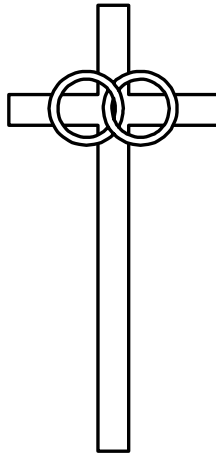


The Song of Solomon
God's Manual for Marital Satisfaction



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The Message of the

Song of Solomon

The Hebrew title for the book is “Song of Songs.” This is how the Hebrew language says “The Best Songs.” The book portrays the deep, genuine love between a man and a woman in marriage. The book should be interpreted literally. The subject of the book is quite obviously sexual in nature.

The book is a collection of love songs which clearly celebrate the joys of physical, intimate love. One of the book’s distinctive messages is that sex is God’s gift, and it should be enjoyed. The Song boldly proclaims the value and beauty of love and devotion between a man and woman. The songs use highly figurative and poetic language, it is easy to see its intent of exalting human love. The lovers’ words portrays a beautiful relationship expressed in the complete giving of themselves to each other in the marriage relationship.

Within the Song, the term, “beloved” refers to the man or groom and the terms, “love” and “lover” refer to the woman or bride. The desire of the lover for her beloved is sung with the sweetest and most beautiful tones. Likewise, the beloved has strong feelings for his lover. This is no casual affair or brief infatuation. There is a genuine heartfelt love for one another. Separation is difficult to endure. The feelings of deepest pain and sorrow are evoked by separation. But their separation does not end their love. The message of the book is that sexual attraction is inseparably linked to the devotion of true love. The book contains scriptural songs which exalts human love. The sensual relationship is depicted in a very positive manner and is a marvelous and gracious gift from God.

The Song of Solomon has a message that all couples need to hear. The beauty of its language and thought elevate the sexual and physical relationship to a much higher level than does the world. Sexual feelings are accepted and affirmed. They are a part of God’s plan for his people. In a very sensitive and winsome manner, the writer records for us several beautiful love poems that provide guidance for developing a marriage that is satisfying.

SONG OF SOLOMON

I. AUTHORSHIP - Traditionally ascribed to Solomon (cf. 1:1). Since the song is about him, some have proposed an anonymous author and dated the book after the lifetime of Solomon. However, there is no compelling reason for rejecting basic Solomonic authorship.

II. DATE - Tenth century during Solomon's reign (971-931 B.C.). Probably the early years (cf. S.S. 6:8) ca. 965 B.C. before his sensual indulgence with multiple wives and concubines. (cf. I Kings 11:3)

III. INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES (Purpose)

A. Allegorical - no literal meaning. A purely metaphorical/symbolic work of some sort.

B. Typical - historical persons (Solomon and Shulamith) typify greater spiritual truth.

1. God's love for Israel.
2. God's love for the church.
3. God's love for the individual believer.

C. Dramatic - a drama involving either two or three main characters:

1. Solomon and Shulamith.
2. Solomon the temper, Shulamith, and her Shepherd-lover.

D. Collection of Syrian wedding songs.

E. Collection of pagan fertility cult liturgies.

F. Anthology of disconnected songs extolling human love.

- G. Literal - a lyric poem with unity and logical progression extolling human love, marriage, and physical pleasure within that relationship.

The book emphasizes the supremacy of love in human relationships, especially that of husband/wife (analogously God/believer). It rightly draws attention to the beauty and purpose of physical/sexual enjoyment between a man and woman in marriage. This in turn points toward the intimacy of a spiritual relationship as well. The book is a series of lyric poems (songs) in a dialogue form, though monologue is prominent as well.

IV. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- A. The book contains eight chapters, 117 verses, 470 different Hebrew words, 2661 total words.
- B. God is never mentioned directly in the book, nor are any major religious words of the Old Testament present.
- C. This book is one of the five megilloth (scrolls) annually read by the Jews on the eighth day of Passover (others of the megilloth are Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther).
- D. It is also titled “Canticles” (Latin for ‘songs’) and Song of Songs.
- E. I Kings 4:32-34 points out that Solomon authored 1,005 songs.
- F. The work is sometimes referred to as a collection of “idylls” or little pictures; pictorial poems which give to familiar or everyday scenes, a tinge of romance (cf. Psalm 45 for a similar text).
- G. Forty-seven words in the Song appear no where else in the Hebrew Bible.

- H. Its place in scripture (i.e., does it belong?) has been vigorously debated throughout history.
1. Because of the absence of the name of God (but cf. S.S. 8:6)
 2. Because of its frank language regarding physical intimacies.
 3. Because of its difficulty in interpretation.
- I. The book is never quoted directly in either the Old or New Testament.
- J. In the English Bible, it is located in the poetry section.
- K. In the Hebrew Bible it is located in the third section known as the *Kethubim* (Writings). It is classified as Semitic wisdom literature.
- L. Key ideas or motifs in the book are the garden, love, lover (beloved), wine, fair, come with me.
- M. As is true of most Hebrew poetry, the book is characterized not by rhyme or metrical patterns, but by parallelism, i.e., the stating of a thought in line one and then a restatement of the same thought in line two.

The Story Behind the Book

King Solomon lives in the tenth century B.C. He is Israel's wisest and richest king. He owns vineyards all over the nation—one of them close to Baalhamon in the northernmost part of Galilee, near the foothills of the Lebanon mountains. While visiting this vineyard, Solomon meets a country girl called Shulamith. She captures his heart. He falls in love. For some time he pursues her and makes periodic visits to see her at her country home.

Finally he asks her to marry him. Shulamith gives serious consideration to whether she really loves him and can be happy in the palace of a king, but she finally accepts because she too loves him.

Solomon sends a wedding procession to escort his new bride-to-be to the palace in Jerusalem. The book opens as she is getting ready for the wedding banquet and the wedding night. The details of their first night together are intimately but beautifully described, and the first half of the book closes.

The second half of the book deals with the joys and problems of their marriage life. She refuses his sexual advances one night, and he departs. (Sound familiar!) She, realizing her foolishness, gets up and tries to find him, eventually does, and they have a joyous time of intimacy again.

