



The Christian life is a journey.

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk: HUMILITY... What does it really mean?

ERIC BYROM

This year at Grace Fellowship we are *marinating* in the core value of relationship. This involves our relationship with God and one another. (The theme for this year is “*Grow together in right relationship with God and others.*”) We are focusing on 1st and 2nd Corinthians.

Paul’s two letters to the church in Corinth offer a wealth of insight into the Christian’s relationships. One that has stuck with me lately is a quote that I read in *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis. He was saying how a truly humble person does not think more or less of himself, but *thinks of himself less.*

I was pondering that as I was driving. I turned the radio off and just thought about it. What hit me was how often we think of humility as thinking less of ourselves. We usually think of a humble person as one who does not lift himself up. I liked how Lewis brought it back to the real point. When we get the gospel into us and really understand that we are loved and accepted and redeemed and washed clean by Jesus *not because we deserve it, but just because we accept it*, we are transformed.

We no longer need to elevate ourselves in an attempt to justify our worth. We no longer need to compare ourselves to others in an attempt to feel special because we can do something better than someone else. The gospel enables us to think of ourselves less because we are content in experiencing acceptance, love, and justification through our relationship through Jesus Christ.

The *real thing* is that we don’t just need to *get the gospel* but we need to *get more of the gospel into us*. Often we don’t live like we really believe that we are lavishly loved by God and accepted through Christ and have nothing to prove. We continue to live lives that are trying to receive acceptance that has already been given. We are not trying to *earn God’s love*, but are called to *live in God’s love*.

When we really get that, we will think of ourselves less and have more time and energy to invest in the well-being of others and to bless them. What would the church look like if we were all operating that way *not only at church but in our daily lives*? We would definitely be unique people who cause the world around us to pause and do a double take. I can think of nothing more winsome than one who genuinely cares about others and is not obsessed with himself.

So, let’s draw together by growing in the kind of humility that causes us to think of ourselves less. Then we will have the time to bless others. May the Holy Spirit allow us to experience growth in that way this year.

If that can happen, watch out world!



GRATITUDE...

it can change your life!

TRISHA BOWMAN

In my mind November glows. Sunlight reflects of gold and amber leaves. Bonfires are hearth fires that bring light and warmth. The longer nights are an invitation to light candles, and my heart is warmed each time one of my children’s cold toes meets mine under a cozy blanket in front of the fireplace.

For me, November is a pause button—the quiet before the bustle of Christmas preparations. We welcome friends and family to our table for Thanksgiving. Mostly, November reminds me that gratitude alters life in the best ways. When I think of the life altering power of thanksgiving, I often think of Paul and Silas in jail (Acts 16). When they began to pray and give God thanks, their chains were literally broken. I think about the chains that try to imprison me and this story inspires me to enter into Thanksgiving. Gratitude is motivating and powerful. It brings freedom and healing.

It’s my love for this golden month of November, and a desire to walk in the freedom gratitude brings, that inspired me to create a family tradition. At the start of November, we search for a couple of bare, fallen branches on the forest floor. We bring them in and prop them up to use as a “thanksgiving tree.” Each night after dinner we all write what we’re grateful for on a leaf. We share it with those around the table, and we hang it on the tree. At the end of the month we have quite a collection: gratitude expressed for the frivolous (concluded on page 4.)

Gary Chapman doesn't know he's famous

The top-selling author's love language books have transformed millions of lives—except, maybe, for his.

KARA BETTIS

Gary Chapman's team had been trying for ten years to get him on Oprah Winfrey. When they finally got a callback, a producer asked if they would be okay filling an hour-long slot on Oprah's Lifeclass, a primetime show on her cable network, for Valentine's Day weekend 2013.

On air, Winfrey told her audience she'd noticed Chapman's book, *The Five Love Languages* never seemed to leave *The New York Times* Best Seller List. When she asked her staff about it, her wardrobe manager spoke up and said it had transformed her marriage.

