

the  
two  
sides  
of  
LOVE

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## THE TWO SIDES OF LOVE

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# Study Guide

## *Lesson 1 (chap. 1)*

1. In the opening story, do you identify more with Darrell's personality or with Charles's? Why?
2. Who do you know who consistently demonstrates hardside love?
3. How would you describe that person?
4. Who do you know who demonstrates softside love?
5. What adjectives would you use to describe that person?
6. In your own words, what's the difference between the two sides of love?
7. Was there someone in your past—perhaps a parent, teacher, or coach—who was hard on you but whose softside love made you want to improve? If so, explain the situation in two or three sentences.
8. Why does a person need to be able to show others both sides of love?
9. In normal, daily relationships, what's an example of where we need to be hard on problems but soft on the people involved?

10. Besides those in the book, what's a biblical example of God's showing both His hard and His soft sides to people?
11. In the opening story, what steps did Darrell have to take to win back his son's heart?
12. In 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul demonstrated both sides of love to the Christians of that city. In 1:3-9, they saw his softness toward them. In passages such as 6:1-8, they saw his hard side. Read those verses, and then answer the following:
  - a. How would the Corinthians have felt after reading 1:3-9? after reading 6:1-8?
  - b. Would they have felt differently if the message of chapter 6 had come *before* the warm affirmation of chapter 1? Why or why not?
  - c. How well does your church give affirmation? correction?

### *Lesson 2 (chap. 2)*

1. Summarize in your own words why it's important to know your personal balance point.
2. If you haven't yet evaluated how you relate to one or more members of your immediate family using the Hardside/Softside Evaluation (pp. 31-34), do that now. (Feel free to make multiple copies of the survey.)

3. How closely do your family members' evaluations of your relationships with them match your own? How do you know?
4. Why do we tend to see ourselves differently from the way others see us?
5. In what ways might an instrument like the Hardside/Softside Evaluation be *misused* in a relationship?
6. How can such misuse be prevented?
7. Read Paul's command to Christians in Romans 12:3. Then answer these questions:
  - a. Why is it important to follow this instruction?
  - b. How is our spiritual life affected if we fail to follow it?
  - c. Besides asking loved ones to evaluate us, how do we manage to think of ourselves "with sober judgment" on a daily basis?

### *Lesson 3 (chap. 3)*

1. In your opinion, what is the greatest strength of each of the four personality types?
2. What's the greatest weakness of each personality?
3. Why do we find it easier to list our faults than our good points?
4. Describe a time when you said or did something you later regretted, and you realize the problem was that one of your strengths got pushed to an extreme.

5. Smalley and Trent write, “So pronounced are these natural bents that a man we highly respect, Dr. Ross Campbell, feels you can even spot them in a newborn” (p. 39). Do you agree or disagree? Why?
6. Why do we tend to view others’ natural strengths as weaknesses?
7. How does understanding another person’s personality bent help us relate better to that individual?
8. Be sure to take the Personal Strengths Survey (pp. 47-51) if you haven’t already done so.
9. What are two or three of your own greatest strengths?
10. If you could have more of any personality bent than you have now, which would you choose? Why?
11. If you could have less of one bent, which would it be? Why?
12. Read John 8:1-11, and answer the following:
  - a. What personality bent did Jesus demonstrate in this incident? What factors lead to your conclusion?
  - b. Which side of love did He show to the woman’s accusers? to the woman herself? Why?
  - c. Looking only at these 11 verses, what conclusions would you draw about the way God loves us?

### *Lesson 4 (chap. 4)*

1. Describe a time when you saw someone's lion qualities produce a good result on the job or in a church setting.
2. Describe a time when a lion's desire for immediate results had a negative effect.
3. How can a lion learn to balance the urge to make decisions quickly with the need to gather relevant information before deciding?
4. Since lions tend to interpret questions about their decisions as a personal challenge, how can we help them to consider other points of view?
5. What are some practical ways in which lions can show softside love to family members? to friends? to co-workers?
6. What events might cause a workaholic lion to rethink his or her priorities?
7. Read Mark 11:15-18, and then answer these questions:
  - a. What motivated Jesus to take lion-like action?
  - b. How did the common people ("the whole crowd") respond to His words and actions? Why?
  - c. How did the religious leaders respond? Why?
  - d. When might Christians today be justified in taking similarly vigorous action?

8. How might a lion confront a problem without intimidating the people involved?

### *Lesson 5 (chap. 5)*

1. Describe a time when you saw a beaver's caution in decision making lead to a good result.
2. What kinds of problems can grow out of a beaver's insistence on doing things "by the book"?
3. How can a beaver be an effective problem solver without picking apart the people involved as well?
4. Besides surgery (see p. 88), what are some other lines of work in which beavers might excel?
5. Beavers "need to feel a strong sense of support and be in a *noncritical atmosphere* to do their best work," say Smalley and Trent (p. 91). How should they respond if they find themselves in a *critical* environment instead?
6. Name a biblical figure who seems to have been a beaver. What evidence makes you think that?
7. Read Matthew 23:23-26, and answer these questions:
  - a. What are some potential spiritual dangers in emphasizing doing things "just right"?
  - b. Why did Jesus seem to come down especially hard on these religious leaders?



