

FALLING IN LOVE INTELLIGENTLY

Some would contend that it is futile to speak of falling in love intelligently. They contend that so long as people are in love it is not possible for them to be intelligent, and that if they are acting intelligently, it is not love.

It is difficult to get people to consider this subject seriously. No matter from what angle the subject may be approached, many think that the discussion of love is just an occasion for merriment. You have inherited the traditions of a past in which people have been unwilling to consider our subject sanely, sensibly and seriously.

Opposite sexes have attracted each other since the beginning of time. God intended that it should be so. It is perfectly natural for young people to court and to fall in love. It is right that they should. Every normal young person wants to get married sometime. To have an interest in courtship and marriage is a most natural tendency. Every normal human being has a sense of incompleteness, a feeling of the need of someone to complement life, someone to discover the hidden possibilities of the soul and to make life whole.

Love-making is one of the most dominating of all our interests. Weaving the threads of romance is one of the most important experiences in which human personalities are ever involved. Among all races the mating instinct has afforded a primary interest. Love is not for a day or a week, but it affects life today and life as it will be tomorrow. It colors all of one's experiences, largely determining what one's viewpoints and attitudes will be. It is responsible for a multitude of life's tragedies, as well as many of life's triumphs. Few decisions in life are more important than the choice of a companion, for thereon hangs much of one's happiness and fortune.

Teaching and guidance in this field are greatly needed. Neither the homes, nor the churches, nor the schools have provided them as they should. Because of this fact, I am daring to discuss this subject frankly, sympathetically and helpfully. If you have any right to expect God's guidance and help in any experience of life, you should seek it and expect it in this matter of proper mating, for all subsequent life is tremendously affected by the choice of a companion.

One does not need to be taught how to begin courtship. It is a game that is as old as the human race, and it will live as long as men and women remain on the earth. Man likes to hunt; and, fortunately, woman is just as eager to be hunted. Courtship before marriage is a most valuable period and the best should be made of it through intelligence and consecration.

If you were to ask me, "Do you believe in love at first sight?", I would say, "Yes." But I would add, "I also believe in taking a second look." That second look is the why of courtship. Don't let yourself fall in love with the first person who comes along. The first person who "catches your eye" may or may not be the best one for you. In either event it won't hurt anything to look around a little in order to make certain. When you go to buy a suit or a dress, you look around in order to ascertain whether or not you can do better. Choosing a companion for life is far more important than buying a suit or a dress. Don't settle down with one until you have had sufficient time to make adequate comparisons.

God has designed that courtship should avoid mismating. Mismating is due to that lack of knowledge of each other which courtship should provide. What is courtship

anyway? Much that passes therefore is not genuine. It is defined as, "The act of paying court or wooing: the attention of a man to a woman", and not of a woman to a man. God made woman to be courted and He made man to do the courting. As a rule when a woman undertakes the job, she makes a botch of it, or, what is worse, marries a man who is not worth having after she gets him.

The day was when about all a girl might do was to wait until "Isaac" came and took her to be his wife. However, she knew the fine art of wooing, when once a young man did come under her father's roof. She knew how to bewitch him, and how to keep him in hot pursuit until allowed to overtake her at the marriage altar. She managed to keep just far enough ahead to make it interesting; always cautious not to outdistance him to the extent of causing him to lose heart and give up the chase. This she did in a way that made him feel that she was trying to escape and that he must make every effort to overtake her. All the time she secretly cherished the hope that he would hurry up and capture her.

Perhaps you have seen a picture of the cave-man in the days of wife-capture in hot pursuit of his mate. She is making a great pretense of escaping by putting distance between them. We are let into the secret of her wiles when in the midst of the chase, she looks back over her shoulder and says to herself, "I had better stub my toe and fall, or he will never overtake me."

A young man traveled quite a distance to visit a young woman. They were seated at the dinner-table when the conversation turned to matrimony, by way of a recently married couple of her acquaintance. With an air of determination she said, "I am going to get married this year if I have to propose to the man." Before the day was done, the young man learned that she meant what she said. But Barkis was not willing. The bad mistake which she made was in letting him know that she had designs on him. She might have had him for her very own, if she had practiced on him the wiles that women have always possessed.

Frequently, in these days, the girl is the pursuer instead of the pursued, the captor instead of the captive. To many maidens every year is leap year. A timid fellow said to one of these modern maidens, "I suppose I'm only a pebble on the beach of your life." Very sweetly she replied, "That is true, but you might stand a better chance if you were a little boulder." In your particular case, which no doubt is exceptional, you may have to propose if he is slower than he ought to be. One girl sat on the seashore with her bashful lover. The breeze was blowing and the dry sand was shifting. While she was talking he turned his head. When she inquired what was the matter, he replied, "I have some sand in my mouth." She said, "Well, swallow it, you need it." Really there are some fine fellows like that. If your friend is of that type, you will just have to do the best you can with what you have. George and Mary had been courting for some time. One of those beautiful spring days "When a young man's fancy turns to love", they went strolling across the campus and sat down. During the conversation, she said, "George, of all things what would you rather be?" As he meditated, he saw a thousand-arm worm crawling along the ground, and he answered, "A thousand-arm worm." Shrugging her shoulders, Mary said, "Oh, George, what makes you say that?" He answered, "So that I could love you with the whole thousand of my arms." Whereupon, she inquired, "You poor fool, why don't you love with the two you have?" Does that make you wonder why there are so many fools in the world?

