

## The World's Greatest Lover

### Introduction

Rudolph Valentino, byname of Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina d'Antonguolla, (born May 6, 1895, Castellaneta, Italy--died August 23, 1926, New York, New York, U.S.), Italian-born American actor who was idolized as the "Great Lover" of the 1920s.

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Rudolph Valentino was a Hollywood actor during the 1920s who died at the age of 31. His status as perhaps the first mass market male legend and his premature death turned Valentino into a legend.

His funeral generated mass hysteria, with over 100,000 people crowding the streets of New York City. Many women fainted while some reportedly committed suicide.

The truth is, Valentino had only a few years to enjoy the life of fame and fortune. He spent most of his years broke, or with very little money, unsuccessful and struggling to rise as an actor.

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### Fast forward

The World's Greatest Lover is a 1977 American comedy film directed, written by and starring Gene Wilder, and co-starring Carol Kane. It is a tribute/spoof of classic silent comedies and "old Hollywood" of the 1920s, specifically the popularity of romantic icon Rudolph Valentino.

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### Love jingles

Love is in the air ... everywhere you look around

I need ... Somebody to Love

I just called ... to say I love you

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We were made to love.

We write innumerable love songs on the subject.

A guy called Swiatowicz analyzed the lyrics of the year's 10 most popular songs listed in Billboard's online archives for two eras, 2002-2005 and 1968-1971. He found that 24 of the 40 songs in the modern era -- 60 percent -- and half the songs of the classic era were devoted to the subject of love and relationships.

We don't have to switch it on, we have a built in desire to love and be loved.  
Deep down inside of us is a desperate need to be loved, to belong to someone.  
We write innumerable books on the topic  
Not even mentioning all the movies ever made, ever wonder how many were about love.

It's all about love and relationships  
You're born because of a relationship, between a man and a woman  
The result is that your birth automatically creates a mom and dad.  
Theoretically, if they stick together and I know that in this world that is not a given, however  
You grow up within this relationship  
You may have brothers and sisters  
At some point you have other friends  
Your relationship community grows  
And then some magic happens in here, somewhere in the teen years  
But suddenly, one day, you have a feeling towards someone from another gender  
And if you're super lucky, which does not always happen, they feel something similar  
towards you.  
And from that feeling ... songs, books, movies are written because we have to share with  
the whole wide world about this wonderful and unique 'person' that we have discovered.

### 1) What is love

One of the simplest and yet most profound statements made in the Bible is this one:  
It's so short, that the Bible reference is longer.

1 Joh 4v16b  
*God is love*

What does one do with that.  
What does that mean?  
It's something we all intrinsically understand  
It's something no-one in this world will be able to fully understand.

I've just spent a few minutes on how deeply ingrained 'love' is in the world as we know it  
and I would guess that it would not matter what era we were able to tap into, we would find  
the same thing.

The point is that love starts with God.  
If God is love then everything about God is about love.  
Everything God does is from a foundation of love.  
His every action and every thought, and every plan ever made and implemented is done out  
of a love that God has for His Creation.  
We may not always feel it within the context of our present day to day happenings but God  
has been loving Man for a while now.

It's been a tough journey for God because this Man that He has loved for so long has been a handful.

Like a baby in fact.

When a baby is born out of an act of love between husband and wife, the result can feel a little unfair.

One can look at that little bundle and say, "hey dude, we created you because we want to love you for the rest of our lives, would it be too much to ask that you could maybe be a little less demanding and a little more grateful at this point.

Feed me, so I can vomit all over you and complain loudly about the food.

Change my nappy, again and again and again and occasionally wash me from head to toe as this green stuff seemingly oozes out everywhere and sometimes nothing comes out and then we are also concerned because we're busing pumping it in on one end and so the natural expectation is that at some it exits ... and then it doesn't.

Play with me, again and again and get used to the fact that I never grow tired.

Watch the same movie with me again and again because for some weird reason, it's always new to me.

Teach me, again and again because my character takes forever to form.

Take me to the doctor, again and again because I seem to pick up every bit of illness that goes around.

Wake up at night because I have a need, every night, several times a night for years sometimes.

Work hard and long so that all my never ending needs are taken care of.

Hang on there buddy ... why did we create you again ???

Because

Every now and again, it happens

He laughs at you when you pull a face at him.

He nestles into the crook of your neck and you feel the warmth of his soft skin and you just want to burst with this overwhelming feeling of love.

And his little hand goes around your neck and grabs a handful of hair and he gives you a little tiny squeeze.

And you feel that touch of his warm breath and you smell that little baby smell and suddenly all is right with the world and you wouldn't change anything.

All the long hours and tough moments and pain and emotions

You can deal with them all, just for the **occasional few moments of magic**.

And every now and again he says, "please" and "thank you" and puts his dirty plate in the sink without asking.

