

Sermon—March 15-16, 1997
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Loving Your Spouse for a Life-Time

Keeping that Lovin' Feelin' for a Life-Time

I have been doing a series for the few weeks on marriage that I have been calling “Loving Your Spouse for a Life-Time.” Today I want to talk about the romantic side of marriage – the passion, the feeling, the fireworks, lightening and thunder. The part that they still write all the love songs about and all the movies that makes you cry. Today I want to talk about the part of marriage that makes your pulse race and your face flush – the romance.

You know, a lot of people are surprised that the Bible has anything to say about romantic love. Oh sure, I expect the Bible to talk about sacrificing for our mates, praying with out mates, but the thrill, the passion? So many people think of the Bible as a book of spiritual disembodied principles for people who have no blood, no life, no longings or yearnings.

God inspired a whole book of the Bible about romance. It is called the Song of Songs or the Song of Solomon. I want you to find that in your Bible if you have a Bible that includes the Old Testament. It is after the Psalms and Proverbs. It is the last book in what is known as “the writings.”

A lot about marriage in the Bible is communicated by songs. Way back in the beginning of the Bible it pictures the union of the first woman and the first man that was accompanied by shouts of delight and song. “This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” That first union was solemnized by a command, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. They shall become one flesh.” It was a union marked by

innocence and vulnerability. They were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.

Here in the Song of Songs, we not only have teaching about marriage or romance, but singing. It is almost impossible to talk about romance without breaking into song. Solomon's Song of Songs, or the best of songs, which is Solomon's, concerns romance and is really a collection of songs. That is why I have used song titles on your outlines today. Because songs, which are much better than simple prose or narratives, communicate romance.

In all of the old movies when a man was dancing with a woman on the dance floor and twirling her about, he would sing to her. And in this best of songs, or Song of Songs, you have two singers – a man portrayed as Solomon as a young man and then his beautiful, young beloved. Throughout there are songs of yearning and songs of admiration, songs of longing and playful teasing songs. The Songs of Solomon or the Song of Songs is a collection of songs. It is unabashedly romantic and erotic. Right there in the heart of the Bible is all this passion.

Now, I don't know if you have actually read the Songs of Solomon recently, but I think it is made much more understandable if you can capture its basic outline. If you are taking notes, you could outline the Song of Solomon from 1:1 to 3:5 as being the courtship. The courtship. It is a young couple falling in love. Then 3:6 to 3:11 is their wedding. Chapter 4 is their wedding night. Chapter 5 and following describes their marriage.

So the first three chapters up to 3:6 is their courtship. It is about a young couple falling in love. And I want you to think back, if you are married, to the moment when you first found yourself falling in love. Some of you may be in that place right now. You may be

engaged or dating and you find yourself falling in love. For some of you, that has never happened.

But here is the woman on her bed at night tossing and turning because she is longing for daybreak when she could be with her lover again. Here is what she says,

“All night long on my bed I look for the one my heart loves. I look for him but did not find him. I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares. I will search for the one my heart loves. So I looked for him, but did not find him. The watchman found me as they made their rounds of the city. ‘Have you seen the one my heart loves?’ Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him to my mother’s house, to the room of the one who conceived me.”

There is an urgency in new love. I can’t wait until I get to be with you again. She can’t sleep. She is tossing and turning. She is restless in the middle of the night. Is this a perfect description of someone who is lovesick? Four times in the first four verses she calls her beloved “the one my heart loves.” V. 1, “I look for the one my heart loves.” V. 2, “I will search for the one my heart loves.” V. 3, “Have you seen the one my heart loves.” V. 4, “I found the one my heart loves.”

Time apart, when you are lovesick, seems like an eternity. You literally can feel physically ill when you are apart. I think of that song, “When A Man Loves A Woman.” “...Can’t keep his mind on anything else.

He’d change the world for the good thing he has found.

If she is bad, he can’t see it. She can do no wrong.

Turn his back on his best friend, if he puts her down.

When a man loves a woman, spend his very last dime

Trying to hold onto what he needs.

He would give up all his comforts

Sleep out in the rain

If she says that's the way it ought to be."