If you are to fall in love intelligently, you must use discrimination in the choice of your friends. The ideals of manhood and womanhood are greatly influenced

by early friendships. Some think it matters little what sort of company you keep in your early courtships. But, early friendships do count. The comradeships of youth are the raw material of the romances and marriages of tomorrow. You may say, "So far as I am concerned, it is only a case of puppy love." If so, let me remind you that "puppy love often leads to a dog's life." So, in courtship, don't get serious with your first boy or girl friend. Establish a basis of comparison by placing yourself in the company of different individuals. Don't mistake physical attraction for genuine love. Learn something about the ancestry, environment, religion, companions, and habits of the one with whom you are contemplating marriage. It is better not to marry than to marry the wrong person. If young people would only give more time and thought to whom they are to marry, there would be fewer unsuccessful marriages and fewer broken homes.

I. Choosing The Best Wife.

Before the marriage ceremony is said, it is wise to raise the question, "Will she make a good wife?" What are some of the qualifications of a good wife? The best wife will be:--

1. A real lady.
The term "lady" covers a lot of ground. In its fullest sweep it covers it all.
2. Morally clean.
If her character is bad, forget her. Don't be fool enough to think that a marriage ceremony will convert her, or that you can reform her. Remember that you need a companion whose society will be acceptable at all times and under all circumstances.
3. A daughter of a good mother.
Daughters are largely what their mothers make them. Be sure that she is good to her mother. If the family is over-anxious to get her married off, that should be suggestive to you.
4. Compatible.
If your courtship has not revealed her disposition, then it is not completed. She should be in sympathy with your aims if you are to be compatible. You should have a large share of common tastes and habits. Consider her disposition, education, social inclinations, artistic talents and common sense.
5. One who has domestic habits.
Unless she is acquainted with the sciences of boil-ology, bake-ology, make-ology, and men-ology, it will soon be evident that she is out of her element. She should at least know how to boil water. If you will use a little sense in this regard, you may avoid a lot of stomach trouble later on.
6. One who has a genuine love for children.
When possible, married couples should have children. God said, "Multiply and replenish the earth." I believe He meant just what He said, but I don't believe that He meant for any one couple to do all of the multiplying. If deprived of children, it is still a good thing for wives to have a love for children because most husbands need to be babied. Every sensible person can visualize the home life of the couple that walks down the street with the wife leading a dog and the husband trailing along.

7. One who is neither quarrelsome nor nagging.
God's Word says, "It is better to dwell in a wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman." "It is better to dwell in a corner on a housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house." Can't you visualize the wife of the man who said his conception of heaven was that of a place where there would not be any nagging? Nagging comes from the Anglo-Saxon word which means "to gnaw". Like a squirrel with a nut, or a rat cutting a hole through the wood, a nagger gnaws at her victim until the patience is worn through. And the strange thing is that no one will ever admit guilt in this regard. Nevertheless, a chronic nagger never lets anything die. The only cure for nagging is a genuine case of Christianity. The only human solution for it is absence from the other. On the night of their wedding one couple entered into a covenant in which the husband agreed that every time the wife got mad and started fussing, he would walk out of the house until she was tranquilized again. When at the age of eighty-five, this dear old man was asked why he was so young and well after his four-score and five years, he recounted that agreement and, with a twinkle in his eye, added: "The result has been that I have spent nearly all my life exercising in the fresh air, and that accounts for my good health at the ripe old age of eighty-five." Illustration: "Rest in peace, Freddie, till I come."
8. One who knows the worth of money.
It is easier to get a wife than to keep one and support her. Ask yourself this question, "Is she willing to start with me where I am and build up slowly and naturally to that position which I hold as my goal?" It will be tragic if she has notions above her station and above your means. Beware of the type that is always finding such "wonderful bargains." To me it is a pitiable sight to see a man who is earning a bicycle salary trying to support an automobile wife.
9. A genuine Christian.
When any woman repudiates Christ, she repudiates the greatest source of her own protection. Will she make a good wife? If she is a genuine Christian, she certainly has the greatest of all qualifications. No couple can have a truly happy home without Christ. Choose a wife who loves God and has a great faith in Him.

II. Selecting the Right Husband.

1. Know something about him.
Find out if he is worth having. Inquire into his ancestry, environment, companions and habits. If he associates with decent, respectable, moral and religious companions, you will have ground to believe that he has sympathies for the true, the beautiful, and the good.
2. Require him to have good character.
No girl can afford to ignore the fact that she will be the greater sufferer if he does not have a good character. Don't marry any man to reform him. That stunt has sent many wives to a living hell. A man who will not be a gentleman to get a wife will never be one after he has gotten her. God and common sense unite in protesting against any girl marrying a boy to reform him. Experience corroborates the protest.
3. Be certain that he is a real man.

