

# Seasons of Marriage

Based upon the theories of Gary D. Chapman, Ph.D.

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## The Essential Nature of Marriage

- Committed
- United
- Intimate
- Purposeful
- Complementary

Emotions moderated by  
Reason guide by Truth =  
Constructive Action

## Winter

A period of coldness, harshness,  
and bitterness.

Cause: Rigidity – the unwillingness  
to consider the other persons  
perspective and work towards a  
meaningful compromise.

## Winter - Emotions

- Hurt
- Anger
- Disappointment
- Loneliness
- Feeling rejected

## Winter - Attitudes

- Negativity
- Discouragement
- Frustration
- Hopelessness

## Winter - Actions

- Destructive
- Speaking harshly
- Not speaking
- Violent

## Winter – Climate of Relationship

- Detached, cold, harsh, bitter
- Unwillingness to negotiate differences
- Conversations turn to arguments
- Spouse withdraw in silence
- No sense of togetherness
- Marriage is like two people living separately

## Spring

A period of beginnings and the excitement of creating new life.

Marriage is not a lifetime of spring but we do return to the optimism, enthusiasm and joy of spring.

## Spring - Emotions

- Excitement
- Joy
- Hope

## Spring - Attitudes

- Anticipation
- Optimism
- Gratitude
- Love
- Trust

## Spring - Actions

- Nurturing
- Planning
- Communicating
- Seeking help when needed

## Spring – Climate of Relationship

- Vital, tender, open, caring
- New beginnings
- Communication is flowing
- Sense of excitement of life together
- Making plans together
- Hope for the future
- Planting seeds for the future

## Summer

A period of reaping the benefits of what was planted.

A period of sharing a deep sense of commitment and satisfaction.

## Summer - Emotions

- Satisfaction
- Happiness
- Accomplishment
- Connection

## Summer - Attitudes

- Trust
- Commitment to growth
- Relaxed

## Summer - Actions

- Communicating constructively
- Accepting differences
- Attending seminars
- Reading books
- Spiritual growth

## Summer – Climate of Relationship

- Comfortable, attached, supportive, understanding
- Dreams of the spring have come true
- Enjoying satisfaction from accomplishments
- Resolve conflicts in a positive manner
- Accept differences & turn them into assets of the relationship
- Growing sense of togetherness

## Fall

A period when things are changing.

Initially on the outside things look ok to others but are deteriorating internally until the changes in the relationship become obvious.

## Fall - Emotions

- Fear
- Sadness
- Rejection
- Apprehension
- Discouragement
- Resentment
- Feelings of being unappreciated

## Fall - Attitudes

- Concern
- Uncertainty
- Blaming

## Fall - Actions

- Neglect
- Failure to face issues

## Fall – Climate of Relationship

- Drift apart, disengagement
- Couple sense something is happening but not sure why
- Sense of detachment
- Feelings of neglect
- Not facing issues squarely
- Disengagement emotionally
- Blame each other

## Seven Strategies to Enhance the Seasons of Marriage

1. Deal with Past Failures
2. Choose a Winning Attitude
3. Learn to Speak Your Spouse's Love Language
4. Develop the Power of Empathetic Listening
5. Discover the Joy of Helping Your Spouse Succeed
6. Maximize Your Differences
7. Implement the Power of Positive Influence

## Deal with Past Failures

- You no longer feel the past because you have confessed your failures and have received forgiveness.
- Marriage deepens when spouse experience genuine confession, repentance, & forgiveness.
- Forgiving others make us more Christ-like.

## Choose a Winning Attitude

- Adopting a Christian worldview
- Break the cycle of negativity

## Characteristics of a Christian Worldview

- Every human being is made in the image of God and therefore extremely valuable.
- Every person is uniquely gifted by God.
- Each person has a unique role in life.
- Marriage is God's idea & spouses are meant to compliment each other.
- The object of marriage is to glorify God by serving one's spouse to help her/him reach her God-given potential.

## Breaking the Cycle of Negativity

- Acknowledge you negative thinking
- Identify & list your spouse's positive traits.
- Teach yourself to focus on your spouse's positive traits.
- Ask God to give you a biblical perspective of your spouse.
- Express your appreciation verbally to your spouse.

