# True Love 💙 Never Fails

Daily reflections to keep love true and enrich your life!

## There is no such thing as "falling" in love.

Have you ever heard someone say, "I just love tacos." or "I love weekends." or "I love my dog." or ... "I feel like I am 'falling' in love."

Sadly, the world has so diluted the use of the word love that it has almost lost its true meaning. Some say that it is just a different kind of "love" that one has for tacos and weekends and dogs ... and some still think they can "fall" in love based on feelings.

But that is simply not true. Trivializing the word love in such ways reflects a serious misunderstanding.

This notion of "falling in love" is actually just *pseudo-love infatuation* ... the opposite of *true love*. Because *true love* is *never* based on feelings.

Instead, a key defining evidence of *true love* is unwavering commitment. No one has greater love than this, that one is willing to lay down their own life for someone they profess to love.

In this small book, you will find descriptions of the most essential attributes of *true love* with one or two concise pages devoted to each key attribute:

1. Trust 2. Commitment 3. Patience 4. Kindness 5. Forgiveness 6. Thankfulness 7. Humbleness 8. Peacefulness 9. Moderation 10. Selflessness *and* 11. Tenacity.

#### True Love Never Fails

A priceless focal point for daily reflection.

True love patiently suffers long and is kind.

True love does not envy.

True love does not vaunt itself.

It is not puffed up.

It does not behave shamefully.

It does not seek its own way.

It is not easily provoked.

It does not think evil.

It does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth.

True love bears all things, believes all things, and endures all things.

## True love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 adapted from The AV7 Bible

Following is a deeper look at the most essential attributes of *True* love.

- True love is trusting and trustworthy.
  It is not jealous, suspicious, or deceitful.
- **True love is committed** ... consistent in loving. It is not fickle, wavering, or undependable.
- True love is patient ... longsuffering ... not impatient, quick-to-accuse, or intolerant, but always willing to endure with composure.
- **True love is kind** ... gentle ... full of grace. It always seeks harmony. It is never harsh, irritable, or mean-spirited.

# True love is forgiving and merciful. It does not look for faults. It does not criticize or condemn. It does not harbor bitterness. It will cover the multitude of sins.

- True love overflows with thanksgiving and joy.
  It is not a gloomy complainer.
  It is appreciative, complimenting, and joyful.
  It is smiling, encouraging, and reassuring.
- True love is meek and humble.
  It is respectful, accommodating, yielding.

It is not proud, puffed up, or head-strong. It is not self-willed, haughty, or demanding.

#### True love is peaceable.

It is peace-loving and peace-nurturing. It is not confrontational or contentious. It is not touchy or easily offended. It will not be overtaken by wrath or rage.

- True love reflects Spirit-controlled moderation:
  Calm restraint, temperance, tranquility.
  A pure heart, soft-spoken, and gentle.
  Heavenly-minded, not worldly-minded.
- True love culminates in selflessly serving others with a willing and a cheerful heart and without seeking anything in return.

True Love Never Fails.

## **Trust**

True love is trusting and trustworthy not jealous, suspicious, or deceiving.

Trust is the first and most important attribute of genuine *true love*. The most successful, thriving, and joyful relationships are those in which there is:

- ◆ Implicit mutual trust in each other
- ◆ Implicit mutual trustworthiness
- ◆ Mutually shared trust in God as the basis.

This kind of trust is possible *only* when people completely and thoroughly know each other.

No secrets. Nothing hidden. Strong in faith.

*True love* flourishes by trusting, believing, and having faith in God, fully embracing this wisdom:

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart.
Do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him
and He will direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6

The tragic reality, however, is that relationships too often fail (including more than half of all marriages) and one major reason is because people did not ask all of the questions that they should have asked and gotten answered before entering in to a relationship.

Do not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. *2 Corinthians 6:14* 

There is nothing covered that will not be revealed and nothing hidden that will not become known.

*Matthew 10:26* ~ *Luke 12:2* 

## Commitment

### True love is committed

consistent in loving never fickle, wavering, or undependable.

The ultimate test and evidence of true love and true friendship is unwavering commitment.

A fair-weather friend is not a genuine friend.

Anyone who professes love, but later is unfaithful and breaks their commitment is a reprobate.

Genuine friendship and genuine love are valid *only* when those who profess love or friendship stay faithful and true to their profession. Consider:

A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they two shall be one flesh ... what God has joined together must *never* separate.

Genesis 2:24 ~ Matthew 19:5-6

The difference between a "Covenant Marriage" and revolving door counterfeits in which couples stay together only as long as it feels good or "as long as we both shall 'love' each other" ... is commitment.

