

“Wonder Woman”
(Essential Ingredients for a Lifetime of Happiness)
Song of Solomon 7:10 – 8:4

I. She delivers personal invitations for love. 7:10-13

1. Be specific. (7:10)
2. Be secure. (7:10)
3. Be spontaneous. (7:11-12)
4. Be sensual. (7:12-13)

II. She declares through public affection her love. 8:1-2

1. Show your loyalty to one another. (8:1)
2. Strengthen your desire for one another. (8:2)

III. She demonstrates through private consummation her love. 8:3-4

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

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

“Wonder Woman”
(Song of Solomon 7:10 – 8:4)

Introduction

I recently came across some counsel guys would like to pass on to the ladies that, at least in our judgment, would go quite a ways in helping you be just the right mate. I call it “25 Essentials for a Fantastic Female.”

1. Learn to work the toilet seat. It it’s up, put it down. We need it up, you need it down. You don’t hear us complaining about you leaving it down.
2. If you won’t dress like the Victoria’s Secret girls, don’t expect us to act like Don Juan or Romeo guys.
3. Don’t cut your hair. Ever. Long hair is always more attractive than short hair. One of the big reasons guys fear getting married is that married women always cut their hair, and by then you’re stuck with her.
4. Birthdays, Valentines, and Anniversaries are not quests to see if we can find the perfect present yet again!
5. If you ask a question you don’t want an answer to, expect an answer you don’t want to hear.
6. Sometimes, we’re not thinking about you. Live with it. Don’t ask what we’re thinking about unless you are prepared to discuss such topics as March Madness, the shotgun formation, and the stupidity of the “prevent defense?”
7. Saturday = Sports. It’s like the full moon or the changing of the tides. Let it be.
8. Shopping is not a sport, and no, we’re never going to think of it that way.
9. When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you want to wear is fine.
10. You have enough clothes.
11. You have too many shoes.
12. Crying is definitely blackmail.
13. Ask for what you want. Let’s be clear on this one: Subtle hints don’t work. Strong hints don’t work. Really obvious hints don’t work. Just say it!
14. We don’t know what day it is. We never will. Mark anniversaries on the calendar.

15. Yes and No are perfectly acceptable answers to almost every question.
16. Come to us with a problem only if you want help solving it. That's what we do.
17. A headache that lasts for 17 months is a problem. See a doctor.
18. If something we said could be interpreted two ways, and one of the ways makes you mad or sad, we meant the other one.
19. You can either tell us to do something OR tell us how to do something but not both.
20. Whenever possible, please say whatever you have to say during commercials.
21. ALL men see in only 16 colors. Peach is a fruit, not a color.
22. It if itches, it will be scratched.
23. If we ask what's wrong and you say "nothing," we will act like nothing's wrong. We know you're lying, but it's just not worth the pain.
24. Anything we said 6 months ago is inadmissible in an argument. All comments become null and void after 7 days.
25. Most guys own three pairs of shoes. What makes you think we'd be any good at choosing which pair, out of thirty, would look good with your dress?

The ladies may not be very impressed with this list from the men. That is quite understandable. But what if I could give you God's perspective on a fabulous female, a picture of His wonder woman. Would you be interested? I believe such a woman is portrayed in Song of Solomon 7:10 – 8:4. She is not characterized by 25 peculiar particulars, but rather by 3 overarching attributes that any man would find attractive and irresistible.

I. She delivers personal invitations for love. 7:10-13

Solomon, at least at this point in his life, is a one-woman kind of man. Shulamith is a one-man kind of woman. His attention is on her, and her affection is set on him. The kind words of praise and affirmation from her husband have set Shulamith free to respond sensually to her husband. She extends an invitation for a romantic getaway. What are its components?

1) Be specific. 7:10

Shulamith says, "I am my beloved's" (NKJV), "I belong to my lover" (NIV). She belongs to him and no other. He is the only man in her life. The danger of infidelity is not on her radar screen and she wisely avoids their snares.

The warning signs of infidelity are not difficult to spot. We simply need to be on the lookout. Nine in particular stand out.

Nine Warning Signs of Infidelity

1. Feeling of “going through the marriage motions.”
2. Inventing excuses to visit someone of the opposite sex.
3. Increasing male/female contacts in normal environments (e.g.: work, choir, recreation).
4. Being preoccupied with thoughts about another person. (Something only you and God will know).
5. Exchanging of gifts with a “friend” of the opposite sex.
6. Making daily/weekly contact with someone by phone.
7. Putting yourself in situations where a “friend or employee” might become more.
8. Having to touch, embrace or glance at a person of the opposite sex.
9. Spending time alone with anyone of the opposite sex.

