

Choosing To Love

Text : **I Cor. 13: 1-8, Eph. 5: 25-33**

A. In America Valentines is the 2nd most commercial holiday of the year.

S#1.

S#2.

1. Estimates vary from 13 billion to \$18.6 billion will be spent.
 - a. Average male will spend \$169 (FNC says .. \$500 for single guys “in a relationship”)
 - b. Average female will spend \$86
2. 180 million cards will be sent
3. 61% of Americans observe Valentine’s Day.
4. On average 11,000 children are conceived each Valentine’s Day.

S#3.

B. Valentine’s Day originated as a festival for St. Valentius. (*each “saint” has day*)

1. It was originated by the Catholic Church to compete with the Feast of Lupercalia.
 - a. The Feast of Lupercalia was a Roman festival to purify and to bring fertility.
 - b. Goats and dogs were sacrificed and naked women were beaten with the skins.
 - c. As was typical, the festival involved drunkenness and unbridled sexual activity.
2. In the middle ages the poet Chaucer associated Valentine’s Day with romantic love.
 - a. Originally handmade cards were given to a woman to whom a man was attracted.
 - b. This festival came to Catholic colonies in America and became generally popular.
 - c. In 1913 the commercialization began when Hallmark began printing cards.
3. Modern Valentines is so commercialized it’s as if one is bribing another to love him.

S#4.

C. Since most folks’ minds are on this lover’s holiday, it seemed an opportune time to discuss love and marriage.

I. Most people think of love as something one “falls” into.

S#5.

A. In America how does one usually choose who to marry ?

S#6.

1. It’s all about falling in love.
2. I asked a couple, “Why are you getting married?”
 - a. Answer : “ We’re in love.”
 - b. Response : “So what; where does it say you’re supposed to marry someone just because you’re in love.”
3. Typically, a guy says ... “She’s pretty.” ... “I’m in love.” ... “I want to marry her.”
4. Her father asks, “Why do you want to marry my daughter?”

Guy responds, “I love her; we’re in love.” Father says okay as long as you love her.

B. Most people think being in love is the foundation for marriage, but it's not. S#7.

1. In fact, that's a huge problem and it's the cause of the outrageously high divorce rate.
2. Love, as popularly defined, is a temporary condition; given time, it will pass.
 - a. Every couple falls out of love multiple times over the course of their marriage.
 - b. Many end their marriage because "*We're just not in love anymore.*"
 - c. The magic has a tendency to slip away over time. (*Johnny Cash song* .. "**Jackson**")
 - 1) He sees her when she wakes up without her hair fixed.
 - 2) She sees and smells him when he comes home from work without cleaning up.
3. There are times when one has hurt the other and they don't even like each other.

S#8.**C. If the marriage is based on a "love" that's gone, adultery seems to make sense.**

1. You meet someone who looks and smells like your spouse used to.
2. You start having some of those feelings you had when you first fell in love.
3. You ask yourself, "*Why did I get married.*" I was in love. I'm in love now.
4. I don't have feelings for my spouse; I have feelings for someone else; adultery is ok.
 - a. 57% of men admit infidelity
 - b. 54% of women admit infidelity (48% of women were unfaithful more than 20 times.)

D. Many get a divorce because they think they are doing the right thing.

1. They are going to someone else because they feel love for them.
2. The problem is that the same cycle starts all over again ... love goes cold again.
3. Love is nice, but it's not the biblical basis for marriage.

II. If love is not its foundation, what is the foundation a biblical marriage ?**S#9.****A. Love is a plus, but biblical marriage is not the result of being IN love.****S#10.**

1. God Himself performed the very first marriage so let's examine it.
 - a. **Gen. 2: 15** – Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. **S#11.**
 - b. **Gen. 2: 18** – Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."
 - c. **Gen. 2: 22** – The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. **S#12.**
 - d. **Gen. 2: 24** – For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

2. God made the man in His own image and assigned him a job to do in the garden.
 - a. He made the woman to be his helper, his companion, his counterpart.
 - *b. God gave the woman to Adam and he accepted. **LOVE is nowhere mentioned.**
3. According to God's plan three things must happen when a marriage occurs. **S#13.**
 - a. They must leave their parents ... the man must be prepared to lead his family.
 - b. They must be joined together ... form a partnership together.
 - c. The two must become one flesh ... function as one. (*This isn't just referring to sex.*)
 - 1) Two individuals become one unit.
 - 2) $1 + 1 = 1$
 - 3) **Eph. 5: 28-29** So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their **S#14.**
own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; **29** for no one ever hated
his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,
4. Romantic love is nowhere mentioned. *It's good, it's not wrong, but also not essential.*

B. What is the biblical definition of marriage?

S#15.