Anyone who initiates the termination of a marriage without indisputable justifiable cause is a reprobate.

## True love does not depend on feelings.

The evidence of true love is staying committed, staying faithful, staying loyal, staying dependable, staying devoted, and being consistent in love.

True love never fails ... never gives up.

## Beware of the counterfeit of love!

The counterfeit of love is revealed in those who are only fair-weather friends, unreliable, unpredictable, impatient, unkind, unforgiving, sharp-tongued ...

A double minded person is unstable in all their ways. James 1:9

Commitment applies not only to being faithful and staying committed to those you profess to love; it also means being committed to growing and improving in the attributes of true love in yourself.

Search my heart O God and show me any wicked ways in me that I need to change.

Teach me your way so that I will walk in your truth.

paraphrased from Psalm 86:11 & Psalm 139:23-24

By daily reading and reflecting on the attributes of true love – as well as the examples of the opposites of love presented here – you will be prompted to search your own heart and understand many ways in which you can grow and change for the better.

Are you willing to grow, change, and give yourself?

God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. *John 3:16* 

Greater love has no one than this, that one is willing to lay down their own life for one they profess to love.

adapted from John 15:13

## **Patience**

### True love is patient

longsuffering ... not impatient not intolerant ... never quick-to-accuse but always willing to endure with composure.

> In your patience, possess your souls. Luke 21:19

Patience is by far the most difficult of all personal attributes to learn and maintain. Conversely, a lack of patience can be the most transparently revealing of all personal attributes.

While impatience is most noticeable in grumbling and complaining, faultfinding and criticizing others, and outbursts of anger or profanity; it is also apparent in many other ways: interrupting others, lack of respect for others, and even in a simple lack of common courtesy and good manners.

True love *patiently* suffers long *and* is kind.
True love is not easily provoked.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

Patience and kindness are closely linked as the first attributes mentioned in this definition of *true love*. Notice also that being patient means not being easily provoked ... not getting angry ... learning how to keep calm, cool, and collected.

The key to learning patience begins when one makes a resolute decision to no longer condone impatience in oneself. Patience must be learned. No one is born with patience. Human nature is selfish, self-centered, and impatient.

## The opposite of patience is anger.

Impatience reveals itself in many different ways, all of which indicate varying degrees of anger, such as: being irritable, emotional, temperamental, touchy, hyper-sensitive, intolerant, short-tempered, easily agitated or exasperated, feelings easily hurt, quick to find fault, volatile, complaining, blaming others, ridiculing, belittling, rolling the eyes, being hostile, confrontational, bristling, antagonistic, belligerent, quarrelsome, contentious, baiting, provoking, overreactive, indignant, argumentative, hot-tempered, intense, strife-provoking, harboring bitterness or animosity, and lashing out with a sharp tongue.

Whoever is angry ... without a just cause shall be in danger of the judgment.

Matthew 5:22

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you. *Ephesians 4:31* 

Instead of all these, learn to be patient, forbearing, enduring, tolerant, charitable, magnanimous, noble, . . . and accepting of others . . . just as they are.

Impatience and trying to change others to impose upon them the way you want them to be is surely a most destructive problem in any relationship. Trying to change others usually leads to resentment, defensiveness, animosity, arguments, harsh words, retaliations, sarcasm, snide comments, frustrations, and more confrontations, unhappiness, and regret.

The only anecdote for all this is to learn to be as pleasant, agreeable, relaxed, kind, conciliatory, and soft-spoken as possible. Because . . .

## Speech is the mirror of the soul.

The words that you speak, the tone of your voice, and the expressions on your face all reveal your patience (or lack of it), your maturity, self-control, and a great deal about your character. Therefore:

Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. James 1:19

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good person out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things ... out of evil treasure brings forth evil things. For every idle word that people speak they will give an account of it on the day of judgment.

Matthew 12:36

Those who restrain their lips are wise. *Proverbs 10:19* 

Those of few words and settled mind are wise. Even a fool is counted wise when keeping silent. adapted from Proverbs 17:27-28

Trials and tribulations are an inevitable part of life. No one is exempt. Adversity reveals patience . . . or the lack of it. Even small things can often cause people to react in anger and offensive words jump out. *But True love is always patient and kind*.

The testing of your faith works patience. *James 1:3* 

Rejoice in tribulation because tribulation produces patience. *adapted from Romans 5:3* 

## **Kindness**

#### True love is kind

gentle . . . full of grace. True love always seeks harmony. It is never harsh, irritable, or mean-spirited.

