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**Discussion Questions: MARRIAGE – WEDDING DAY**

1. Many people commit to a ban on the word “divorce” once they get married – meaning their vows are not optional. What other practical steps can a couple take to keep their promise to each other and to God?
2. What does Solomon’s grand processional communicate to his bride? How is this beneficial to a woman as she approaches her wedding day?
3. Wedding days can be such a blur. How can a couple who has been married a long time bring back the magic of that day?
4. If you are getting married, what spiritual symbols do you plan on using in your ceremony? Why are these significant?
5. If you are married, what symbols did you use in the wedding ceremony that had special significance to you as a couple? How have those symbols benefited your marriage?

# SONG OF SOLOMON

MARRIAGE – WEDDING DAY (3:6-11)

God’s plan for any young couple getting married is that they have a holy, pure, and joyful wedding celebration to unite their lives as one spiritually, emotionally and socially. And then, they are to have a glorious and steamy wedding night in which to celebrate their wedding and unite their lives as one sexually. For a woman, the wedding day is what they dream about from a little girl on – getting dressed up and spending hours on making everything perfect for that special day. The man on the other hand only thinks about the honeymoon. At the heart of any good marriage is a spiritual bond. Sex should flow out of that bond and enhance that bond.

Marriage should be entered into only if you are 100 percent committed to making a vow before God to love the person who is standing by your side regardless of what happens and for as long as you both live. (*For those in or considering a second marriage should read, “How to Save Your Second Marriage Before it Gets Started” by Les & Leslie Parrott)*

**ANNOTATION OF VERSES:** Song of Songs 3:6-11 (WEDDING DAY)

(3:6) “*Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant’s fragrant powders?”* The original Hebrew implies that Solomon had sent his royal carriage to bring the woman from her mother’s house to the city of their wedding. This text also alludes to the wandering of Israel in the wilderness led by the Spirit of God from place to place – spiritual principle is that they are there by divine appointment.

*(3:7-8) “Behold, it is Solomon’s couch, with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being experts in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night.”* She is safe and secure with Solomon’s royal guards.

(3:9-10) “*Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin (a portable enclosed couch). He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem*.” This speaks of security, solidarity, wealth, beauty and royalty.

(3:11) “*Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart*.” This is not Solomon’s coronation because only the High Priest could preside over that. This speaks of his recognition as the future king – at this time King David was bed-ridden and Solomon was announced as the successor king. This also shows the royal approval of this union.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE WEDDING DAY

HALLMARKS OF A GREAT WEDDING:

### A Divine Appointment (Song of Songs 3:6)

Your wedding is a moment both partners should anticipate as a sacred moment; a moment in which God is fully present as the foremost witness to the wedding vows. This is the time appointed by God to take you to the next level of your journey and purpose with Him.

### A Time for Celebration and Joy (Song of Songs 3:6)

As Solomon approaches his wedding he is described as perfumed with myrrh and frankincense and all the merchant’s powders (3:6) which are symbols of sweetness and celebration. The whole atmosphere of a wedding should display the very best of the best. Go into your wedding with a glad and celebratory heart. Celebrate the fact that God brought you together, all the way through dating and courtship and engagement to the marriage altar.

### A Supportive Atmosphere (Song of Songs 3:7-8)

Solomon did not go at his wedding alone. Your wedding ceremony should bear a sense of security, safety, protection, and solidarity. You need the support of those who share in your values and belief system. Choose godly people for your wedding party that will support you fully in your vows you make. Those who witness your marriage should be like a holy hedge of protection around you, keeping you focused toward each other inside the circle of matrimony, and keeping out anybody who might try to destroy your marriage.

### It is marked by Strength (Song of Songs 3:9-10)

A key ingredient of a great wedding is a strong groom. Women are drawn to strength and security. Since men are generally the initiators, I believe it is his responsibility to demonstrate restraint when passion is aroused. This will speak volumes of his value, love and respect for his bride and will convey a message of trust and faithfulness.

I also believe it is the husband’s responsibility to be the financial provider for the family – this doesn’t mean the wife cannot work outside the home. As a general rule, it is far better to wait to marry until the man can support his wife and family.

