

What is God's Love Language?





MARRIAGE COUNSELOR Gary Chapman's book *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate* has sold more than 12 million copies. It teaches five main ways that we express and receive love and suggests that every person has a love language. The five ways are: quality time, words of affirmation, physical touch, gifts and acts of service. If you are interested in learning more, you can go to 5lovelanguages.com and take a quiz to find your love language. We recently did so with our team in Israel. It was a great interactive activity and helped us understand ourselves and others better. After a time of discussion, I asked the question: "What do you think is God's love language?"

Jesus (Yeshua) said that the greatest commandment is to love God with our whole being (Mark 12:30). So, the question I have is: How does God receive our love? What is His love language?

Acts of Service

Acts of service is my love language, and I was excited to realize that God also receives love through our service.

In the book of Exodus we find the first time God connects loving Him with keeping His commandments: "...showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (20:6). What follows is the Ten Commandments, found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, and the same words are found in both lists. Clearly God is saying that those who love Him show it by keeping the commandments.

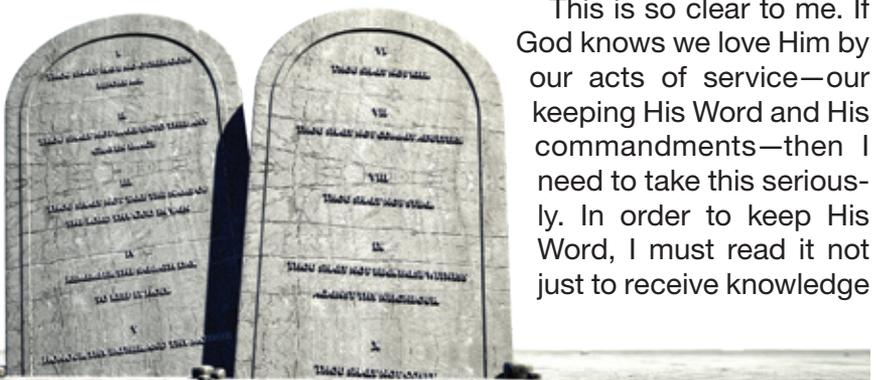
Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, today generally known by the acronym Rashi, was a medieval French rabbi and author of a comprehensive commentary on the *Talmud* (rabbinic commentary on Jewish tradition and the Hebrew Scriptures) and on the *Tanakh* (Old Testament or OT). His commentary on Deuteronomy 6:5 says, "And thou shalt love the LORD—fulfill His commands out of love, for one who acts out of love is not like him (is on a higher plane than one) who acts out of fear."

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments... He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father. John 14:15, 21

Our Orthodox Jewish friend Moshe Kempinski was asked about keeping the commandments by a Christian. His response is interesting. “The fulfillment of the law has nothing to do with salvation. The fulfillment of the law is simply the fulfillment of the will of a beloved, the ultimate Divine Beloved. If I know that my wife truly desires something, then the ultimate gift of love would be giving her what she desires. If I know that G-d [Jews don’t spell out the entire name of God out of respect] desires that I fulfill the commandments, then the fulfillment of that desire becomes a gift of love.”

In the New Testament (Writings of the Apostles), we find Jesus (Yeshua) saying very similar things. John 14 has four verses that emphasize the same concept. *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments...He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him...If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me”* (John 14:15, 21, 23, 24).

This is so clear to me. If God knows we love Him by our acts of service—our keeping His Word and His commandments—then I need to take this seriously. In order to keep His Word, I must read it not just to receive knowledge



but to know how to act in a manner which pleases my beloved Lord.

Quality Time

Early in the Bible we see that God desired to spend time in the garden with Adam and Eve. As we read through the Bible it is apparent that God loves when we spend time with Him. How much time does God want to spend with us? How do we spend quality time with Him? The answer seems easy: prayer, meditation and time in His Word. Yet many of us struggle to find the time to spend with Him. There are so many distractions that claim our limited time. If we find more time for our recreational activities than time with God, does He feel our love?

The Lord spoke to Joshua saying, *“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success”* (Josh. 1:8).

Jesus (Yeshua) felt the need to spend time alone with God. *“After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone”* (Matt. 14:23).

One of the great Christian writers, Andrew Murray, said, “Shut the world out, withdraw from all worldly thoughts and occupations, and shut yourself in alone with God, to pray to Him in secret. Let this be your chief object in prayer, to realize the presence of your heavenly Father.”

