



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** When Sorry Isn't Enough: Apology and Forgiveness - Part 2

**Guest:** Dr. Gary Chapman

**Air Date:** April 15, 2021

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- Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.
- Roger Marsh: Hello, and welcome to Family Talk, the listener supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, thanking you so much for making us a part of your day. Now, as you may already know, Dr. Dobson is currently in California working on his latest book. He and his wife, Shirley, are doing very, very well, and they really enjoy each other's company, especially on these writing projects.
- Roger Marsh: Our host for today's edition of Family Talk will be our own. Dr. Tim Clinton. Tim is an author, counselor, and the president of the American Association of Christian Counselors.
- Roger Marsh: Our guest for a second day is renowned author, pastor, speaker, and counselor, Dr. Gary Chapman. Dr. Chapman is the author of the incredible book called The Five Love Languages. It's sold over 15 million copies in English alone, and it's been translated into 50 different languages.
- Roger Marsh: Today though, Dr. Tim Clinton and Dr. Chapman will be discussing principles from another book that Gary wrote with Jennifer Thomas entitled The Five Languages Of Apology. They'll lay out the components of apology, and give practical tips for resolving conflict in your marriage. Dr. Gary Chapman has been directly involved in family counseling since the beginning of his ministry. His nationally syndicated radio program airs on the Moody Radio Network and its over 400 affiliates. Let's listen now to this important conversation here on Family Talk.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, welcome back to Family Talk. It was fun yesterday talking about the five love languages. Today, we're going to talk about the five languages of apology. At the end of the day, Gary, pretty much every time I walk into a counseling office, here's what I'm staring at. "Tim, all we do is," what? "All we do is fight and I'm tired of it. It's exhausting. I don't know what to do. I don't know where

to go. I don't even know how to begin. Can you help save our relationship? Save our marriage."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, and what are you seeing in couples? What brings about so much tension in today's world?

Dr. Gary Chapman: In one word, selfishness. "I'm not getting what I want out of this relationship and because you're not meeting my needs, all we do is argue about things." Tim, I'm going to tell you where I start with a couple like that. I say, "I can understand that. I can see how you can get there, where it's just fight, fight, fight. So why don't we do this? Why don't we call a truce on throwing verbal bombs at each other for one month? Let's just say, with the help of God, we're not going to throw verbal bombs, that's verbal criticisms expressed in harshness and anger. We're not going to do that for one month, with God's help. And we're going to replace that by giving one affirmation, one expression of gratitude, a week. Just one a week. No bombs for a month, but every week we're going to give one expression of gratitude."

Dr. Gary Chapman: What this does, this doesn't solve the problem. What it does is give you a window in which to begin to change the climate in the marriage. If we stop throwing the bombs, which always burst in the other person's heart and mind, and you're just destroying each other, so let's just agree to stop destroying each other, and let's begin with the simple thing of looking for one thing that you can say positive about them.

Dr. Gary Chapman: If they're willing to do that, we create a climate. And then is when that jump into the second step. Get alone with God individually and ask God, "Where am I failing in this marriage?" And write down whatever God brings to your mind. He'll answer that prayer. He will answer that prayer. He will show you. You write them down. You confess them to God. God will always forgive you. Then you go to your spouse and you say, "I've been thinking about us. This is what came to my mind when I followed the instructions we were given by the counselor. And this is hard for me to admit, but I'm going to do it." And you read them to each other and request forgiveness.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Now, when I share that idea, Tim, here's what typically happens. One of... you know.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I've been there. I'm smiling already.

Dr. Gary Chapman: One of them will say, "Well, Dr. Chapman, I understand that. But what if he really is the problem?" Or she really is the problem?

Dr. Tim Clinton: You don't live with her. You don't live with him. She's sick. She needs help. He's sick. He needs help.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Here's what I say. "Let's assume that your spouse is 95% of the problem. Now, that would only leave 5% for you. What I'm saying is, you start with your 5%." You can't confess his sins or her sins. You can only confess your own sins. But when you do that to God and then to them, they may not forgive you immediately, but they'll walk away thinking to themselves, "Man, this is different. All I've heard for five years is how awful I am, and they just apologized to me for some things."