While she lives at the palace, the new queen often longs for the mountains of Lebanon where she grew up. She finally asks Solomon to take her there on a vacation. He agrees, and the book closes with their return to her country home and their enjoyment of sexual love there.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

THE BEGINNING OF LOVE			THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONENESS								
THE WEDDING DAY	REFLECTIONS ON A COURTSHIP		THE WEDDING DAY		A DREAM OF LOVE REFUSED		A VACATION IN THE COUNTRY				
	(a parenthesis)		(continued)		A PROBLEM		A SOLUTION				
1. Shulamith in the Palace (1:1-8) 2. At the Banquet Table (1:9-14) 3. In the Bridal Chamber (1:15-2:7)	4. A Springtime Visit (2:8-11) 5. The Little Foxes (2:15-17) 6. A Dream—On Counting the Cost (3:1-5)	7. The Wedding Procession (3:6-11) 8. The Wedding Night (4:1-5:1)	9. A Dream of Love Refused	10. A Change of Attitude (5:9-6:3) 11. The Return of Solomon (6:4-10) 12. Shulamith in the Garden (6:11-13a) 13. The Dance of the Mahanaim (6:13b-8:4)	14. A Vacation in the Country (8:5-14)						
1:1	2:7	2:8	3:5	3:6	5:1	5:2	5:8	5:9	8:4	8:5	8:14
THE GLORIOUS IDEAL			THE PRACTICAL REALITY								
LOVE'S FIRST ENHANCING DAYS			LOVE'S DEEP ABIDING JOYS								
PALACE			LEBANON			PALACE			LEBANON		

ANALYSIS

TITLE AND ATTRIBUTION (1:1)

I. ANTICIPATION (1:2 - 2:7)

- a. The bride's first request (1:2-4)
- b. The girl's shy uncertainty (1:5-7)
- c. The beloved's gentle encouragement (1:8-11)
- d. The bride's soliloquy (1:12-14)
- e. The beloved's and bride's banter (1:15-2:2)
- f. The bride's second request (2:3-7)

II. FOUND, AND LOST - AND FOUND (2:8 - 3:5)

- a. The beloved's arrival (2:8-9)
- b. His first request (2:10-14)
- c. A word of warning (2:15)
- d. The bride's response (2:16-17)
- e. The bride's search (3:1-5)

III. CONSUMMATION (3:6 - 5:1)

- a. A wedding song for Solomon (3:6-11)
- b. Beauty and desire (4:1-15)
- c. Consummation (4:16 - 5:1)

IV. LOST - AND FOUND (5:2 - 8:4)

- a. The break (5:2-8)
- b. A leading question (5:9)
- c. A joyous response (5:10-16)
- d. A second question (6:1)
- e. A sensual response (6:2-3)
- f. The beloved overwhelmed (6:4-10)
- g. The bride's excited anticipation (6:11-12)
- h. A request and a question (6:13)
- i. The lover's praise (7:1-9)
- j. Consummation - again (7:9b - 8:4)

V. AFFIRMATION (8:5-14)

- a. Arousal (8:5)
- b. Commitment (8:6-7)
- c. Contentment (8:8-10)
- d. Communion (8:11-14)

PURPOSES OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON

1. It is a revelation about the true nature of human love; love as God intended it to be.
 - a. The foundation of love is mutual satisfaction. We find rest in our spouse on all levels; emotional physical, spiritual, and intellectual, as God satisfies our hearts in our mate.
 - b. Mutual satisfaction is not only complementary, it is also exclusive. True satisfaction demands a commitment to exclusivity. “Forsake all others!” is foundational.
 - c. Love is probably the strongest human emotion in human life. You cannot buy it, nor can you demand it. You cultivate it. (When mutual satisfaction breaks down, so will the marriage).

2. We discover in the Song the three fruits of true love.
 - a. In true love there is **REST**.
 - b. In true love there is **JOY**.
 - c. In true love there is **COURAGE**.

HUMAN AND SPIRITUAL LIFE FIND THEIR GREATEST FULFILLMENT

IN THE EXPERIENCE OF MUTUAL LOVE!

Love for our Master in salvation.

Love for our mate in marriage.

**TEN OBSERVATIONS THAT HIGHLIGHT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A
MAN AND A WOMAN!**

1. A man will pay \$2 for a \$1 item he wants.
A woman will pay \$1 for a \$2 item that she doesn't want.
2. A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband.
A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.
3. A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend.
A successful woman is one who can find such a man.
4. To be happy with a man you must understand him a lot & love him a little.
To be happy with a woman you must love her a lot & not try to understand her at all.
5. Married men live longer than single men - but married men are a lot more willing to die.
6. Any married man should forget his mistakes - there's no reason for two people remembering the same thing.
7. Men wake up as good-looking as they went to bed.
Women somehow deteriorate during the night.
8. A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't.
A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change & she does.
9. A woman has the last word in any argument.
Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.
10. There are 2 times when a man doesn't understand a woman - before & after marriage.

Love Story

(Shulamith in the Palace: Anticipation for the Wedding)
Song of Solomon 1:1-8

- I. Anticipate the rewards of being with your mate. 1:1-4
 1. Desire the physical pleasures of marriage. 1:1-2
 2. Experience the personal pleasures of marriage. 1:3-4
 - A. Delight in his fragrance. 1:3a
 - B. Delight in his fame. 1:3b
 - C. Delight in his friends. 1:3c; 4b
 - D. Delight in his faithfulness. 1:4a

- II. Accept the realities of being with your mate. 1:5-8
 1. A woman can be ambivalent concerning her appearance. 1:5-6
 - A. She may be delighted with her appearance. 1:5-6
 - B. She may be defensive with her appearance. 1:6a
 - C. She may be disappointed with her appearance. 1:6b
 2. A woman can be anxious concerning his absence. 1:7
 - A. A husband's absence can be a source of personal sorrow. 1:7
 - B. A husband's absence can be a source of personal shame. 1:7

- III. Acknowledge the risk of being with your mate. 1:8
 1. You must know where you can find him.
 2. You must go where you can find him.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. Physical desire and a longing for intimate consummation is a characteristic of romantic love and is a good thing within the bonds of marriage.
(intoxicating and sweet as wine.)
2. The character (as well as the physical appearance) of a person is vitally important in the selection and enjoyment of one's spouse.
3. Acknowledge your imperfections up front, but recognize the special value/potential they have for God to work in your life. (They are wonderful pricks to keep us humble, and who doesn't need to be humble in a marital relationship!)
4. We must count the cost involved before committing ourselves for a lifetime to another individual.
5. As a Christian, our relationship to our spouse often takes on a fishbowl type of scrutiny! Accept it and live up to the challenge.

Principles That Make Marriages Work

Adapted From

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If we would liberate our marriages from the consequences of human weakness and frailties and sins, we must guide them with principles that come from outside of ourselves and which do not focus on us personally.

