

## Culture Segment

TOPIC: How do we love our parents well?

GUEST: Dr. Gary Chapman

TAPING:

**\*Studio Interview**

July 29, 2025

1:00 pm

Studio A

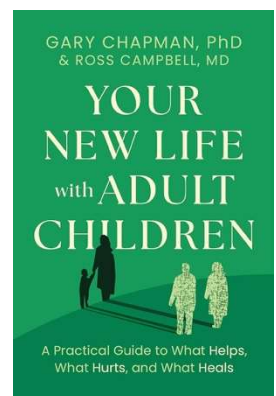
AIRDATE:

August 28, 2025

SHOW#: 917

Interview Direction:

- To start, we'll talk about we as adults can develop thoughtful relationships with our parents.
- Then, we'll speak to the adults who live with their parents, and how they can maintain a healthy relationship with them while keeping their independence.
- We'll cover how to care for our parents when their health starts to decline, and how to simultaneously care for ourselves.
- Finally, we'll review some practical tips and words of hope for adults who want to improve their relationships with their parents.



**Dr. Chapman's Website:** [5LoveLanguages.com/Learn](https://5LoveLanguages.com/Learn)

**BOOK (This is a GOAA):** *Your New Life with Adult Children* (2024, with the late Dr. Ross Campbell)

# GUEST BIO — Dr. Gary Chapman:

## Career:

- Author, speaker, counselor
- Senior Associate Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, NC
- Host of two nationally syndicated radio programs, *A Love Language Minute* and *Building Relationships with Dr. Gary Chapman*



## Education:

- PhD (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)
- BA in anthropology (Wheaton College)
- MA in anthropology (Wake Forest University, NC)
- Moody Bible Institute

## Author of 30 books, including:

- *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* (1992)
- *Parenting Your Adult Child* (1999, with Dr. Ross Campbell)
- *The Love Languages of God: How to Feel and Reflect Divine Love* (2002)
- *Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married* (2010)
- *When Sorry Isn't Enough: Making Things Right With Those You Love* (2013, with Jennifer Thomas)
- *Rising Above a Toxic Workplace: Taking Care of Yourself in an Unhealthy Environment* (2014, with Harold Myra and Paul White)
- *Screen Kids: 5 Relational Skills Every Child Needs in a Tech-Driven World* (2020, with Arlene Pellicane)
- *5 Traits of a Healthy Family* (2023)

## Personal Life & Accomplishments:

- Married to Karolyn. They live in Winston-Salem, NC. They have two grown children, Shelley and Derek, and two grandchildren

## Previous Boundless guest:

- Episode 306, What's Your Language? (12/12/2013)
- Episode 484, More Than Sorry (5/11/2017)
- Episode 576, Valentine's Day with Dr. Gary Chapman (2/14/2019)

**BOOK:** *Your New Life with Adult Children* (2024, with the late Dr. Ross Campbell)

**WEBSITE:** [5LoveLanguages.com/Learn](https://5LoveLanguages.com/Learn)

## BACKGROUND:

- **Even when children become adults, parents can still be a good influence:**
  - "As parents, we must take responsibility for our own power of influence and stop blaming our children for a less than optimal relationship. We are older and should be more mature" (p. 11).
  - "Parents can't create a good relationship with a child, but they can help create a climate in which the relationship can develop" (p. 11).
- **Practical ways for parents to positively influence their adult children:**
  - Avoid these less-than-ideal tendencies of parenting: Overprotection, undermanagement, micromanagement (p. 11-20).
  - "It is far more productive to ask sensitive questions designed to help you understand what she is thinking and feeling. Then wait for her to ask those simple words 'What do you think?' before making suggestions. Unsolicited advice will almost always produce a negative response. But when your grown child feels that you genuinely care and understand, she is far more likely to receive your counsel" (p. 42).
  - Some more guidelines (p. 56-57):
    1. Maintain open communication. **STORY:** Peterson family conferences established guidelines for their kids. "[O]ne size does not fit all" for each child (p. 54).
    2. Balance freedom and responsibility
    3. Honor your moral values
    4. Consider your own physical and mental health
      - "Some parents feel guilty enjoying themselves when their children are in painful crises. However, becoming emotionally obsessed with the problems of adult children can bring one to a point of emotional exhaustion where they are no longer able to help at all" (p. 119).
    5. Set time limits and goals
  - "Please remember these two words: *pleasant* and *firm*. If you can be both pleasant and firm, you will get through the tough time without doing damage that you will have to apologize for or repair later" (p. 59).
- **When a child moves back home, parents should both love and challenge:**
  1. "Establish a time limit for the nesting experience" (p. 78).
  2. Communicate to that the adult child may have to take on an in-between job to meet financial obligations of living in parents' house.
  3. Determine a contract that accounts for everyone's financial goals.
  4. Set the agreement in writing
  5. "Respect the need for privacy" (p. 79).
- **Dealing with lifestyle disagreements like cohabitation, homosexuality, gender issues, religious choices, gaming, money:**

