

life group study guide

April 3, 2016

MAKE LOVE...WORK

SONG OF SOLOMON

It seems an eternal question, to be answered only at the end of times -- Is Song of Songs about God's love for us, or if it should be read as a love song between two people?

In a world where television has defined how we see male female relationships, where people walk the streets telling us the Bible is false. Where people preach against the Scriptures, against God in classrooms, and universities. Even in government, how relationships are defined is regulated, or unregulated to the detriment of so many... How are we to see love? And intimacy?

Our modern times seem to have equated love and intimacy as the same thing. Sex is seen as a free act, devoid of love. Simply pleasure.

Q) While intimacy does bring God ordained pleasure, what are the boundaries that God has set up?

Where do we find those boundaries?

Q) But what is love?

Q) What does love look like?

Q) What would you say is the Biblical definition of love between a man and a woman?

Q) If God is love, what is the Biblical definition of Love in general?

Song of Solomon is a rather racy book at times, but it's about love. God's gift of love, including the physical intimacy parts. But, God's view of love is much deeper than emotion. It is a decision.

Emotions come and go, God understands this, but Love, His view of love is based on a decision.

Read Romans 5:8

That love, was a choice. Not an emotional based choice, but the model of choosing love. God's model of love.

Read Luke 15:17-25

Another decision to love. More than emotions, a decision.

In the first two chapters of the Song we see the main characters beginning to explore each other. To discover one another. Much like we needed to do when we first decided to explore, or to know God.

Song of Songs, or Song of Solomon shows us beginning love between two people. It speaks using rather racy language at times, even sexual intimacy...

So, since this book is included in the Bible, we should simply ask ourselves, what is God trying to teach us, or say to us here in through this poem, this story?

And if part of the lesson from Matt is in dating and choosing a mate, something clearly stated in the early chapters of the book, then that too must be part of the message being delivered to us today.

Throughout the book, we are really learning about God's love for us, and how we are to grow in that love towards God.

The Maiden is seeking intimacy, or a growing love of her mate. It is a reflection of how we should make this our life's goal: Intimacy with Jesus. Who first loved us.

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This book, is about the growing love between a man and a woman, including its ultimate destination after marriage. I believe the primary message of the book is this: that human love, marriage, and sexual love, are a gift from God. And like all things, through Him, they are a blessing, without Him, destined to fail at some level.

Love has no deeper meaning apart from God being the foundation of that love.

I think it also teaches us more- Love between a man and a woman is fundamental to all human experience.

Just as God's love for us is fundamental to us knowing Him and in any way understanding Him.

Through God's love for us, we learn

- Love means giving one to another. The man is not to lord it over the woman, nor vice versa, but there is to be a mutual giving, one to another.
- True love is a fire that burns strongly, and love like that is a gift from God that is not to be treated lightly. This is one of the major reasons, for example, that the Bible treats divorce so seriously, and why Jesus effectively banned it outright.
- Love means remaining loyal and faithful to one another, no matter what the circumstances. It would have been all too easy for the maiden to give in to the advances of Solomon, betraying her shepherd lover. She would have done no wrong in marrying the king, for she was a virgin. But true love is loyal and faithful, and she could not turn her back on her shepherd.
- Love cannot be rushed or forced. In the advice that the maiden gives to the harem women, this is stressed time and time again throughout the poem; *do not awaken love before it is ready.* 1

1--Andy Bannister- Song of Songs, what God wants to teach us...

Song of Songs can be an interesting book, open to the many different seasons of our lives. Racy, confirmation of God's gift of intimacy, yet so much more. God's model for love is displayed as much here, as it is in any other part of Scripture. Perhaps more so as a guide to dating, to waiting, and anticipation of the joy of God's gift to us of pure love.

Each discussion group that uses this lesson will be in different stages of life, and love. Married for a long time, newlyweds. Kids grown and out, to kids just hitting the dating age. Share in discussion amongst yourselves the challenges, the successes and the rewards or perhaps even the failures you've experienced in these areas of your relationship and life.

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