Seven areas need our careful attention and commitment.

I. Educationally:

1. Study marriage; become a real student of it.
2. Study the opposite sex; become an expert on them.
3. Study your spouse; really get to know her/him.

II. Sexually:

1. Be faithful to one another for life.
2. Know the difference between your “needs” and “wants.”
3. Exercise self-control (resist outside temptation).
4. Do not bargain with sex. Don’t become a marital prostitute
(To play you must pay!)
5. Make sure there is mutual consent to all you and your spouse decide to do. If they cannot say “no” when circumstance warrant it, how can we be sure that they are not our slaves?
6. Do not expect your spouse to have the same appetite and desires as you do.

III. Financially:

1. Set up financial priorities jointly and stick to them.
2. Remember that one is not entitled to a superior status just because one earns the money to pay the rent, buy the groceries, etc. Keeping the house clean and guiding the homefront efficiently is just as important and just as worthy of praise.
3. All who share in the labor to maintain the family ought to share in everything the family earns or produces.

IV. Rearing Children:

1. Set up disciplinary policies jointly and stick to them. (Eph. 6:1-4)
2. Do not argue about discipline in front of the children.
3. Be loving and always restore fellowship after discipline.

V. Publicly:

1. Keep confidential matters confidential.
2. Never criticize your spouse in public or in front of others.

VI. Individually:

1. Do not make unilateral decisions that affect the relationship.
2. Do not depend primarily on your spouse for a sense of self-worth. Look to God.
3. Own up to your own mistakes, etc. Be willing to say, "I am sorry."
(Eph. 4:32)
4. Deal with your own sins first before dealing with theirs. (Gal. 6:1)

VII. Relationally:

1. Take one another seriously.
2. Nurture one another. (Eph. 5:29-30)
3. Set up a problem-solving mechanism.
4. Be respectful and courteous at all times.
5. Spend time with your spouse and family. (both quality and quantity)
6. Make room for intimacy and affection without pushing for sex.
7. Treat one another as equals.
8. Be honest with one another; speak the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15)
9. Give your spouse practical and relational priority in all the aspects of your life.
10. Be slow to anger, slow to speak, and quick to listen. (James 1:19)
11. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. (Eph. 4:29)
12. Never stop caring about pleasing your spouse. (Phil. 2:3-4)
13. Seek unity and do not feel threatened by disagreement. (Phil. 2:2)
14. Honor one another's rights and needs.
15. Do not impose your will on the other except by peaceful and kind persuasion.
16. Seek to be one another's best friend.
17. Try to deal with facts rather than feelings.
18. Minister to rather than manipulate one another.
19. Put your spouse before all others including the children.
20. Honor the Creator's structure for marriage. (Eph. 5:21-33)
21. Be approachable, teachable, and correctable (even by your spouse).
22. Do not try to control everything.
23. Confront one another with tenderness, compassion, loving concern and without exasperating them.
24. Be willing to sacrifice for your loved ones.
25. Do not neglect your responsibility to provide for your own.
26. Be willing to communicate and to listen.
27. Despise divorce and determine it will never be an option.
28. Eat as many meals with one another as possible.
29. Whenever possible, postpone doing things you want to do for yourself to the times when your spouse is busy with other things.
30. Do not stop trying to make time for your spouse just because it seems so impossible to do so.

There Is Power In Praising Our Partner

(At the Banquet Table in Familiar Surroundings)

Song Solomon 1:9-14

I. BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR PRAISE. 1:9-10

1. Tell her she is special. 1:9
2. Tell her she is beautiful. 1:10

II. BE SACRIFICIAL IN YOUR PRAISE. 1:11

1. Be specific.
2. Say it with silver!

III. BE SENSUAL IN YOUR PRAISE. 1:12-14

1. Desire is made known by love. 1:12
(Tell him he is worthy of an expensive display.)
2. Desire is made known by loyalty. 1:13
(Tell him he is a fragrance close to your heart.) 1:13
3. Desire is made known by longing. 1:14
(Tell him he is refreshing like an oasis in a desert.)

- Spikenard expresses his great worth and priceless significance.
- Myrrh expresses her desire for loyal intimacy and fragrant pleasure.
- Henna blossoms expresses his unique and refreshing pleasure.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. Praising our mate as unique and special is a wonderful remedy for their feelings of inferiority and insecurity. 1:9-11, 14
2. Jewelry can and should enhance and not detract/distract from one's appearance. 1:10-11
3. Little things can mean a lot in a relationship. 1:10-11
4. Verbal praise of our mate will often influence the opinion of others with reference to our spouse. 1:11
5. We should strive to make the very thought of our lover a source of mental and sensual pleasure. 1:12-14
6. All the senses should come to participate in expressions of love toward our mate. 1:9-14

In Summary:

- A. Love should be shown verbally. 1:9
- B. Love should be shown tangibly. 1:10-11
- C. Love should cherish, protect, and adore the mate God has given us. Communicate that no one else compares to them in your life. 1:9, 12-14

MARITAL INTIMACY TEST

(Answer: 4 - often, 3 - often enough, 2 - not enough, 1 - rarely, or 0 - never for each.)

1. How often do you show affection for each other? _____
2. How often do you laugh at each other's jokes? _____
3. How often do you say something nice to each other? _____
4. How often do you compliment you partner in front of others? _____
5. How often do you enjoy sexual intimacy? _____
6. How often are you playful with each other? _____
7. How often do you look each other in the eyes while talking? _____
7. How often do you give each other a little surprise? _____
9. How often do you say please? _____
10. How often do you say I'm sorry? _____

Add up your points and divide by 10. You will get your score per a 4.0 scale.



“Fanning the Flames of Love”
(Get Ready for the Bedroom)
Song of Solomon 1:15-2:7

I. PRAISE YOUR PARTNER. 1:15-2:2

1. Admire their attractiveness. 1:15-16
2. Acknowledge their thoughtfulness. 16-17
3. Affirm their uniqueness. 2:1-2

II. PROCLAIM THEIR PROVISION. 2:3

1. Tell others how they protect you.
2. Tell others how they please you.

III. PREPARE FOR PASSION. 2:4-7

1. Make love in the right place. 2:4
2. Make love in the right way. 2:5-6
3. Make love at the right time. 2:7

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Song of Solomon 1:15-2:7

1. Put thought and effort into creating a romantic “atmosphere” for your spouse.

2. Build up your spouse by concentrating on their positive features and gifts.

3. Explore the joys and opportunities for love.
Three biblical principles to guide you:
 - a. Unselfish love.
 - b. Mutual agreement.
 - c. Christlike submission/humility.

