

VALENTINE'S DEVOTION

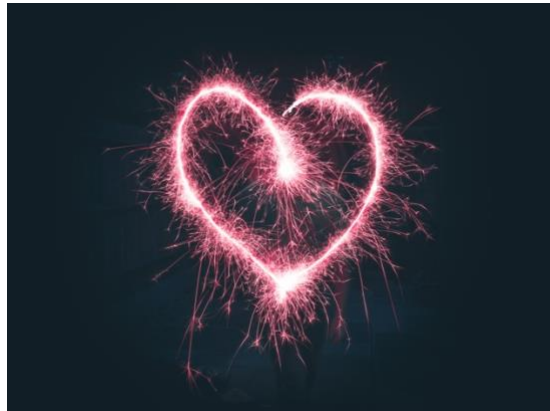


Photo by [Jamie Street](#) on [Unsplash](#)

On February 14, countless people across the globe will celebrate Valentine's Day.

Where did this holiday come from?

The answer might surprise you. The historical roots of "Valentine's Day" can be traced back to the early church. Though the details are lost in history, in A.D. 270 there was a Christian named Valentine who was beheaded in Rome. According to later sources, Valentine was a priest who was arrested and condemned by Emperor Claudius II for helping Christian couples marry.* If true, what should we be celebrating on Valentine's Day?

In our culture, Valentine's Day is a celebration of romantic love. It is a celebration of the attraction, experiences, and emotions that draw us to that special someone in our lives. These are fine as far as they go, but by themselves they don't represent the true nature of love.

It's only in Scripture that we come to understand the true character of love. According to Scripture, love is a commitment of our will to another's best interest. It is a commitment of our will, to another's best interest, *regardless of what it cost*. While this love will often include our emotions, it is not driven by our emotions.

True love starts with commitment. It is an act of our wills.

This leads us back to marriage. Marriage is the ultimate expression of human love because it involves a lifelong commitment to your spouse. God designed marriage to be a field where love

can grow, and where two different people can learn to continually give of themselves for the good of the other. Marriage is the perfect school of human love.

Marriage is also a window into the gospel. In Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul talks about the roles and responsibilities of a husband and wife. He relates both of their roles back to Christ and his relationship with the church. After reminding us about God's blueprint for marriage in creation, he says, "*This is a mega-mystery, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*" (Eph. 5:32) In other words, our marriages are not primarily about us, but about Jesus and his love for us.

Back to St. Valentine. If the legend is true, he gave his life out of a biblical understanding of love. This Valentine's Day, take some time to reflect on love as God intended it. Don't allow the world's preoccupation with romance consume you. Rather, think on God's gift of love. Think on his gift of love in marriage. Think on his gift of love in Christ, and celebrate his love for you.

* <https://www.history.com/news/6-surprising-facts-about-st-valentine>