Dr. Gary Chapman: You see, God can use your apology to touch their heart. Then maybe they warm up and come back. Maybe it's two days or two weeks, and it's, "So, I've been thinking about us. And you know..." If you can get both of them to make the list and do it, obviously that's best. But if you only have one of them, even one can start the process.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, I've written down some thoughts here in my notes, just for a moment. I want to make sure everyone listening understands that we understand. We know, for example, that money, kids, sex, work, chores, jealousy, and all those things combined, make for a tough marriage. It's not fun. We know that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We also know that it's not fun to be in a relationship where all you're doing is fighting. Gary, when it's nagging, when it's screaming or name-calling or whatever's going on behind closed doors, it's sad to me. We do and say things to our spouse that we would never do or say to a friend. You and I know this.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In addition, Gary, we know that it's inevitable. In relationships, you're going to get violated. You're going to have your feelings hurt. And we're not talking about abuse here for a moment. You and I have a zero tolerance on abuse. We're together on all that.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We're talking about tough relationships, trying to make things go when it's not easy and things are not the way they're supposed to be. Gary, before we go into the journey of apology, which I think is going to be a beautiful gift to everyone listening, I wanted to ask you, sometimes the relationship can get toxic or to a place where we can't talk. We're angry and maybe resentful, even bitter in our heart. And we need a little space. Are you okay with people, you'll say, "Listen, cool this thing down for a moment." But you can't just quote, ask for space, and not come back to the relationship. You've got to move forward. You can't just live in that zone because you're going to go nowhere. That's the old Dr. Phil, "How's that been working for you?" type thing.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But Gary, what do you say to couples there? And then I want to journey into we can't quote, just let it go. We've got to do work here.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah. I think part of the problem there also is that one of them will want to talk about it and the other one will not, because they know it's going to get into another argument, and they don't want to get into another argument.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There you go. You're so right on that, Gary. Oh my.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah. So they just clam up. And then the other one gets mad. "We're going to talk about this and we're going to talk about it right now." So one of the things I encourage couples to do is, "Look, now that we're sane, we're sitting here in my office, and we're rather sane and calm, the next time that begins to happen, and the person says something that really hurts you, and you know that if you respond, it's going to go downhill, why don't you just call a timeout? Just give the timeout signal like they do in the athletic things? Timeout. And if both of you agree on this, which is ideal, we're going to respect it when the other person calls a time out. And what that means is, let's give me some time to breathe. Let back off on this. It doesn't mean we're going to ignore it. We're going to come back, but let's calm down. And then let's come back when we're both calmer, and we can talk about this rather than yell about this."

Dr. Gary Chapman: And the timeout thing is a starting place, at least, to not get into another argument, another verbal fight with each other. And then you have to have a time in which you do sit down and deal with the issue in a better way.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, when I've been hurt, when I've been violated and we need to make peace, and so if we've called the timeout and now we're going to try to figure out what to do here, we try to say, "I'm sorry," to each other. Gary, in this journey, you began to talk about, hey, there are five key components. At the heart of it, number one, expressing regret becomes really important. In other words, saying, "I'm sorry," is significant. Can you explain that to us?

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah. You know what we did, Tim, in coming up with these five is, we asked thousands of people two questions. When you apologize, how do you typically apologize? When someone's apologizing to you what do you want to hear them say or do? And their answers fell into these five categories. And one of them is regret, which you've just mentioned. It's what the prodigal son did when he came home, having wasted all of his money in riotous living. And he came back to his father and he said, "Dad, I'm not worthy to be called your son. If you could just give me a job on the farm, Dad, I'm hungry." He regretted what he had done. And the words, "I'm sorry," is one way to express regret. It means, "I feel badly about what I've done. I'm sorry. I regret what I did."

