



LOVE

7



*Feeling. Energy. Power.
Principle. Craved. Desired.
Wanted. Needed. Elusive.
Inexplicable. Love.*

*Overwhelming. Nurturing.
Satisfying. Love. It hurts. It feels
good. Our need for it drives us
beyond our limits and dreams,
while sustaining our survival
on a daily basis. What is Love?
If love is good for us, why do we
call it "falling" in love?*

Broken hearts and dreams are the things that love songs are made of. We chase fantasies while hanging on to the security of familiar relationships; stuck in the daily grind, we squeeze our family and friends for every ounce of energy and approval we can get, desperately hoping to believe that we are lovable. We want to be loved and yet the price seems too high, because it is we that need to do the loving first, but this is the problem as well as the solution. In order to love, it feels like we need that extra boost, the umph, to get there. If only we had that extra ounce of love given to us first, then how willing we would be to spend it. Except the magic of love, is that it flows most freely when we give it away... and yet it's when the bank account of our heart feels empty that we need love the most. We just want someone to love us. If only...

Unconditional Love

Unconditional love is most richly expressed and appreciated by acceptance. I know I am truly loved by my friends and family when no matter what I've done or where I've been, they still accept me without judging me or making me feel bad. Encouraging and full of hope they inspire me to believe that I am worthy, worthwhile, able and lovable and that I will succeed.

But this kind of love is not so easy to come by, even in families. One in every two marriages ends in divorce. Why? Because someone was selfish, uncaring, stubborn, or refused to co-operate. Wanting to be loved, are we lovable? Are we giving what we want to get? Do we love only the beautiful and the perfect, despising what we see in others because we are reminded of what is ugly in ourselves? Keenly aware of the gap between who we are and what we'd like to be, we want to be connected without being rejected.

**"In erotic love, two people who were separated become one.
In motherly love, two people who were one become separate."**

Erich Fromm The Art of Loving

The Loneliness Epidemic

Fear of intimacy

Longing to be loved, we go to extraordinary lengths to “reach out and touch someone”, all the while avoiding the intimacy of face-to-face personal encounter.

It is astounding to watch two people having lunch together at a restaurant, with one person talking on their cell phone, while the other watches and waits. Hiding behind the comfortable shield technology provides, we connect, yet from a distance.

So close yet so far

The explosion of Internet dating systems provides a most vivid example of our predicament. Single moms, married and divorcees alike search cyberspace to find what they somehow couldn't discover or achieve in real life. Fantasy chases reality in a confused combination of idolatry lust and love.



A -Non-Love

*Wanted but not given
Mistrusted and forsaken
The perfect partner eludes us
As though our willingness to love
Depended on their perfection.
How perverse it seems
In our systems-driven era
Where individuals succumb
To the norms Of the many –
With each one wanting
To be different and normal
At the same time.
Love what, love who, why?*

ANON

Lust or Love...



What is the difference between the obsession of an erotic fantasy and a mother nurturing her child - and why do we call both love? One is needy, the other is giving. The obsessed lover overwhelmed with passion is driven by the fear and anxiety of possibly losing the object of their desire. The mother nurtures and cares for the child, putting her own needs aside for the sake of her newborn. How do we get from chemistry to commitment? Is there something that unifies the different kinds of love?



Love is a many splendored thing...

Whether it's puppy love or parental love, we get goo-goo eyed and talk baby talk, filled with silliness and fun, warm butterflies and feelings. We feel good about ourselves, and the ones we love. A common theme between romantic, parental, brotherly, and godly love seems to be that we have a desire to give ourselves to the other person, to do anything we can to enhance or protect their happiness and well being. Making them happy, makes us happy. We express love with acceptance, trust, understanding, sharing, caring, listening, gentleness, encouragement, and self sacrifice. Until...things go wrong.

From Chemistry to Commitment

Early in a relationship new couples tend to agree on everything, seeing commonalities that may not exist, looking for reasons to unite their lives in response to bodily urges. But building on base attraction is often a time bomb. Clearly biology alone is not enough. Neither the initial chemistry of attraction and desire, nor the strongest bonds of blood lines and genetics are able to keep families from breaking apart.

Broken Hearts and Dreams

In good relationships, we feel better about ourselves when we're together. In bad relationships, we tend to feel worse about ourselves in each other's company.