4. Communication is vital in intimacy.

5. The right mate and the right moment is worth waiting for!

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING SEX

1. Sexual relations within marriage are holy and good. God encourages intimate relations and warns against their cessation. (1 Cor. 7:5).
2. Pleasure in sexual relations is both healthy and expected (the bodies of both parties belong to each other; Prov. 5:15-19; 1 Cor. 7:4).
3. Sexual pleasure is to be guided by the principle that one's sexuality is to be other-oriented ("rights" over one's body are given in marriage to the other party; Phil. 2:3-4).
4. Sexual relations are to be regular and normal. No exact number of times per week is right or correct, but the biblical principle is that both parties are to provide adequate sexual satisfaction so that both "burning" (sexual desire) and temptation to find satisfaction elsewhere are avoided (1 Cor. 7:9).
5. The principle of satisfaction means that each party is to provide sexual enjoyment (which is "due" him or her in marriage) as frequently as the other party requires. Other biblical principles (moderation, seeking to please another rather than oneself, etc.) also come into play. Consideration of one's mate is to guide one's requests for sexual relations.
6. In accordance with the principle of "rights," there is to be no sexual bargaining between married persons (I'll not have relations unless you . . ."). Neither party has the right to make such bargains. This is a form of "prostitution" and must be avoided.
7. Sexual relations are equal and reciprocal. The Bible does not give the man superior rights to the woman or the woman superior rights to the man. Mutual stimulation and mutual initiation of relations are legitimate (see in the Song of Solomon).
8. Whatever is safe, pleasing, enjoyable, and satisfying to both is acceptable. The *body* of each belongs to the other (1 Cor. 7:4). Neither should demand from the other what is painful, harmful or distasteful to him or her.

THINKING ABOUT SEX

If only because one of them is a man and the other a woman, married couples usually have quite different attitudes and approaches to sex. Furthermore, many people may come to marriage with varying beliefs and expectations. This attitude assessment tool is designed to open up discussion about these differences. Take it with your partner and see what you can learn about each other.

Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	
_____	_____	_____	Sex is one of the most beautiful aspects of life.
_____	_____	_____	It is more enjoyable to give than to receive.
_____	_____	_____	Bodily pleasure is fleshly and not spiritual.
_____	_____	_____	Sexual intercourse is primarily for physical release.
_____	_____	_____	Our religious beliefs have the greatest influence on our attitudes toward sexual behavior.
_____	_____	_____	Men and women have equal rights to sexual pleasure.
_____	_____	_____	There are sexual activities that I would consider wrong for a married couple to practices. If you agree, list these: _____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	To be truly satisfying, intercourse must lead to simultaneous orgasm.
_____	_____	_____	Sexual fantasies are normal.
_____	_____	_____	Masturbation (self-stimulation) is an acceptable means for sexual pleasure and release.
_____	_____	_____	The male always should be the aggressor in sexual activity.
_____	_____	_____	In general, women don't enjoy sex as much as men.
_____	_____	_____	Men should be allowed more freedom in sexual behavior than women.
_____	_____	_____	The quality of a sexual relationship is more than just physical pleasure.

(Adapted from *Sexual Fulfillment in Marriage: A Multimedia Learning Kit* by Clifford and Joyce Penner, Family Concern, Inc., 1977. Available through the Penners at 2 N. Lake Avenue, Suite 610, Pasadena, California 91101)

SPRING FEVER: A TIME FOR LOVE TO BLOSSOM
SONG OF SONGS 2:8-17

I. EXPRESS YOUR DESIRE FOR LOVE. (2:8-14)

1. Say it with your actions. (2:8)
2. Say it with your eyes. (2:9)
3. Say it with your words. (2:10-13)
4. Say it with your heart. (2:14)

II. EXPECT SOME DANGERS TO LOVE (2:15)

1. Trouble is usually in the small things.
2. Relationships are uniquely sensitive things.

III. ENJOY THE DELIGHTS OF LOVE. (2:16-17)

1. Invite your mate to feed on you. (2:16)
2. Invite your mate to feast on you. (2:17)

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS
SONG OF SOLOMON 2:8-17

1. It's the small stuff that ruins a marriage. Always be on the lookout for the little foxes that can slip in unawares and damage your relationship.
2. Grow in your knowledge of each other.
 - *Ask your mate some tough, probing questions.
 - *Ask yourself some tough, probing questions.
3. Identify and resolve potential problems such as:
 - * Communication
 - * Background
 - * Aspirations and goals
 - * Children (number? and discipline)
 - * Expectations
 - * In-law relations
 - * Finances and debts
 - * Attitudes toward sex

THE AVERAGE MAN

Several years ago, *USA Today* carried an article from *Men's Health* magazine. The article was based upon "...reports, surveys, and reams of marketing data..." profiling the average male in America today. The report revealed that the average man:

- * Loses his virginity at 17
- * Marries at 26
- * Can run a mile in 12 minutes
- * Can do 30-33 1/2 sit-ups per minute
- * Sleeps 7 1/2 hours a night
- * Buys frozen pizza 4 times a month
- * Can bench press 88% of his body weight
- * Has 70-80 pounds of muscle
- * Watches TV about 28 hours per week
- * Saves less than \$3,000 per year for retirement
- * Earns an annual salary of \$29,533
- * Is 5'9" tall and weighs 172 pounds
- * Will have sex with 5-10 partners during his lifetime
- * Will consume 11 beers in a 7-day period

Whatever this "kind of guy" may be, he is certainly not the guy God intended. He is absolutely not the guy we discover in Song of Solomon.

Gilbert Holland wrote a poem that in some sense captures the essence of the husband described in the Song of Solomon. May it be said of us, "there goes such a man."

"God Give Us Men!"

"God, give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And (condemn) his treacherous flatteries without winking!
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds
Mingle in selfish strife, lo! freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land and waiting justice sleeps."