"It was such a game-changer for me," stylist Kelly Hurliman explained on the show. "There's such simplicity in its message, but I feel like it's so powerful."

That simple message was Chapman's theory that there are five main ways that people feel loved or tend to show love: words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, receiving gifts, and physical touch. Most other forms of love fall into these categories as "dialects" of the languages, he argues.

Chapman became a household name for evangelicals in the mid-1990s after publishing his iconic purple book that helped people discover their primary ways of giving and receiving love. *The Five Love Languages* sold 8,500 copies its first year. It more than doubled that in the second year. The fourth year, it sold 137,000 copies. And it kept going.

It has sold more than 20 million copies worldwide. Only six other evangelical books have reached that number, including Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* (30 million).

Gary Chapman
at his desk
(photo by
Chris Edwards)



Gary Chapman is, well, just Gary. He is constant. He's lived in the same red-brick house for more than 20 years. He still counsels couples in the same Baptist congregation he has pastored for five decades in Winston-Salem, NC. He blocks Sundays from his busy speaking schedule so he can attend worship there even if it means taking a redeye flight to make it on time. Many weeks he stands at the door after services to greet parishioners.

Gary Chapman is vanilla. He doesn't drink. He seems to have worn khakis for most of his life. His guiltiest pleasure is that he can't finish a lunch or dinner without a dessert.

Gary Chapman is, well, just Gary.

At age 10, one night at church he began to realize he was not a Christian. He literally ran to the front and committed his life to Christ. As a teen he evangelized at local "beer joints."

The first in his family to go to college, he went first to Moody Bible Institute and then to Wheaton College getting degrees (B.A. and M.A.) in anthropology. He later got both M.R.E. and Ph.D. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and eventually an additional M.A. in anthropology from Wake Forest University.

But the "real deal" didn't guarantee the Chapmans a happy marriage. Karolyn and Gary, who celebrated 60 years of marriage in August, are honest about how miserable their first years together were. That struggle is central to the love languages origin story. They even argued over small annoyances like how to load the dishwasher.

While praying one day in desperation over their marriage, he received the image of Christ washing his disciples' feet. He realized he needed to serve Karolyn in a sacrificial way. He asked her frequently how he could help her and be a better husband. Her response was usually: "Do some chores."

Now Gary takes out the trash and vacuums the floor. "She tells me every day that I'm the best husband in the world."

The love languages concept did not really solidify until years later, after years of counseling couples. A couple who had been married thirty years said that they felt like they were living like roommates.

"I don't understand," the husband said. "I start the evening meal, I wash the dishes, vacuum the floors, mow the grass..." and Gary realized there was a pattern. The great things the husband was doing just didn't connect with his wife. He distilled what he was hearing

(continued on page 3)

Gary Chapman... *(continued from p. 2)*

into the five love languages.

Notably, the languages don't distinguish between men and women. All people are different and all relationships are different, Gary says. "What I discovered over and over again, is that they are non-gender-specific."

Gary says he doesn't take a salary from his writing or speaking or conferences. All those earnings get rolled into a nonprofit he started in the early 1980s, Marriage and Family Life Consultants, that funds Christian colleges and helps young counselors get on their feet. Records list Gary as its director. He doesn't disclose how much the charity takes in each year but confirmed that \$1.5 million is "a good ballpark" number.

"Our intention is to give it away," he said.

Gary doesn't spend much energy worrying about himself. His publisher says, "I often tell people that the person they see onstage is the same person you see offstage." He's the energizer bunny. His constant prayer request is that God would give him strength and energy to continue.

Gary tells a story about a trip to Crewe, Virginia, where he stopped to visit the grave of beloved Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon. "It took me a while to find it and it was a little stone thing. All it said was 'Lottie Moon' and it gave her birth date and death date. And then it said, 'faithful unto death.' And I wept."

And I said, "God, that is what I want. To be faithful unto death."

KARA BETTIS is associate features editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY. From October 2021 issue.

Used by permission.