Love your neighbor as yourself. *Matthew 19:19* ~ *Leviticus 19:18* 

Kindness is the easiest of all the attributes of true love to learn, to understand, and to master.

## It really is simple: Just be nice to one another.

You will never experience greater satisfaction in life than saying or doing something nice for someone. It is incredibly easy to do – for a spouse, a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker, or even a complete stranger. A kind word, a thoughtful act, a cheerful greeting, a compliment, an offer to assist someone in distress.

Be kindly affectionate to one another. Romans 12:10

Put on a heart of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, patience. *Colossians 3:12* 

"Put on" means to make a conscious choice and decision to be especially kind and gentle toward others – to be more cordial, more congenial, more affable, tactful, respectful, considerate, attentive, polite, courteous, well-mannered, tenderhearted, and compassionate – intentionally being nicer and kinder than might be your natural tendency.

## Kind and gentle words, actions speak louder than words, and . . . "the look of love"

Let us not love in word only but also in deeds and in truth.

1. John 3:18

Kindness is seen in both actions *and* in a gentle tone of voice *and* also in facial expressions. Being kind means being *consistently* courteous, polite, and thoughtful – always pursuing peace and harmony.

Be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Be affectionate. Be courteous.

1 Peter 3:8

The opposite of kindness is seen in being aloof, thoughtless, inconsiderate, impolite, hard-hearted, unfeeling, detached, withdrawn, disagreeable, cold, callous, withholding affection ... or worse, becoming rude, mean, cruel, spiteful, vicious, strident, unseemly, crude, harsh, or abusive.

## What goes around, comes around.

The Golden Rule

All things whatsoever you would that others should do to you, you do to them. For this is the sum of the law and the prophets.

\*Matthew 7:12\*

Love your enemies.

Bless those who curse you.

Do good to those who hate you.

And pray for those who despitefully use you.

Matthew 5:44 ~ Proverby 16:7

## **Forgiveness**

## True love is forgiving and merciful.

It does not look for faults.
It does not harbor bitterness.
It does not criticize or condemn.
True love covers the multitude of sins.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 5:7

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another ... as God forgives you. *adapted from Ephesians 4:32* 

If you forgive others for their trespasses then your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others for their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.

\*\*Matthew 6:14\*\*

Having a forgiving heart toward others is liberating. When you can unconditionally forgive others you feel have wronged you, then you can be set free from harboring bitterness, hard feelings, or anger and having such feelings rise up from time to time.

Forgiveness is an absolute. It does not exist in degrees. Either you have unconditionally forgiven others, or you have not. There is no middle ground.

But if you are holding on to unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, or resentment toward anyone, then that reveals that you have not truly forgiven them. And if you do not forgive them, then neither has God forgiven you. It really is that simple.

Being able to forgive is a revealing benchmark of one's ability to love genuinely with *true love*. Anyone who cannot forgive unconditionally can never give or experience *true love*.

If unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, or resentment ever resurfaces, then that reveals that the lesson of genuine forgiveness has still not been learned.

Forgiveness requires letting go. A baby bird can sit in its nest and flap its wings, but that is not flying. As long as it is unwilling to let go, it cannot fly.

So it is with forgiveness.

Forgiveness and mercy are closely related but different attributes. Mercy has to do with how you treat others. Forgiveness is a state of mind and heart and attitude. Both are reflected in being quick to forgive, being amiable, accepting, and lenient.

The opposite is withholding forgiveness, being judgmental, disapproving, blaming, condemning, bitter, resentful, hateful, vengeful, vindictive, and unwilling to let go of condemnation.

Forgive us for our debts in which we have done wrong to others as we forgive those we feel have done wrong to us. adapted from Matthew 6:12

Above all have fervent true love among yourselves. For true love covers the multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8 ~ Proverbs 10:12

## Thankfulness & Joy

True love overflows with thanksgiving & joy.

It is continually appreciative and joyful.
It is never a gloomy complainer.
True love smiles, encourages, and reassures.

Be of good cheer. I am with you.

Matthew 14:27

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Do not be anxious about anything
but in everything by prayer with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.

adapted from Philippians 4:4-6

Thankfulness and joy go hand-in-hand. Have you noticed that most people have either a cheerful, joyful, sunny disposition with a thankful attitude most of the time ... or else they tend to be the opposite ... grumbling and complaining with a negative attitude and an unthankful spirit.

The difference is a *choice* that people make.

Those who have a thankful and joyful outlook on life rarely grumble or complain. Instead, thankful people count their blessings, look on the bright side, maintain a positive attitude and optimistic outlook, and bear their burdens quietly. They often express praise, reassurance, and encouragement to others, always looking for the best in others.