- c. What did Jesus suggest is the proper approach toward keeping God's commandments?

### *Lesson 6 (chap. 6)*

1. Name some otters you know who are excellent motivators and/or public speakers. What makes them so effective?
2. What's a healthy attitude for non-otters to take toward otters' constant desire for fun?
3. Describe a time when you saw an otter's lack of attention to detail lead to a memorable conclusion.
4. How do two people with different perspectives on time (see pp. 108-12) reconcile their views in a mutually acceptable way?
5. Smalley and Trent point out that otters and others who tend toward love's soft side also tend to avoid confrontation, even when it's needed. To test your tendency in this area, rate how soon you're likely to initiate the following difficult discussions, using a scale from 1 (immediately) to 5 (at the last possible minute):
  - a. Call your pastor to say you can't teach in Vacation Bible School after all.  
     1          2          3          4          5
  - b. Talk to your child about the unexpectedly low grades on her report card.  
     1          2          3          4          5

- c. Tell your spouse he bounced a check at the sporting goods store.  
1      2      3      4      5
- d. Ask a friend why you weren't invited to her dinner party.  
1      2      3      4      5
- e. Inform your parents you can't come home for Christmas this year.  
1      2      3      4      5
6. In what types of careers might an otter's networking ability be especially useful?
7. For a good example of succumbing to peer pressure, read Luke 22:31-34, 54-62. Then answer these questions:
- Why did Peter deny Christ those three times?
  - How did he feel afterward?
  - As far as we know, Peter was the only disciple who followed the prisoner Jesus into the high priest's house. What does that tell you about Peter?
  - If you had been in Peter's place, how do you think you would have responded? Why?

### *Lesson 7 (chap. 7)*

- When you read that loyalty is the predominant characteristic of golden retrievers, an example of such an extremely loyal person

- probably popped right into your mind. Who is that person? Why did he or she come to mind so quickly?
2. All things considered, has that person's intense loyalty seemed to hurt or help him or her? Why?
  3. What are the advantages of having a few deep friendships as opposed to many shallower ones?
  4. What are the advantages of having many friendships in typical otter fashion?
  5. How can a deep need to please others be taken to an unhealthy extreme?
  6. Describe a time at school or work when you saw a golden retriever's sensitive spirit bruised by someone else's unintentionally harmful words.
  7. What's a current situation or relationship in which you would benefit from being more adaptable? Why?
  8. How have you seen golden retrievers respond when changes are imposed on them by others?
  9. How can a golden retriever express concern about proposed changes most effectively?
  10. Read Acts 15:36-41, and answer the following:
    - a. What did Paul (a lion) and Barnabas (a golden retriever) disagree about? (Note that Mark was Barnabas's cousin.)
    - b. What arguments would you guess each man made in support of his case?

- c. Read 2 Timothy 4:11, which was written by Paul about 17 years after the dispute. What was his view of Mark at this point?
- d. What golden retriever qualities might have helped Barnabas be such a good judge of character?

### *Lesson 8 (chap. 8)*

1. Think of a family you know where one member is far out of balance on either the hard or soft side of love. What has been the effect on the family?
2. Do you agree with Smalley and Trent that even the hardest people can learn to add softness to their love? Why or why not?
3. Was there an emotional freeze point earlier in your life? If so, what was it? If not, think of someone who *has* had such an experience.
4. What has been the result of your or the other person's freeze point?
5. Read Genesis 37:12-36, then answer these questions:
  - a. How might his brothers' cruelty have created an emotional freeze point in Joseph's life?
  - b. How do you think you would have responded if you had been in his place?

- c. Now read Genesis 45:1-11. What was Joseph's response to his brothers' action? Why?
  - d. How can you apply Joseph's perspective to your own past or potential freeze points?
6. If you haven't already done so, take the Smalley-Trent Distance-Closeness Survey on pages 159-61.
  7. Is the degree of distance between you and your spouse or other person closest to you what you want it to be? Is it what the other person wants it to be? How do you know?
  8. If either of you is unhappy with the degree of distance in your relationship, to what extent is the problem a result of differences in your personalities?
  9. In your own words, what is a softness sandwich (pp. 163-67)?
  10. With whom might it be a good idea for you to try a softness sandwich? Why?
  11. When would be a good opportunity for you to try it for the first time?

### *Lesson 9 (chap. 9)*

1. Think of someone whose natural strengths you haven't appreciated fully because they conflict with your own. How can you develop greater respect for that person's strengths?