1. Marriage is a covenant of companionship.
 - a. What is a covenant ? It's an agreement, a contract between a man and a woman.
 - b. A covenant can be mutual, but does not have to be.

Gen. 9: 13 – I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a **S#16.**
covenant between Me and the earth. (*unilateral contract*)
2. When you buy a house you make a contract with the bank. 15, 20, 30 years
3. The term of a marriage covenant is a lifetime.
 - a. **Mal. 2: 14** – Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been a **S#17.**
witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt
treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.
 - b. God is the witness of the covenant between a man and woman.

Prov. 2: 16-17 To deliver you from the strange woman, From the **S#18.**
adulteress who flatters with her words; **17** That leaves the
companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God;

C. Sooo, what is marriage ? It's a contract between two people made with God as a witness in which both parties commit to be a companion for the life of the other.

- *1. It's designed to provide a secure platform upon which to build the next generation.
2. Yes, it's good to be in love, but whether you are in love or not you are still in the "‘til death do us part" contract.

3. Love is not the essence of a marriage, a couple doesn't have to know each other.
 - a. The modern custom of courtship and marriage is a recent cultural change.
 - b. Mail order brides were common as America was being settled.
 - c. Isaac and Rebecca didn't know each. (*arranged marriages are still common*)

III. Once a covenant is made the scriptures command us to love our spouse. S#18. S#19.

A. Men are commanded to love their wives. (*Does not necessitate they BE in love*)

1. **Eph. 5: 25** – Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her (Cf. – **Col. 3: 19**)
2. **Eph. 5: 28** – So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; S#20.
3. **Eph. 5: 33** – Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

B. Likewise, women are to love their husbands. S#21.

1. **Titus 2: 3-5** Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, **4** SO that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.
2. The love between a husband and wife can honor or dishonor the word of God.

C. The point is ... true love is a choice ... romantic love is not a prerequisite S#22.

1. Biblical love ... true love is not something one can fall into or out of.
2. Falling into physical attraction is often mistaken for love.
 - a. See an attractive person, blood pressure rises a little and electrodermal response.
 - b. Some call it love at first sight, but it is attraction, it is arousal.
- *3. In fact, it's hormones triggered by pheromones being released into one's bloodstream
 - a. Technically it's "biological cognitive arousal."
 - b. It's an involuntary animal response .. linked to the instinct to procreate.
 - c. It's not sinful, God made us that way, but He gave mankind the ability to control it.
 - **d. Hormones create emotions, but it's not love. (*Again, it's not wrong if controlled.*)

S#23.

D. Biblical love is a choice .. not an emotion triggered by chemicals in the blood.

1. There is no such thing as "love at first sight."
2. Attraction at first sight .. lust at first sight .. "I saw her and she was so pretty I ...

IV. Let's observe this from our text ... I Corinthians 13.**S#24.****A. There are 15 attributes of love listed :****S#25.**

1. vs. **4** ... 5 activities ... patient & kind, **not** jealous, braggadocios, or arrogant
2. vs. **5** ... 4 activities ... **not** act unbecomingly, seek its own, provoked or count wrong
3. vs. **6** ... 2 activities ... does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth
4. vs. **7** ... 4 activities ... bears all, believes all, hopes all, endures all things

B. In all 15 incidences the Apostle used a verb.

1. A verb is an action word ... something one does.
2. One does not fall into or out of a verb.
3. For example .. Vs. **4** ... **"Love is patient"**
 - a. One can't fall into patience ... he must choose to be patient
 - b. Thus, love involves a choice to be patient.
 - c. One cannot fall in or out of patience, kindness, arrogance, selflessness, etc.

V. Four practical applications :**S#26.****A. To the singles ... Don't get married just because you're in love.**

1. **The idea that there is one true love for you stems directly from Hinduism.**
2. Being in love is not going to last so if that's all you have the marriage will fail.
3. Commitment deepens over time, but excitement wears off.
4. Make a rational decision if you think a person will make a good life partner. **S#27.**
 - a. Will he / she help you be all you can be for God ?
 - b. Does he / she have the character to be faithful to you ?
 - c. Will he / she make a godly mother or father for your children.
5. People fall out of love, so love is not a solid foundation for a marriage.

S#28.**B. To married folks ... choose to love your spouse even when you are not in love.**

1. When you're in love it's easy to do special things.
2. Actively loving is commanded as part of the marriage covenant, not being **"in"** love.
3. Not being **"in love"** is no excuse for divorce.
4. You entered into a covenant that was not based on love ... it's a life commitment.

