

OUR LIFE OF ROMANCE WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER

How we met and loved

Recently we were visiting a friend and somehow the topic of how we met came up. Of course, this being one of our favorite stories, we told her all about it. She was so impressed she immediately responded, “You have just got to share this with others; it’s such a wonderful story! People will love it!” So, we hope she is right, that’s what we are going to do.

Ron and I had been married for a few months when one day we passed a little day nursery, in town, near where we lived. It’s fenced in back yard with swings and a large sand box brought back long forgotten memories. We both were surprised that the little day nursery was still in business.

“Yes“, he said, “as matter fact I remember staying there with two of my sisters.

“Really? That’s strange, because I remember staying there for a short time, too”, with my two younger brothers. My being there is a long story. At first they were not going to accept me because they only took pre-schoolers and I was too old, already ten years old.”

Ron continued, “I remember there was an older girl that was there; she had long pigtails and was too bossy! I didn’t like her. She tried to make me take a nap; I wanted to go out and play on the swings. She embarrassed me by offering to take me to the bathroom. Of course I refused to take a nap! But I did accept the cookies and milk she gave me at snack time”.

“What year was that; do you remember,” I asked.

After thinking it over he replied, “I think it was in the summer of 1944.

“Then that must have been about the same time I was there” I said. After exchanging more memories we came to the conclusion that we were talking about ourselves. I had very long hair then and Mom braided it and let it hang down my back, so I was the “older, bossy girl with pigtails.” We were so surprised and excited at the whole idea we burst out laughing. We couldn’t believe it actually had happened that way; here we were, thirty-three years later, together again. Things sure had changed; by this time we couldn’t get enough of each other!

We had lived in and around the same town for 30 years and never met again.

Back to the first encounter with each other: Ron was almost 6 yrs old, it was in this same small pre-school day nursery where we had met for the first time. I was accepted, only as a “helper” to the younger children, because I was school age and had two younger siblings enrolled. Our first meeting was not love at first sight because Ronnie resented me taking him to the bathroom, did not want to take a nap or stay inside; he wanted to go outside and swing instead. His only acceptance of me, whom he considered a “bossy older girl,” was to grudgingly accept the milk and cookie treats I offered. He didn’t accept my authority even though I was almost six years his senior and he didn’t like me at all. Now we look back on it all with great amusement. Only God knew that He would put us together to bond for the rest of our lives. We never met again until 1976. We have decided that God has quite a sense of humor. We love Him for it!

Both of us had had bad marriages; Ronnie for 17 years, with three children, (ages 16, 14 and 6) living with him, and I for 27 years. I had three adult children, only one, ten year old, still living with me. I had been divorced from my first husband almost two years. Ronnie and his first wife had been separated several months but divorced only a few months when we met again, for the second time. This was 1976. Remember the first time was in 1944, over 30 years later.

Since I had married, at the young age of 14, back in 1948, I had not dated anyone but my ex-husband. During my divorce I joined a club called “Parents Without Partners”. I was also attending church regularly and was dedicated to my faith. I dated several men in the church and a few outside, but hadn’t found the one I felt God approved me to marry. During my first marriage I had prayed constantly that God would make my marriage and home a happy one. I finally came to the conclusion that God doesn’t force people to change especially those, as my husband was, happy to be addicted to alcohol for rest of his life, and had no intention of giving it up. By this time he had re-married a distant cousin of mine. He died of alcoholism at the age of 62.

I stopped dating and begin praying that God would send me someone I could make happy, and pleaded “Pease God, don’t let me mess up again”. Three months later, being the orientation officer of the club, I received a phone call around noon. The soft voice wanted to know all about Parents Without

Partners club. He explained he had three children and was looking for activities he had heard the club provided for both parents and their children. While I explained the club to him the strangest feeling came over me, I felt extremely excited and didn't know why. I felt as though something wonderful was going to happen. That feeling lasted for the rest of the day. Was this the man I was going to marry? I had never met him. I had no idea what he looked like or how old he was, but I could not shake the feeling. I told him about the meeting the club was having that evening and invited him to attend. I couldn't stop thinking about him, "was he fat, was he bald, was he ugly, was he very tall or very short"? Thoughts kept running through my head.