And all that teaching that you have been puring into him/her finally gets converted into obedience.

It's all about those few moments of connection.

That overlap

That blending of minds and souls and emotions and who knows what.

Something connects and the two of you are one and all is right with the world.

It's a difficult feeling to describe.

I think that is pure love at the heart and mind and soul and strength level.  
Everything comes together at that moment.  
When two separate individuals become one  
The perfect relationship.

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So what is love  
I don't know  
Let's look at how God loves.

## 2) Somebody to Love

I work hard (he works hard) every day of my life  
I work 'til I ache in my bones  
At the end (at the end of the day)  
I take home my hard earned pay all on my own  
I get down (down) on my knees (knees)  
And I start to pray  
'Til the tears run down from my eyes  
Lord, somebody (somebody), ooh somebody  
(Please) can anybody find me somebody to love?  
(Queen - Somebody to Love)

There was a time many years back when another 'birthing' took place.  
God created Man  
In a Garden made by God for us  
He created Adam and like any good parent He immediately took care of Adam's needs.  
God gave him every seed bearing plant as food.  
He gave him a purpose, a mission, to rule over the earth, having been made in God's image.  
He saw that it was not good for man to be alone and so he created a helper for him.  
And they were united.

Have you ever wondered **why**?  
Why did God create Man?

David asked the same question.

Psa 8v3-4

<sup>3</sup>When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,

**<sup>4</sup>what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?<sup>u</sup>**

David said that God created the universe  
So  
Why did you create Man.  
And then he leaves that question hanging  
And just ends with

<sup>9</sup>*LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Because it's not like God needed anything physical ...

**Act 17v24-25**

**<sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. <sup>25</sup>And he is not served by human hands, **as if he needed anything**. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.**

So we're not sure because God doesn't need anything physical from us.

Let's start from the beginning.

God created Mankind, men and women

In the early days there was actually a relationship between God and Man

If we read Gen 3v8, which was the point after the fruit was eaten, we can deduce a number of things.

**Gen 3v8**

**<sup>8</sup>Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.  
<sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"**

That relationship sounds very real.

They could hear God walking in the Garden

How far away from someone do you have to be to hear them ... metres.

They chose to hide from Him, we know why but that is not the point.

They could just as easily have chosen to go meet Him because that seems to have been His expectation, He asked, "Where are you?"

It leaves us with a strong feeling of relationship.

"God is love"

Maybe He created us so that He could love us and have a relationship with us.

He just wanted, "Somebody to Love".

Created in His image, to be loved as He loves.

And he created a Mankind that has a need to be loved and to love.

**3) Love Hurts**

But

Love hurts  
Love scars  
Love wounds and marks  
Any heart not tough or strong enough  
To take a lot of pain, take a lot of pain  
Love is like a cloud, it holds a lot of rain  
Love hurts  
(Nazareth - Love Hurts)

However, obedience was never Man's strong point and He was expelled from the Garden  
And yet ...  
God still clothed him  
And fed Him  
And cleaned up after Him  
And intervened when he got into trouble  
And taught him again and again some of the basic requirements of a relationship  
Even though it hurt  
If any of you have ever had children, does that sound familiar?

Now, if God is love and out of this love He created us, we have to ask ourselves, what's in it  
for God.  
I mean, what did we do to deserve this.  
Clearly nothing.  
Yet if we read the Bible, we notice something.  
God oversees man's creation and keeps looking out for Him, in spite of Him

Remember, God is Love  
Ever wondered how we make God feel?

Gen 6v5

*<sup>5</sup>The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. <sup>6</sup>The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.*

How would you feel if your partner in your relationship hit this point early on?  
From walking together among the trees in the cool of the day to ...  
*every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time*  
I think you agree that you would have moved on a long time before it got to this.  
Not God however.  
His love for us was stronger than that.  
"God is love" remember, even though Love Hurts.  
And great lovers keep going.  
**And they keep looking for love and relationship.**  
**Even if the people they are pursuing it with have weaknesses.**

4) I'm looking for love (in the strangest places)

I was looking for love in the strangest places  
There wasn't a stone that I left unturned  
I must have tried more than a thousand faces  
But not one was aware of the fire that burned  
(Uriah Heep - July Morning)

And as a Mankind, we have a need  
A fire that burns within us  
For meaning  
And so we go look for love in the strangest places  
Work, Pastimes, Sport, Hobbies, Money, Collectibles ...  
You name, we pursue it.  
Except, we don't realise that the hole we are trying to fill.  
The fire that we are trying to quench  
Is God shaped  
And only God can fill it.

And you have to ask yourself, what kind of people does God want to have a relationship with?  
Let's look at a few that we have documented in the Scriptures.