Dr. Gary Chapman: But don't just use those two words alone. Tell them what you're sorry for. "I'm sorry that I lost my temper and yelled at you. I'm sorry that I came home an hour-and-a-half late. I know I told you I'd be home and we would go to the

program and I know we've missed it. I feel sorry." Tell them what you're sorry for. And don't ever add the word, "But." Because when you say, "I'm sorry that I lost my temper and yelled at you, but if you had not, then I would not," you're no longer apologizing. You're blaming them for your poor behavior.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Gary Chapman: But expressing regret is one of the languages of apology. It's one way to apologize. And for some people, this is a super, super important one.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. The second one, Gary, is accepting responsibility. In other words, like you were saying, don't push the blame over on someone else.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Accept responsibility for what has happened.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah. "I was wrong."

Dr. Tim Clinton: "I did this."

Dr. Gary Chapman: "I should not have done that. There was no excuse for that. I take full responsibility." And Tim, some people do have trouble admitting that they're wrong. Some of those are people that grew up in homes where their parents seldom told them what they did right. Every day they told them what they did wrong. And something inside of their psyche said, "If I ever get to be big, I'll never be wrong again."

Dr. Gary Chapman: And the reality is, all of us mess up sometimes. And some young men were taught by their fathers that real men don't apologize. And the reality is, real men do apologize. In fact, you can't have a long-term relationship, healthy relationship without apologizing, but accepting responsibility.

Dr. Gary Chapman: I have had men say this, "Dr. Chapman, how can I say I was wrong if I don't think I was wrong?" And I say, "Listen, don't leave it to morally wrong. If what you did or said or failed to do or say hurt the relationship, in that sense, it's wrong." So accept it. Don't get hung up on whether it's morally wrong or not. If it's hurt the relationship, it's wrong, and you're the one that did it, to make it wrong. But be willing to say, "I was wrong. I should not have done that."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, is there a difference here between men and women? How many times have you heard someone say, "Hey, listen, wait a second, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I said, I'm sorry. What else do you need? I mean, come on. I said I'm sorry. Why can't you just accept that? It's not enough for you, is it?"

Dr. Gary Chapman: And the answer is, no, it's not. You see, what that person is doing, they're demanding that you forgive them. "I did my part. I said I'm sorry. Now you got

to forgive me." Especially if they're Christian, "The Bible says, you got to forgive me like God forgave you." This preaching at our spouses never helps. But yeah, I think because we have the idea that this is an apology, "I've said, I'm sorry, what more do you want?" Well, some people want to hear, "I was wrong."

Dr. Gary Chapman: You know, Tim, what we're judging in our mind when someone's apologizing to us is, are they sincere? Because if we sense if they're sincere, it's much easier to forgive them. But if we sense they're just trying to cover it up, make it little, it's harder to forgive them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton. Our guest today is Dr. Gary Chapman, esteemed counselor, best-selling author of *The Five Love Languages* and *The Five Languages of Apology*.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, again, what a meaningful conversation, because we all fight. We all struggle. We all have a hard time letting it go, moving beyond the pain and the hurt in our relationship.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, before we go on to the third step here, some people, though, learn the power of their anger, or they learn the power of not forgiving someone. Can you address that?

Dr. Gary Chapman: I think when we choose that, and sometimes it's not a conscious choice, but it is how we operate, I think we're choosing not to have good relationships. Because if we're going to use our anger to control the other person and they may stop, they may back off, they may acquiesce because they don't want to hear your anger, and they don't want you to do something even worse than what you've already done. So yeah, it is a power. It can be used as a power. But you're never going to have good relationships when you use it in that way.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, could there also be some fear in this? Because if I do forgive you, all I'm going to do is make myself vulnerable to be hurt all over again, and that's all you do is hurt me.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Absolutely. I heard that in my office just this morning. She said, "I can forgive him, but I've forgiven him many times in the past."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah.

Dr. Gary Chapman: "And the same thing recurs every time I forgive him." It's hard to say, I forgive you and think that things are going to be different, because I don't have any model that things have been different.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's why I think these five steps become really important then, these five languages of apology. Let me go back, expressing regret. Number two, accepting responsibility. Number three, Gary, you talk about making restitution. We're

hearing a little bit of that in our modern-day culture. What does it mean to make restitution?

