

A close-up photograph of a couple's hands clasped together. The person on the left is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and dark denim jeans. The person on the right is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, long-sleeved shirt and dark denim jeans. They are standing on a sandy beach, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset over the ocean with silhouettes of people in the distance.

STUDY GUIDE

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR
ENHANCING YOUR LOVE LIFE

LOVE, SEX & LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

CHIPINGRAM

Before You “Fall in Love”

INTRODUCTION

You exchange a quick glance, followed by a warm, inviting smile. The attraction is suddenly intoxicating. Your heart races just a bit. A wonderful, euphoric feeling begins to flood your body, starting in your chest and moving outward to your neck, head, and down to your stomach. Your knees feel strangely weak. In your imagination, you can almost feel the first embrace. You are captivated.

Is it love? Maybe. But most likely it's another phenomenon described in the Bible. And while it shares a close relationship with love, it should never be mistaken for it. In fact, in our culture today, most of our “love baggage” - the heartaches and pains - could be avoided if we simply understood the difference between love and this other phenomenon from Scripture.

In this session, we'll talk about one of the most common pitfalls in romantic relationships today. In addition, we'll discover how to identify the three attributes of true love, and how you can tell if you're really in love. By the end of this session, you'll know the difference between the counterfeits and the real thing. And you'll see why true love makes for a relationship beyond belief.



Video Notes

I. AM I IN LOVE?

_____ This is need love. It is based upon physical attraction and fulfillment. This love is necessary for marriage to succeed; however, marriage cannot be sustained by eros alone.

¹⁵Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. ¹⁶Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? ¹⁷Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. ¹⁸May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹A loving doe, a graceful deer- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. ~ Proverbs 5:15-19 (NIV)

_____ This is friendship love based on reciprocal sharing of time, activities, the home, hobbies, games, and other objects of common affection.

⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. ~ Romans 12:9-13 (NIV)

_____ This is supernatural love. It is giving love and can be unilateral, in that one loves even when the other doesn't respond as expected.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love 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. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NIV)

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II. IS IT LOVE OR INFATUATION?

THE TEST:

Test # 1- _____

Love grows, and all growth requires time. Infatuation may come on suddenly.

Test # 2- _____

Love grows out of an appraisal of all the known characteristics of the other person. Infatuation may arise from an acquaintance with only one or a few of these characteristics.

Test # 3- _____

Love is other-person-centered. It is outgoing. It results in sharing. Infatuation is self-centered.

Test # 4- _____

Genuine love is centered on one person only. An infatuated person may be "in love" with two or more persons simultaneously.

Adapted from *Marriage for Moderns* by Dr. Henry Bowman

"Infatuation is when you think he's as sexy as Robert Redford, as smart as Henry Kissinger, as noble as Ralph Nader, as funny as Woody Allen, and as athletic as Jimmy Connors. Love is when you realize that he's as sexy as Woody Allen, as smart as Jimmy Connors, as funny as Ralph Nader, as athletic as Henry Kissinger and nothing like Robert Redford - but you'll take him anyway."
~ Judith Viorst, Redbook, 1975

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been infatuated? Describe.
2. How would you describe the difference between the biblical concept of infatuation and the biblical concept of love?
3. It has been said, "Love is a choice." Is infatuation ever a choice? Explain.
4. Of the first four tests — time, knowledge, focus, and singularity — which one is most important to you?
5. In your most important relationships, to what degree is your attention focused on what you are receiving from them and to what degree is your attention focused on meeting the other's needs?



Before You "Fall in Love"

SESSION 3 KEYS

- *Love is different than infatuation.*
- *There are three attributes in true, biblical love.*
- *True love is distinguished from infatuation by time, knowledge, focus, and singularity.*

ACTION STEPS

For anyone who intends to be romantically involved, it is crucial to understand the difference between love and infatuation. Both can involve such strong emotions that your thinking can become cloudy. How will you tell them apart in your life? In the space below, describe some basic characteristics that you can use to distinguish love from infatuation in the future.



Before You "Fall in Love"

SESSION 3

AT HOME

As Proverbs 5:19 demonstrates, it's possible to be infatuated AND be in love. However, infatuation makes it harder to tell if love is the real thing. We've said that true love is distinguished by time, knowledge, focus, and singularity. In the spaces below, create your own criteria that must be met when the real thing comes along.

MY STANDARDS FOR:

Time

Knowledge

Focus

singularity



MEMORY VERSE

*Let her affection fill you at all times with delight,
be infatuated always with her love...
Why should you be infatuated, my son, with a loose
woman and embrace the bosom of an adventuress?
~ Proverbs 5:19-20 (NRSV)*