It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord and sing praises to His name.

For His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 91:1 ~ Psalm 107:1

## Contentment and joy are a state of mind.

I have learned, in whatever state I am, there to be content. Philippians 4:11

*True love* thrives in joyful environments where friends and families and lovers are consistently appreciative of each other and where kindness, thoughtfulness, thankfulness, and affection are freely, frequently, and liberally expressed.

Choosing to be consistently thankful and joyful is an important key to keeping love alive and well.

In everything give thanks. For this is the will of God for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Notice what atmosphere, attitude, and conditions appear whenever there is a lack of thankfulness and joy in any relationship. Typically, there will arise sullenness, crabbiness, sarcasm, fault-finding, criticizing, sour dispositions, blaming, harsh words, pessimism ... tearing-down instead of building up.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. *Galatians 5:22-23* 

Do not allow filthiness or foolish talking but rather give thanks. *Ephesians 5:4* 

You and you alone decide whether you will be a thankful joyful person or an unthankful sullen complainer.

## Humility

True love is meek and humble respectful, accommodating, yielding, not proud, puffed up, or head-strong, not self-willed, haughty, or demanding.

Whoever will humble themselves will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. adapted from Matthew 18:4

God hates pride, arrogance, a self-willed mouth. from Proverbs 8:13

> God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6 ~ Proverbs 3:34

Human nature is almost universally self-centered, self-willed, proud, vain, and certainly not humble. Instead, pride and self-will usually tend to increase unless and until something causes a transformation.

Pride and self-will show up in many different forms and degrees from subtle assertiveness to stubborn inflexibility to arrogance to becoming overbearing, demanding, controlling, rude, and manipulative.

Whoever exalts themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Matthew 23:12

Let nothing be done through strife or self-centered pride but in lowliness of mind esteem others better than yourself. adapted from Philippians 2:3

### Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5 ~ Psalm 37:11

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am meek and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:29

It is important to understand that meekness does not mean weakness. On the contrary, meekness is strength under control. Meekness is reflected in the way people react to provocation, confrontation or adversity. Self-centered human nature typically reacts with anger, a vengeful attitude, or by lashing out with harsh words. But meekness has the inner strength to maintain restraint and not retaliate in either actions or words in such situations.

Put on a heart of mercies, kindness, humbleness, meekness, and patience. *adapted from Colossians 3:12* 

If someone is overtaken in a fault you who are spiritual should try to restore them in the spirit of meekness.

Galatians 6:1

In sharp contrast to pride and self-centeredness, humble people are usually soft-spoken, polite, respectful, courteous, yielding, accommodating, flexible, and deferential toward others.

The Lord has shown you what is good. And what does He require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

## Peace

## True love is peaceable.

It is peace-loving and peace-nurturing.
It is not confrontational or contentious.
It is never touchy or easily offended.
It will never be overtaken by wrath or rage.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Matthew 5:9

When one's ways please the Lord, that makes even one's adversaries to be at peace with them. adapted from Proverbs 16:7

True love is always a peacemaker, even-tempered, slow to anger, relaxed, composed, unflappable, not defensive, not easily offended, soft-spoken, and silent in the face of anger or false accusations.

A soft voice can break hard bones. *Proverbs 25:15* 

Everyone longs for peace. One of the keys to attaining peace is to minimize distractions, avoid the rat-race, and not allow external trappings to dominate your life ... and instead focus on inviting the Holy Spirit to live within you. In this way, you can attain peace and also become an ambassador of peace. There is no true happiness or peace apart from that which the Spirit can provide and will provide if you will just extend the invitation.

Be still and know that I am God. *Isaiah 46.10* 

## **Moderation**

## True love reflects Spirit-controlled moderation

a pure-heart, soft-spoken, gentle, heavenly-minded, not worldly-minded, calm restraint, temperance, tranquility.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8

Moderation is revealed in many areas of life including life-style, attitudes, and how people react and respond in challenging situations. For example, in life-style:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. adapted from Matthew 6:19-21

Moderation in life-style means to live modestly, to not be materialistic, to not spend more than you earn, to avoid debt, and not become ensnared by extravagance, excess, or high-maintenance living.

Beware of covetousness. For one's life is not to be found in the abundance of things that one possesses. *Luke 12:15* 

To be worldly minded is death. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. *Romans 8:6* 

Let your moderation be known to everyone. *Philippians 4:5* 

## The choices that you make in your life-style ~ <u>and</u> ~ in the way you act and react reveal who you really are.

Moderation is having the ability to avoid both overindulging and over-reacting. It is the ability to remain cool, calm, composed, poised, even-keeled, steady in the midst of turmoil, restrained, discreet, mild-mannered, and forbearing.

