

## **My Eternal Valentine**

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation or shadow of turning.*

*James 1:17*

Most women love Valentine's Day and I'll admit I'm no exception. We may anticipate a romantic evening with candy and flowers, not to mention a card expressing words of undying love and loyalty. I look forward to such trappings as well, but as much as I enjoy them, they would be meaningless without the more important intangibles such as my husband's heart, his commitment and his character. Furthermore, it's not the gifts that are most important, but him—the giver of the gifts. I can easily do without candy and flowers, but I'd suffer much loss without him.

Likewise, love and marriage are undoubtedly wonderful gifts, but I must remember the Giver to truly appreciate them. Marriage itself reflects our loving God; only He could create such a wonderful relationship between a man and woman. The divine origin of marriage is demonstrated in Ephesians 5:23, where God pictures the relationship between Christ as the husband and His bride as the Church. Indeed, this heavenly model is a high standard for comparison to earthly matrimony but it represents love at its finest, not just flowery words and candlelit dinners. Moreover, godly character qualities such as patience, honesty and faithfulness are vital to building marriages according to this divine blueprint. But the payoff is huge; although husbands and wives must love sacrificially to honor one another, each knows without a doubt that they are deeply cherished.

The gift of my earthly valentine, my husband, reminds me that I have an eternal valentine from my Heavenly Father. He freely gives His children marvelous gifts, including marriage and many other earthly blessings. But more importantly He's sent us the Perfect Gift, His Son through Whom we have eternal life, forgiveness of sins and a glorious, incorruptible inheritance waiting ahead. Yet unlike the flowers and candy of Valentine's Day, these eternal gifts last forever and can never be taken away. Moreover, both women and men, whether married or single, are given this Eternal Valentine:

A valentine is colored red  
Because with heart its words are said  
But there's another heart of love  
That's sent to earth from up above

Though many sins were tainted red  
In place of me Christ died instead  
My sins were washed as white as snow  
He loved me more than I can know

Within His hand I'll always be  
Because He paid my debt for me  
My risen Savior, pure and fine  
He's my eternal Valentine

*By Mary Nixon*