

TRUE LOVE
by Megan Don

“... those whom God brings to a certain clear knowledge love very differently... this clear knowledge is about the nature of the world, that there is another world... that the one is eternal and the other a dream...” Teresa of Avila

Our world is besotted with love. No matter where we turn – to popular or religious culture, or to psychological or new age theories – love is the key factor. We are all searching and yearning for love, whether to replace a love lost or to find a love never before felt. Most people have a place deep within that is aching to be loved. Some acknowledge this, some bury it in their work or addictions, while others are disappointed with the love they are experiencing. Love entices us all, and yet it seems to elude us just as quickly. What is this thing called love? Where is the true love that many of us instinctively know exists? For most, it has been relegated to an unrealistic dream world, as practicality and dependency have overshadowed the realm of magic and aliveness felt when we first glimpse another’s soul. Could it be that we have confused dream and reality and have settled for an illusory state of love? According to Teresa, this is so, and she reached out to remind us of the clarity of being that is necessary to understand the true and perfect love.

Those who have been given knowledge of their true nature and of this world care little about being loved, Teresa said. Their only concern is for the soul of the other person. Love, for them, is only important when it is of spiritual benefit; all else is without substance. When we desire to have someone love us, we are seeking our own benefit or satisfaction, said Teresa. Our affections are blurred by our needs, and it is our own fulfillment that inspires the feelings that we mistake for love of the other. We suffer

greatly, she believed, when these desires are not fulfilled. If another does fulfill them, also mistaking their feelings for love, we have a too-common scenario – two individuals in a co-dependent relationship, desiring their demands for love to be met. When we have clarity of perception we can see the illusion of such actions, and being unable to respond according to the other's desires, may be accused of being unable to love. Yet the opposite is true.

It is impossible, said Teresa, for a soul who has surrendered itself to God to be intimately involved with another who is still attached to the mundane realm. That is, if one is still concerned with the wealth, reputation, or looks of another, this does not allow for true love to flourish. The perfection of love consists of traveling into the eternal realm of love where these things are no longer relevant (they may, Teresa said, still be enjoyed, but there is no attachment to them). In the realm of true love the clarity of being and vision come together as both people become a witness to each other's soul in the light of their spiritual well being.

We are called, said Teresa, to imitate the love that Jesus, the good lover, had for us. Everything is seen and known in the truth of love; there is no false flattery, nor hiding anything from one another. In this way, lovers can advance far as they create an openness that allows them to soar toward God. Without the truth of love in our lives the soul can become weary; knowing this God sends us a companion, in His own time, enabling us to enter into sincerity with our self and with others.

Meditation:

Come into a place of deep being. Ask for the clarity of vision. See what matters in your intimate relationships. See what your demands are.

Is the spiritual welfare of your partner and yourself paramount?

Ask that you know the sincerity of your own soul.