

## READINGS FOR YOUR WEDDING: THEY SHOULD REFLECT THE TWO OF YOU

Choosing a reading for wedding ceremony is one of the most meaningful tasks any couple undertakes. After all, the readings can, and do, reflect the couple's personalities, beliefs, commitments, faith, hopes, and love.

Look to the following readings for inspiration:

### RELIGIOUS:

## I Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

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**From the "Song of Solomon," King James Bible version:**

My beloved spake, and said unto me,  
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.  
For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over, and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the  
singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle

is heard in the land.  
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the  
vines with the tender grape give a good smell.  
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

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## THE PRAYER

~ By St. Francis of Assisi ~

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, union;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy;  
O Divine Master, Grant that we may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

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## WEDDING PRAYER

~ By Robert Louis Stevenson ~

Lord, behold our family here assembled.  
We thank you for this place in which we dwell,  
for the love that unites us,  
for the peace accorded us this day,  
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,  
for the health, the work, the food,  
and the bright skies that make our lives delightful;  
for our friends in all parts of the earth.

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# TRADITIONAL IRISH BLESSING

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
The rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

May God be with you and bless you;  
May you see your children's children.  
May you be poor in misfortune,  
Rich in blessings,  
May you know nothing but happiness  
From this day forward.

May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind be always at your back  
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home  
And may the hand of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on,  
May blue be the skies above you,  
May pure be the joys that surround you,  
May true be the hearts that love you.

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## THE JERUSALEM BIBLE, SONG OF SONGS 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

For love is as strong as death.

I hear my Beloved. See how he comes  
leaping on the mountains,  
bounding over the hills.  
My Beloved is like a gazelle,  
like a young stag.  
See where he stands behind our wall.  
He looks in at the window,  
he peers through the lattice.  
My Beloved lifts up his voice, he says to me,  
"Come then, my love,

my lovely, come.  
"My dove, hiding in the clefts of the rock,  
in the coverts of the cliff,  
show me your face,  
let me hear your voice;  
for your voice is sweet  
and your face is beautiful."  
My Beloved is mine and I am his.  
He said to me:  
'Set me like a seal on your heart,  
For love is strong as Death,  
jealousy relentless as Sheol.  
The flash of it is a flash of fir,  
a flame of the Lord himself.'  
Love no flood can quench,  
no torrents down.

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## I John 4:7-19

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

We love, because He first loved us.

## POETRY

### HOW DO I LOVE THEE ~ By Elizabeth Barrett Browning ~

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of every day's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
I love with a passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints, -- I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life! -- and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

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### SONNET 116 ~ By William Shakespeare ~

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O, no! It is an ever-fix'd mark,  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me prov'd,  
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

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**SONNET LXIX**  
~ By Pablo Neruda

Maybe nothingness is to be without your presence,  
without you moving, slicing the noon  
like a blue flower, without you walking  
later through the fog and the cobbles,

without the light you carry in your hand,  
golden, which maybe others will not see,  
which maybe no one knew was growing  
like the red beginnings of a rose.

In short, without your presence: without your coming  
suddenly, incitingly, to know my life,  
gust of a rosebush, wheat of wind:

since then I am because you are,  
since then you are, I am, we are,  
and through love I will be, you will be, we'll be.

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**WHY MARRIAGE?**  
~ By: Mari Nichols-Haining ~

Because to the depths of me, I long to love one person,  
With all my heart, my soul, my mind, my body...

Because I need a forever friend to trust with the intimacies of me,  
Who won't hold them against me,  
Who loves me when I'm unlikable,  
Who sees the small child in me, and  
Who looks for the divine potential of me...

Because I need to cuddle in the warmth of the night  
With someone who thanks God for me,  
With someone I feel blessed to hold...

Because marriage means opportunity  
To grow in love in friendship...

Because marriage is a discipline  
To be added to a list of achievements...

Because marriages do not fail, people fail  
When they enter into marriage  
Expecting another to make them whole...

Because, knowing this,  
I promise myself to take full responsibility  
For my spiritual, mental and physical wholeness  
I create me,  
I take half of the responsibility for my marriage  
Together we create our marriage...

Because with this understanding  
The possibilities are limitless.

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**MY TRUE LOVE**  
~ Sir Phillip Sydney ~

My true love hath my heart and I have his,  
By just exchange one for another given  
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,  
There never was a better bargain driven  
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,  
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides  
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,  
I cherish his because in me it bides  
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

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## **Excerpt from "The Prophet" by Kahil Gibran**

Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself.  
But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires:  
To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.  
To know the pain of too much tenderness.  
To be wounded by your own understanding of love;  
And to bleed willingly and joyfully.

To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;  
To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy;  
To return home at eventide with gratitude;  
And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise on  
your lips.

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**"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"**  
by Christopher Marlowe

Come live with me, and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, hills and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks  
By shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs,  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May-morning;  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me, and be my love.

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**"To My Dear and Loving Husband"**  
by Anne Bradstreet

If ever two were one, then surely we.  
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee.  
If ever wife was happy in a man,  
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.  
I prize thy love more than whole Mines of gold,  
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.  
My love is such that Rivers cannot quench,  
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.  
Thy love is such I can in no way repay;  
The heavens reward thee manifold I pray.  
Then while we live, in love lets so persever,  
That when we live no more, we may live ever.