

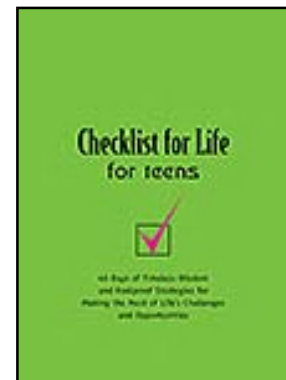
## Love, “Ever After”

Of all subjects or gifts of Christianity, Love is the most renowned and revered; for as the first book of Corinthians tells us, *the greatest of these is love*.

Understanding the meaning of love is not so easy; as what we learn about love depends in part on our environment or nurturing. Love is endowed to all humankind, yet because of sin or corruption, it can be stymied – even destroyed.

Love may seem complex in the apparent variety of forms: romantic, platonian, paternal and so many more types of love give much reason for the confusion and misunderstanding.

*Checklist for Life* describes romantic love as one of the “coolest” – as it can “bring out the best in you – if you handle it right.” This form of love can also be abused however; and so often leads to eventual hurt and pain...more than best in you.



Choosing to love is right; choosing to love all people in Christ is correct; but choosing to love someone on a romantic basis warrants caution and patience. Who is this person...and what do they believe about God, the Bible and Christianity? Even with confidence in their beliefs, you never have the guarantee that they will be faithful in the love, their commitment, their promise toward God and the marriage. **Romantic love is not enough to ensure survival of the relationship, the marriage.**

Love must grow; and who better to supply that love than the source of love, God. Romantic relationships (and marriage) must be founded on your full trust in God – and not in that other person. Because that person is human, you are certain to be disappointed or let down if you place your full trust in them alone. Again, from *Checklist for Life*:

But who knows what you need better than God does?  
 Who better understands what you desire in a mate?  
 Who wants you to have a successful marriage more than God does?  
 Remember that he loves you (in the perfect sense of what love is)

Physical attraction is an obvious element of romantic love or interest; but again, physical beauty will not sustain a marriage or relationship. Naturally, we are attracted by another's physical features; but in time, these features are superseded by the more intrinsic qualities or attributes of the person. The physical features may be the first to grab your attention; but it is far from the last... **Be careful not to put too much stock in the physical features alone.**

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### Homework:

#### Please try to do these:

- Trust God’s timing when it comes to getting involved...
- Give prayer and pause to the matter...choosing patience over unbridled passion
- Learn that reliance in others (including your spouse) must be built on a reliance in God
- Don’t compromise in the matter of faith and beliefs – but choose someone who shares and practices like faith
- When you engage in a romantic relationship, do so with the long-term intent of marriage – and not just a casual, short-term relationship

#### Things to Do:

- ✓ Ask (or pray) for God to prepare you and your future mate – for a relationship that will be Him glory
- ✓ Consider and even write down your desires for your mate; again, augmenting your effort with prayer...
- ✓ Consider the book of Proverbs as to some attributes or qualities of a desirable mate and marriage...

The Bible is replete with words and stories of love; but here is just a few from *The Message*:

*Love is invincible facing danger and death. Passion laughs at the terrors of hell. The fire of love stops at nothing—it sweeps everything before it.*

- Song of Solomon, chapter 8, verse 10

*Oh, let me warn you, sisters in Jerusalem, by the gazelles, yes, by all the wild deer: Don’t excite love, don’t stir it up, until the time is ripe—and you’re ready.*

- Song of Solomon, chapter 3, verse 5