



## When Friends Aren't Fluent In Your Love Language

For the last twenty-two years over 15 million people have taken Gary Chapman's "5 Love Languages" official assessment to determine how they best receive love. And over the past twenty-two years, circles of girl friends have had great conversations as they share with one another what their primary love language is. It seems like any time I'm getting to know a new group of girls the question, "what is your love language" always comes up. **We want to know, are you a words-of-affirmation person, acts of service, physical touch, quality time, or is receiving gifts at the top of your profile.** We also want to make sure everyone knows what our top language is—one, because, it's human nature to like to talk about yourself, right? Or is that just me? And two, because if we are building a friendship, we feel it's important for our new friend to know how they can make us the happiest.

I love the five simple categories Dr. Chapman established in the book, and I believe the assessment is a very beneficial test in the way it helps us to understand how God created us to best relate to others, but after a great, in-depth talk with my friend Courtney, whom you'll get to hear from in a bit, she helped me see how sometimes we use our love languages to create unhealthy expectations in our marriages and in our friendships.

It's empowering to find out the way you best receive love is through words of affirmation. It's as if someone has given you a key to help unlock the thing for which you hunger. Naturally, you fill your friends in, and once they know, you expect them to never forget this important piece of

information about you. But naturally, they will. **They won't always love you the way you most want to be loved.** They may forget to compliment the article you wrote and shared on your blog. They may forget to commend you for being a great mom on Mother's Day. They may sign your birthday card "happy birthday" when you were expecting a paragraph about how much you mean to them. And after enough run-ins with a friend who continually lets us down by not speaking our love language, we start to harbor bitterness toward them. And we start to feel unloved and unworthy. But as my very wise friend Courtney says, **friendship was never designed to measure our worth it was designed to enrich our lives.** When you are looking to your friends to fill your love cup, you'll always be disappointed.

The good news is, the God we serve is love, and He not only created us to receive love uniquely, but He also speaks all five love languages fluently. His love will never disappoint us. **So what if, instead of going through life hoping that our spouse and our friends make us feel loved, we purpose to connect with God daily and allow Him to minister to us via our love languages.** I truly believe that if we seek God's love first, we will find it, and it will surpass all our expectations in a way that enables us to take the pressure off of our earthly relationships.

Am I saying we don't need friends? No way! **God has called us to be in relationship with one another.** We need friends to build us up and spur us on, and we need to have friends that we are building up and spurring on. But, we have to realize our friends can't meet all of our needs according to their riches in glory and vice versa. We look to God first, and in Him we find the ultimate friend: one that sticks closer than a brother and knows us better than we know ourselves.

I have asked a few of *my* friends, who also happen to be HIS small group leaders, to help me write about our top love languages and the different ways we experience God's love for us as it relates to our primary language. Our prayer is that you will begin to identify the unique ways that God wants to love on you and be more aware than ever that **although His love is vast, He knows how to customize it just for you.**

### **Acts Of Service – Sarah Blount**

I have always appreciated when someone goes the extra mile. I love when my husband makes the bed and helps me around the house. I really appreciate when a co-worker offers to take something off of my very full plate. And I might burst into a dance party if one of my kids carried in the groceries without having to be asked. **Because I carry so much responsibility, I feel loved when others jump in to help lighten the load.** But of course, people have let me down

in this area and of course, I've been harder on them than I should have been because I was looking to them to come to my rescue when I'm in over my head, instead of looking to God.

**Psalm 55:22** *Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you.*

How often are we waiting for someone to help us carry our burdens, when God is standing in front of us with His arms ready to receive, asking, **how can I help**. Those are the most romantic four words an acts-of-service person could ever hear, and Jesus is constantly whispering them to our spirits. **But we often miss His still small offer to help because we are too busy looking for someone else to cast our cares upon**. God has pledged to carry your sin and shame, your anxiety, the burdens that are weighing you down, and get this because it's SO good, He's pledged to carry you!

**Isaiah 46:4** *I will be your God throughout your lifetime--until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!*

Acts-of-service girls, let our Servant King sweep you off your feet on the daily.

### **Words Of Affirmation – Colie Hanson**

For me words of affirmation bring clarity. They let me know that I hit the mark or am on the right track, and without them there is less certainty. Words give me permission to go deeper as well as to know my place in someone's life or in an organization/team. To have my husband praise all the extras I have done that day or to have a friend to relay that I am indeed someone they enjoy getting to know is life giving. **These things are deposits into my emotional bank account, but are they where my hope is found?**

**1 Corinthians 2:11** *For what person knows the thoughts and motives of a man except the man's spirit within him? So also no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*  
(Amplified)

**Finding out that I not only have the Word of God but direct access to the thoughts of God as well, through the Holy Spirit, changed my life** (and switched my hope focus). At any moment in my day, I can ask God what He thinks of me and the wins that I have had. At the same time, I can just as easily hear how He sees me and my situation when I am broken or worn down. Coupling hearing God through His Word and hearing Him directly for ourselves is like putting on glasses for the first time after years of trying to see through blurry eyes.

