



## Love and Lust

Lust is when we intensely desire or crave something, especially in the sexual sense. Lust appeals to our self-centeredness and treats others as objects instead of people. Love, on the other hand, is an intentional devotion toward another no matter what the circumstances. Love puts another's needs before yours to ensure his or her well-being.

Why does it matter? Confusing the two can be dangerous and could lead to manipulation, a broken marriage, adultery or a similar tragic situation. While physical attraction and emotional feelings between a man and a woman have their place, love between the two is more than that. It is an act of the will—a commitment to seek what is best for the other person. True love doesn't demand; it gives. True love doesn't ask, "What can I get out of this person?" It asks, "What can I do to help this person?" True love isn't self-centered; it is self-giving.

It takes a lifetime to explore the richness and complexities of human love. But consider this: Would you love this person even if he or she lost physical beauty, or if his or her body were ravaged by cancer or disability? The Bible says, "Love is patient, love is kind. ... Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4, 8). This is the kind of love God had for us when He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and draw us closer to Him.

If you're faced with a challenge concerning lust:

— Open your heart to God's love by inviting Christ to come into your life, then ask Him to help you avoid lustful thoughts and actions. Ask Him to help you understand how to truly love someone.

— Remember that what goes on in our minds eventually influences the way we act. Jesus warned, "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Make it your goal to keep your mind pure, as well as your body.

When you feel tempted to lust after someone, remember this verse: "God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).