I remember when Marlene and I fell in love. We had to spend the first summer apart for three months while I worked with my father out in California building houses. I really was aching to be with her. Once a week we would write these long, seven or eight page letters to each other. They were very romantic. We still have a few dozen of them tied up in a box. They are kind of fun to go back and read.

But you know what it is like before you get married. You will stay up until 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning talking before you have to part. You have this incredible amount of energy. "Hey, let's walk to the lake where we can see the sunrise together. So what if we have a full day of work tomorrow. At least we get to be together tonight."

Some of you went to different colleges than your girlfriends or boyfriends. I have heard stories of people driving 9 hours to just be together for a few hours and then turning around and driving back. It is okay because you are in love.

So they get married, this couple in the Song of Songs. They have an incredible wedding, a phenomenal wedding night. And what you would expect is "...and they lived happily ever after." But the Bible has too much realism for that. After the honeymoon we read these two verses in 5:2-3. This is the same girl just a few years later. "I slept, but my heart was awake. Listen, my lover is knocking. Open to me my sister, my darling, my dove, and my flawless one. My head is drenched with dew. My hair with the dampness of the night."

Here is her response: "I have taken off my robe. Must I put it on again? I have washed my feet, must I soil them again?"

Oh no, not now she says. I am tired. I have had a really long day. I am not in the mood. I have a stomachache. I have a headache. I have a big day tomorrow. I really need to get some sleep. I have a project due at work. The baby is going to be up in just one hour.

What happens in life that we move from “For you I would sleep out in the rain” to “For you I wouldn’t even roll over in bed?” There are so many love songs like “You have lost that lovin feelin.”

“You never close your eyes anymore

When I kiss your lips.

There is no tenderness like before

On your finger tips.”

For some of you today you are still white hot, very much in love. This message will hopefully help you to avoid some land mines that you are going to have to negotiate around to keep the romance alive for a lifetime. For others of you the fire has grown so dim that your relationship can best be described as a business partnership. In fact, the very idea of romance and passion might be laughable to someone if it didn’t hurt so much. I hope for you this talk is an encouragement and not a discouragement. That some of you might say, we really need to get some help. Our absence of romance is a strong warning that something is really wrong. I have called today’s talk, “Keeping that Lovin’ Feelin’ for a Life-Time.” Let’s pray.

Why do people move from “When a man loves a woman...sleep out in the rain” to “You’ve lost that lovin feelin”? What happens to people between Song of Songs chapter 3 and Song of Songs chapter 5 in this woman’s life?

Certainly one of the things that you would have to note is over familiarity. The longer we have something, the less we cherish it. Probably we have all had this experience with a

new car where, for the first few months, we absolutely baby it. You notice every little nick that is on the door panels. You tell the kids, “You are not allowed to bring any drinks in the car.” “Take your shoes off before you get in the new car.” You wax it every week until you can see yourself in it perfectly. Two years later you are hauling lumber in it. You have open cans of driveway sealant on the backseat and McDonald’s wrappers. Just throw them in the back. Sure, we can put that Christmas tree in the car – no problem.

What happens? There is an over familiarity, isn’t there? Hey, it’s just a car. It’s even true with pieces of furniture. You get a new coffee table for the living room. You are taking the coasters out and polishing it. After a year, you say it is just a piece of furniture, what difference does it make? Lets put our boots on it. Doesn’t the dog look cute up on the coffee table?

I think that kind of things happens in relationships and in marriage. When it is shiny and new there is a desire to keep it fixed up and polished. You go out on a date and fix yourself up. You put on perfume and curl your hair. A few years into the marriage you are dragging yourself around in some ratty old flannel bathrobe that you bought six years before. And your husband is walking around the house in his biggest and most sloppy sweat clothes with the mustard stain on it from a hot dog that he ate at a baseball game last summer. These are the kinds of clothes that are guaranteed to spice up our marriage of our mates?

Too often there is this neglect over familiarity and this feeling of “Hey, I got you babe”—I have won her heart already; I have won his heart, which leads to a lack of maintenance. There is no fixing up. There is no polish. There is no shine. No upkeep. We treat our marriages the way we treat our older cars.