A LOVER'S NIGHTMARE
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:1-5

I. BE PASSIONATE WITH YOUR LOVE. (3:1)

1. Seek the right mate
2. Savor the right moment

II. BE PERSISTENT WITH YOUR LOVE. (3:2-3)

1. Pursue your spouse with healthy abandonment. (3:2)
2. Pursue your spouse with helpful advice. (3:3)

III. BE PROTECTIVE WITH YOUR LOVE. (3:4)

1. Hold on to him with your advances
2. Honor him with your availability

IV. BE PATIENT WITH YOUR LOVE. (3:5)

1. Wait for the right person
2. Wait for the right time

TWENTY-FIVE WAYS TO LOVE YOUR LOVER

by Joanna Weaver

1. List the "top 10 reasons I'm the most fortunate husband/wife in the world." Read them aloud to your spouse.
2. Surprise your mate by doing one of his or her chores. When asked why, give a smooch and say, "because you are worth it."
3. Don't just show - tell! Say, "I love you."
4. Communicate your plans to each other. On Sunday night, go over your schedules for the coming week.
5. Use the T.H.I.N.K. method to determine whether an issue needs to be brought up. Is it true? helpful? important? necessary? kind?
6. Plan an appreciation celebration for your mate, complete with his or her favorite meal.
7. Look at your schedule. Make time with your spouse a weekly priority.
8. Bring back those dating days. After picking up the sitter, walk back outside and knock on the door with flowers in your hand.
9. Don't turn on the TV until after dinnertime, if at all. Wait for a conversation to break out.
10. Pray together. Thank god for your mate, then pray for his or her special needs.
11. On your spouse's birthday, send your in-laws a thank-you card.
12. Set boundaries in outside relationships. Don't let anyone take away too much of the time you spend with your spouse.
13. Are you seeing eye to eye? Experts have found the deeper the love, the more frequent the eye contact.
14. Pull out old love letters, taking turns reading and reminiscing.
15. Take turns reading from the Bible each night.
16. Stretch out birthdays with special activities, fun surprises and a whole lot of hoopla.
17. Be a student of your spouse. Learn what he likes. Learn what she needs.
18. Treat your wife like a lady. Open doors and hold chairs.
19. Throw away fighting words like "you never..." and "you should..." Use healing words like "I'm sorry..." and "you may be right."
20. Make church attendance a joyful priority.
21. Instead of making a joke at your spouse's expense, give a sincere compliment.
22. Create traditions as a couple by budgeting money for special times together.
23. Be affectionate. Back rubs and tender hand-holding communicate love.
24. Choose your battles carefully.
25. Be a person of integrity. Give your spouse no reason to doubt your word or question your commitment.

**WHAT A GREAT DAY FOR A WEDDING
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:6-11**

I. IN MARRIAGE WE PLEDGE OUR PURITY. (3:6)

1. We should have no one but our mate.
2. We should honor no one but our mate.

II. IN MARRIAGE WE PLEDGE OUR PROTECTION. (3:7-8)

1. We gain strength. (3:7)
2. We give security. (3:8)

III. IN MARRIAGE WE PLEDGE OUR POSSESSIONS. (3:9-10)

1. Friends should bear witness in this celebration. (3:9-11)
2. Family should bear witness in this celebration. (3:11)

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:6-11

1. Marriage involves public attestation. (3:6-8,11)
2. Marriage involves private consummation. (implied 3:9)
3. Christian marriage involves: (Gen. 2:24)
 - a. A commitment to leave
 - b. A commitment to cleave
4. A biblical wedding should be:
 - a. A time set apart - an event
 - b. A time of honoring the bride.

SEVEN QUESTIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE

1. Have you faced the myths of marriage with honesty?

Myths can include that both partners expect the same thing out of marriage - "everything bad in my life will disappear" - or, "my spouse will make me whole."

2. Can you identify your love style?

The word "love" can mean different things to people, often translated into an emphasis on passion, intimacy or commitment.

3. Have you developed the habit of happiness?

Happy couples are that way because both partners decide to be happy regardless of their circumstances.

4. Can you say what you mean and understand what you hear?

Good communication, not just talking, can be the difference in whether a marriage survives.

5. Have you bridged the gender gap?

Men are from mars; women are from venus. Understanding the differences is the key.

6. Do you know how to fight a good fight?

Conflict is inevitable, but knowing how to "fight fair" is critical.

7. Are you and your partner soul mates?

Marriage thrives when the spiritual dimensions of both participants are nourished.

"Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts"

by Les and Leslie Parrott



**THE BEAUTY AND BLESSINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S BEDROOM
SONG OF SOLOMON 4:1-5:1**

When you are intimate with your mate:

I. EXPRESS YOUR ADMIRATION. (4:1-7)

1. Be specific. (4:1-4)
2. Be sensual. (4:5-6)
3. Be supportive. (4:7)

II. EXTEND YOUR INVITATION. (4:8)

1. A woman may seem uninterested: But she's not!
2. A woman may seem unavailable: But she is!

III. EXPLAIN YOUR SATISFACTION. (4:9-11)

1. She is a friend to you (sister)
2. She is a lover to you (spouse)

IV. ENJOY THE CONSUMATION. (4:12-5:1)

1. Rejoice in her purity. (4:12)
2. Rejoice in her pleasures. (4:13-15)
3. Rejoice in her promises. (4:16)
4. Rejoice in her perplexities. (5:1)

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS
SONG OF SOLOMON 4:1-5:1

1. Biblical purpose for sexual intercourse:
 - a. Procreation
 - b. Consummate the marriage covenant
 - c. Expression of love
 1. Love vs. Lust
 2. Meeting their needs
 - d. Pleasure and enjoyment
 - e. Creates 1 out of 2
2. Bedroom atmosphere:
 - Language is especially important to a woman
 - Appearance is especially important to a man
3. Do you make her feel needed and wanted?
4. Romance!
 - Creativity is essential
 - The unexpected element is appreciated

TWELVE WAYS TO KEEP PASSION ALIVE IN YOUR MARRIAGE

1. Work At It

Lifelong love and romance take effort and courage. Few things in life are as complicated as building and maintaining an intimate relationship. You need to work on it constantly to get through those trying periods that require extra work.

2. Think Team

When making important decisions, such as whether to work overtime or accept a transfer or promotion, ask yourself this question: What will the choice I am making do to the people I love? Try to make the decision that will have the most positive impact on your marriage and your family.

3. Be Protective

Guard and separate your marriage and your family from the rest of the world. This might mean refusing to work on certain days or nights. You might turn down relatives and friends who want more of you than you have the time, energy or inclination to give. You might even have to say no to your children to protect time with your spouse. (The kids won't suffer if this is done occasionally and not constantly).

4. Accept That Good Is As Perfect As It Gets When It Comes To Our Mate

Sacrifices and compromises have to be made. You might need to settle for a job rather than pursue a career. You may not earn as much as you wish. Most of all, you will have to accept that there is not enough time at this point in your life to do and be all that you might wish to accomplish.

