

**Amazing Grace**

'God's Grace' - Given something from God that we do not deserve.

1. What is one character/personality trait that you have that you think would attract someone of the opposite sex to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How important is impressing your partner? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Give a weighting of importance for the following attributes of a person you may consider marrying. Assign a number from 1 (Least Important) to 10 (Very Important).

- Appearance       Intellect       Faith       Personality       Character  
 Background/Culture       Career       Social Status

Marriage is a gift. You are the finest gift to your Partner and your Partner is the finest gift to you. A gift is given as an expression of our love. It is not based on whether the recipient deserves it or not. Our giving of a gift is actually an act of grace.

Ultimately we must allow God in His grace to direct you to the gift. We do not 'deserve' to receive anything in this world, but God's grace allows us to enjoy whatever He gives, including our life-long partner. Let it not be by your efforts alone that you find a partner, allow God to provide the best gift that you will ever receive.

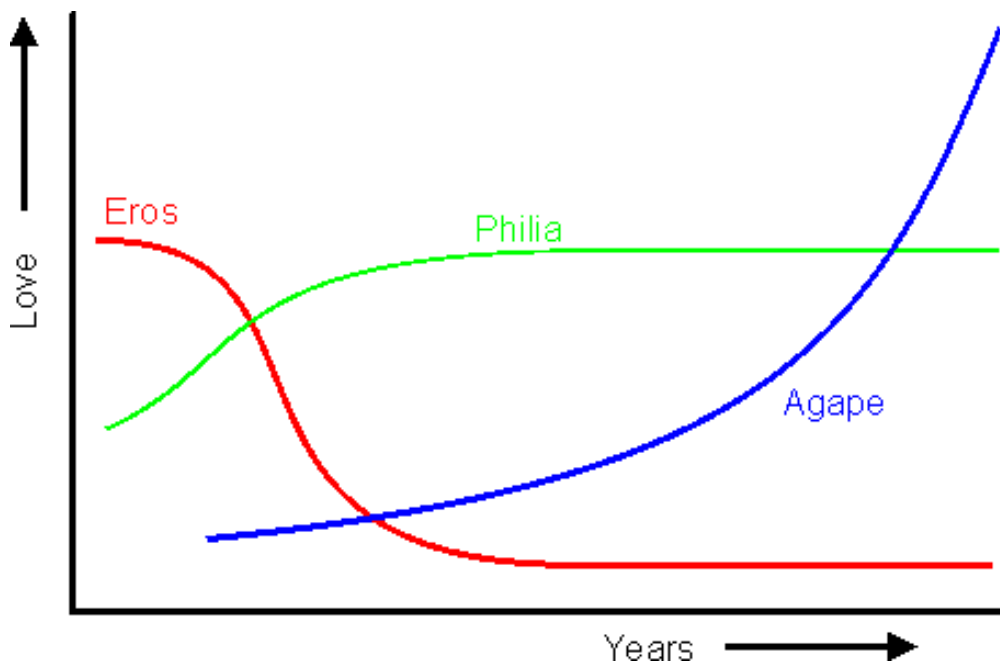
*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. 200 not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*3For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. (Romans 12: 1- 3)*

**What's love got to do with it! - Part A**

3 Forms of Love - There are 3 forms of love in a marriage relationship, these change over time and we need to recognize the types and the roles in a relationship.

4.



### 1. Eros Love ("need" Love)

- Eros is the love that leads to marriage. Most couples begin their marriage with an emphasis on eros love and a minimum of the others. Eros is necessary for marriage to succeed. Often it begins in attraction
- Eros is the love that seeks sensual expression. Eros is desire. Eros is a romantic love, sexual love. It is inspired by the biological structure of human nature.
- After marriage the eros or excitement phase begins to diminish. We need to remember that a marriage cannot be sustained by eros alone. Research has found that for most couples, intense passion lasts from six months to about two-and-a-half years.
- Eros sometimes has a close relationship to infatuation. How do you know if you are in love or if it is just infatuation? The word "infatuation" means to be "carried away by irrational passions." The desires and fantasies almost immediately take over the lives and personalities of those involved.
- This is not a love that endures. This love comes about through emotions and circumstances.

### 2. Philia Love ("friendship" Love)

- For love to endure it has to move from the eros stage to the level of friendship (Philia).
- In a good marriage the husband and wife are also friends.
- Friendship means:
  - a. companionship.
  - b. communication.
  - c. cooperation.
- While eros is almost always a face-to-face relationship, Philia is often a shoulder-to-shoulder relationship. When there is Philia, husband and wife are working together on something greater than both of them.

### 3. Agape Love ("self-giving" Love)

- Agape is sacrificial love, gift love, the love that goes on loving even when the other person becomes unlovable.
- Agape love is not just something that happens to you; it's something you make happen.
- Love is a personal act of commitment.
- Christ's love (and hence the pattern for our love) is:
  - i. gift love.
  - ii. unconditional love.
  - iii. eternal love
- When the Bible states that God is love, it uses agape. Some examples:
  - i. "God so loved [agape] the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3: 16).
  - ii. "We love, because He first loved [agape] us" (1 John 4: 19).
  - iii. "But God demonstrates His own love [agape] toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:23).
  - iv. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25)
- Agape loves whether or not the object deserves that love.
- A husband who loves his wife as Christ loved [agape] the church will make every sacrifice to meet her needs (not necessarily all her wants).
- He will provide for her **physical** needs of sexual love, financial security, clothes, food, etc.
- He will provide for her **emotional** needs like security, decision, understanding, acceptance, the feeling of being wanted, and of feeling necessary to complete him.
- He will provide for her **spiritual** needs by encouraging her to grow in the Lord. He will set the example of what it means to walk in the Spirit.
- If love is not given an opportunity to grow and the relationship is hurried into marriage, the divorce probability is very high. Statistics show that those who know each other well before they marry have the greatest probability of making their marriage to work.
- Here is something to consider before you give your love to that other person.
  - i. can you be happy with this person if he or she never changes?
  - ii. Are you loving the person you have now or an imaginary dream?
  - iii. Can you be happy with this person if he or she changes in ways you never dreamed of?
  - iv. A love with its roots in commitment will last through the pressures and pain of life's disappointments.

#### Think about this ...

"Love means to commit yourself without guarantee, to give yourself completely in the hope that your love will produce love in the loved person. Love is an act of faith, and whoever is of little faith is also of little love. The perfect love would be one that gives all and expects nothing. It would, of course) be willing and delighted to take anything it was offered, the more the better. But it would ask for nothing. For if one expects nothing and asks nothing, he can never be deceived or disappointed. It is only when love demands that it brings on pain." - Eric Fromm