", A BOOK BY DR. GARY CHAPMAN

THE **5 love**
LANGUAGES
The Secret to Love
That Lasts

LOVE LANGUAGES PERSONAL PROFILE FOR SINGLES



Below you will see 30 paired statements. Please circle the letter next to the statement that best defines what is most meaningful to you in your relationship. Both statements may (or may not) sound like they fit your situation, but please choose the statement that captures the essence of what is most meaningful to you, the majority of the time. Allow 10 to 15 minutes to complete the profile. Take it when you are relaxed, and try not to rush through it.

- 1 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A someone I love sends me a loving note/text/email for no special reason.
 - E I hug someone I love.

- 2 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B I can spend alone time with someone I love - just us.
 - D someone I love does something practical to help me out.

- 3 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- C someone I love gives me a little gift as a token of our love of concern for each other.
 - B I get to spend uninterrupted leisure time with those I love.

- 4 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- D someone I love does something unexpected for me to help me with a project.
 - E I can share an innocent touch with someone I love.

- 5 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- E someone I love puts their arm around me in public.
 - C someone I love surprises me with a gift.

- 6 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B I'm around someone I love, even if we're not really doing anything.
 - E I can be comfortable holding hands, high-fiving, or putting my arm around someone I love.

- 7 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- C I receive a gift from someone I love.
 - A I hear from someone I love that they love me.

- 8 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- E I sit close to someone I love.
 - A I am complimented by someone I love for no apparent reason.

- 9 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B I get the chance to just "hang out" with someone I love.
 - C I unexpectedly get small gifts from someone I love.

- 10 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A I hear someone I love tell me, "I'm proud of you."
 - D someone I love helps me with a task.

- 11 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B I get to do things with someone I love.
 - A I hear supportive words from someone I love.

- 12 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- D someone I love does things for me instead of just talking about doing nice things.
 - E I feel connected to someone I love through a hug.

- 13 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A I hear praise from someone I love.
 - C someone I love gives me something that shows they were really thinking about me.

- 14 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B I'm able to just be around someone I love.
 - E I get a back rub from someone I love.

- 15 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A someone I love reacts positively to something I've accomplished.
 - D someone I love does something for me that I know they don't particularly enjoy.

- 16 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- E I'm able to be in close physical proximity to someone I love.
 - B I sense someone I love showing interest in the things I care about.

NEXT

LOVE LANGUAGES PERSONAL PROFILE FOR SINGLES



17 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
D someone I love works on special projects with me that I have to complete.
C someone I love gives me an exciting gift.

18 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
A I'm complimented by someone I love on my appearance.
B someone I love takes the time to listen to me and really understand my feelings.

19 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
E I can share a meaningful touch in public with someone I love.
D someone I love offers to run errands for me.

20 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
D someone I love does something special for me to help me out.
C I get a gift that someone I love put thought into choosing.

21 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
B someone I love doesn't check their phone while we're talking with each other.
D someone I love goes out of their way to do something that relieves pressure on me.

22 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
C I can look forward to a holiday because I'll probably get a gift from someone I love.
A I hear the words, "I appreciate you" from someone I love.

23 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
C someone I love and haven't seen in a while thinks enough of me to give me a little gift.
D someone I love takes care of something I'm responsible to do that I feel too stressed to do at the time.

24 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
B someone I love doesn't interrupt me while I'm talking.
C gift giving is an important part of the relationship with someone I love.

25 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
D someone I love helps me out when they know I'm already tired.
B I get to go somewhere while spending time with someone I love.

26 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
E someone I love touches my arm or shoulder to show their care or concern.
C someone I love gives me a little gift that they picked up in the course of their normal day.

27 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
A someone I love says something encouraging to me.
B I get to spend time in a shared activity or hobby with someone I love.

28 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
C someone I love surprises me with a small token of their appreciation.
E I'm touching someone I love frequently to express our friendship.

29 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
D someone I love helps me out - especially if I know they're already busy.
A I hear someone I love tell me that they appreciate me.

30 *It's more meaningful to me when...*
E I get a hug from someone whom I haven't seen in a while.
A I hear someone I love tell me how much I mean to him/her.

Now go back and count the number of times you circled each individual letter and write that number in the appropriate blank below.

This profile is an excerpt from 'The 5 Love Languages' (©2015, Northfield Publishing). Reproduction and distribution for use, personal and/or professional (workshops, organizations, churches, nonprofits, small groups, etc.), is permitted provided the profiles are distributed free of charge. You may not under any circumstances upload, share, transmit, or distribute this file digitally.

RESULTS

- A:** _____ WORDS OF AFFIRMATION
B: _____ QUALITY TIME
C: _____ RECEIVING GIFTS
D: _____ ACTS OF SERVICE
E: _____ PHYSICAL TOUCH

Which love language received the highest score?

This is your primary love language. If point totals for two love languages are equal, you are "bilingual" and have two primary love languages. And, if you have a secondary love language, or one that is close in score to your primary love language, this means that both expressions of love are important to you. The highest possible score for any single love language is 12.

GET THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES APP

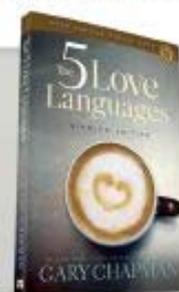


/DrBoryChapman



/5LoveLanguages

5LoveLanguages.com



Knowing the love languages is powerful, but knowing *how* they work in your relationships—that's the game changer.

LEARN MORE AT

5LoveLanguages.com