- "It is critical that you recognize their autonomy and give them freedom to make their own choices, even when you disagree with them" (p. 129).
- "[R]eflect on the courage it took for your child to share with you such a personal matter. Keep communication open: 'How long have you felt this way? When did you decide you were attracted to the same sex?'" (p. 133)
- "If parents can be accepting of their child's freedom to explore other religions or worship styles and will openly discuss the merits of other belief systems, they will also have the opportunity to share what they perceive to be the inconsistencies or detrimental practices of these religions" (p. 144).
- "When your child requests financial assistance, you should not rush to conclusions but listen to the whole story. ... Ask questions to make sure you understand the request and also to assure your child that you care. ... [I]t is wise to delay, giving yourself time to think it over" (p. 155).
- **When forgiveness and reconciliation is in order:**
  - Writing letters, even if they're never sent, can help:
    - "[R]elease your negative feelings such as anger, hurt, and frustration. This may be difficult if you have suppressed them for a long time. ... It is crucial that you be honest with yourself; everyone has some negative feelings towards their parents" (p. 187).
    - "Be careful to not send the correspondence until you are ready to do so; wait a while and review for tone and word choice. Spoken words can be easily misunderstood, yet written words are much easier to examine before transmission, and they're easier to talk about later. And knowing that emails can easily be forwarded, remember to be wise before communicating this way" (p. 188).
  - If parents deny they hurt you, or are deceased, "you release them to God who judges rightly, and you release them to God (who knows and understand) your anger and bitterness" (p. 191).
- **FAQs**
  - If parents have nothing to talk about with adult child, it may be because of an emotional distance.
    - "[W]hat has been my role in creating this situation? What you discover may call for an apology, which can be the first step in building a bridge between the two of you" (p. 221).
    - Or the parent should "express interest in the thing with which the adult child is so enamored. It may not be your natural desire, but it can be the street that helps you enter their world" (p. 222).
  - If the parent develops a new relationship, see things through the child's eyes and pray.
    - "If your decision is to pursue this new relationship and perhaps to marry the person, in due time, your adult children will likely begin to warm up to the new reality. If not, then you must learn to live with a fractured relationship with your adult child" (p. 224).

## STORIES/QUESTIONS:

- 1) You mention many parents who feel like a failure because their adult children aren't succeeding. How can adult children be mindful of their parents' insecurities while fostering honest communication?
- 2) Talk to the adults living in their parents' house. When is it time to move out?
- 3) What about our listeners who moved back home, didn't want to, but didn't have a choice. How can young adults moving back in with their parents have grace for themselves without feeling like a mistake or a failure?
- 4) How can young adults take care of their health without feeling guilty (**p. 119**), especially when their parents' physical or mental health (**p. 88**) begins to decline?
- 5) What are some practical tips for adults who want to improve their relationships with their parents, but aren't sure where to start?
- 6) Let's give hope to the young adults whose parents aren't believers, or don't value family roles and open communication like this. How do those adult children honor their parents and have grace for them?

**END (This is a GOAA):** *Your New Life with Adult Children* (2024, with the late Dr. Ross Campbell). Go to [Boundless.org](https://Boundless.org), search for 917.

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**Dr. Chapman's website:** [5LoveLanguages.com/Learn](https://5LoveLanguages.com/Learn)