



November 13, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken."

Psalm 62:1-2

INFO

Sermons are always available...catch up on the ones you haven't heard!
iTunes: bit.ly/AltadenaBaptistPodcast
On our website:
www.altadenabaptist.org/sermonaudio/

Also, check us out online:
On the web: www.altadenabaptist.org

Contact Information:

general office communication:
altabap@aol.com

prayer requests:
altabaprayer@aol.com

Connie Larson DeVaughn, pastor

George Van Alstine, associate pastor

ALTADENA BAPTIST CHURCH
791 E. Calaveras Street
Altadena, CA 91001-2447
(626) 797-8970

LOVING vs. FALLING IN LOVE

I grew up in a family where love was a real thing, but nobody knew how to talk about it. Along the way, I encountered families where a person would routinely say "Luv You," instead of "Goodbye," every time they left. Their partner would automatically respond with "Luv You Too."

I'll have to confess that I was a bit judgmental toward Luv-You/Luv-You-Too families. They seemed to cheapen the concept of Love into a thoughtless conversational formula. When I finally said those three words to the young woman I married, they were very meaningful, because they weren't part of my everyday vocabulary. Then I discovered some of the complications of reserving the "I-Love-You" phrase for meaningful moments. What if, one day, we've had a nasty argument and I can't honestly say those three words because that's not what I'm really feeling? And what if my partner says a sincere "I-Love-You" and my murmured "Luv-You-Too" response seems like a lame afterthought ("Rats! She beat me to it.")? Do couples in Luv-You/Luv-U-Too relationships say it anyway? After a heated argument at night, do they roll away from each other in bed muttering through gritted teeth, "Luv-You/Luv-You-Too"?

Recently, I came to understand the radical difference between being **in love** and **loving**. "Being in love" is passive; "loving" is active. "Falling in love" is something that happens to you; loving a person is something you make happen.

If "falling in love" happens to us and is beyond our control, "falling out of love" is just as possible and can happen, without apparent cause, to any "in love" couple. In fact, it's pretty predictable that it will. I was impressed by this line I recently heard in a short romantic film on YouTube: "The way you bite your lip when you feel insecure made my heart melt; now it makes my skin crawl." As the familiar show tune put it, "Falling in Love with Love Is Falling for Make Believe."¹

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was one of the most respected literary leaders of the early Twentieth Century. He was lucky in poetry, but unlucky in love. When he was 24, he fell hard for Maud Gonne² and spent much of the rest of his life chasing after her. He proposed marriage to her in 1889, 1891, 1899, 1900 and 1901, and she repeatedly refused him. He was heartbroken when Maud married another man in 1903. However, that marriage was a failure, ending in a legal separation. Finally, Yeats connected with Maud in a rebound one-night liaison. A friend noted, "The long years of fidelity were rewarded at last." However, Yeats' memory of the night wasn't that pleasant; he wrote: "The tragedy of sexual intercourse is the perpetual virginity of the soul."³ Sad. The moral of Yeats' story: Unrequited love can be painful, but if your dream is finally fulfilled, you may regret that it was ever "requited."

November 13, 2024

(Continued from other side)

I wanted to connect this article with a Biblical passage, and my mind kept focusing on what's known as "The Great Love Chapter," 1 Corinthians 13. This passage is often read at weddings, but it's not at all about being "in love." It's about the other kind of love, the kind you choose and commit to. Remember, this was written by the Apostle Paul, a man who grew up in a rigid rabbinic Jewish family. Definitely not a Luv-You/Luv-You-Too family. These words did not come naturally to him. They came through hard-won personal experience:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. . . .

Now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13)

I'm noticing that my daughter and grandchildren have developed into a Luv-You/Luv-You-Too extended family, and I think that's great. I'm beginning to get the flow of it myself.⁴ I just hope we'll always remind ourselves that every time we say those words it's a promise and a commitment. It doesn't always have to be accompanied by a loving feeling, although that makes it more effective and affirming. At the very least, the Luv-You/Luv-You-Too formula means, "I may not like you right now, but I'll always have your back!"

Pastor George Van Alstine

¹ From Rodgers and Hart, "The Boys from Syracuse."

² Yeats should have been smart enough not to fall for a woman whose name was Gonne.

³ From the Wikipedia article on W. B. Yeats.

⁴ I draw the line at the clever GenZish response which replaces "Luv U Too" with "Luv U More!" Too much; too fast; too far!