### Has Parental Approval (Song of Songs 3:11)

Solomon’s mother crowned him with the wedding crown that a groom wore in those days. It was a sign of her approval that he was marrying a woman that she valued and would love as a daughter.

While you are dating and courting, take time to get to know the family into which you will be marrying.

The goal of every parent should be to raise their children not only to choose a godly spouse, but eventually to leave their care and make a home of their own.

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Description automatically generatedDiscussion Questions: MARRIAGE – INTIMACY**

(*It may be beneficial to split into separate gender groups for this session if you are meeting in a group).*

1. What is unique about Solomon’s approach to his bride compared to most men?
2. What fears did you have or do you have regarding your honeymoon? Was it or is it important to discuss expectations about the honeymoon? Why or why not?
3. How was your honeymoon? Did it resemble this one? Why or why not?
4. What issues relating to sex are difficult to discuss with your spouse? What are some ways to open the conversation when it comes to sexual intimacy?
5. How will your view of sexual intimacy change as a result of this session?
6. Why is it so difficult to talk about sex within the church?
7. Why does so much sexual intimacy depend on friendship in marriage?

# SONG OF SOLOMON

MARRIAGE – INTIMACY (4:1-5:1)

What a wonderful moment when the honeymoon finally arrives. Couples tend to arrive at this moment exhilarated in their emotions, exhausted from the wedding, and energized by passion. As much as a couple may be eager for, excited about, and ready for sexual intimacy, questions and hesitations sometimes loom about sex. Most of the information young people receive about sex does not come to them in a straightforward informational style. They are taught about the mechanics of sex and biological information of reproduction is given at the public schools but little is taught about the emotional and psychological aspects of physical intimacy.

So many people within the church seem to be wounded emotionally and psychologically by issues and problems related to sexual intimacy, and yet most in the church do not want to talk about sex. My desire is to be an exception to that and provide you with some valuable information that will bring about healing in your life as well as equip you to help others.

**ANNOTATIONS OF VERSES:** Song of Songs 4:1-5:1 (INTIMACY)

(4:1) “*Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove’s eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead*.” Solomon tells her how beautiful she is. He praises her from “head to toe.” This clearly reveals his wisdom – he knew that sex for a woman always begins in her mind, a woman’s most sensitive sexual organ.

Nothing calms a woman’s fears and excites her passion as much as having a man tell her how wonderful she is. He appreciates her, values her, acknowledges her and builds her up. He looks into her eyes or “soul” as a prelude to exploring her body. He begins to undress her starting with her wedding cap as her hair flows down her neck and shoulders; described as a flock of goats bounding down the mountain. (This doesn’t mean that men do not want to be complemented because this recognition for a man is vital to feeling respected but in this context of foreplay it is important that a woman feels that she is valued for more than her body).

(4:2) “*Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them*.” She enjoys Solomon’s praise and is smiling – Solomon tells her how beautiful her smile is by describing her perfect teeth, white, and none missing.

(4:3-4) “*Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.”* This is kissing talk; Solomon is moving in and tracing her features with his hand as he whispers his appreciation to her; your temples behind the veil are like a piece of pomegranate; she is blushing and he likes that. He can sense the tingling in her body at his touch and response to his close presence. He now moves down to her neck, where he describes her necklace as looking like the tower of

David. She was standing tall and as was the custom, wearing a large necklace to depict her beauty and dignity. She was enjoying and approving of Solomon’s gentle exploration.

We see Solomon being very romantic and sensual. He didn’t jump out of the chariot and run into “Hotel Jerusalem” and overwhelm the woman with his desire for her. He dealt with her tenderly, spoke to her, kissed her, and made her feel special and desirable. He built a desire for himself within her mind and heart. That is how we define being romantic.

(4:5) *“Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.*” He approaches and touches her gently and moves slowly. Solomon is engaged in slow, romantic foreplay with the woman he loves.

(4:6) *“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.”* This passage is very erotic in the Hebrew. Solomon made love to his wife all night long. The mountain of myrrh refers to her breast and the hill of frankincense to her genital area.

(4:7) *“You are fair, my love, and there is no spot in you.”* Solomon appreciates her body and pronounces her perfect. A woman wants to know that you are pleased and as far as you are concerned, she is perfect in your eyes. A woman who truly feels cherished by her husband in all ways is going to give herself freely and generously to him.