By evening I had come to feel that I was going to the meeting where I would meet my future husband. I knew it didn't matter what he looked like, if God sent him to me, it would be the right one. I spent a little more time in grooming than usual and couldn't stop shaking with excitement. That evening I drove my daughter and I to the meeting. I knew all the members that would be at the "business" meeting, so it would be easy to spot a new face. I spotted the "new face" as soon as I entered the hall. He stood about 5ft 7 and was a little too thin, about 38 years old, younger than me. He was well groomed and easy on the eyes. I wanted to yell out loud, "thank you God!" but I said it silently. The new face was in conversation with one of the members; he turned in my direction as I walked across the floor to meet him. I extended my hand and he responded. We introduced ourselves to each other, "nice smile!" The member, who was a longtime friend, remarked, "Boy, Rhoda, you are all dressed up like you have a hot date tonight"! Before I had a second thought I heard myself saying, "Well, if some good-looking guy asks me, yes".

I glanced at Ronnie, a little surprised that I had been so bold, but glad I had when he replied almost immediately, "Consider yourself asked."

During the meeting we were very rude, I'm sure. We talked all the way through it, as quietly as possible. It was as if we had known each other all of our lives. After the meeting we stopped at a pizza place and couldn't stop talking. Afterwards we joined the club group at the local hangout, where there was live music and dancing. We laughed, talked, and danced some more. Around midnight we came back to my house and sat in the car and talked about our lives, our religion, our mistakes and hopes. Suddenly we noticed the sun peeking over the horizon. "You know what? I've got to go to work!" Ron complained. "I also have to get the kids off to school on time for

them to catch their buss.”

We said our hesitant good byes with promises of seeing each other again that evening. I discovered his office, where he worked was within blocks of where I lived, (in IND) but he lived across the state line in Ohio.

I had invited Ronnie to come that evening for dinner and of course he accepted. When he arrived we had a very nice meal and afterwards he helped me with the cleanup of dishes. My daughter had stayed with us watching television until she got bored and went to her room. We continued watching T.V. for a while. I noticed Ronnie had gotten quite. The next thing I knew he was leaning against me, then gradually rested his head in my lap. He was sound asleep. I had had a nap during the morning and was not that sleepy. I suddenly realized this man had not had any sleep for about 36 hours. No wonder he was asleep! I watched the tube for the next four hours while he laid in my lap and slept. I finally woke him and reminded him he had to go home and take care of his kids. He agreed. But he showed up for lunch the next day bright and cheerful.

Shortly after we met I had a pre-arranged trip out of state for my daughter and I to keep a religious festival. Before I left Ronnie gave me a cute little heart necklace he said to remember him by. As if I could forget him! We were gone for over a week, but when we got back Ronnie was waiting for me with a bouquet of flowers.

Then there was the time I played a trick on him. I often rode around on a bicycle. We had been dating for a couple months and I was riding around where Ronnie worked. I noticed he had parked his car outside of the parking lot beside an alley. I thought “I wonder if he might get a citation for illegal parking” then the idea struck me. I had a pink pad in my pocket and an ink pen. On it I wrote “I fine you a lifetime of love and devotion” and stuck it on his windshield and rode away.

His side of it: “I was sitting at my desk when several of my co-workers were looking out the window. When they called me, they asked if I knew I had a parking ticket on my car. I think someone had watched and saw her put it on the car, but I was exasperated because I had parked there many times and never gotten a ticket. The guys watched me as I took the card off the window. I instantly knew what had happened. I put the card in my shirt pocket and kept a straight face. When I got back they asked if I had gotten a parking ticket I said “Yeah, I sure did get a ticket” and walked back to my

desk. I didn't tell them any more about it. I let them figure it out.”
That is one of his stories he likes to recall. He says he sure is glad I did that because it let him know that I really did love him. What's not to love?

I have to tell about my list. I was confident that eventually God would answer my prayers and the right man would show up; I wanted that good marriage I had always envisioned. I had previously made a list of all the things I would look for in the man I wanted to marry. If he didn't have at least two thirds of the requirements I would end the relationship.