5. Share Your Thoughts And Feelings

Unless you constantly communicate, signaling to your partner where you are and getting a recognizable message in return, you will lose each other along the way. Create or protect communication-generating rituals. No matter how busy you may be, make time for each other. For example, take a night off each week, go for a walk together every few days, go out to breakfast if you can't have dinner alone, or just sit together for 15 minutes each evening simply talking, without any other distractions.

6. Manage Anger Better

Try to break the cycle in which hostile, cynical attitudes fuel unpleasant emotions, leading to aggressive behaviors that stress each other out and create more tension. Recognize that anger signals frustration of some underlying need, and try to figure out what that need might be. Avoid igniting feelings of anger with the judgment that you are

being mistreated. Watch your non-verbal signals, such as the tone of your voice, your hand and arm gestures, facial expressions and body movements. Remain seated, don't stand or march around the room. Deal with one issue at a time. Don't let your anger about one thing lead you into showering the other with a cascade of issues. If different topics surface during your conflict, flag them to address later. Try to notice subtle signs that anger or irritation is building. If you are harboring these feelings, express them before they build too much and lead to an angry outburst. Keep focused on the problem, not persons. Don't turn a fairly manageable problem into a catastrophe. Emphasize where you agree.

7. Declare Your Devotion To Each Other Again And Again

True long-range intimacy requires repeated affirmations of commitment to your partner. Remember: love is in what you say and in how you act. Buy flowers. Do the dishes and take out the trash without being asked. Committed couples protect the boundaries around their relationship. Share secrets with each other more than with any circle of friends and relatives.

8. Give Each Other Permission To Change

Pay attention. If you aren't learning something new about each other every week or two, you simply aren't observing closely enough. You are focusing on other things, not one another. Bored couples fail to update how they view each other. They act as though the roles they assigned and assumed early in the relationship will remain forever comfortable. Remain constantly abreast of each other's dreams, fears, goals disappointments, hopes, regrets, wishes and fantasies. People continue to trust the people who know them best and who accept them.

9. Have Fun Together

Human beings usually fall in love with the ones who make them laugh. They stay in love with those who make them feel safe enough to come out to play. Keep delight a priority. Put your creative energy into making yourselves joyful and producing a relationship that regularly feels like recess.

10. Make Yourself Trustworthy

People come to trust the ones who affirm them. They learn to distrust those who act as if a relationship were a continual competition over who is right. Always act as if each of you has thoughts, impressions and preferences that make sense, even if your opinions or needs differ.

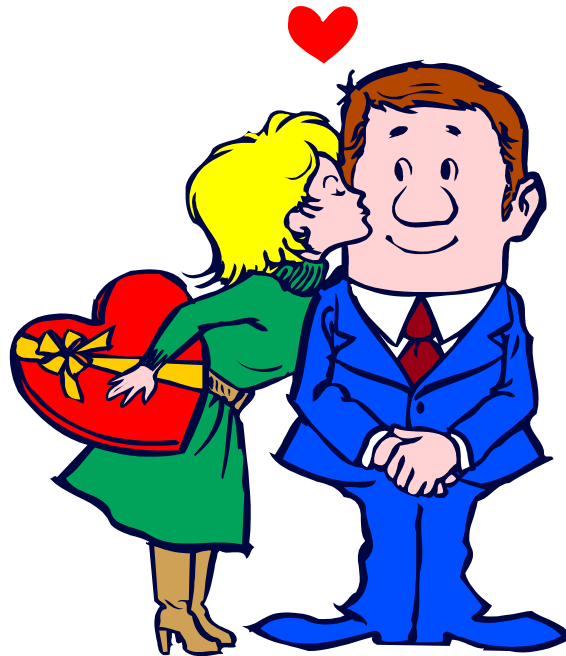
Realize your partner's perceptions will always contain at least a few truths, and validate those truths before adding your perspectives to the discussion.

11. Forgive And Forget

Don't be too hard on each other. If your passion and love are to survive, you must learn how to forgive. You and your partner regularly need to wipe the slate clean so that anger doesn't build and resentment will not fester. Holding on to hurts and hostility is a way of blocking real intimacy. It will only assure that no matter how hard you otherwise work at it, your relationship will not grow. Do what you can to heal the wounds in a relationship, even if you did not cause them. Be compassionate about the fact that neither of you intended to hurt the other as you set out on this journey.

12. Cherish And Applaud

The most fundamental ingredient in the intimacy formula is cherishing each other. You need to celebrate each other's presence. If you don't give your partner admiration, applause, appreciation, acknowledgement, the benefit of the doubt, encouragement and the message that you are happy to be there with them now, where will they receive those gifts? Be generous. Be gracious. One of the most painful mistakes couples make is the failure to notice their own partner's heroics. These small acts of selflessness include taking out the trash, doing the laundry, mowing the lawn, driving the carpool, preparing the taxes, keeping track of birthdays, calling the repairman and cleaning the bathroom, as well as enduring hundreds of other routine labors. People are amazingly resilient if given at least a little reinforcement for their efforts. But they become demoralized if they toil without appreciation. So make a concerted effort to notice daily acts of heroism by your loved ones.



**A BAD NIGHT IN THE BEDROOM
SONG OF SOLOMON 5:2-8**

I. THE DESIRE FOR LOVE MAY FAIL BECAUSE OF BAD TIMING. (5:2)

1. Work may cause the problem.
2. Words may not cure the problem.

II. THE DETAILS FOR LOVE MAY FEEL LIKE TOO MUCH TROUBLE. (5:3)

1. Guard against having silly priorities.
2. Guard against being a selfish person.

III. THE DENIAL OF LOVE MAY FLOWER ONLY TEMPORARILY. (5:4-7)

1. You may reconsider saying no. (5:4-5)
2. You may reap from saying no. (5:6)
 - a. He may walk.
 - b. He may not talk.
3. You may regret saying no. (5:7)
 - a. You may be alone.
 - b. You may be ashamed.

IV. THE DRIVE OF LOVE MAY FLAME WITH TESTIMONY. (5:8)

1. Tell others of your love.
2. Tell your mate of your love.

SIDE EFFECTS OF STRESS IN MARRIAGE

Think of it this way: If you're driving a car 30 miles per hour, you're likely to be reasonably courteous to your passenger. You might ask, Are you comfortable? Want to listen to the radio? But if you are driving 120 miles per hour, you won't care if your passengers are comfortable. You need to keep your eyes and mind on what you're doing.

