

Life Group Study Guide

Song of Solomon 3:6-5:1

Introduction

God instituted the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, but the institution of marriage has recently come under attack in the United States in many different forms.

The issue of what constitutes a legal marriage has come under attack, especially traditional male-female marriage, as a number of people are fighting to make same-sex marriage legitimate. Hollywood has attacked the sacred covenant of marriage by portraying having multiple partners and committing adultery as normal behavior, and even preferable to a committed, monogamous relationship. Traditional Christian values are no longer respected, and those who hold these values are now considered to be bigots, sexists, and haters.

Take 5-10 minutes to discuss attacks on the conservative values of marriage you have seen or experienced recently. Where do they stem from? What do you think fuels these attacks? How can Christians counter these movements?

Background

Song of Solomon belongs to a genre of books known as Wisdom Literature, comprised of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Job, and (sometimes) Psalms (not all Psalms were considered Wisdom Literature by some Hebrew traditions). It can be divided into three sections: the courtship (1:1 - 3:5); the wedding (3:6 - 5:1); and the maturing marriage (5:2 - 8:14).

Last week we learned about the courtship between Solomon and his bride-to-be. Solomon sought out his bride, commending her beauty and character with admiration, and honor. The bride responded with humility and the strong desire to hear his voice, see his face, and have him come to her. This week we will study the wedding procession and consummation of the marriage, which was designed by God to be enjoyed.

This book is intended to show the intimacy of the marriage between a man and a woman, and how God desires us to enjoy our marriage and keep it sacred. It also is a very graphic representation of this intimate love. Due to this fact, Jerome, an early church father, mandated that this book should not be read by those under 30 years of age! The Song of Solomon clearly shows that marriage was intended to be enjoyed by spouses, and that intimacy and sex are intended to be one of God's blessings to his creation.

Group Study:

Read Song of Solomon 3:6-3:11 - Here Comes the King!

Solomon comes in a triumphal procession to marry his future bride. His presence is announced in the distance by a cloud of fragrances (myrrh and frankincense) which are being burned to celebrate the occasion. Additionally, he travels in an intricate carriage surrounded by 60 soldiers who are to provide safety for the couple. He arrives wearing his kingly crown as he seeks the love of his heart.

What does the presence of the soldiers represent to the new bride? How does the description of the chariot emphasize the importance of this event? What other descriptions in these verses point to the importance of this event? Where else can you find myrrh and frankincense mentioned in the Bible? How do these passages relate to the importance of marriage today?

Read Song of Solomon 4:1-4:6 - The Twitterpated King

The descriptions of beauty found in the Song of Solomon may seem foreign to us; men today do not often tell the women they love that their eyes look like “doves”, that their hair looks like “a flock of goats”, or that their neck resembles a “tower”, but these poetic descriptions were intended to portray the beauty that this man saw in his bride.

What do you think that the groom meant by the following expressions?

Verse 1 - eyes of doves / hair like a flock of goats

Verse 2 - teeth like a flock of shorn ewes

Verse 3 - lips like scarlet thread / cheeks like pomegranates

Verse 4 - neck like the tower of David

Verse 5 - breasts like fawns

How does this language reflect how we should revere our spouses? What are some phrases we use today to describe these feelings? How can we let our loved ones know how we feel about them?

Read Song of Solomon 4:7-5:1 - Intimate Expressions as God Intended

Why would the groom describe this woman as his sister and his bride? Is his love strictly sexual, or is there more involved? What does this tell you about a lasting, Godly marriage relationship? Should a man and a woman be infatuated with one another? Why or why not?

The spices, fragrances, and smells in verses 11-14 are exotic, coming from areas all around the world.

What does this tell you about the nature of the relationship that God has provided for a married couple? Discuss.

In verse 12, the sister-bride is described as a locked spring, a locked garden, and a sealed fountain.

Who has the key? What is intended by this description of a Godly marriage?

Conclusion:

For those who are married, God has given a spouse as a gift to be enjoyed. The wedding day should be the beginning of this intimate journey, but the love between spouses should increase as two learn each day how to become one.

How does sex in scripture differ from how the world portrays sex? Is sex meant to be enjoyed and in what context? Why would premarital sex and adultery disrupt God's intentions for marriage? What practical steps can you take today to ensure a sacred marriage in God's eyes? If you are married, how can you protect your marriage and nurture it in practical ways? Discuss.

Prayer

Conclude in prayer about what you have learned.