Dr. Gary Chapman: It means that you do what Zachias did when he encountered Jesus. Remember when he said, "Lord, the people I've stolen from, I'm going to pay them back four times what I took"? That is restitution. It's asking the person that you've offended, in a marriage, your spouse, "Honey, what could I do to make this right? I know that I've hurt you deeply. I know that what I did was wrong. I told you I'm sorry. I feel so badly about all of this. But is there some way that I can make it right? Is there something I can do that will make it right?" For some people, if you don't express the desire to make it right, in their mind, you're not sincere. You're just trying to get away with, "I'm sorry I was wrong." But you don't have the heart to say, "How can I make this right?" They're waiting for you to ask that.

Dr. Gary Chapman: And if this is their language, because again, one of these, or two of these, will be more important to certain people than others, and if this is one that's really important to your spouse, when you do offer that, "How can I make it right? What can I do to make it up to you?" They will have an idea. They will tell you what you can do. And when you do that, they sense your sincerity. Because see, now it's not just words. Now you're doing something to make it right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Number four, genuinely repenting, which means to turn around.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: To go a different direction. Gary, explain that to us.

Dr. Gary Chapman: It's expressing the desire to change your behavior. I'll just give you an illustration. I think this will make it clear. A wife said to me, "Dr. Chapman," she said, "A few years ago when our baby was small, maybe 16, 18 months old, my husband was looking after the baby while I did something else in the house. And the baby started crying, and he did everything he could to get the baby to stop crying. And the baby just kept screaming, and he lost his temper, picked up our baby and started shaking our baby. And when he did," she said, "I grabbed the baby and said, 'Don't do that to our baby.' And I ran to the bedroom, just sobbing." She said, "In probably 10 minutes, he knocked on the door and asked me if he could come in. He walked in and started crying. And he said, 'Honey, I can't believe I did that. You know, I love our child. I don't ever want to do that again. Can you help me? Can we talk? Can we get a plan so I will not do that again?'"

Dr. Gary Chapman: She said, "Gary, I sensed he was so sincere that I forgave him, even though what he did was horrible. And we sat there and came up with a simple plan that if he ever felt himself about to lose his temper with one of our children, he would say to me, 'Honey, I'm hot. I've got to take a walk.' And I would know what that meant. And I'd take over and he'd take a walk. He'd come back. He wouldn't

walk all night, okay? He'd come back and say, 'Okay honey, I think I'm under control. What can I do to plug back in?' He'd plug back into the evening." She said, "Gary, that was eight years ago. He's never lost his temper with one of our children since. He's taken quite a few walks, but he's never lost his temper."

Dr. Gary Chapman: You see, it was his expressing the desire to change his behavior. You see, you come and say, "I'm sorry," your spouse forgives you. Next month, you do the same thing. You say, "I'm sorry," they forgive you. This goes on several times. And they're thinking, "How in the world could you be sorry, and you keep doing the same thing? You make no effort to change." So for some people, this expression, the desire to change your behavior and to turn it around, that's the word repentance, as you see it. This is what they're waiting for.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary. I'm looking at II Corinthians 7:10-11. Verse 10, Paul writes about, Godly sorrow produces repentance. In verse 11 he says, "For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a Godly manner, what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourself, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication. In all things you proved yourself to be clear in this matter."

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Godly sorrow and repentance is what we're talking about. This is the game changer.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The last one, Gary, requesting forgiveness. And I know that forgiveness is a difficult word.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But it's probably one of the most important words in our everyday life and in our faith. Can you explain it to us, Gary?

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah. I have to be honest with you, Tim, on this one, this one was really not on my radar before we did our research. I mean, I thought if I'm apologizing in any manner, would you not know that I want to be forgiven? Why do I have to ask for it?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah.

