

life group study guide

April 24, 2016

SERIES TITLE: **Make Love...Work**

CONTENT: Song of Solomon

THEME:

Our culture is in love with the idea of love. We are enamored with the idea of the fairy tale beginning and the fairy tale ending, but we never hear the full story of the in-between. These stories leave us hopeful and hopeless at the same time. We are hopeful to reach the end of our stories, but we appear hopeless to get across the chasm between the now and the then.

In the book of Song of Solomon, God gives us the hope to start living out the *then* right now. He not only gives us the destination, but lays out the roadmap on how to get there. Love is the greatest gift given to us, but like any gift, it will take effort on our part to open it. To make love in this world, we have to know the destination to the fairy tale ending and work to get there. God has given us this gift so that we can better understand what his love is like. And that is what the Song of Songs is all about.

Week 4 [4/24]: Sky Rockets in Flight

Song of Solomon 4:1-5:1— (Message)

Come and look, sisters in Jerusalem. Oh, sisters of Zion, don't miss this!

My King—Lover, dressed and garlanded for his wedding, his heart full, bursting with joy!

You're so beautiful, my darling, so beautiful, and your dove eyes are veiled by your hair as it flows and shimmers, like a flock of goats in the distance streaming down a hillside in the sunshine.

Your smile is generous and full— expressive and strong and clean.

Your lips are jewel red, your mouth elegant and inviting, your veiled cheeks soft and radiant.

The smooth, lithe lines of your neck command notice—all heads turn in awe and admiration!

Your breasts are like fawns, twins of a gazelle, grazing among the first spring flowers.

The sweet, fragrant curves of your body, the soft, spiced contours of your flesh invite me, and I come. I stay until dawn breathes its light and night slips away.

You're beautiful from head to toe, my dear love, beautiful beyond compare, absolutely flawless.

Come with me from Lebanon, my bride.

Leave Lebanon behind, and come.

Leave your high mountain hideaway.

Abandon your wilderness seclusion,

Where you keep company with lions and panthers guard your safety.

You've captured my heart, dear friend.

You looked at me, and I fell in love. One look my way and I was hopelessly in love!

How beautiful your love, dear, dear friend—far more pleasing than a fine, rare wine, your fragrance more exotic than select spices.

The kisses of your lips are honey, my love, every syllable you speak a delicacy to savor.

Your clothes smell like the wild outdoors, the ozone scent of high mountains.

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*Dear lover and friend, you're a secret garden, a private
and pure fountain.*

*Body and soul, you are paradise, a whole orchard of
succulent fruits—*

Ripe apricots and peaches, oranges and pears;

Nut trees and cinnamon, and all scented woods;

Mint and lavender, and all herbs aromatic;

A garden fountain, sparkling and splashing, fed by spring waters from the Lebanon Mountains.

Wake up, North Wind, get moving, South Wind! Breathe on my garden,

fill the air with spice fragrance. Oh, let my lover enter his garden!

*Yes, let him eat the fine, ripe fruits. I went to my garden, dear friend, best lover! I breathed the sweet
fragrance. I ate the fruit and honey; I drank the nectar and wine.*

Celebrate with me, friends! Raise your glasses— "To life! To love.

The Honeymoon... Godly Intimacy

Big Idea: God as the climax of marital love created Sexual Intimacy.

“Human passion . . . gives us a hint of God's passion for us. We are most like God's love for us when we are aroused in the presence of our beloved. And we best experience a hint of God's love for us when our beloved pursues us.” (Andrew Greeley, *Love Song* [New York: Warner Books, 1989], p. 28.)

- What kinds of emotions do you notice throughout this passage?
- What do the lover's explicit words describing his beloved's physical beauty (vv. 1-7) reveal about their relationship?
- What words and phrases help you understand how Solomon feels about his beloved (vv. 9-15)?
- How does the beloved respond to the praise and adoration that is lavished upon her?
- What does their dialogue reveal about their attitude about themselves as sexual beings?
- Do you think this type of passionate expression is necessary to a marriage? Why or why not?
- Discuss the appropriate timing of sex, i.e., premarital, extra-marital (in the light of Gen 2 & Song of Solomon 8:4)
- How does this picture compare to and contrast with the depiction of married love in current media?
- In what ways does this passage change and/or inform your attitude toward married love?
- Since God created human beings with a strong desire for sexual touch and our bodies are wired in such a way as to respond with pleasure, even ecstasy, when stroked in special ways, why do God's people seem to feel so conflicted about sex?
- How has your faith shaped your views on sexuality? Why did God create us including this?
- Is it theologically accurate for Matt to request cohabiting singles to part before marriage?
- How might the man and woman's relationship be strengthened by this kind of frank and detailed conversation?
- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns against the dangers of lusting after a woman. His warning goes so far as to suggest gouging out one's eyes if they cause one to lust. Does that mean we can't feel any sense of arousal toward our beloved until we are married? Why or why not?

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