The opposite of moderation is extremism, and that takes many forms including drunkenness, gluttony, hoarding, vanity, excessive image-consciousness, flaunting possessions, and flamboyant worldliness.

But beware ... the immoderate pursuit of pleasure, wealth, material possessions, happiness, fame, or power is a dead end road. Instead, hold on to the things of this world loosely.

To experience *true love* requires avoiding excesses and extremism, and instead maintaining moderation in all things with a pure-heart – to be moral, ethical, honorable, frugal, conservative, and one who stays within reasonable limits.

True love does not behave shamefully. *1 Corinthians 13:5* 

Dress in modest apparel with humility and moderation ... not with costly array. adapted from 1 Timothy 2:9

Your heavenly Father knows everything that you need.
Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all that you need will be added to you. adapted from Matthew 6:32-33

## Selflessness

True love culminates in serving others
With a willing and a cheerful heart
and without seeking anything in return.

Selflessness is the single most defining attribute of genuine *true love*.

Selflessness means to have a servant's heart toward others ... to be more concerned about others' well being than with one's own self-centered interests.

Who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 23:11 ~ Mark 10:43 ~ Luke 22:26

The problem, though, is that human nature is the exact opposite. From birth, human nature is universally self-centered, self-willed, self-serving, self-justifying, selfish, self-preservation and self-gratification seeking, ego-driven, and concerned mainly with looking out for number one ... self.

From birth, infants fuss and cry when they are not happy and when they want to be fed and changed. Children tend to be very possessive with their toys, and some scream and throw tantrums if they don't get whatever they want immediately when they want it.

A monumental change is necessary for anyone to become transformed from me-first self-centered into being genuinely selfless.

Do not be conformed to this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2

## Self-centered or selfless ~ your choice.

Adults generally continue to have self-centered human nature ... some continuing to behave like spoiled children with temper tantrums when they don't get their way ... and some evolving to more subtle forms of asserting self. However:

*True love* does not seek its own way. *1 Corinthians 13:5* 

The key to *true love* is to just let others be who they are, not try to change them, and not become a self-asserting, controlling, domineering personality.

Put away the old self with its self-centeredness. *Colossians 3:9* 

Let there be no self-centered pride but in lowliness of mind esteem others first. adapted from Philippians 2:3

True friends accept one another just as they are.

Parents have the responsibility to lovingly guide, correct, and discipline their children; however a time comes when parents must let go and let God.

Husbands and wives need to *selflessly* love and encourage and be consistently kind to each other. Neither should ever nag or try to change the other. Neither should ever try to manipulate or control or try to impose their will on the other. Instead:

Submit yourselves to one another. *Ephesians 5:21* 

Love ... and do good ... expecting nothing in return. adapted from Luke 6:35

## **Tenacity**

## True Love Never Fails.

1 Corinthians 13:8

*True love* never, never, never gives up. True friends are tenacious in their loyalty. Godly parents never give up in their love for their children and praying for them. God honoring husbands and wives never give up praying for each other and striving to be the best marriage partner that they can be for each other. *True love* follows this example with tenacity:

I will never leave you nor forsake you. John 14:18 ~ Hebrews 13:5

Of course, true love and faithful devotion by one in a relationship does not always guarantee that their love and devotion will always be reciprocated. However, making the choice and decision to grow and continually improve in all the attributes of true love will always be the best course to follow.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. adapted from Matthew 22:37-39

Love one another as I have loved you fervently with a pure heart.

John 15:12 ~ 1 Peter 1:22

If we love one another, then God lives in us and His love is perfected in us.

1 John 4:11-12

True Love begins with ""

True Love Never Fails.

#### True Love Never Fails

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The original edition of this book – Part 1 with the subtitle "How to find the right one" was designed primarily for single adults and included 200 questions that every person considering marriage should ask and answer.

This compact special edition – Part 2 with the subtitle "How to keep love vibrant" has been revised to focus on the key attributes of true love as these attributes are applicable to everyone in all stages of life including both singles and married couples.

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## True Love 💙 Never Fails

This edition of True Love Never Fails presents a concise and easy-to-read summary of these most essential attributes of True Love ~ ideal for inspiring daily reading and reflection.

Trust ~ Commitment
Patience ~ Kindness
Forgiveness ~ Thankfulness
Humility ~ Peace ~ Moderation
Selflessness ~ Tenacity

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