### **Physical Touch - Ashley Bassoppo-Moyo**

It wasn't until I lived overseas in a house full of strangers that I realized how important being hugged is to me. I grew up with my dad giving me these long hugs, telling me how proud he was of me, on just about a daily basis. The year and a half I lived with these strangers, they became like family, but they didn't speak this language that I had been so accustomed to over the course of my childhood and thus I often felt unloved. It was during this season that I realized that to have this deep longing for intimacy fulfilled, I needed to seek this from my God.

Physical touch people can get labeled as being "touchy feely," but in this common label I believe we catch a glimpse of the heart of God. See, God is the perfect model of the Loving Father I had come to experience in those hugs from my dad. Those were good, pure, intimate moments of closeness, and I believe God wants every one of us to experience good, pure, intimate moments of closeness when He simply lets us know how much He loves us. **He wants to touch our hearts and fill us with feelings of intimacy.**

**Song of Solomon 6:3** *I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine.*

There is something very key that must take place to live in the fullness of this intimate relationship with God. Just as in a romantic relationship, we must put our walls down and accept the overwhelming love of God. Sometimes, however, pride can take the form of self-denial. If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable at the idea of God lavishing His love on you and connecting with God on the basis of His overwhelming love for you, you are denying Him the very thing you would never withhold from someone as close as a spouse or a child.

**Allow God to love you and be the One you look to for intimacy and pure moments of love. He will not deny you, and as you pursue Him, He will pursue you back** (*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. James 4:8*), and you will find something so much more filling than any human relationship could ever be. Allow yourself to receive and pursue that love in God every day!

### **Gifts – Andrea Tompkins**

I've always felt that having gifts as a top love language was such a selfish trait to hold. Who wants to admit, I feel loved when you give me things? But, after glimpsing into God's heart a little further, I'm convinced it's His number one love language as well. I so enjoy the sweet way

He continually affirms, then reaffirms just how much He loves us with the gifts He's given us in scripture. From the first gift of a companion to Adam in Genesis 2 to Jesus' promises of parting gifts riddled throughout the New Testament: the gift of a Helper in John 14:16 and the gift of peace in John 14:27 to name a few. **God's Word is chock full of how much He shows His vast love for us, through His giving of gifts.** If our aim here is to experience love and fulfillment through Him then we need to RECEIVE that GIFT of love *from* Him first before looking to people to fulfill that need.

**Jeremiah 31:3** *I've never quit loving you and never will. Expect love, love, and more love!*

What a sweet promise; no matter our temperament yesterday, today or tomorrow, no matter how we look, or what we've done or haven't done for Him, even if we haven't expressed our love to Him lately or sought to fill His love tank, we can still only, "expect love, love, and more love" from Him. He still offers that gift up to us daily. **And since God is Love, then I imagine His gift of love to us is top notch and comes wrapped in the prettiest paper, adorned with the biggest bow and hand delivered straight to our heart.** So let's dive in, unwrap that gift, and soak in His sweet love for us today.

### **Quality Time – Courtney Haggard**

Let's get coffee: the three magical words all of us quality time ladies really want to hear. Seriously though, meaningful one-on-one time with a good friend can be so life giving--and because we gain so much fulfillment from these encounters, we crave them. Maybe you're like me, and you can have an incredible time with a friend, only to feel emptied just days later. I can spend hours with a bestie on Monday, and feel like I don't see that person enough by Thursday. I can't help it; my cup constantly desires to be filled by time with others. **If I am not careful though, I can slip into a habit of placing too much unhealthy responsibility on the relationships in my life, specifically friendships.** Friendships are not designed to fill our cups; they are designed as a gift to enrich our lives.

If your quality-time bucket is feeling empty, my question to you is simple: what does your relationship with the Lord look like, and how often do you pursue one-on-one time with Him? **As a quality time gal, you are naturally inclined to feel loved through a relationship, and connection with Jesus is the *only* thing that has the power to actually fulfill you!**

**Psalm 107:9** *For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good things.*

The good news is, God is a quality time expert! He is always available. He is never too tired or busy. His schedule is always a perfect fit for yours. **When we seek the Lord in a fulfilling relationship, we can kiss misfiring friendships goodbye.** Gone are the days of feeling left out, forgotten, or empty. We can wake up each day in the overwhelming goodness of fulfillment and joy.

**Psalm 16:11** *In your presence, there is fullness of joy.*

As you can see, God wants to meet you right where you are at and minister love to you in the exact, perfect way that you'll best receive it, so give Him a chance FIRST, before placing impossible expectations on your friends and family.



1. What is your love language profile?
2. Have you ever been let down by a friend because they weren't speaking your love language?
3. Why do you think we default to people meeting our needs instead of looking to God to meet them?
4. How can you connect to God in a greater way through the lens of your love language? List a few specific ways that He can meet your need for acts of service, quality time, physical touch, gifts, or words of affirmation.
5. As you cultivate your friendship with God, how do you think that will affect the way you love the friends he's placed in your life?



## HIS HEART WORK

**Study:** Find a story in the New Testament where God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit is speaking your top love language. Share the story with your group.

**Act:** Be the icing on someone's cake. Now that you know how the people in your small group best receive love, let God use you to minister His love to them in a special way.



## PRAYER NEEDS

Write down the prayer requests of your group members, and pray fervently for them! Let your group members know when you are praying for them, if you have any scriptures or encouraging words for them, etc.