1. He must not be addicted to anything: alcohol, smoking, food, sports, etc.
2. He had been a responsible family man, had a good job, and had only been married one time.
3. He had to be neat, not obese, or lazy.
4. Good manners, and a sense of humor would help.
5. But most of all I would have to trust him. He had to show me he was an honest man, and one that showed respect for all women.
6. He would have to accept that my religion was a personal commitment between me and God. He would not interfere with that.

I thought it would be impossible to find a man who would fill all these requirements but if he had two thirds of my list I would be happy.

In time I found Ronnie had all that I had listed plus some requirements I had not thought of. He was generous, hardworking, adventurous, and interjected. He didn't use what I considered bad language, nor did he tell dirty jokes, etc.

That was the beginning of a six month whirlwind bonding relationship. Ronnie began attending the same church I attended and became eager to understand the truth of God's word. Later he became a deacon of the same organization. We couldn't get enough of being together. Ronnie wanted us to get married sooner, but we agreed our families needed more time to adjust to our marriage, and how it would affect them, too. We were married, attended by family and some close friends, March 5th 1977 at the three bedroom home Ronnie had built before we met.

Sometime later I saw an old picture of Ronnie as a little boy and it confirmed everything. That was him! Our memories of each other were so vivid it was unreal. We are still amazed at God's sense of humor.

I am leaving out a lot of details taking place during these six months, I know. It would take pages and pages to include so much. I will just touch on some: dances, parties, combining our old friends with new friends, prearranged commitments, attending religious meetings, combining two households of furniture, garage sales, moving my personal and best to his place (in the rain), Ronnie taking a bad cold (that lasted for part of the honeymoon), a bridal shower, making arrangements for our wedding and honeymoon in Florida.

We had a wonderful little wedding but by the time guests left and the kids sent to their other parent, it was well past midnight. We collapsed in exhaustion and went instantly to sleep. We had to be at the airport early the next morning for our flight to Florida for a week of honeymooning. It had been a hectic six months. In spite of Ronnie still suffering from his cold, we were ecstatic, our first passenger plane trip. We explored Disney World, Sea World, and everything in between. We knew God had put us together.

When we returned home we faced the real world, we had a lot of decisions to deal with. Ronnie came back to his 8 to 5 office job, I to being a new wife, mother, housekeeper, and finishing my college course I had enrolled in before we met. etc. We planted a small garden and I started canning and freezing all the food I could.

We had been married a few weeks when we had our first fight. Ronnie had bought matching sheets but both were flat sheets. I was used to using fitted sheets on the mattress so I was putting one on as Ronnie came into the room. All of a sudden he seemed irritated, "why aren't you using the matching set?" he questioned. I tried to explain but he insisted I use the matching set. I continued putting the fitted sheet on and that triggered his irritation. He picked up the other unused flat sheet and threw it in the trash can. "If you aren't going to use it we may just as well throw it in the trash!"

I was so surprised I just stood there staring at him. Then it struck me so funny that I started laughing. What a stupid thing to fight over!! Since that incident we still laugh about it.

My three oldest were already out of the nest, but Ronnie still had three at

home, and I had one. We talked about realities and made a vow we would never allow our children to come between us, or cause us a personal conflict (and we never have). As it turned out the two oldest choose to live with other relatives and the two youngest continued living with us.

This story is about us and not so much about the decisions (and results) the children made, so I won't go into detail as to why they made certain choices. All seven of our children have grown to be responsible, hardworking, law abiding citizens with families of their own. We can boast of having had seven children, ten grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren and one great-great grandson.

Having said that, I will go back to us. We became involved in our religious faith, we were so active in serving that Ronnie was eventually baptized and ordained Deacon. We became involved in almost every activity of the church. I had never been a physically strong person; I had had serious back problems for years that eventually lead to major surgery. This was my first major physical problem. I recuperated from that in a miraculously short period of time, being able to help build onto our existing house and continue in normal work. We give God the credit for so much!

We started going to auction sales and came up with an idea of buying at auctions to start a little retail store. I would take care of the store and when Ronnie got off work he would come and help. We finally hired another person for part time help. We had no more than got a good start with the store than a few months later Ronnie had a serious heart attack. That put a halt to our dream of having a store. Prayers were sent up to God on his behalf. He was scheduled for a serious operation the following morning. But God healed him that evening. Both he and I know exactly when it happened. The following morning doctors had no explanation as to how it happened, and they found no reason to keep him. We left the hospital that day and went shopping before going home. He has never had any heart problems since. God is an awesome God!