(4:8) *“Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.”* Solomon was calling to his wife to move from the lowlands where the lions roamed to the mountaintops where the leopards lived. This is a clear picture of sexual climax - moving higher and higher to the greatest emotional ecstasy possible. He wanted her not only to be one with him in physical union, but also experience the ecstasy that he was experiencing. She is his sexual partner and not just his plaything.

(4:9-11) “*You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace. How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love* (Hebrew is love-making*), and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon*.” These verses describe very intense passion – his heart was beating faster and faster – he is kissing her passionately and deeply. Open-mouth kisses are one of the most sensual acts possible in a marriage union. (I believe that the phrase my sister, my spouse refers to their spiritual and physical relationship and also to the respect and manner in which he treated her before their wedding.)

(4:12) *“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”* Her body has been off limits until now – she was a virgin, her fountain was sealed. In the Bible a man’s sexuality is described as a spring; a woman’s sexuality is described as a well.

(4:13-15) “*Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices- a* ***fountain*** *of gardens, a* ***well*** *of living waters,* ***and streams*** *from Lebanon*.” The woman was fragrant and moist in her sexual passion as he was reaching a sexual climax within her. Their union was complete – Solomon was in his garden. The fountain, well and stream speaks of an ever increasing flow of delight.

(4:16) “*Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden that its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits.”* Up until this moment Solomon has been doing all the talking and now the wife speaks. Remember on two occasions she had been told not to awaken love until the proper time – but now she speaks and says, MAKE MY GARDEN BREATHE! The north winds are strong; the south winds are gentle – she wants Solomon to take control but be gentle. She wants to be awakened completely in her passion and experience all the love there was to experience. Great sex to a woman is tenderness; to a man it is responsiveness. The couple had deeply met their mutual needs.

(5:1) *“I have come to* ***my*** *garden,* ***my*** *sister,* ***my*** *spouse; I have gathered* ***my*** *myrrh with* ***my*** *spice; I have eaten* ***my*** *honeycomb with* ***my*** *honey; I have drunk* ***my*** *wine with* ***my*** *milk*.( I have come into my garden, past tense – sex has occurred, they have their fill of lovemaking. Nine times Solomon calls the woman “mine”. The two have now become one. When sexual intimacy occurs in right timing and with the right person, from God’s perspective, it is meant to be enjoyed fully.) Eat, O friends! Drink, drink deeply, O beloved ones.” I believe that God is speaking at this point and says, “**ENJOY the gift I have given you.”**

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT SEX

***PRINCIPLES FOR HAVING GREAT SEX:***

## Understand the differences between men and women

Gary Smalley said, “Men are microwaves and women are crock pots.” A man can have sex any time for him it is intermission – A woman heats up slowly and needs tenderness to be ready for sex. Foreplay can begin verbally and playfully hours before the bedroom.

## Understand your spouse’s sexual needs

For a woman it is sensitivity, tenderness, thoughtfulness.

For a man it is responsiveness – no man wants to make love to a willing victim. Some women will go through the motions because they feel it’s an obligation or duty instead of a celebration.

## Start Early

Men, be sensitive to your wife’s day and level of stress and weariness. Help her around the house and in taking care of the children. Men it is important that you prepare the heart of your wife for sex.

## Be Aware of your mate’s signals

Don’t just say 10:30 be there! Be sensitive to what your mate likes. Sometimes it is what you wear to bed is a signal or if a man shaves before bed. It could be the perfume your wife wears or maybe it’s a back rub or the brushing of her hair. Everyone is different but be attentive and sensitive. Most men do not need to give a signal they are ready any time – but be sensitive to your wife. Women also be sensitive to the fact that sex is very important to your husband. You should be comfortable enough to talk about when you want to have sex and when you want to abstain.

## Beware of Sexual boundaries of your mate

Men do not force or push your wife to do what she is uncomfortable with doing. Rarely will a man say that his wife makes him feel “dirty”. Do not demean or shame your wife into doing anything against her will.

Ungodly people will become manipulative and controlling to get their way.

The basis of great sex is FRIENDSHIP and basis of friendship is tenderness, courtesy, piety and holiness.