Mansfield Christian School's: "Senior Spotlight of the Month:"

Ethan Byrom

Ed's Note: You can find the whole article on Laura Byrom's and the Roggio's Facebook pages where he answers these questions: What are you most excited about this senior year? What are some of your memorable moments at MCS? What are your lifetime goals? Where would you like to attend college and what is your intended major? What is your favorite class memory?



One of Ethan's senior pictures taken up in Wisconsin on vacation.

Congratulations, Ethan!

What his teachers have to say about Ethan:

"Ethan is a man of high integrity who strives to keep godliness as a goal. He demonstrates maturity in that he isn't ashamed of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit. They are evident in his everyday life. He is compassionate, honest, diligent and leads by example, bringing a good attitude and fun to every situation."

"ETHAN IS OFF TO A GREAT START IN HIS SENIOR YEAR; HE ALWAYS THINKS THINGS THROUGH AND SHOWS COURTESY, RESPECT, AND APPRECIATION TO HIS TEACHERS AND CLASSMATES. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE REST OF HIS SENIOR YEAR UNFOLD AND TO SEE WHATEVER HE PURSUES AFTER MCS."

"Ethan is one of the kindest hearted students at MCS. He always has such a kind word and smile for all his teachers and that is truly appreciated and adds a bright spot to my day. He elevates me with the simplest 'Good morning. How are you?'"

"Such a sweet heart."

"I appreciate Ethan's positive Christian attitude. Even if there is a challenging situation, Ethan will put forth consistent effort while encouraging others around him."



The Schwartzes are in a new house! Janine celebrated with 14 other Women of Grace at a September 11th tea.

GRATITUDE...*(concluded from page 1)*

and for the eternal—delicious tacos, chirping birds, health, family, Jesus, and salvation, just to name a few.





It's a way of creating space in our hearts ahead of Advent. It's our way of making thanksgiving (the act of gratitude, not the holiday) more prominent. You don't need to have a thanksgiving tree to allow gratitude to change your life.

I would encourage you to take time to pause and contemplate a list of things you are grateful for. Maybe you'll be compelled to write them down or to draw a picture of your gratitude, or maybe simply share your gratitude with someone nearby. Whatever the way you keep track of the good, know that there is healing and hope in your gratitude.



Kathy Russell, *president of the Richland County Retired Teachers Association and her mother, the treasurer, congratulate a teacher who received a grant for a 3D printer.*

NOVEMBER 2021

- 6** Men's Retreat with Harvest Christian Church of Elyria here at GFC, 9 am to 6:30.
Time change: Fall back. Turn clock back one hour before retiring.
- 7** Guest missionaries preaching. If you would like to join them for lunch, please RSVP to Lori Barker.
Operation Christmas Child—collection of shoeboxes! 
- 14** Jon Vega preaching: 1 Cor. 6:1-10. 
Operation Christmas Child—FINAL collection of shoeboxes! 
- 14 - 22** Jon Vega's surgical mission trip.
- 20** Men's monthly prayer breakfast at 9 am.
- 21** Eric Byrom preaching: 1 Cor. 6:12-20.
- 25** **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**
- 28** Eric Byrom preaching:
1st Sunday of Advent. 

Save the Date:

Christmas Party: Wed. Dec. 15, 6:30-8 pm.



Grace Fellowship Church

365 Straub Rd East • Mansfield Oh 44903
419-526-4699 • gracefellowship01@gmail.com



Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder/Pastor
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heining	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Rick Widener	Treasurer
Kay Berry & Karen Gates	Women
Lori Barker	Missions
Andy Heining	Worship
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Kathy Barth, Manfred & Janet Adalem	Communion
Andy Anschutz	Sound/Power Point
John and Donna Kurtz	TrailNotes

BIG NEWS!

Former GFCer, Rebekah Stefaniuk has been chosen as the new Coordinator for the Wakakusa English Program. Our dear Nathan Tucker was the previous one. Pray for Rebekah and her family as she seeks the Lord's guidance in locating and training new teachers.



Mr. Maki and the Stefaniuk family at GFC in a 2017 photo