

How do you know someone loves you?

How do you know someone loves you? Love and desire are often confused and true love must be purified of selfish desire. How do you know that someone is not just using you for their own gratification, or that you are not just using them? How do you know that they truly love you and will be faithful to you through thick and thin? Having someone desire you physically, or even emotionally, does not prove that they love you – even if this desire is strong and ongoing. You only know they truly love you if they are willing to sacrifice for you in doing what is best for you. Is their profession of love for you based on what they get from you? Or on what they desire to give to you? Love gives. Lust takes. And while it can be thrilling to have someone lust for you. It is not sustainable. In true love, two people make a mutual and *sacrificial*, total gift of self to the other. To be genuine, this gift must be given freely, and not because one is driven by passion and cannot say “no.” Some people, when they say they love you, may be very sincere in their own mind, but what they really mean is that they enjoy what they get from you and they desire that this enjoyment will continue. Although this may be satisfying for a time, it will not endure when they no longer find you satisfying.

Love proves itself in sacrifice. If someone is not willing to give themselves to you and be there for you when they get nothing back from you, then they do not truly love you. They are merely using you for their own gratification. What many people call love today is simply two people using each other for their own individual gratification. When it is no longer satisfying for one of the parties, then the love is said to have faded or been lost and they move on, taking the scars of a broken relationship with them.

True love gives without counting the cost. It proves itself in sacrifice. True love protects the honor and dignity of the beloved and is interested in their wellbeing for this life and the next. True love comes from God, who is the author of love. As such, it would never seek to turn the beloved away from God’s love or the keeping of his commandments, which are the laws of love. That which leads to spiritual death could never be considered an act of love.

This is why one must attain a certain level of *self-mastery* before one can honestly profess true love for another. If you are incapable of denying and *mastering* your own passions you will not be truly free to love passionately. Passionate lust and passionate love are not the same thing. In the first, you are a slave to your passions and your craving to take. In the second, as the free master of your passions, you give yourself to another passionately, as a gift. There is a relationship between *passion* and *suffering*. Passionate lust seeks to relieve one’s own suffering through sexual gratification. Passionate love is willing to endure suffering for the sake of the beloved, as Christ did upon the

cross when he gave his life out of love for us during his Passion. If you are unable to say no to sex, then you do not have the self-possession needed to make a passionate (sacrificial) gift of yourself in marriage. You can't freely give what you do not first possess.

Certainly, married love includes the erotic delight of receiving the gift of the other. This is by God's design! But there is a difference between the mutual delight of *giving and receiving* in married love, and the mutual *taking* of lust. The primary act of married love is not one of taking, but rather, one of making a passionate and total gift of one's self to the other. Lust takes. Love rejoices in sacrificial giving. Then, demanding nothing in return, love receives with delight the return gift of the other.

Do not profane what you seek to embrace! Do not profane the marriage bed and the very sacrament you wish to honor with the rest of your life! Do not disdain the vows of marriage before you have even spoken them. If you do not respect the sanctity of the marriage bed before you are married, what will make you want to respect it afterwards?

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

2339 *Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom. The alternative is clear: either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy. "Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by blind impulses in himself or by mere external constraint. Man gains such dignity when, ridding himself of all slavery to the passions, he presses forward to his goal by freely choosing what is good and, by his diligence and skill, effectively secures for himself the means suited to this end."*

2350 Those who are *engaged to marry* are called to live chastity in continence. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the hope of receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love. They will help each other grow in chastity.

2353 *Fornication* is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young.

2391 ... Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another.

2284 Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. The person who gives scandal becomes his neighbor's tempter. He damages virtue and integrity; he may even draw his brother into spiritual death.