



PRAYERS
and
REFLECTIONS
FOR
NEWLY WEDS

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CONTENTS

Chapter One
FALLING IN LOVE 1

Chapter Two
I FOUND “THE ONE” 13

Chapter Three
WE’RE ENGAGED! 25

Chapter Four
THE WEDDING 35

Chapter Five
LIVING AS ONE 45

Chapter Six
TWO FAMILIES BECOME ONE 55

Chapter Seven
INTIMACY AND ROMANCE 67

Chapter Eight
FIGHTING AND DISILLUSIONMENT 79

Chapter Nine
ENCOUNTERING CHANGE 91

Chapter Ten
SOLVING PROBLEMS TOGETHER 103

Chapter Eleven
GOD IN OUR MARRIAGE 115

Chapter Twelve
DREAMS AHEAD 127

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! By getting married, you are continuing one of the greatest journeys of your lifetime, one of relationship and love. You have both met “the one,” someone you love unconditionally and someone with whom you feel complete. Sometimes it can seem like a miracle that you have both found each other. But you have—and now you have the rest of your lives to grow in your love and dreams together.

This book contains twelve chapters that tell the story of a married couple, from meeting and falling in love to getting married, facing challenges, and dreaming of a future together. The book can be read from start to finish, or you may choose to read the chapters in whatever order is most inspiring for you or your spouse.

Many newlyweds would like to pray more often but are unsure of exactly how to do so. My hope is that this book will offer some simple yet meaningful guidance for prayer and reflection.

Every chapter contains several poems and prayers, including Scripture verses with reflective text to help you understand and think about each passage. The chapters also contain a

feature called *Looking Back, Looking Ahead*, which includes questions to help you reflect on the past and imagine the future of your marriage. Additional personal reflection prompts are included in a *Sharing Together* section for couples to talk about the chapter content, as well as a *Growing Together* section with activities that couples can do together to explore and nurture their relationship.

It is my sincere hope that this book will offer support for your relationship as you seek to grow closer to God and one another.

*May God bless you with a lifetime of love,
happiness, and fulfillment together.*

A decorative illustration of thin, dark branches with small, oval leaves. A small, dark bird with a white heart on its chest is perched on one of the branches on the left side of the page.

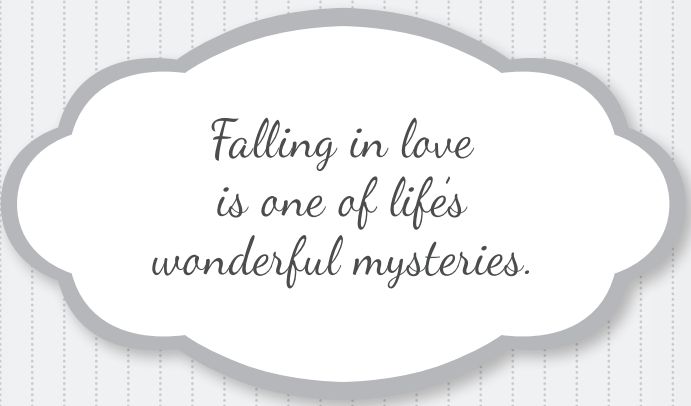
Chapter One

FALLING IN LOVE

Three things are too wonderful for me;
four I do not understand:
the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a girl.

PROVERBS 30:18-19





*Falling in love
is one of life's
wonderful mysteries.*

Our lives are surrounded by the sights and sounds of falling in love. As children, we heard stories about princes and princesses living happily ever after. As we grew older, we learned about the wonders of love from music, movies, and television. Today, shelves of romance novels line bookstores and supermarket displays.

Even the anticipation of falling in love can be a powerful experience. I remember lying in bed when I was young and wondering who I might fall in love with. What was her name, where did she live, and what she was doing right now?