A wise husband and a wise wife will covenant never to be alone with a person of the opposite sex other than their spouse. Such a commitment is a sure safeguard against adultery and a pledge of the specific and particular nature of one’s love and devotion for their mate.

2) Be secure. 7:10

Shulamith can also say of her husband, “And his desire is for me” (NIV). Solomon had eyes for only one woman and that woman is his wife. This is how it should be for all men, that our desire is only set on a single lady: our wife. A wife who is secure in her relationship with her husband is released to love him without holding anything back. She does not fear her love will be prostituted or abused. In an article entitled “New Rules for a Happy Marriage,” Sue Ellin Browder gives us seven tips which will build security in a happy relationship.

1. Love your differences.
2. Sweat the small stuff.
3. Laugh.
4. Put your heads together.
5. Stay connected.
6. Take a leap of faith.
7. Relive beautiful moments.¹

3) Be spontaneous. 7:11-12

For the first time in the Song, Shulamith takes the initiative in requesting a time for romance and lovemaking with her husband. She knows that sex that takes place only at home can run the risk of becoming routine. Vacations and special getaways often enhance and rekindle passion in marriage. She invites him to leave the city and its grind and to go away with her to the country for a time where they can be alone together. Four times she says “let’s go.”

Let us go forth to the Field;
 Let us lodge in the villages;
 Let us get up early to the vineyards;
 Let us see if the vine has budded,

Spring is a universal symbol of love and romance, and the signs are everywhere in their marriage. There is still a freshness and sense of anticipation to their love. Getting away, if only for a brief time, can invigorate and energize their love. Shulamith knew sexual problems can slip into a relationship if it is not properly cared for. As a woman she was aware of the role she must play to keep their sex life on a high plain. Ginny Graves outlines seven essentials that a woman must give attention to in order to keep the flames of romance raging:

1. Adjust Your Hormones. Sex and hormones are inextricably linked... hormonal upheaval can strike in a woman’s mid-to late 40’s, before menopause sets in. “In some women, when levels of sex hormones

¹ Sue Ellin Browder, “New Rules for a Happy Marriage,” *Readers Digest* (Nov. 99), 100–104.

decrease around menopause, so does sex drive,” says Barbara Sherwin, professor of psychology and obstetrics/gynecology at McGill University in Montreal.

2. **Sleep Well.** “Sleep deprivation is an underrated cause of decreased sex drive,” says Kathleen Blindt Segraves, associate professor of psychiatry at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio. The treatment is easy and inexpensive: seven to nine hours of shut-eye a night.
3. **Exercise Wisely.** Most of the news about exercise and sex is good. According to one study, aerobic exercise (an hour a day) has been shown to increase sexual frequency and responsiveness in men, and researchers assume it gives women the same libidinal zing. Extreme exercise, however, may cause a backlash... To reap exercise benefits, be sure to maintain a moderate workout schedule, increase the intensity of your regimen gradually, and consume enough calories to preserve a healthful level of body fat.

4. Beat Depression. “Depression has a constellation of symptoms, including loss of interest in sex,” says Xavier Amador, a New York City psychologist.
5. Watch Those Anti-Depressants. “One of the great ironies of anti-depressants is that they can cause sexual dysfunction,” says Dr. Andrew Leuchter, director of the Division of Adult Psychiatry at U.C.L.A.
6. Manage Stress. “Even everyday stressors correlate with reduced sexual desire in men and women,” says J. Gayle Beck, professor of psychology at the State University of New York at Buffalo. “Men are more likely to put their feelings aside in the interest of having sex, whereas women will choose not to have a sexual encounter,” she says. When stress builds up, people become too distracted to focus on giving and receiving sexual pleasure. “It’s no coincidence,” says Beck, “that a lot of couples have great sex when they’re on vacation.” If you suspect that stress is causing low libido, find time to decompress by taking a bath or a long walk early in the evening.
7. Communicate.²

4) Be sensual. 7:12-13

Budding vines, blossoms opening, pomegranates and especially mandrakes were all considered aphrodisiacs. Some referred to the mandrake as the “love apple.”³ In the midst of these outdoor delicacies Shulamith says “There I will give you my love.” Not just in the country but outside under the sun, moon and stars we will find a place just for the two of us and make passionate love.