Select a husband who is more than a "ladies man." Be careful about marrying a man whom men do not respect and admire. Choose a husband of whom you will not be ashamed. As you consider his mental fitness, raise the question, "If his brains were made of dynamite and they blew up, would it even disturb his hair?"

4. Choose one who is capable of providing for a wife. It costs money to get married and provide for a family. The statement, "Two can live as cheaply as one" is one that experience has proved untrue in millions of cases. Living on love is a good thing to joke about, but as a diet for fifty years it is very unsatisfactory. A man should support his wife and family, but, of course, it is still permissible to marry a man and support him if he is not capable or industrious enough to do it.
5. Be sure that he truly loves you. Pass up the kind that pines for you from the curb with a motor horn. If he sits in the car and blows the horn until you run out to see him, do not contemplate marriage with him. In other words, "Don't marry a honker." He will demand hotel service in the home. Be sure that he truly loves you. Courtship is not what it should be until that question is settled beyond a peradventure of a doubt. Never stand at the marriage altar with him unless he truly loves you.
6. Marry a Christian. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." You cannot marry a son of the devil without having trouble with your father-in-law. I never knew of a broken home and a divorce where both the husband and wife were devoted Christians. Lack of this is at the bottom of most failures in marriage. It is better if a couple can see alike religiously, but if you cannot do so, don't fuss about it or try to force the other. Go on and build your home for God and show the world that you are real Christians. "Except the Lord build the home, they labor in vain who build it."

When should you marry? Never in haste to repent at leisure. Not too young before you know yourself, let alone your mate. Not until you get an education and can earn a living. Don't delay too long, and become so selfish and so fixed in your ways that no one could get along with you. Never until you are sure that you love each other with a love that only death can sever.

III. Problems of Married Life.

Remember, however, that love professed at the marriage altar and the saying of a ceremony will not automatically solve all the difficulties thereafter. Marriage is intended to bring happiness. Married life is meant to be the happiest, fullest and richest life. If it isn't, the fault is with those who do not fulfill the conditions.

1. Discovery that your companion is human. There was a day when men were thought of as gods and women as angels. That day has passed. We know each other better now. You may idolize your companion and expect too much. You will discover that your companion is not perfect, but human just as you are. You may discover that really you did not know each other. One man and his wife were in a Court of Domestic Relations. The Judge said, "Madam, how long did you know this man before you married him?" "I was acquainted with him for two

years, but I never really knew him until after we were married and I asked for ten dollars." Because each is human you will not see everything alike. But don't try to remodel your companion.

2. Where to live.

Should young people live with their in-laws for awhile after marriage? In married life nothing is more important than getting started right. The early months are a time of adjustment. A young couple should have the most favorable starting conditions possible. God's Word declares, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Gen. 2:24. Steer clear of relatives' reef on the sea of matrimony. The best recipe for getting along with in-laws is for newly-weds to take leave of relatives. If there is not distance between them, it will not be long before there are differences between them. Christ gave the wisest counsel to newly-weds when He said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." Matt. 19:5. No house is big enough for both couples. What two women can love the same man, and live in the same house, and be at peace—even though one is his wife and the other is his mother? Woman's human nature will have to be made over before that feat can be accomplished. Even for a mother to see her son love another woman better than he loves her is more than most mothers can endure and be on the best terms with the other woman. Some in-laws are prone to give a lot of free advice, but such interference is about as welcome as a gnat in the eye. It caused one young man to send the following telegram to a fellow brother-in-law: "Our mother-in-law is at the gate of death. Come and help us pull her through."

Since the groom was a big game hunter, he and his bride decided to go to Africa on their honeymoon. The bride's mother announced that she was going along, too, and she did. On the first morning in the jungle Jim and Alice were out walking, when to their horror they saw a lion crouched and ready to spring on someone in the pathway, who proved to be her mother. Alice gasped and said, "Oh, Jim, what will we do?" "Do?" asked Jim calmly. "We'll do nothing at all. That lion got himself into this mess, and he'll have to get himself out of it the best way that he can."

3. Magnifying faults.

One may emphasize faults until the five percent faulty may obliterate the ninety-five percent which is splendid. One man harped on the fact that his wife could not cook as well as his mother, but he seemed to forget that she was a marvelous mother, splendid housekeeper, charming personality, gracious and beautiful woman, and one who could bring credit to any home. One woman had a husband who would not hang up his clothes like he should. That was a bad fault, but she harped on it, talked about it in private and in public until she almost came to believe that one fault made him unfit to be her husband. You must learn to overlook some faults, go ahead and live right, and be happy in spite of the weaknesses of your companion. Regardless of everything else, let Christ be the Master of your home, for you can never have a happy and successful married life if Christ is left out.