2. What problems in your family might be solved by a family contract?
3. What questions, if any, do you have about how to implement a contract system or whether it's a good idea for your family?
4. When and how will you seek answers to those questions? If you have no questions, when might you discuss the contract approach with your family?
5. On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very hard and 5 being very soft, how would you assess your normal nonverbal communication to family and friends?  
1          2          3          4          5
6. On that same scale, how do you think those closest to you would assess your nonverbal language?  
1          2          3          4          5
7. Now ask a close friend or family member to assess your nonverbal messages with the same scale. Were you surprised by the answer? Why or why not?
8. If you're not already giving some kind of regular service to others, where might you look for opportunities to get involved?
9. What's a tough time God has used to soften your heart? How have you been able to show greater love to others as a result?

10. After reading the text section “Keep our hearts spiritually soft” (pp. 186-87), what changes do you think God might want to make in your life?
11. Read Luke 19:1-9, and answer the following:
  - a. What’s implied in verse 8 about the way Zacchaeus did business before his conversion?
  - b. What apparently caused his change of heart?
  - c. What kind of husband, father, and businessman do you think he became after his conversion?
12. What could a goal-oriented person do tomorrow to start showing more soft-sided love to those around him?

### *Lesson 10 (chap. 10)*

1. In the opening story of chapter 10, what motivated golden retriever Steve to put some firmness in his love for his daughter Robin?
2. What might he have done earlier to keep from ever getting to that point?
3. If you haven’t already done so, complete the survey on pages 193-194. Based on the results, how great a need do you have to add a healthy hardness to your love?

4. Describe briefly someone you know who got stuck on the extreme soft end of love by an emotional freeze point.
5. Think of a recent time when you had to correct the attitude or behavior of a loved one. Did it create some emotional distance in the relationship? If so, for how long did that last? If not, why not?
6. If you struggle to discipline loved ones, why do you think that is? If you don't struggle, why do you think that is?
7. Which of the five reasons for needing to say no (pp. 202-208) is most important to you personally? Why?
8. If people have difficulty saying no even when they should, how can they develop that ability? How can others help?
9. In Luke 10:38-42, we see an example of Jesus' saying no to someone. Read that passage, and then answer these questions:
  - a. What request did He deny?
  - b. Why did He say no?
  - c. Which of the five reasons for saying no would that fall under?
  - d. What might you need to say no to so you can spend more time with the Lord?
  - e. What can we learn from the way He denied Martha's request?



*Lesson 11 (chap. 11)*

1. Procrastination is generally considered bad, but what are some good reasons for putting things off?
2. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (always), how often do you tend to procrastinate in doing necessary things?  
1            2            3            4            5
3. What feelings do you typically experience when you procrastinate?
4. What results have come from your procrastination?
5. As you analyze your past procrastination, which of the reasons given for it (pp. 215-217) comes closest to yours? Why?
6. Do you agree with the authors that needed changes in personality traits occur only gradually and with hard work? Why or why not?
7. If being accountable to someone would help you make a needed change, who could you turn to for such assistance?
8. Read Proverbs 27:17, and answer these questions:
  - a. In your own words, what does the verse mean?
  - b. What happens if one person resists the sharpening process?
  - c. Is such sharpening a one-time thing or an ongoing process? Why?

9. Think of a hardside change you need to make. What bite-size steps can you break it into?
10. What can you do to develop greater spiritual confidence?
11. Might such increased confidence relative to developing one's hard side create a risk of becoming judgmental? Why or why not?
12. Which strategy for developing healthy hard-side love is likely to give you the most immediate help? Why?

### *Lesson 12 (chap. 12)*

1. Recall a time when you tried to make a major positive change in your life using only your willpower. What was the result?
2. Why is our own power insufficient for providing both sides of love?
3. Does love for others come automatically as we seek to grow in our love for God, or do we need to work at both? Why?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, then answer the following:
  - a. What did Paul say was necessary for him to experience God's strength?
  - b. What was his attitude toward his weaknesses and difficulties?
  - c. How might the kind of godly power Paul described be seen in a person's life today?

5. As you think about Paul's using both sides of love in relating to the early churches (see pp. 239-240), what criteria should modern church leaders use in deciding how to handle wayward members?
6. Have you ever admitted to God that you can't love others as you should on your own? If not, what's keeping you from doing so now?
7. On a scale of 1 (completely cut off) to 5 (completely open), how would you rate the overall quality of your communication with God?  
1            2            3            4            5
8. How did you decide on that rating?
9. What's the most important change you need to make so you can give your loved ones both sides of love?
10. How can you begin to make that change today even if you don't feel like it?

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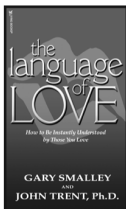
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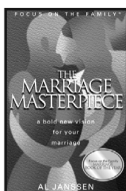
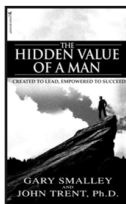


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