Barbara O’Chester of Austin, Texas speaks to thousands of women every year about marriage, sex and romance. She recognizes that some women struggle in the area of romance and experiencing their own sexual pleasure. Why? She notes 10 reasons:

- 1) Ignorance
- 2) RESENTMENT
- 3) GUILT
- 4) Physical Problems (Illnesses)
- 5) Fear
- 6) passivity
- 7) hormonal
- 8) overweight

² Ginny Graves, “7 Solutions for Sexual Problems,” *Readers Digest* (Aug. 99), 102-106.

³ Carr, 165.

- 9) fatigue
- 10) lack of time

Song of Solomon provides some real assistance in overcoming a number of these. Fatigued? Take a vacation. Lack of time? Get away. Do as verse 13 directs: at the door of your mate, find pleasant fruit. Lay your inhibitions aside and let your imagination run wild. Find “all manner” of pleasant fruit. Some will be old (it is good every time without fail) and some should be new (different, previously unexplored). Shulamith says she has all of this stored up for her husband, and a wise man will certainly say let’s enjoy. And guys, not only will it be fun, it is also good for you. The British Heart Foundation just released a report that says men who make love three or four times a week are protecting themselves against heart attacks and stroke. Men who have three to four orgasms a week cut in half the risk of having a major heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years. Indeed good sex is as good an exercise as jogging or squash.⁴ While the research did not look at the impact of sexual activity on women’s long-term health, I’m sure the benefits are even better for them!

II. She declares through public affection her love. 8:1-2

These two verses sound strange to our modern western ears, but they would have spoken beautifully and affectionately to the heart of Solomon. Indeed it is the case that kind loving words are welcomed almost anytime and anywhere. They are crucial to keeping us well connected. We all might be well served to take a little advice from the family dog at this point.

“Fido may do a better job of greeting your spouse when he or she comes home than you do, says William Doherty, director of the Marriage and Family Therapy program at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. The family dog is loyal, enthusiastic and totally focused on the greeting ritual. But your opening words to your spouse just might be a question about having left the garage door open or remembering to pay a bill. And that attitude makes a difference. Small “couple rituals” – such as a loving greeting – add up in the long run. They help maintain connection between partners and “are the glue we need to help us cling together in times of stress and in seasons of despair,” Doherty says. The absence of such intimate rituals may indicate that a marriage is drifting along on “automatic pilot.”⁵

Nothing was on “auto pilot” in this marriage. Shulamith made no assumptions and she left nothing to chance. She wanted her husband and the world to know how she felt. What do we learn from her?

⁴ David Derbyshire, “A Little Loving Makes the Heart Last Longer,” *Sex and Health* (11-29-00). *The Telegraph*, #2014.

⁵ Karen S. Peterson, “Take Time to Nurture A Marriage,” *USA Today* (7-5-00).

1) Show your loyalty to one another. 8:1

Shulamith says she wishes Solomon was her brother so she could shower him publicly with affectionate kisses. In the Ancient Near East it was considered appropriate only for near relatives to engage in such public displays of love and affection. “The freedom to kiss in public would not apply to her husband.”⁶ Shulamith regrets this. She wants all to know how she feels about her husband. She will not overturn accepted social expectations and suffer scorn and ridicule. She will not be despised. Her actions may have to be curtailed for the moment, but her words trumpet a message that is music to the ears and heart of her husband.

Pawing one another in public is still in bad taste. Gracious and genuine tokens of our love, loyalty and affection are always welcomed. They will be well received by our mate and they will provide testimony of our devotion to others.

A lonely heart, even in marriage, is often a sick heart and in more ways than one. In an article entitled “Lonely Hearts Often Have Sick Hearts,” Ronald Kotulak notes,

“Loneliness is bad for the heart in more ways than one, according to new research that shows the physiological toll of psychological isolation. But the research, conducted by a team from the University of Chicago and Ohio State University also suggests a remedy: Just saying hello or being nice in other small ways can help prevent heart attacks among the lonely. The study found that being lonely is a major risk factor of heart disease, as bad as a high-fat diet, high blood pressure, obesity, smoking or physical inactivity. Loneliness tends to raise blood pressure and disrupt sleep, both of which put people at greater risk of heart trouble. Population experts long have known that lonely people tend to be sicker and die younger, but they didn’t know why. Women with few social contacts and who feel isolated, for instance, have a greater risk of dying of cancer. Married cancer patients have better outcomes than unmarried cancer patients. But loneliness is not just being alone. It involves feelings of isolations, of disconnectedness and of not belonging, each of which can occur when a person is in a crowd or alone. Lonely people perceive their world as less reinforcing and more threatening. They may not have a romantic partner or close friends...”⁷

Demonstrate in clear and unambiguous ways your love and loyalty to one another. Remember: it’s good for the heart.