C. Realize that extramarital love is not love at all, it is lust.**S#29.**

1. **II Tim. 2: 22** – Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love
2. Some have said, “There’s really nothing for me at home ... I’m in love with someone else. What should I do??”
 - a. First, correct your grammar; you’re not in love, ... you’re being overtaken by lust.
 - b. You strongly desire what is forbidden to one in a covenant of companionship.
 - c. When you see a fine car and you desire it, you can’t just hop in it w/o a contract.

D. You can love your spouse even when he / she is unlovely.**S#30.**

1. How do you know that to be the case ?
2. We know that to be true because God chooses to love us.
 - a. We’re all unlovely sinners.
 - b. Not one of us is worthy of God’s love.
3. **Rom. 5 ..** While we were unlovely and worthy of wrath God sent His Son to die **#31**
 - a. His sacrifice for us was the ultimate demonstration of love.
 - b. Jesus **CHOSE** to love us when we were unlovable.
4. You can make that same decision to love. **Love does not seek its own.** **S#32.**
 - a. Surrender yourself to your spouse. Actively love ! Don’t wait for a feeling !
 - b. In the same way ... surrender yourself to God.

CONCLUSION :**A. Love is a choice ... not a biological response.****B. You can choose to love your spouse under all circumstances.****C. You can also choose to love God.****S#33.**

1. You are invited to enter a covenant of companionship with Him.
2. Commit yourself to Him this very day.

INVITATION :**S#34.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Ephesians 5: 25-33**

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **26** so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. **28** So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; **29** for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, **30** because we are members of His body. **31** *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to His wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* **32** This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. **33** Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

I Corinthians 13: 1-8

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; **7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

<http://www.jango.com/music/Johnny+Cash>

"Jackson" (*first recorded in 1967 sung for decades*)

We got married in a fever, hotter than a pepper sprout,
We've been talkin' 'bout Jackson, ever since the fire went out.
I'm goin' to Jackson, I'm gonna mess around,
Yeah, I'm goin' to Jackson,
Look out Jackson town.

Well, go on down to Jackson; go ahead and wreck your health.
Go play your hand you big-talkin' man, make a big fool of yourself,
You're goin' to Jackson; go comb your hair!
Honey, I'm gonna snowball Jackson.
See if I care.

When I breeze into that city, people gonna stoop and bow. (Hah!)
All them women gonna make me, teach 'em what they don't know how,
I'm goin' to Jackson, you turn-a loose-a my coat.
'Cos I'm goin' to Jackson.
"Goodbye," that's all she wrote.

But they'll laugh at you in Jackson, and I'll be dancin' on a Pony Keg.
They'll lead you 'round town like a scalded hound,
With your tail tucked between your legs,
You're goin' to Jackson, you big-talkin' man.
And I'll be waitin' in Jackson, behind my Jaypan Fan,

Well now, we got married in a fever, hotter than a pepper Sprout,
We've been talkin' 'bout Jackson, ever since the fire went out.
I'm goin' to Jackson, and that's a fact.
Yeah, we're goin' to Jackson, ain't never comin' back.

Well, we got married in a fever, hotter than a pepper sprout'
And we've been talkin' 'bout Jackson, ever since the fire went...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEkB-VQviLI>

You've Lost That Lovin' Fellin'

Righteous Brothers ... (*first recorded in 1964*)

You never close your eyes anymore when I kiss your lips.
And there's no tenderness like before in your fingertips.
You're trying hard not to show it, (baby).
But baby, baby I know it...

You've lost that lovin' feeling,
Whoa, that lovin' feeling,
You've lost that lovin' feeling,
Now it's gone...gone...gone...wooooooh.

Now there's no welcome look in your eyes
when I reach for you.
And now your're starting to critisize little things I do.
It makes me just feel like crying, (baby).
'Cause baby, something beautiful's dying.

You lost that lovin' feeling,
Whoa, that lovin' feeling,
You've lost that lovin' feeling,
Now it's gone...gone...gone...woooooah

Baby, baby, I get down on my knees for you.
If you would only love me like you used to do, yeah.
We had a love...a love...a love you don't find everyday.
So don't...don't...don't...don't let it slip away.

Baby (baby), baby (baby),
I beg of you please...please,
I need your love (I need your love),
I need your love (I need your love),
So bring it on back (So bring it on back),
Bring it on back (so bring it on back).

Bring back that lovin' feeling,
Whoa, that lovin' feeling
Bring back that lovin' feeling,
'Cause it's gone...gone...gone,
and I can't go on,
noooo...

Bring back that lovin' feeling,
Whoa, that lovin' feeling
Bring back that lovin' feeling,
'Cause it's gone...gone...