

SESSION ONE: LOVE AND LUST

Illustration: Years back I remember watching a story. There were four friends. One friend attempts suicide because he could not marry a rich girl, as they both loved each other ardently. The other three friends put their lives at stake [one friend loses his leg, another his ear] and have them both marry each other. Later, these three friends came to know that this couple is getting divorced. They were outraged as this couple was hardened and they decided to kill them, although that won't happen.

Love a boy or a girl, and love marriages are becoming common in our times. Some ask, "Is it wrong to love a boy or a girl?"

Two questions:

1. On what basis do we say something is right or wrong? On Scripture. Only God has the authority to call something 'sin'. We cannot invent it.
2. Where in the Scripture does it say that to love a boy or a girl, or love marriage is a sin?
 - Jacob loved Rachel and worked for seven years for his father-in-law.
 - Sex before marriage is a sin, but love before marriage is not a sin.

But, this doesn't mean you can just go ahead and love whomsoever you want.

- Am I choosing the right person?
- Am I in the right physical age and have good understanding of love?
- What are my parents' concern?
- Do I make a hasty decision or pray for God's wisdom?
- What is my motive? Marriage or to flirt

When a boy or a girl say, "I love you" or when a couple says, "We love each other", what do they actually mean?

Question: Whether arranged or love marriage:

- Why is it that a couple that talks for hours before marriage cannot find even five minutes focused time for one another after marriage?
- Why is it that a couple that seems to die for each other before marriage finds it difficult to live with each other after marriage?
- Why is it that a couple that makes a covenant with each other in marriage, lose interest in one another and emotionally get attracted to another person?

This is because, before marriage, young men and women move emotionally and neglect thinking realistically.

FACTS ABOUT EMOTIONS:

Remember, Feelings are:

1) Neutral (cannot decide right or wrong) – Eg. If there are two gorgeous women before a man, he will be naturally attracted to both. Feelings generally respond according to what we SEE, HEAR and TOUCH. It cannot decide for itself right or wrong. (Eg. David – Bathsheba)

2) Spontaneous and Shallow (cannot get into the deep) – Eg. A young man is a great worship leader in the church. A young girl gets attracted to this stylish man. She does not know he is an addict to porn everyday for years. Feelings are spontaneously aroused and superficially attracted. It clouds our reason. (Eg. Samson – Philistine Woman)

3) Fleeting and Unstable (cannot be stable) – Today I will feel affectionate towards you and tomorrow it will either subside or change based on behaviors and situations. Feelings are not always the same. They change. (Eg. Amnon – Tamar)

We need to learn to control our feelings and follow biblical convictions. Aristotle described that self-control is the ability to test desire by reason. He explained that people who are not controlled have strong desires which try to seduce them from the way of reason; but to succeed they must keep those desires under control. (Taken from *Developing the Leader Within You*, John Maxwell, pg. 161)

J. Christensen: “People say they have fallen in love when maybe they have only fallen into lust.”

Josh McDowell: Love and lust are often confused in our culture. In fact, many of today’s movies, popular songs, and novels about love are really about lust. How can you tell the difference?

| LUST | LOVE |
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| <p>1) <i>Physical Attraction</i> – unreasoned passion and attraction.</p> <p>Natural Physical Attraction and Sensual Attraction – Difficult to distinguish initially</p> <p>Some even want to have a beautiful person so that it gets them attention from others.</p> | <p>Holistic – Spiritual, Intellectual, Emotional, Physical attraction</p> <p>Pro. 31:30, “Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised.”</p> |
| <p>2) <i>Possessive</i> – controlling, compelling manipulative.</p> <p>I want to have you. I want to have my needs fulfilled.</p> | <p>Gives <i>freedom</i> of choice</p> |
| <p>3) <i>Selfish</i> – thinks about one’s own happiness.</p> <p>Even when a person says, “I can’t live without you,” he is thinking about his own happiness.</p> | <p>Selfless – thinks about the welfare of the partner.</p> |

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| <p>4) Focus: <i>Physical Entertainment (sex)</i></p> <p>One counselor says, “in romantic love about 90 percent is sexual desire.”</p> <p>Note: This does not come to the surface immediately. It begins with talk – touching hands – kissing – other private parts</p> | <p>Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Relationship</i> ▪ <i>Care</i> ▪ <i>Affection</i> ▪ <i>Giving</i> |
| <p>5) Seeks <i>immediate satisfaction (right now)</i> sex without control.</p> <p><u>Note</u>: If we cannot control sexual passions before marriage, it is hard for you to control them after marriage.</p> | <p><i>Patient (waits)</i> sex under control</p> <p>Sex is purely and satisfyingly enjoyed only within the boundary of marriage.</p> |
| <p>6) <i>Covets more (pornography, sexual fantasizing other women, even pursuing physical relationship with other women)</i></p> | <p>Committed to <i>faithfulness</i></p> |
| <p>7) <i>Momentary feeling (initially extreme excitement and soon fades away)</i></p> | <p><i>Lasting affection [Love never dies]</i></p> |

How to develop “true love” in us?

First, know and experience the love of God manifestation through the cross of Christ. (Rom. 5:8)

Second, read the Word of God more to understand what love is rather than watching worldly movies and television shows; reading novels and romantic books; and looking at worldly culture. (Ps. 119:30)

Third, deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. (Luke. 9:23)

Note: It is my conviction that genuine and intimate love is cultivated only after marriage. What looks like undying love before marriage is only a mirage!

True description of LOVE: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 [New Living Translation]

- Love is patient.
- Love is kind.
- Love is not jealous.
- Love is not boastful.
- Love is not proud.
- Love is not rude.

- Love does not demand its own way.
- Love is not irritable.
- Love keeps no record of being wronged.
- Love does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.
- Love never gives up.
- Love never loses faith.
- Love is always hopeful.
- Love endures through every circumstance.

Application: The relationship or marriage that survives till the end is that which is built on love, not on lust.