2) Strengthen your desire for one another. 8:2

⁶ Garrett, 424.

⁷ Ronald Kotulak, “Lonely Hearts Often Have Sick Hearts,” *Chicago Tribune* (8-8-00).

Shulamith begins to play with her husband. She assumes the role of an older sister and tells him how she would relate to him. She would lead him and bring him into the house of her mother. The word for “lead” refers to “a superior leading an inferior: a general, his army; a king, his captain; a shepherd, his sheep She would lead her younger brother to their common home.”⁸ Shulamith notes it was at home that she received instruction from her mother. In the context, she must mean instruction about matters of sexual intimacy and love. This is a valuable lesson, especially for those of us who are parents. “The art of preparing for love is best learned at home.”⁹ Dads and moms must take charge at appropriate times and in appropriate ways in teaching their children about the birds and the bees. They cannot leave this vital task in the hands of the schools. They dare not entrust it to a locker room and girlfriend talk. Dads must instruct their sons and mothers must guide their daughters. This does not mean dads have no part in training their daughters or moms in assisting their sons, but sexual identity often will play a role in who takes the lead with whom.

Shulamith informs Solomon of some things she learned from her mother. “Spiced wine,” special wine, would be on their lover’s menu as well as the juice of the pomegranate. “An ancient Egyptian love poem identifies a wife’s breasts with the fruit of the pomegranate.”¹⁰ Duane Garrett points out that the reference to her “mother’s house” could easily be a euphemism for the intimate sexual parts of the woman.¹¹ That the overtones of her words are sensual and erotic are undeniable. The joy of lovemaking they share does not wane, but grows more intensive and creative as their marriage progresses. And, much of the credit lies at the feet of Shulamith.

In an article entitled, “When He’s Not in the Mood,” Michele Weiner-Davis provides some helpful advice to build and maintain sexual passion in marriage, especially if things are on a down turn at the present.

Men

- 1) Get a complete medical check-up.
- 2) Check carefully any medications you are taking.
- 3) Check your hormone levels, especially your testosterone.
- 4) Measure any signs of depression.
- 5) Evaluate frustration or resentment over unresolved relational issues.
- 6) Educate yourself through seminars and good reading.

Women

- 1) Take action to rekindle the fire. Don’t be passive.

⁸ Glickman, 90.

⁹ Carr, 167.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Garrett, 425.

- 2) Spice things up with a new location, new positions, lingerie, candles; cast your inhibitions to the wind.
- 3) Quit nagging – it is men’s #1 complaint about their wives and is a certain turn-off.
- 4) Engage in self-care.
- 5) Be supportive.
- 6) Give him space.¹²

¹² Michelle Weiner – Davis, “When He’s Not in the Mood,” *Parade Magazine* (3-19-00).

III. She demonstrates through private consummation her love. 8:3-4

An article in Maxim, a popular men's magazine said, "Monogamy is man's greatest challenge. It takes unshakable commitment, intense emotional maturity, a will of steel in the face of overwhelming temptation. In other words, it ain't gonna happen."¹³ I don't believe this. In fact, I reject such an argument with every fiber of my being. When a man loves a woman like this Song teaches and when a woman puts her man where her heart is as this Song instructs us, the passion, commitment and devotion they enjoy will provide a glue that will hold them together until death parts them. Solomon and Shulamith again are engaged in the act of lovemaking, but the focus this time is a bit different. It is also very instructive.

¹³ Quoted in *Washington Post Online Edition* (11-12-99).

1) Remember tenderness is ensuring. 8:3

“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.” Solomon gently and tenderly is holding and caressing his wife. Perhaps they have just finished making love and they rest in each other’s arms in the afterglow of the moment. He does not leap out of bed and run downstairs for a snack. He doesn’t grab the remote control to get a sports update from ESPN. She doesn’t slip out of bed to make a quick phone call, nor does she rush out of the room to attack unfinished chores. They simply lie there loving each other and holding each other. They are tender in their affections, and tenderness speaks to the heart and soul of our mate.

In an article entitled “Nourishing Your Love,” Marie Pierson advises women in how to touch a man’s heart. Her six suggestions:

1. Show him admiration and appreciation.
2. Nurture his friendship.
3. Lower your expectations. (You married a real person!)
4. Watch your priorities. (Is he #1 after Jesus?!)
5. Enhance your love life.
6. Be forgiving. (Even as God in Christ has forgiven you. Eph. 4:32)¹⁴

2) Remember timing is important. 8:4

For the third time (cf. 2:7; 3:5) the importance of the proper time for lovemaking is addressed. Obviously God believes timing is important. First, it is the right time for lovemaking only in marriage between a man and a woman. Second, within marriage, timing and sensitivity to the needs and feelings of our mate is crucial as we build affection and romance in our marriage. Mary Ganske wisely points out,

¹⁴ Adapted from Marie Pierson, “Nourishing Your Love,” *Virtue* (date unknown).