## Learn to Speak Your Spouse's Love Language

- Words of affirmation
- Acts of service
- Receiving gifts
- Quality time
- Physical touch

## 5 Common Complaints & the Love Language Revealed

1. "You mean you didn't bring me anything? Didn't you miss me while you were gone?"

- Receiving gifts

## 5 Common Complaints & the Love Language Revealed

2. "We never spend any time with each other any more. We're like two ships passing in the night."

- Quality time

## 5 Common Complaints & the Love Language Revealed

3. "I don't think you would ever touch me if I didn't initiate it."

- Physical touch

## 5 Common Complaints & the Love Language Revealed

4. "I can't do anything right around here. All you ever do is criticize. I can never please you."

- Words of affirmation

## 5 Common Complaints & the Love Language Revealed

5. "If you loved me, you would do something around here. You never lift a finger to help."

- Acts of service

## Develop the Power of Empathetic Listening – Four Keys

- Listen with an attitude of understanding – not judgment.
- Withhold judgment on your spouse's ideas.
- Affirm you spouse even if you disagree with her/his idea.
- Share your own ideas only when your spouse feels understood.

## Discover the Joy of Helping Your Spouse Succeed

### Three Questions to Help Your Spouse Succeed

- **What can I do to help you?**
- **What can I do to make your life easier?**
- **How can I be a better husband/wife?**

## **Discover the Joy of Helping Your Spouse Succeed**

### **Four Ways to Help Your Spouse Succeed**

- **Offer encouraging words**
- **Take supportive action**
- **Provide emotional support**
- **Express respect for your spouse**

## **Maximize Your Differences**

### **Five Steps to Maximize your Differences**

- **Identify your differences**
- **Look for assets in your differences**
- **Learn from your differences**
- **Replace condemnation with affirmation**
- **Discover a plan for maximizing your differences**

## Implement the Power of Positive Influence

Positive choices lead to Positive actions that result in Positive feelings.



## Resources

Chapman, Gary (2005). The Four Seasons of Marriage. Tyndale House Publishing.

Chapman, Gary (1995). The Five Love Languages. Northfield Publishing.

Eggerichs, Emerson (2004). Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires, The Respect He Desperately Needs. Integrity Publishers.

Morley, Patrick (1998). Devotions for Couples. Zondervan Publishing House.

Warren, Rick (2002). The Purpose Driven Life. Zondervan Publishing House.

<http://www.garychapman.org>

<http://www.fivelovelanguages.com>

<http://www.loveandrespect.com>

<http://maninthemirror.org>

## Marital Seasons Indicator

Based upon the concepts of Gary Chapman, Ph.D.

Choose one word or phrase per row that represents your thoughts and feelings about your marriage in the past few weeks. Then tally your scores per columns.

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraging  | <input type="checkbox"/> Exciting          | <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfying     | <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain     |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless      | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy             | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful       | <input type="checkbox"/> Confusing     |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Empty         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeful           | <input type="checkbox"/> Committed      | <input type="checkbox"/> Stressful     |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Harsh         | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurturing         | <input type="checkbox"/> Secure         | <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrating   |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Resentful     | <input type="checkbox"/> Open              | <input type="checkbox"/> Trusting       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tired         |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Destructive   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh             | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed        | <input type="checkbox"/> Distant       |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Rejection     | <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipation      | <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Apprehension  |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Tension       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing           | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest         | <input type="checkbox"/> Drifting      |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Give up       | <input type="checkbox"/> Making Plans      | <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork       | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathetic     |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Critical     | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring            | <input type="checkbox"/> Connected      | <input type="checkbox"/> Concerned     |
| 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Angry        | <input type="checkbox"/> Joyful            | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding  | <input type="checkbox"/> Burned out    |
| 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Disappointed | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic        | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable    | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglected     |
| 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Untrusting   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tender            | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive     | <input type="checkbox"/> Afraid        |
| 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn    | <input type="checkbox"/> Growing           | <input type="checkbox"/> Attached       | <input type="checkbox"/> Detached      |
| 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Cold         | <input type="checkbox"/> Alive             | <input type="checkbox"/> Content        | <input type="checkbox"/> Proudful      |
| 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Unforgiving  | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to change | <input type="checkbox"/> Overlook flaws | <input type="checkbox"/> Growing apart |

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