No time do I think I am any better than anyone else in God's sight, and He loves us all, but He does tell us, in his word, that our sins do separate us from Him. I am still working on keeping sin out of my life. If I expect God to rescue me or hear my prayers I have to be working on getting sin out of my life. To do that I have to study God's word to know what He calls sin.

Before we married Ronnie had built a garage and a two story, three bedroom

house, leaving space between them and eventually finish by connecting, making a larger house. Together, we did that, making it a beautiful, spacious home.

Ronnie had a good, steady job with a good retirement plan but that changed overnight. His elderly boss, the owner, turned the business over to his son and left for Florida, taking all the retirement money with him, except what the workers had paid into the investment themselves. Since Ronnie had worked there for many years, he had a good little chunk of money, but no retirement plan. I had had some experience in rentals before in my first life, so I suggested we take what money he had gotten and invest it in a rental house. This is how we got involved in the rental business. We put a down payment on the first house. Borrowed against it, bought another one, borrowed against it and bought another one, etc. until we got ten properties.

For no apparent reason, except that we had problems with the steep driveway and would eventually have problems with stairs, Ronnie gave in to a dream of his of building an underground home. Around 1991 we, and another couple, decided to buy a piece of land large enough for two houses to be built on. The friend would help us build our house and then we helped them build theirs. We found the ideal land out in the country; we bought the land and proceeded to build.

The next problem we had was a total shock, the church we had attended for so many years, made an about face and changed the teachings we had studied and accepted. We had to make the most important decision ever made in our lives. Do we choose what men tell us or do we depend on God to direct us? Many of our close friends chose to stay with the men who had changed everything, some were going to other churches, and some were not attending anywhere. What were we to do? We attended one of the “splits” from our original church. We were host for that group for about a year, serving about twenty, in our house. That fizzled out when the leaders of that split began teaching contrary to what we accepted as truths. When we expressed to the presiding minister, it was politely suggested that we not affiliate with them anymore. We still held to some of the old teachings that we had held for many years, so we decided to start our own Bible studies, not being connected with any organized religion. We no longer had anyone to control what we found and taught from the Bible. It was amazing how much God opened up to us, things we had never been taught, or heard of. I had already started writing the Novel and a few other studies that we used in our Bible studies, but questioned what benefit they would ever be to others.

However, studies kept popping up in my mind; I had a compulsion to write them down. For about ten years I wrote study after study as God revealed new prophecies to us.

I guess I should mention some of our more recent tests we have had to deal with. About nine years ago we bought a little house in Florida so we could spend winters there. Mom was living with us then and we brought her with us every winter. We loved it. During this time I lost my oldest 59 yr old son, next Ronnie and I both lost our Mothers. Then our house in Indiana was broken into and thousands of dollars of stuff was stolen. Shortly after that I had a bout with major blood clots on both lungs putting me in the hospital for two weeks. Then I developed a frozen shoulder and discovered I had to have surgery on it.

Very shortly after that we lost a 58 yr old daughter to cancer. Because of all the pain and grief Ronny and I have grown closer than ever, depending on each other for love and support.

Then, about a year ago, while giving one of the Bible studies, a young man was so impressed he suggested I get my studies out to the world. "I would love to. But I don't know how to do it", I replied. Then out of the blue came the miracle! "But I do," he stated with such confidence I was shocked. "We can get you a web page and I can put these studies on the internet", he continued. And that's what he did and has been doing it ever since.

Then when we thought we were through the trials Ronnie discovered he had prostate cancer. His story about that and how God lead him to find a cure is on the web page.

Since I consider this God's work I do not ask for money, and I'm not selling anything, nor am I trying to build a following. I do get a thrill when I check the web page and see the hits growing week by week. In any given time we average between 12 to over 20 hits per day! It may be more tomorrow! That is where we are today, still loving each other and loving God and trusting Him. I am blessed to be able to share God's word with whoever is interested. May God bless you all.