“Even the most happily married couples fall into ruts now and then. You know, those times when minor irritations override the love and affection you feel for each other.” Drawing upon marriage seminars around the country she shares five ways to “improve communication, smooth over rough spots and get closer than ever before.”

Marriage Tip #1: Take a minute to set up your day together.

“We tell couples not to leave home in the morning until they find out at least one thing that’s going to happen to their spouse that day” says John Gottman, Ph.D., codirector of The Gottman Institute. Ask your husband what he’s doing on his lunch hour or after work. And don’t forget to fill him in on your plans. It’s also important to make sure that at least once a week, perhaps during dinner, you talk about what really matters. Ask how his relationship with his boss is going or if he’s worried about his annual checkup. “You can’t get emotionally close if you don’t know anything about your partner’s inner world,” says Dr. Gottman.

Marriage Tip #2: Discuss your expectations.

Everyone enters into marriage with preconceived notions of how things should be: We should spend certain holidays with our families, save as much money as possible, go to church every Sunday. The key is to make sure you both know what the other person expects.

Marriage Tip #3: Update your dream list.

Sit down together at least once a year to go over your dreams for the future. These may include things you want to have (a new couch) things you want to do (create a flower garden) and things you want to be (more spiritual, a better listener). Pinpointing your desires not only helps you both grow as people, but keeps you aligned as a couple. “We are constantly changing,” says Sherod Miller, Ph.D., codeveloper of Couple Communication. Find out if any new dreams have surfaced in him, and be sure to tell him yours. “Supporting your partner’s goals is one of the best and simplest ways to show you care.”

Marriage Tip #4: Control the way you argue.

Every happy couple has hot-button issues. Even the most compatible pair yell and scream sometimes. The trick is to contain the disagreements before they spin out of control. “If you handle conflicts poorly - - with hostility, nagging, or icy distance - - the love and affection you feel for each other will erode over time,” says Howard Markman, Ph.D., co-author of “Fighting For Your Marriage.” Your best bet is to head off fights in the first place by bringing up tough issues before they erupt. If despite your best efforts, the conversation turns into a screaming match, call a time-out and agree to revisit the issue when you can both be civil.

Marriage Tip #5: Use praise to change bad habits.

Too often we try to change our partner by railing about what he's doing wrong. "Don't drive so fast!" "Why can't you hang up your clothes?" But highlighting your spouse's flaws is unproductive. "He'll only get defensive and counterattack," says Bernard Guerney, Jr., Ph.D., director of the National Institute of Relationship Enhancement. A better approach is to explain what you'd like him to do. Instead of "No one should have to live in such a pigsty" a simple "I'd love it if the bedroom weren't so cluttered" will do. The next step is to heap on praise when he does what you ask." As basic as it sounds, people repeat behaviors that make them feel good," says Dr. Guerney. Just be careful not to temper your approval with digs such as, "That's a good start" or "It's about time." The more positive you are, the more compliant he'll be."¹⁵

Conclusion

Some popular pundits say the modern Christian advice concerning sex dates to 1973 and a book by a woman, Marabel Morgan's *The Total Woman*. Actually advice for Christians concerning sex goes all the way back to the book of Genesis when prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve "were both naked ... and not ashamed" (Gen. 2:25). The climax of God's counsel we find in the Song of Solomon. Here we discover that our God says sex and romance is a good thing in marriage. Indeed it is an essential thing. It is encouraging to see that more and more Christians "see sex more as a gift to be enjoyed within marriage than as an evil to be endured or avoided,"¹⁶ and that, "an orthodox view of romance, courtship and sexuality" may be the best road to sexual satisfaction. Solomon worked at doing his part. In these verses we have seen Shulamith doing her part. My only regret to this discovery is this. Why hasn't it always been this way? After all, God's plan for the Christian bedroom has never changed. It is a good thing. It is a great thing. Yes, it is a God thing.

¹⁵ Mary Ganske, "How to Make a Good Marriage Great: Little Habits that Can Make All The Difference," *Women's Day* (10-3-00).

¹⁶ Quoted from *Sex in America: A Definitive Study* by Robert Michael, John Gagnon, Edward Laumann, and Gina Kolata.