

5 Ways to Tell if You are in Love

<http://chastityproject.com/2014/02/5-ways-to-tell-if-you-are-in-love/>



She is the last thing you think of before you fall asleep and your first thought in the morning... Your heart races when you see him in the hallway... You can't remember life without each other... But is it the *real thing*? Ask yourself the following questions to shed some light on the topic:

1. Are you in love with the person or the way they make you feel?

In college I had a conversation with a friend regarding the reason to get married. He explained that he had heard a Deacon say that when he asked engaged couples why they wanted to be married their answer was always the same: "She/he makes me so happy." My friend explained that when he got married, his motivation would be the opposite: he wanted to make his wife so happy. Months passed and this friend became my boyfriend, later my fiancé and then my husband.

It is easy to get caught up in a relationship based on emotion. Many confuse loving a person with loving the way that person makes them feel. St. Paul said, "[Love] does not seek its own interests" (1 Cor 13:5). Carefully evaluate why you are in your relationship. When the goal is one another's holiness then happiness will be a natural byproduct. Which leads to question number two:

2. Is his/her soul your first priority?

God wants to reveal Himself to us through our encounters with others. God invented human relationships to make us holy! True love should point us to Heaven and motivate us to do

whatever we can to protect the soul of the other. Loving someone never means sinning with them. Love builds up, strengthens and sanctifies as it seeks the good of the one we love. Lust is self-serving, passion driven and debilitating.

God is love, and a God-centered relationship is the best place to look for authentic human love.

3. Can you live with their flaws?

My second daughter is a two-year old rebel. She is constantly eating chapstick, climbing in the dryer or drawing on walls. She makes me crazy, but when she puts that sweet head on my shoulder my heart explodes with unconditional love. Everyone has flaws, and your future spouse will have many. My husband could tell you all of mine, but he loves me in spite of them. We didn't marry each other with the intent to change one another. However, because God is the source of our love, He has certainly used us to draw the other away from many vices!

Disclaimer: These flaws shouldn't be things that put your soul or body in danger. St. Paul continues on: "[Love] is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing" (1 Cor. 13:5-5). If someone is hurting you spiritually (through making it hard to practice your faith or inviting you to sin) then this clearly isn't love. Furthermore, if someone hurts you emotionally or physically then I urge you to end the relationship quickly and seek counsel from a trusted adult.

4. Are you compatible?

Does love hurt? Ask Jesus.

As Jason Evert points out so beautifully, "*compatible* comes from the Latin word *compati*, meaning, 'to suffer with.' If you are unwilling to suffer with someone until death do you part, then you are not compatible." Whether through tragedy or childbirth, suffering is inevitable in life. Is this the person you want to share your cross with? Are you willing to bear their sufferings as well?

5. If you love someone, you don't ask if you love them.

When I was dating my husband in college, many friends would ask how I knew I was in love. It's cliché, but all I could say was, "I just know." If you are questioning if it's true love, it probably isn't. This isn't a bad thing. It simply means that you are growing in your discernment of whether or not this person is for you.

Remember, when it comes to relationships doing everything right doesn't always mean it is God's Will. One night my oldest daughter decided to give us her most prized possession: her bedroom. She switched all of the bedding and belongings. She unveiled her gift and was utterly devastated when we explained we couldn't accept it. I realized in this moment that just because we are doing something good it doesn't necessarily make it the best thing for us.

The Lord knows the surest way to get to you Heaven and has a personal vocation for *you*.

Within that vocation he knows the best religious order or person to make you the happiest and holiest. Don't rush your heart! Remain constantly open to God's Will in your relationships. If you care about someone you will want them to find God's plan for their life with or without you in it. Trust the Lord and He will not disappoint!

Katie Hartfiel is an author and speaker dedicated to sharing the intense love of God. She graduated Franciscan University of Steubenville, where she received a degree in Theology. She served as a youth minister for seven years in Houston, where she now resides with her husband, Mark, and two daughters. In 2012, Katie released her first book, *Woman in Love* (available at womaninlove.org). This work coaches young women as they strive for purity through praying for and journaling to their future spouse. She has been blessed to watch hearts come alive with the realization that our faithful God hungers to exceed our deepest desires.

