

Candida, by George Bernard Shaw

In this comedy, Candida is happily married to the clergyman James Morell, until Eugene Marchbanks, a young man the Morells take in from the streets, tells James he is in love with Candida. Following the confession is a mixture of doubt, fear, and jealousy as James' faith and commitment are tested against Eugene's romantic advances and poetic wielding of the English language.

Important questions are raised concerning James' marriage and profession. What makes something true, and what makes it a lie? Is a woman truly happy with mere words? What gives words meaning? Is passionate enthusiasm the same as conviction? What makes a longing or desire worth fighting for? Is love a second reality, separate from everyday life? What makes a stable home? Are women work vessels, or ornaments of display? What is love?

Because man is weak, sometimes only one word, look, or deed can shake us from our foundations for a while, and it takes much faith and prayer to bring us back again. There was no reason for James to doubt Candida's love for him until Eugene suggested it, touching the deepest parts of James' worst fears. Only by facing his fears could he put his mind to rest.

Candida explains to Eugene that in spite of the hardships of cleaning a house, raising children, cooking meals, managing money, and the discouragement they endure at times concerning the clergy position, the marriage stays strong for two reasons. One is because of James' character and resolve to remain honorable and diligent. The other is because of her promise not to violate James' trust and confidence in her, giving him the courage to hold his head up without shame. Her love for her husband grew over a long period of getting to know him personally, as well as from his family's accounts of his childhood and youth. Love didn't simply appear because she felt good about herself listening to his best romantic recitations.

The questions raised during the events of the day are answered. One's reaction doesn't constitute truth. God's word is truth, and anything done in Christ's name is true. John 17:17; 1 John 5:6; 1 Corinthians 12:3. True happiness in a relationship comes from actions backing our words. Actions are the only thing that can give words meaning. 1 John 3:18. Passionate enthusiasm may be the result of a conviction, but passion and enthusiasm alone will wane in difficult times, not being founded on anything substantial, while a conviction will last through thick and thin. Matthew 13:5-6, 8, 20-21, 23. If our desires are grounded in truth, always putting God first, and leaving room for Providence, our perseverance will reap goodness. Psalm 37:4-5; Galatians 6:9. Love is an every day reality, because God is love, and He is an every day reality. Jeremiah 23:23; 1 John 4:8. An honorable man and a virtuous woman, rooted in Christ, make a stable home. Proverbs 31. Women are not to be ornaments of display, but sober, chaste leaders. Proverbs 31; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; Titus 2:3-5. Love is kind, patient, humble, pure, respectable, hopeful, everlasting, and joyful in truth and goodness. 1 Corinthians 13.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:9-13, 17, 21