Here's one

Gen 6v8-9

<sup>8</sup>*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

<sup>9</sup>*This is the account of Noah and his family.*

***Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.***

Well that sounds pretty good  
If I was looking for someone to have a friendship with then this guy looks like he's made from the right stuff.

But hang on  
A bit later the Bible says.

Gen 9v20

*X a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. <sup>21</sup>When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.*

Now I'm not so sure anymore.  
Maybe I should pick someone else.  
I like the way James describes this guy.  
I think I'll go with him.

## Jam 2v21

<sup>21</sup>Was not our father Abraham considered **righteous for what he did** when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that his **faith and his actions were working together**, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup>And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,"<sup>a</sup> and **he was called God's friend**. <sup>24</sup>You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

Righteous, faithful and

God's friend, did you pick that up.

But hang on, just after God chose him to build a nation, the following happened.

## Gen 12v10-13

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. <sup>11</sup>As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. <sup>12</sup>When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. <sup>13</sup>**Say you are my sister**, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

He asked his wife to lie, to protect himself from a potential threat

Right after God said to him that, "you're my man from whom I am going to build a great nation".

Great example Abram.

We won't even talk about the time he laughed at God for suggesting that you might have a child in your advanced age

Or when he went along with your wife's plan to expedite the nation building process by sleeping with the servant girl

What about this guy?

## 1 Sam 13v13-14

<sup>13</sup>"You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. <sup>14</sup>**But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people**, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

Finally someone hand picked by God

But no, later on in his rule he committed adultery and murder, which was not after God's own heart.

What about Peter the Rock, chosen by Jesus

and yet we also know he denied Jesus 3 times.

And Paul, the church persecutor who looked on as Christians were being murdered

That Paul

Who was then chosen by God

We can sometimes look at his life after he was struck down on the road to Damascus, as perfect, but a close reading of his letters show us that he had his own character that let him down ...

Calls himself the worst of sinners

Did not treat John Mark particularly well during the early years

In Acts 24 he appeared to be following some Jewish requirements of the Law to appease some Jewish Christians, the very law he said had been set aside (Mat 27v51, Heb 9v12, Eph 2v15)

Insulted the chief priest (Act 23)

Again, a man picked by God.

And so it continued throughout the Bible, God kept choosing and Mankind had good moments

And weak moments.

And God kept pouring out His love

The world's greatest lover kept going.

There is a passage in 2 Chronicles that give us some insight into God's heart.

The backdrop to this statement is that Israel had been split into two Kingdoms

King Asa ruled Judah in the south and King Baasha ruled Israel in the north

King Baasha made moves against King Asa

King Asa then took all the gold and silver out of the treasuries of the Lord's temple and sent it to King Ben Hadad of Aram who was ruling in Damascus and asked him to break the treaty he had with his northern rival and to rather help him.

And King Ben did break his treaty and was very helpful to King Asa.

And one would think that all is well that ends well.

The lesson however was not yet complete.

2 Chr 16v7

*<sup>7</sup>At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. <sup>8</sup>Were not the Cushites<sup>1</sup> and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen?*

*Yet when you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand.*

2 Chr 16v9

*<sup>9</sup>For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.*

At first glance one can think that it's a lesson on commitment.

We need to be fully committed.

But it actually says that God is looking for hearts that are fully committed to him

That's a completely different outlook.

Not perfect people or even committed people.

But hearts that fully committed even if they beat in the bodies of the imperfect.  
As we have seen in the lives of some of the Biblical greats .

Think about it.

Isn't that what you want in a relationship.

Not just a commitment to show up.

But a partner or friend whose heart is fully committed to the relationship.

In spite of their failings, weaknesses and imperfections.

Isn't that what you feel when the child you are raising just gets it.

He says please and thank you without being prompted .. From the heart

He comes up to you and gives you a hug and a kiss because he wants to.

He shares without being begged.

When the lesson that you have been teaching him for ever finally makes it into his heart.

Those are the committed hearts God is looking for as well.

### 5) Crazy Love

I can hear her heart beat for a thousand miles  
And the heavens open every time she smiles  
And when I come to her that's where I belong  
Yet I'm running to her like a river's song  
She give me love, love, love, love, crazy love  
(Van Morrison - Crazy love)

It doesn't make sense, this feeling that love produces in our hearts  
But that is God's love.

And then God's fully committed heart to us was fully exposed.

### Joh 3v16

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

God so loved the world

The world's greatest lover since the beginning of time.

Who loved the world, as in you and me, so much

That

The result of this great love was Jesus

God's world bursting in to our world in the most glorious fashion

Described beautifully in the words of 1 Joh 1v14

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.  
We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son,  
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

And during the Easter period we focus most on this outpouring of love  
A love story that started in the Garden  
Was fully exposed in the death burial and resurrection of Jesus  
And continues to this day in our lives as God still searches for hearts that are fully  
committed to Him.