

Pathwork on
Marital Love

This two-part quote from Pathwork Lecture 102 *The Seven Cardinal Sins*, describes mature marital love. The first part distinguishes between general human love and erotic or marital love, the latter requiring mutuality between partners. The second part speaks to the possibility of erotic love growing in a marriage when it was not there in the beginning in one or both of the partners.

60	QUESTION: This question pertains to the "one and only love." The mature person, it seems, gives love very easily and certainly would want something in return. If a person is, let's say, seventy-five percent mature and gets this wonderful feeling from giving love, then it seems that the object of the love is not so important. How could such a mature person who needs and wants to give love, who is able to give it, reconcile this with what romantics say about two people coming together, and then, suddenly, this is it!
61	ANSWER: There is a great deal of confusion here. In the first place, there are many different kinds of love. It is perfectly true that a mature person can love many people in many different ways. For clarity's sake, let us use the words "warmth" and "understanding." These feelings can even be felt for people who do not actively love this mature person in return. Yet, this very same mature person will certainly not harbor erotic love, the love between the sexes, when it is not reciprocated. A mature, rewarding relationship is mutual. It cannot be one-sided. It would be a crass misunderstanding to believe that mature men and women can love when they are hated. The best that can be expected is that they will not hate in return because they are not defensive. They are uninvolved and objective, and therefore they sense why the other person hates. However, they will not seek a relationship in such a case, not even one of casual friendship. Mature men and women will have understanding and warmth in different degrees for different people. They will relate to many people in different ways. But in marital, committed love, mutuality is a prerequisite for a mature relationship. This does not mean that both always feel the same way and with the same intensity; marital love cannot be measured in such terms. Relationships change and fluctuate, but on the whole there must be reciprocity. You bring two different kinds of love together here -- general human relationship and erotic love -- and this is why you are confused.
62	QUESTION: In marital love, is it possible that perhaps the husband loves more at first, and then the wife, and then it changes again?
63	ANSWER: Of course. But this may also have to do with something other than love in its true sense. It may be that at one time the need and insecurity of one person may be greater, and then that person manifests dependency. When the need is satisfied, the picture may change.

64	<p>QUESTION: Isn't the greatest and best adjusting factor in a marital relationship the ability to slowly grow into seeing God in the other partner?</p> <p>ANSWER: This applies to any kind of human relationship.</p>
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69	<p>QUESTION: If a man marries without being really deeply in love with a woman -- first, is this wrong? Second: is it possible that with proper guidance this marriage could turn out well? Is it possible that they then fall in love, that it develops into a real love affair, even though it was started rather coldly?</p>
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70	<p>ANSWER: It is very hard to answer you with a definite statement of right or wrong. It depends on so many circumstances. It depends on the motivation, on the kind of feelings you do have, and on the will and effort that is put into the relationship. But, generally, I may say that if the motivation is sincere and if feelings of affection, respect, liking for the other human being are there, together with certain common basic interests, this may indeed turn out to be a better marriage than one based only on passion. In the latter, the real values may be overlooked. Yet, I do not mean that if two people are in love, they necessarily overlook the real values. They may have fallen in love just because of them.</p>
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71	<p>What you say is certainly not a rule, but it is possible under certain circumstances if real values are perceived. However, a careful examination should be made in such a case as to the motivation in both people. This cannot be quickly and easily done, because deep and hidden factors may play a role. Even distorted and unhealthy motives, when finally brought out into the open, may not have a damaging effect. But they will be extremely damaging if one is unaware of them or not willing to deal with them.</p>
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