**GOD’S LOVE LANGUAGE**

***Speak Lord, Thy Servant Hears***

Those who know me well have learned by now that I am captured by stories from the Civil War. When I was a young boy I not only collected baseball cards by the hundreds, but I also collected Civil War cards. In 1961, when I was nine, the nation was remembering the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, which had been fought from April 12, 1861 to April 9, 1865. Civil War memorabilia was everywhere. Trading cards showed scenes of a special battle, like Gettysburg, while on the back were the details of that battle, including statistics of how many soldiers were Yankees and Rebels, along with the number of fatalities. I was fascinated by that war and set out to read as many books as I could about it.

Let me tell you one such story that actually helped me spiritually for the last 60 years.

General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Confederate Army, had sent a request to General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson to “*stop by and see me when you have the time, for I wish to speak to you about some matter*.” Upon receiving this request General Jackson immediately mounted his horse and rode all night through a pouring rainstorm and stunned General Lee by his prompt arrival. Lee asked him why he had come, when the matter was not critical. Jackson replied, “***Sir, the least request from my general is a command to me***!”

I love that quote. It reminds me of another quote by another soldier… the apostle Paul.

“*Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ”*(Col. 3:22-23).

Like Stonewall Jackson, Paul knew Christians are all subordinates (i.e. “*bondservants*”) to our “General” Jesus Christ. Indeed, the least request by my Savior is a command to me! I live only to serve Him. A mere mention of a want from Him brings immediate and eager response from me.

The first century church was composed of many Master / Slave relationships. Many saints were on the lowest rung of the ladder, being mere bond-servants. These were the foot-washers, toilet-cleaners, and garbage-haulers. The lowest and dirtiest jobs were theirs. But now that they were Christians they saw their duty as not just service to their earthly master, but service to God. Now they served “*heartily, as to the Lord*.” A mere request became a command because now they were doing it for their Jesus. They fully understood the structure of authority in their work-world, and carried it over to their faith-world.

We must do the same in our modern world. The mere request of our boss, spouse, neighbor or fellow Christian is seen as a golden opportunity to “***serve the Lord Christ***” by turning them into commands.

Gary Chapman’s book *The Five Love Languages* has become a staple in my marriage counseling classes. It has opened my eyes and heart to truly get to know people. I have learned better how to love my own bride, my children, and now my grandchildren, so that I can serve them in the language that speaks to their heart, not my own. His five love languages are (1) Words of Affirmation, (2) Quality Time, (3) Gifts, (4) Acts of Service, and (5) Physical Touch. If you want to draw closer to someone find out what their love language is and give that to them in spades. To love them in a way that does not stir their heart will only get you as far as a hamster on a wheel (i.e. you expend lots of energy but get nowhere fast).

For years I thought I was blessing the lives of others by giving them what I assumed would please them. In reality I learned that I was thinking their “love language” was the same as mine. I was foolishly trying to put a round peg into a square hole. It doesn’t work. I thought all women loved flowers as gifts because that was what I had seen portrayed by TV and newspaper ads. After years of giving Benita flowers I came to find out that “gifts,” including flowers, did not melt her heart. She has always been frugal with our money, and expensive flowers that quickly died (just as God said – Jam. 1:10-11), were a waste, especially when she could grow them for free in her garden.

That led me to ask, “I wonder what God’s love language is.” Then it hit me like a ton of bricks.
“*If you love Me, keep my commandments*” (I Jn. 14:15).
“*What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God*” (Micah 6:8).
“*By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*” (I Jn. 5:2-3).

I could literally fill this page with Biblical quotes from God that tell us in no uncertain terms that His love language is our obedience to His commands. And not just mere obedience out of a heart of drudgery, but that “*His commandments are not burdensome*” (i.e. we obey with a merry heart).

Stonewall Jackson rode all night in a downpour when General Lee merely said, “stop by and see me when you have the time,” proclaiming “the least request from my General is a command to me.” Jackson knew Lee’s “love language.” It is little wonder that when Jackson had his left arm amputated after being shot that Lee said, “Jackson has lost his left arm, and I have lost my right.” The two Generals had become as one.

So it is with God. It is not enough that I give to Him what I “think” is His love language. The religious world has done that, only to become that hamster on a wheel. We must speak His true love language by saying, “Speak Lord, thy servant hears.” - Rick