The Psalmist says, *“Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah”* (Ps. 62:8).

The apostle Paul said, *“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving”* (Col. 4:2).

1 Chronicles 16:11 teaches us to *“Seek the LORD*





and His strength; seek His face continually.”

In just these few biblical passages we find some strong advice: meditate day and night; pour out your heart; devote yourselves; seek His face continually. If you are like me, you are feeling convicted. I imagine few of us spend enough quality time with Him. I think I will shut my door, close out all distractions and spend some time with Him.

Words of Affirmation

I love to hear affirmation. Does the Lord? The Bible, especially the Psalms, is full of injunctions to praise and worship God. The psalmists certainly understood the need of the human soul to praise God. Did they also understand the desire of God to receive our words of praise and worship? So many Scriptures are related



to praising and worshiping God that it must be one of His favorite things. Psalm 150 tells us to praise Him with instruments, in the sanctuary and in the expanse. Psalm 34:1 says, *“I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”* Psalm 149 adds the idea of dancing, singing a new song, congregational worship and even singing in bed.

Deuteronomy 6:13 says, *“You shall fear [or reverence] only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.”* Jesus alluded to this passage when He said to Satan, *“Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God and him only shall you serve’”* (Matt. 4:10 ESV).

I love to praise and worship the Lord. But what about those times when we don’t feel like it? Asaph, one of the writers of the Psalms, said, *“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High”* (Ps. 50:14).

Gifts

Does God want gifts from us? As the Creator, He is able to speak anything into existence. What could we possibly give to Him? Let’s look at Isaiah 66:1–2. *“Thus says the LORD, ‘Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being,’ declares the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.’”*

Yes, God does desire a gift from us. He wants us to give Him our hearts. He desires humility, contrite spirits and someone who takes Him and His Word seriously.

He established the sacrificial system, most of which had less to do with sin offerings and more to do with praise offerings. The word for sacrifice in Hebrew is *korban*, which comes from the word





which means to come close. God has always desired fellowship with us. When we come close with our offerings, He knows that we love Him.

Still, in several places the Bible says that sacrifices and burnt offerings are not as important to Him. Let's look at a couple of verses.

*"For I delight in loyalty [or mercy—the Hebrew word is *chesed*, which is more often translated mercy] rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings"* (Hos. 6:6). See also Micah 6:6–8.

Jesus (Yeshua) spoke on the subject as well. *"But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION [or mercy] AND NOT [or more than] SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners"* (Matt. 9:13). The part in single quotes is taken from Hosea 6:6. Matthew 12:7 also alludes to the Hosea passage.

Are gifts God's love language? I'm not sure, but the Scripture is clear that God expects His people to support His Kingdom purposes, including gifts to the Temple, the synagogue, the church, the Jewish people and the family of God.

Physical Touch

God created physical touch as a way to express love, but Scripture doesn't indicate that He needs our physical touch to feel our love.

God's Love Language

While we may have one or two love languages, it seems that God is multilingual! Since He is able to see our heart motivation, I am sure that all our expressions of love are a blessing when they come from a heart of love for Him. When Jesus (Yeshua) said that we are to love God with our heart, mind, soul and strength, He was saying with our whole being. If we love God with everything in us, surely we will show it in our practical acts of service, words of praise and worship, spending quality time with Him, giving gifts to Him and reaching

out to touch His heart. I personally think the strongest case is for practical deeds because of the statement “*If you love Me, keep My commandments*” found in Exodus, Deuteronomy and John. But you can decide for yourself which way you think God receives love. The main thing is that you love Him and that He is the priority of your life.

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Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.

TERMINOLOGY:

Many of our readers are seasoned supporters of Israel while others are just beginning to understand the importance of standing with God's chosen nation; some prefer the use of Hebrew names and terms, while others are comfortable with more traditional Christian terminology. Because we want to show respect to all of our readers while providing an enjoyable educational experience, we are making every effort to use both terms whenever possible. The following are some of the most common examples:

- Jesus (Yeshua)
- *Tanakh* (Old Testament or OT) – *Tanakh* is an acronym used in Judaism which stands for *Torah, Neviim* or Prophets and *Ketuvim* or Writings.
- Writings of the Apostles (New Testament or NT)
- *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.)

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