In a healthy relationship, I feel better about me when I'm with you. But in an unhealthy relationship, there seems to be a constant struggle of feeling "less than/more than," characterized by a "put down" mentality where nothing either person does is ever good enough. Children seek their parent's approval, and scorned lovers try desperately to win back the affection of their desire. How does this happen, and how can we avoid it happening to us?

Trust and Expectations

Character and core values have much to do with keeping healthy relationships functional. Lying, cheating, stealing, infidelity, violence - these are just a few reasons why relationships break. People will always disappoint us, particularly the ones we love the most. This is when real love is tested. How far do we go with someone before we call it quits. Thousands of people quit every day. Should we,? How can we turn our back on family? Is there anything else we can do? How can we make a lasting commitment to someone we can't, won't, or don't trust? We may not be able to choose our parents or other relatives, but we can choose our prospective partners.

...and Adam “knew” Eve...



The very first mention of making love in the Bible, it is said that, Adam “knew” Eve. From ancient times, the idea of loving someone, meant to know them intimately, personally, completely.

The idea of reserving sexual union for the committed marriage relationship comes from the belief that in order to “know” someone so fully, intimately and personally, we need to be able to trust them with our deepest secrets. There’s no way we’re going to do that unless we believe or trust that the other person is totally committed to us. Are they willing to die for us? Will they give their all?

The purity and intimacy of sexual union and the delight in the orgasm is shared in the ecstasy of our most vulnerable moment, when we know we are completely trusted and desired by the other and we want to surrender ourselves in the context and confines of a totally committed relationship. Who do we dare trust with our most vulnerable needs & secrets?

Love is a choice

So many marriages end in divorce, not just because of money, or the sex went sour, or because someone lied or cheated. These are just symptoms of a deeper problem - that two people didn’t share and communicate at deeper levels, cherishing greater values and a more noble vision in Life. Real love is more than just a feeling. It is a spiritual principal. Without the underlying spiritual principal of love, everything else crumbles. Ultimately, love is a choice and a decision. Wiser choices, with a less selfish and superficial focus on the immediate and the convenient, may appear to be more difficult initially, but in the long run produce healthy results and friendships that last a lifetime.

We are all aware of a gap between who we are and who we’d like to be. Believe it or not, the biblical concept of creation and the fall of man fits perfectly into the dilemma we find ourselves. We are keenly aware of our own shortcomings and internal ugliness yet we desperately hope that someone else more pure and lovely than ourselves will indeed love and accept us. Secretly many people hope that by receiving this love somehow they will become purified and become more like the person they believe in, and the person they themselves would like to be. And yet we all know that no one is perfect. Except One...

God is...



“God is Love.” As trite or cliché as it may seem, the expression is still poignantly relevant. Why? Because it is that intangible, invisible principle and power, the energy force generated and invoked through faith that fills our hearts and emanates love. Idolatry, object worship, and lust are essentially selfish; not caring, giving or concerned about the other, just obsessed with it. Selfishness is the root of all evil. It is the opposite of Love. In Hebrew the root of love means to give, not take.

Problems arise when we worship each other, and don't live up to our own expectations. We know what we want, and who we'd like to be. We worship Love. The best way to keep a healthy relationship is to recognize our own imperfections, that only God is Love, and ask for help to be able to forgive.

“To Err is Human, to Forgive, Divine”

When Moses asked God to show him His glory, the Bible says in Exodus that the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, thy God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.”

Patience, kindness and “long-suffering” above all seem to be a few of the most prominent aspects of Godly love. None of us are “abundant in goodness and truth” or constantly merciful and gracious. But we can ask God for help with these things. It's not corny, stupid or religious. It's reality. We really do need God. We know we fail, and we want our relationships to work, and so often we screw them up by ourselves.

The deep loneliness and cravings we have inside can never truly be fulfilled by another faulty human being. But we can be fulfilled as we recognize our needs and place our trust in the only One who is truly trustworthy, and seek to become more like Him. As we place our trust in God, we can have more confidence in our ability to trust each other. In conclusion, on the opposite page is a famous passage often quoted at weddings. It was written by the Apostle Paul, a Hebrew, and a Pharisee. Although it is found in the New Testament, it is still good Jewish wisdom. As you take a moment to consider these things, may you grow and become more like who you strive to be, and as you do, may you find the Love you've always wanted. Shalom.

Love is...

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 'but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13.

*Love is a many splendored thing....
the closer we get to God, the more
splendorous we become...*





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Inexplicable. Overwhelming.
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