

## Actions Speak Louder than Words

The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate is a 1992 book by Gary Chapman. It outlines five general ways that romantic partners express and experience love, which Chapman calls "love languages". The 5 Love Languages: · Words of affirmation · Quality time · Receiving gifts · Acts of service · Physical touch. [Wikipedia](#) To love may not mean to fight, but it does mean to **become close**, to care a lot, and eventually to discover differences and disagreements. *Those who love much have a better chance of conflict.* Here's why: **People who care much about each other (and their relationship) want consensus and caring to continue.**

Let love be genuine. (Romans 12:9).

The law code finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is *love*. (Romans 13:10). *The Message*

If you care enough about others, you may find yourself in conflict or disagreement sometimes. (Indifference is the opposite of love) In Matthew 18:15, Jesus shares a conflict resolution method for the church.

"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend. If he won't listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won't listen, tell the church. If he won't listen to the church, you'll have to start over from scratch,

confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God's forgiving love.

This method requires **Action** as well as language. Reminds me of Liza DoLittle in *My Fair Lady* when she sings to Freddie, “

Words! Words! Words! I'm so sick of words!  
I get words all day through; First from him, now from you!  
Is that all you blighters can do?  
Don't talk of stars Burning above; If you're in love, **Show me!**

Jesus begins with GO and TELL the person you feel has hurt you how you feel. Psychology tells us using “I” statements work best. “I felt attacked when you called me that disparaging name.” Can we talk about the issue instead of each other? Grandma-ology says if you're really angry or upset, count to 10 before opening your mouth. Grandma knew a lot – when you're really upset, your brain switches off the reason circuit and jumps right in the middle of the limbic circuit. (or as some call it the reptilian system) By counting to 10, you force your brain back into the reason/logic mode. If you can multitask, while you're counting, place yourself in the other person's place. Ask yourself, “how would I want to be approached if the circumstances were reversed?” Hopefully, everyone will have calmed down to have a true discussion rather than a fight. And you will have made a friend.

Now Jesus offers what to do if that person does NOT listen. He says take 1 or 2 others with you and try again. That implies that you have walked away. If someone refuses to listen, yelling at them or repeating yourself over and



over does no good. With another with you, another insight might present itself. Notice that Jesus says 1 or 2 persons – NOT a gang- preferably someone with a neutral opinion about the issue. You are trying to maintain peace here, not start a war. If the person STILL does NOT listen, it's getting pretty deep so help is needed. Jesus says then TELL the CHURCH.

This can be a little tricky, You may need to count to 10 again. Jesus does not mean get on the phone and call everyone and pour out all your woes to each one. Worship service is not the time or place to share this kind of information either. Maybe at a congregational meeting or a congregational care committee meeting.

If he won't listen to the church, you'll have to **start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God's forgiving love.** If possible, confess the ways in which maybe you were at fault and ask for forgiveness as you forgive the original hurt. Then go on your way, trying to always lead in love.

Love one another with mutual affection.”

We may not choose our feelings, but we do choose our behaviors.

That means placing our partners at home and at church high on our priority lists. It means asking their opinion, and **really wanting to hear it.** It means **spending time together, and doing the little things that bring joy.** It means **publicly praising our partners.** All the love languages are used at least part of the time.

Why do we care so much about loving our neighbor? Because GOD is LOVE! The church represents the Love of God through the love Christ showed all people and the love that we receive daily from our Lord.

The church is a snapshot of God's kingdom on earth. Are we representing that kingdom well?

More and more ministers of Word and Sacrament are leaving their calls. Even they are finding it hard to see the kingdom in the congregations they serve. BUT before you think I'm attacking you personally, more and more congregants are writing in response that the ministers are only interested in numbers and money. (That sounds like a GREAT representation of the kingdom of God, doesn't it?)

Jesus took 12 men and several women and changed the world. God's gifts are bountiful and enough to carry the church into the next century if we but show that love to others – one person at a time if necessary. Every person reaching out in love to one other person and the tide will turn. Come Lord Jesus!

Praise be to God the Father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit! Amen.

## Romans 13:8-14 The Message

**8-10** Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. The law code—don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don't" you can think of—finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is *love*.

**11-14** But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God. The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed. We can't afford to waste a minute, must not squander these precious daylight hours in frivolity and indulgence, in sleeping around and dissipation, in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!

< [Romans 12](#)

[Romans 14](#) >

### **The Message (MSG)**

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