1. If you manage your life as a perpetual road race, there will be an inevitable toll on your relationship.
2. If you are frequently exhausted, you will be too tired to pay adequate attention to each other.
3. If you are controlling when you interact with others, they will stop revealing themselves, fearing unwanted invasion and manipulation.
4. If you are a perfectionist, your criticism will alienate others.
5. If you are excessively competitive, others will avoid you for fear of being put down.
6. If you are impatient, others will feel anxious when around you.
7. If you repeatedly express irritation and hostility, others will undoubtedly feel wounded and not nurtured by you.
8. If you habitually do or think more than one thing at once, others will feel that you never fully pay attention to them.

"KEYS TO MARITAL HARMONY AND RECONCILIATION"
SONG OF SOLOMON 5:9-6:13A

When problems arise in marriage:

I. THERE MUST BE A CHANGE IN APPRECIATION FOR OUR PARTNER.
(5:9-16)

(From indifference [5:2-8] to sensitivity and gratitude.)

1. Some may challenge our partner's value. (5:9)
2. We should catalogue our partner's value. (5:10-16)
 - a. Value his appearance. (5:10-16)
 - b. Value his character. (5:10-12)
 - c. Value his fragrance. (5:13)
 - d. Value his attractiveness. (5:13)
 - e. Value his security. (5:14)
 - f. Value his strength. (5:14-15)
 - g. Value his physical expressions. (5:16)
 - h. Value his verbal expressions. (5:16)
 - i. Value his love making. (5:16)
 - j. Value his friendship. (5:16)

II . THERE MUST BE A CONFIDENCE OF REUNION WITH OUR PARTNER. (6:1-3)

1. Request his presence. (6:1)
2. Respond to his presence. (6:2-3)
 - a. She knows where he is. (6:2) - (His presence)
 - b. She knows whose he is. (6:3) - (His position)

III. THERE SHOULD BE A CERTAINTY OF RECONCILIATION WITH OUR PARTNER. (6:4-10)

1. Say she is beautiful. (6:4-7) - (cf. 4:1-3; note the omission of 4:4ff.)
2. Say she is irresistible. (6:5)
3. Say she is special. (6:8-9)
4. Say she is celestial. (6:10)

IV. THERE SHOULD BE A CELEBRATION OF RESTORATION WITH OUR PARTNER. (6:11-13)

1. Anticipate a new season of love. (6:12)
2. Acknowledge a new season of love. (6:12)
3. Announce a new season of love. (6:13)

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS
SONG OF SOLOMON 5:9-6:13A

1. When problems arise, look for the positive in your spouse, not the negative.
2. Listing those characteristics you appreciate in your mate will help rekindle the flame of love.
3. Forgiveness and acceptance of that forgiveness are essential for relational restoration.
4. Patient silence can often prepare the way for reunion.
5. Life partnership precedes sexual partnership.
6. New and fresh evidences of your love are a certain aid to a happy marriage.

*seek to move from ingratitude to appreciation with your mate.

*seek to move from pride to humility in relation to your mate.

A QUIZ FOR COUPLES

How well do you really know your partner?

A thorough knowledge leads to a deep friendship. That is the key to a lasting marriage.

Answer the following either True or False

1. I can name my partner's best friends.
2. I know what stresses that my partner currently faces.
3. I know the names of those who have been irritating my partner lately.
4. I know some of my partner's life dreams.
5. I am very familiar with my partner's spiritual beliefs.
6. I can outline my partner's basic philosophy of life.
7. I can list the relatives my partner likes least.
8. I know my partner's favorite music.
9. I can list my partner's favorite three movies.
10. I know the most stressful thing that happened to my partner in childhood.
11. I can list my partner's major aspirations.
12. I know what my partner would do if he/she suddenly received 10 million dollars.
13. I can relate in detail my first impressions of my partner.
14. I ask my partner about his/her world periodically.
15. I feel my partner knows me well.

Scoring: If you answered true to more than half, this is an area of strength in your marriage. You know what makes your partner "tick."

If not, you have some work to do. Take time to learn more about your spouse to make your relationship stronger.

Adapted from *The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work* by John Gottman

TEN PRACTICAL SECRETS FOR BEING HAPPILY MARRIED

1. Dream a dream! Develop a vision of everything you believe your marriage can be.
2. Be steadfast! A happy marriage requires thoroughly committed partners.
3. Build the trust factor! Spouses in a solid relationship have complete faith and confidence in each other.
4. Stay healthy! A good marriage is encouraged by two emotionally, physically and spiritually healthy people.
5. Work on chemistry! Maximize passion, romance and affection. Be sensitive to each others needs.
6. Learn to talk! Become partners of good communication.
7. Never say die! Conflict is inevitable, so learn to handle it productively, not fatally!
8. Seek a mutually satisfying sexual relationship! A great sex life results from and also builds intimacy in marriage.
9. Get connected! Recognize the important role of children and friends in making your marriage successful.
10. Pursue spirituality! Partners in great marriages find significance in their spiritual lives. Seek to grow in your walk with Jesus.

“Men Behaving Beautifully”

(How to improve on the honeymoon)

Song of Solomon 6:13-7:10

We improve on the honeymoon:

I. WHEN WE ARE ACTIVE IN THE PRAISE OF OUR MATE 6:13-7:6

(cf. 4:1-7; 6:4-9 and note the more intimate, sensual and developed adoration of his spouse)

1. There must be public praise 6:13
2. There must be physical praise 7:1-5
3. There must be particular praise 7:1-5
4. There must be personal praise 7:6

P.A. Make it a priority to regularly say something nice about your spouse publicly and privately. Be genuine! Be specific!

II. WHEN WE ARE AGGRESSIVE IN THE PURSUIT OF OUR MATE

7:7-9

1. Express a desire for her love. 7:7-8
2. Expect delight from her love. 7:8-9

P.A. Fan the flames of sexual intimacy. Be creative in your advances!

III. WHEN WE ACCEPT THE PASSION OF OUR MATE 7:9-10

1. There will be mutual giving (cf. 1 Cor. 7:3-4) 7:9
2. There will be mutual gratification 7:10

P.A. Strive for mutual joy, pleasure and satisfaction physically and psychologically. Be giving! Be receptive!

PROVERBS 32

“The Husband of Noble Character”

A husband of noble character who can find? He is worth more than winning the Publisher’s Clearinghouse Sweepstakes.

His wife has full confidence in him and lacks nothing of importance.

He brings her good, not harm, all the days of her life.

He works hard to provide for his family. Getting up early he helps get the kids ready for school, then dashes off to work.

