Small Group Guide: Receiving Gifts

Opening verse and prayer

Paul writes about the support he received from the church at Philippi: “I have been paid back everything, and with interest. I am completely satisfied with the gifts that you had Epaphroditus bring me. They are like a sweet-smelling offering or like the right kind of sacrifice that pleases God” (Philippians 4:18).

Let us pray: O God, you are the giver of all things, and we are grateful for all we receive. Help us to share gifts as signs of our love for you and for others. Amen.

Note: While knowing the 5 love languages is very helpful in marriages, it also is valuable in relationships with children, friends, and co-workers. In this study the word “partner” refers to anyone in your circle of love.

Ice breaker, think and share

Pause for a moment and ask God to remind you of a truly meaningful gift you received. What was it? What made it mean so much to you? Can you think of a gift you gave someone that had the same effect?

Digging deeper

The third love language is receiving gifts. It is summarized this way: “Don’t mistake this love language for materialism; the receiver of gifts thrives on the love, thoughtfulness, and effort behind the gift. If you speak this language, the perfect gift or gesture shows that you are known, you are cared for, and you are prized above whatever was sacrificed to bring the gift to you. A missed birthday, anniversary, or a hasty, thoughtless gift would be disastrous—so would the absence of everyday gestures.”

1. Have you ever received a truly thoughtless gift? How did it make you feel about the gift and especially the giver?

2. Is love language #3 a primary language for you? For your partner? How high did you score on the gift scale when you took the survey?
3. Dr. Chapman writes that flattery is not the same thing as words of affirmation. Why not? How about gifts; when you are asked for a gift or told what someone wants, is that still a gift? Why or why not?

4. The Wise men illustrated the right motivation for giving gifts when they brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:7-12). Why did they bring gifts to our Lord? What did they hope to get from their generosity?

5. Dr. Chapman writes, “Gifts are visual symbols of love” and “You must be thinking of someone to give him a gift” (p.76,77). For you, how much of the importance is the gift itself, and how much the thoughtfulness behind it?

6. Our attitudes to money can get in the way of gift giving. Why?

7. Why is the gift of time so important to some people? Is it important to you? How does this love language cross over with quality time, or words of affirmation?

8. Thoughtfulness and timeliness make gifts great. Read John 12:1-8, the story of Mary anointing Jesus with costly ointment. What was Judas’ reaction to this? Why? What was Jesus’ reaction to this? Why? Why did Jesus appreciate the timeliness of this gift?

   Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ‘Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?’ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.’ (John 12:1-8)

9. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being awful and 10 being wonderful, how would you rate yourself as a gift-giver? What about your partner? If gift giving is not something that comes naturally to you, what can you do to be better? Check pages 87-88 in the book about ways to give gifts. Which one could you try?

Closing Exercise

Pause and ask God to show you one gift you could give to someone you love. Is it something material? Simple? Handmade? Is it time, a compliment, a phone call or card? God bless you!