What are your earliest memories of falling in love? Do you remember butterflies in your stomach from a childhood crush? My father first kissed a girl in kindergarten! Decades later, hours from our childhood home, our family miraculously ran into her. My father didn't recognize her at first, but then she asked, "Don't you recognize your first girlfriend?" My father, always poised, was speechless and red in the face, like a young schoolboy. Now that's powerful!

Falling in love involves attraction of all kinds. You may have many things in common or be completely different, but the attraction is there, pulling you closer and closer together. The more we learn about the other, the more we want to know. It's amazing!

Probably the only thing more amazing than falling in love is the fact that someone might actually fall in love with us. "How did I get so lucky?" you might recall thinking to yourself. When we experience someone who really loves us and wants to get to know us, we get excited, not only about each other, but about life.

Yes, “falling in love” is the first step toward any marriage, but it doesn’t need to become a distant memory. The magic, mystery, and joy of falling in love never has to grow old and can be nurtured along the way. You and your partner are on a lifelong journey together. It is a journey of falling in love.

I had heard about love many times
But never felt its touch.
I never understood its depth or power,

And then you were there.

Within my busy life,
Emptiness filled its core.
Lots of activity, without purpose.

And then you were there.

Among the many, I still felt lonely.
There was no one I could open up to,
Nobody with whom I could
share my story, my life.

And then you were there.

I thank God I have you in my life.

I had heard about love many times
But never felt its touch.
I never understood its depth or power,

And then you were there.

God, we have fallen in love.

*As we continue to be drawn
to each other,
help us know that our love
is only a fraction of the love
you have for us.*

*Thank you for all
that has led us to this moment.*

*Help us to remember and cherish our past.
Help us to approach each day.*

*Help us to continue to fall in love
as we grow closer to each other
and closer to you each day.*

Amen.

My beloved thrust his hand into the opening,
and my inmost being yearned for him.

SONG OF SONGS 5:4

*Love challenges us to make ourselves
vulnerable to each other.*

Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

SONG OF SONGS 8:7

*No experience is more powerful
than finding true and lasting love.*

Looking Back

Close your eyes and think about
when you first met.

Remember your first thoughts,
your first conversation,
your first date,
your first decision
to live a life together.

What did you hope for most when you first met?

Looking Ahead

Now think about the love you hold.
Think of future conversations,
shared fun, laughter, pain, and renewed love.

What do you hope for most?

Whisper one word
that captures your future dreams.

Love changes everything.

*I know a young man who struggled with confidence,
despite being friendly, outgoing and multitalented.*

Then he met a girl.

He was magically transformed!

*Never one to dress to impress,
he is now sporting a new haircut,
wearing more stylish clothes,
and has a newfound air of confidence.
He even seems more expressive
and compassionate.*

*My wife and I ran into him and his date
at a local restaurant one night.*

*As we talked, I saw a sparkle in his eye,
and a look of pride and happiness on his face.
"He is falling in love," I thought.*

Yes, love changes everything.

God, bless our love.

Bless the feelings we share
and transform them into
loving words and actions.

Bless the mystery of our relationship.

Give us the strength and wisdom
to be our best selves
as our love continues to grow.

Through the miracle of our love,
help us to appreciate every day together
as we continue to fall in love,
forever and forever.

Amen.

So how did you fall in love? What are your earliest memories of being together? When I met my wife, Sherry, we found out that we attended the same church. It's hard to believe, but our first date was at church!

Can you remember not just what you did but how you felt when you first started falling in love? Marriage is a lifetime of falling in love. Each day, every day, in new ways.

Sharing Together

- ✦ *What was your life like before you fell in love?
How is it better now?*
- ✦ *What parts of your love relationship
do you never want to change?*
- ✦ *What has falling in love taught you about yourself?*

Growing Together

- ✦ *Buy an inexpensive gift for each other that represents
something you admire or appreciate about the other
person. Exchange gifts and share the meaning. You'll
learn about each other and have a wonderful memento
of your love!*
- ✦ *Plan, cook, and share a meal together. Include foods
that bring back favorite memories of your relationship.
Talk about your memories while you eat together.*