With his shoulder to the grindstone he works with energy and vigor, as one who is working for the Lord. And while busy, he always finds time to call his wife during the day to say, “I love you.”

He promptly comes home from work and immediately pitches in with the chores, helping the children with their homework, or with making dinner. While hot dogs and baked beans are his specialty, he doesn’t fear heating up a TV dinner or even making a meat loaf. He does this with such ease that all are amazed and in awe.

When his wife prepares a meal he always eats with gusto and when finished, never forgets to smile and tell her how great the meal was. Of course, he is always the first to volunteer to do the dishes or at least to volunteer the children to complete the task!

All in all, he is a joy to have in the kitchen.

As a father, there is no equal on the face of the earth. No matter how exhausted from work or chores, he always takes time for his children.

Whether its making funny faces at the baby, tickling the small child, wrestling or sharing tea with an older child, or making pained and disbelieving expressions at his teenager, he is always there for them.

He is a whiz at math, science, spelling, geography, Spanish, and any other subject his children are studying at school.

And if he should be totally ignorant of the subject at hand, he skillfully hides his ignorance by sending the child to their mother.

He can fix any problem from a scraped knee to loose bicycle chains, from interpreting rules for a kickball game to referring sparing matches between his kids.

More importantly, he is also the spiritual leader in the family. He always takes the family to church. He shows his children, by his example, what it means to love Jesus and be a Christian.

He teaches his children how to pray and the importance of knowing and loving God. He often rises early to pray for his wife and children and reads from his Bible at night before sleeping.

He disciplines his children with loving firmness; never yelling or with humiliating words. He is always more interested in teaching a lesson than in simply punishing.

During the day he meditates on God's Word and on how to live it. He shows Christ in all his dealings with others and is considered a valuable employee by his bosses. His co-workers respect his hard work, his integrity, and his kindness.

He always shows his wife the utmost respect, even opening the door for her. He is always quick with a word of encouragement, and is constantly telling her how beautiful she is, even when she isn't wearing any make-up.

A day seldom passes that he doesn't tell her of his love for her. Praise for her is always on his lips.

Anniversaries and birthdays are never forgotten and gifts and flowers are often given, “just because.”

He even makes superhuman efforts to be nice when her family is visiting.

He is full of compassion for the pain of others and willingly helps those in need. Whether its changing a stranger’s flat tire, helping with a friend’s home improvement project, or feeding the poor at the local soup kitchen, he is the first to volunteer.

He is not afraid to shed a tear with a friend in pain or to be rowdy in laughter at another’s joke.

He loves life and lives it with passion.

His children, while not always calling him “blessed,” have no doubts about his great love for them. His wife also calls him many things, among them, “blessed,” and she thanks God for him.

Many men do great things but he surpasses them all.

Flattery is deceptive and good looks, like hair, is fleeting; but a man who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give him the reward he has earned, and let his deeds bring him praise.

Michael M. Jones

Louisville, KY 1996

“God’s Wives Club”
(Essential ingredients for a lifetime of happiness)
Song of Solomon 7:10-8:7

I. DELIVER A PERSONAL INVITATION FOR LOVE 7:10-13

1. Love should be specific. 7:10
2. Love should be secure. 7:10
3. Love should be spontaneous. 7:11
4. Love should be sensual. 7:12-13

II. DECLARE THROUGH PUBLIC AFFECTION YOUR LOVE 8:1-2

1. Show your loyalty to one another. 8:1
2. Strengthen your dependency on one another. 8:2

III. DEMONSTRATE THROUGH PRIVATE CONSUMMATION YOUR LOVE 8:3-4

1. Remember tenderness is ensuring. 8:3
2. Remember timing is important. 8:4

IV. DEFINE THROUGH PASSIONATE EXPRESSION YOUR LOVE 8:5-7

1. Your love is to be pleasing. 8:5
2. Your love is to be personal. 8:6
3. Your love is to be permanent. 8:6
4. Your love is to be possessive. 8:6
5. Your love is to be powerful. 8:6
6. Your love is to be perpetual. 8:7
7. Your love is to be priceless. 8:7

Principles to Remember

- *Say the right thing in the right way at the right time.**
- *Lovemaking does not begin in the bed but in the heart.**
- *Remember the vulnerability of the male ego.**
- *Be sensitive to a woman’s definition of romance.**
- *Creativity and sensitivity are twin essentials for a growing and satisfying marriage.**

**LOVE IS A WONDERFUL THING
SONG OF SOLOMON 8:5-14**

- I. LOVE IS PROTECTIVE 8:5
- II. LOVE IS PERSONAL 8:6
- III. LOVE IS PERMANENT 8:6
- IV. LOVE IS POSSESSIVE 8:6
- V. LOVE IS POWERFUL 8:6
- VI. LOVE IS PERSEVERING 8:7
- VII. LOVE IS PRICELESS 8:8
- VIII. LOVE IS PURE 8:8-9
- IX. LOVE IS PEACEFUL 8:10
- X. LOVE IS PRODUCTIVE 8:11-12
- XI. LOVE IS PRIVILEGED 8:13
- XII. LOVE IS PARTICULAR 8:14

THE FRIENDSHIP INVENTORY

Are you and your spouse friends? Take this quiz and find out.

- YES NO I respect my spouse.
 YES NO I like him/her as he/she is.
 YES NO I could live without him/her, but my life would be poorer for it.
 YES NO I enjoy sharing what we have in common with others of like mind.
 YES NO If we were not married, we would still share many of the same ideas, ideals, and activities.
 YES NO I respect him/her even when he/she does things that upset or annoy me.
 YES NO I know him/her well enough that I can anticipate what his/her words or behavior will be in most circumstances.
 YES NO It's easy to turn a blind eye to his/her faults.
 YES NO I want what is best for him/her.
 YES NO I care enough to let him/her go or even give him/her up.
 YES NO My respect for him/her is not based on his/her accomplishments.
 YES NO I know he/she is a kindred spirit even though I may not be assured of this frequently.
 YES NO He/she brings out the best in me.
 YES NO I feel we can stand together against the views of outsiders.
 YES NO I can be both strong and weak with him/her.
 YES NO My giving to him/her is characterized by freedom and willingness and not grudging sacrifice.
 YES NO My relationship with him/her is characterized by trust.

Rate your friendship level by giving one point of each "yes" answer:

- 15-17 Very good
12-14 Good
9-11 Needs work
6-8 Poor
0-5 Very poor

[The Friendship inventory is adapted from Andre Bustanoby, *Can Men and Women Be Just Friends?* Zondervan, 1985, pp. 112-116.]