



May 15, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."
Matthew 5:3,4

INFO

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"In the Spring a Young Man's Fancy Lightly Turns to Thoughts of Love."¹

It's spring, and this young man has been having some light thoughts about love. The falling-in-love phenomenon seems less obvious and more complex as I look back over years of experience and observation.

First, we should acknowledge that ***being in love*** is a real thing. It definitely changes a person. They get all googly-eyed and squishy-kneed. They see the person they love as perfect and beautiful. They say things they've never even thought of before. They make promises they can't possibly keep. Their hormones often seem to overrule their better judgment. Being in love is a gift from God and is, therefore, basically a good thing, but it's easily messed up and can become self-destructive.

Second, it's important to ask, does anyone ever simply ***fall in love***? The word seems to imply that the person is helpless and has no choice in the process. If I'm honest about my own experience and the hundreds of love-falls I've watched in the lives of others, the fall always seems to be preceded by some kind of decision to be open to and ready for a new relationship. People who are preoccupied with other life interests and closed off to romance can walk by hundreds of starry-eyed potential lovers and never experience a hormonal blip. But once a person **decides** to be ready, they're **READY!**

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Third, there are usually many people around warning us “Be careful **who you fall in love with!**” *That’s an important blinking yellow light. When we’re vulnerable and open, just about anybody can trigger an in-love feeling. Falling in love can be such a thrilling feeling that we can easily hurt ourselves or others. Remember the Broadway song: “Falling in Love with Love is Falling For Make Believe.”² It can be even worse to fall in love with the wrong person.*

Fourth, then there’s **falling out of love**. *Sadly, this is a pretty common experience, often soon after the honeymoon. We need to acknowledge that, just as falling in love doesn’t just happen, neither does falling out of love; it is preceded by a decision (usually unconscious) to change the way we look at the other person. Two possible things can then happen: (1) The love turns cold, or even into hate; the relationship is doomed, ending in either breakup or divorce; or (2) The love matures into a lasting bonded commitment. This latter kind of love has the potential to be **much more satisfying and nurturing** than a constant emotional state of being in love.*

Here’s this old young guy’s advice!
Internalize these spiritual teachings of the Apostle Paul:

Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is

commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

(Philippians 4:8)

Then, as God allows you, let your hormones loose, go on your journey of falling in love, enjoy being in love. But never forget Paul’s words of advice. You can’t go wrong if you hold on to these values.

Pastor George Van Alstine

1 From the poem “Locksley Hall,” by Alford, Lord Tennyson (1809 – 1892).

2 From the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical “The Boys from Syracuse.”