Dr. Gary Chapman: But for some people, this is what they consider to be a part of a sincere apology. "Honey, I hope that you can forgive me." You can use all the others, if you like. But, "I know it was wrong and I don't deserve forgiveness, but I'm asking, will you please forgive me?" And for some people, this is what they're waiting for. They're waiting for you to actually request forgiveness. Now see, this gives them them a chance to forgive or not to forgive you. But for some, if you don't ask for forgiveness, in their mind, it's just not quite sincere. Now in your mind, you've



been sincere, but you're not touching them with what they sensed to be genuine sincerity.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gary, we're fighting time here, but I want to bring our program to our listeners, and for those who are again, maybe in a season of darkness. Maybe the relationship's cold, they've not connected in a long time. And maybe the hurt is so deep, they feel like it can't be forgiven. Maybe they can't make it. They're not sure, but they turned the dial up when they heard the program. And they just want hope and they need a little help. They need some encouragement. Gary, would you speak directly to him or her or to that couple right now?

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah. Well first of all, Tim, I'm obviously empathetic with that, because I understand how you can get there, and you can go over things and things and things and you get to that place. But what I say is this, listen, we've always agreed you cannot change your spouse, okay? But we can influence our spouse. And one of the ways to influence a spouse, even one that's treated you horribly, is for you to acknowledge your own failures. Because none of us are perfect. And to acknowledge your own failures, to God and to your spouse, that's the apology, you're apologizing for your part, your things, and God can use your apology. Whether they forgive you or whether they don't, God can use your apology, and we talked about this at the beginning of the program to touch their hearts.

Dr. Gary Chapman: And they may well, in time, come back and apologize to you. I mean, we're talking about sincere apology. Then, you can both sincerely forgive. I know it may seem impossible when you're at the bottom of the barrel with all of this stuff. But listen, renewed relationships must begin with the acknowledgement of failure. You can't make the other person acknowledge it, but you can acknowledge your own, and you can ask God's forgiveness, and you can ask your spouse's forgiveness. It can often be the first step toward reconciliation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Somebody's got to do it. Somebody's got to take a step, Gary. Let's also make a strong statement for counseling. I think upwards of 80-plus percent of people actually seek out some type of help.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: They seek a counselor. They're seeing the fruit of good work come to their relationship. And so we want to encourage that, Gary, every step of the way. At the heart of it, with God in the center of it all, there's always hope.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, the book again is, The Five Languages of Apology. Gary coauthored it with a colleague of his, Jennifer Thomas, who I've met. She's delightful. And Gary, what a great piece of work. What a gift to us all. We appreciate you and the work that you're doing. And tell us a little bit more about the Chapman Center at Moody and the great work that's taking place there.

Dr. Gary Chapman: The Chapman Center is on the campus of Moody Bible Institute, which is also the home of Moody Publishers and also Moody Radio. And the new building that was built, the Chapman Center, houses both of those, Moody Publisher and Moody Radio, both of which, of course I'm involved in. Moody's published many of my books. I have a weekly radio program there, and a daily one-minute program there. So Moody Bible Institute and their ministries have been a great part of my life. So they're part of my family, as it were.

Dr. Gary Chapman: And so if folks are ever in Chicago, I'd invite them to stop by and visit.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, their family, the entire Family Talk team, Gary, we again salute you. We appreciate you taking the time out to join us. Thanks for being a part of Family Talk.

Dr. Gary Chapman: Thank you, Tim. Always enjoy being with you.

Roger Marsh: We hope that you've been encouraged by today's edition of Family Talk and maybe, just maybe, even convicted a little bit to take that first step of apology toward your spouse. Remember, God can use your humility to soften your spouse's heart.

Roger Marsh: To learn more about Dr. Gary Chapman, his books, or his ministry, visit our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). And by the way, if you missed any part of today's program, or if you'd like to hear part one of this conversation, you can find that audio there, as well, at [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast).

Roger Marsh: Now, if you have any questions about today's program or our ministry here at Family Talk, give us a call. (877) 732-6825 is the number, and we are here 24/7 to answer your questions or to pray with you or provide information about a resource. That number again is (877) 732-6825.

Roger Marsh: Finally, as we bring today's program to a close, I want to remind you that Family Talk is a listener supported broadcast outreach. If you're able to support our ministry in any way, please give us a call. Remember, you can give a gift over the phone when you call (877) 732-6825, or you can give a gift online when you go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Thanks so much for listening to Family Talk, and from all of us here at the James Dobson Family Institute, have a blessed day. Join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.