I think the romance burns low because of simple exhaustion. We find ourselves not having the energy level that we did when we were in our early 20’s. We simply can’t stay up

that late and get up that early. Take a walk on a moonlit night? Are you kidding? I want to go to bed. I have been dragging two kids around all day grocery shopping and doing five loads of laundry while the little one has a gag reflex so that he spits up on himself every 20 minutes. I have deadlines at the office. A major proposal is due the next day. You want to go out for brownies like we used to at 10:00 at night? Are you crazy? I have an early morning meeting, plus the baby is going to be up soon.

I think to rekindle romance, to keep from permanently losing that lovin' feelin' we have to go back to romance's beginning. What was it like "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face?" Listen to these two lovers communicate in the language of love to each other.

"How beautiful you are my darling. Oh, how beautiful. Your eyes are doves. Oh, how handsome you are my lover. Oh, how charming. Our bed is verdant. The beams of our house are cedars. The rafters are firs."

They are lying down outside in the grass just staring at each other. I remember doing that with my wife Marlene before we were married. Taking walks in the park and lying down in the grass and staring at each other. We may not have Persian rugs, but we have the most wonderful floor in this field and the most beautiful roof possible – the branches of these trees.

Of course, throughout the Song of Solomon there is this beautiful language of love. Lots of metaphors: Your eyes are doves. The beams of our house are cedars. Our rafters are firs.

You want to rekindle romance in your relationship? Do you speak the language of love that your spouse understands? One of the problems that a lot of couples have is that they don't speak their mate's romantic language. And they won't take the time to learn their mate's romantic language or to practice it. It is like getting married to someone who speaks

French and no English and you are American. You say, “Well, doggonit, if they are going to come to the United States, then they better learn English. I am not going to take the time to even learn a few words of French.”

Do you know that your mate has a language of love? I don’t care how unromantic you think he or she is. There is a language that will awaken your mate’s heart if you would take the time to learn it. And I bet it is a different language than the language you speak. For my wife Marlene the language of love is service. She loves it when I take a day just to do things around the house and serve her. I have a romantic wife when I clean out the basement or clean up the yard or wash her car and vacuum it. She speaks the language of service. If I want to get her in a romantic mood, I will serve her. She also loves romantic dinners at one of those nice little restaurants with candlelight, a fireplace, and soft music playing in the background. Again, if I take her out for a dinner like that, she’s mine.

I speak the language of verbalized affection and touch. I love lots of verbalized affection and I love when she touches me.

So guess how we romance each other? I touch her and speak a lot of affectionate words to her that she doesn’t understand. And she serves me to death. Do you get it?

Maybe your husband speaks the language of appreciation. He wants a wife that will do some cheerleading, some encouraging. You want to warm your husband’s heart? Maybe instead of criticizing or negative speech, maybe for a day or a few days you speak words of appreciation and respect to him. Nagging hasn’t helped, but maybe that will. Maybe your wife speaks the language of verbalized affection. It is not enough that on your wedding day you told her that you loved her. Maybe she would like to hear it again. Maybe her language is the language of flowers and perfume and remembering anniversaries and birthdays and

not being cheap with your gifts, but spending at least as much time and thought on purchasing a birthday gift for her as you do on purchasing new golf clubs for yourself.

Do you know what happens when we learn and choose to speak out mate's language of love? We make them feel brand new. I want you to see this. The woman says about herself, "I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valley." Now before she heard her language of love from her beloved, look at what this woman says about herself. In chapter 1:6, "Do not stare at me because I am darkened by the sun. My mother's sons were angry with me and made me take care of the Vineyards. But my own Vineyard I have neglected."

Please don't look at me. I haven't been taking care of myself. I have put on weight.

How many women and men suffer from incredible feelings of low self-esteem and inferiority but can go through a profound change because their wives never mention their weak points, but emphasize their positive qualities. From "don't stare at me" here is a woman who says, "I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valley." Where did she get that? From her lover who says in v. 2, "Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens."

Is it not the case that one of the things that draws us to another person is the way they make us feel? That I feel good around this person. I love their love for me. I know that is certainly true about my relationship with God. One of the things that I love about God the most is how much He loves me. How incredibly good He is to me and how good I feel in His presence. And certainly one of the things I love most about Marlene is how much she loves me and how good she makes me feel about myself.

When people speak your language of love, your heart will sing, "You make me feel brand new." And if your spouse still really suffers from insecurity or deep-seeded feelings of

inferiority maybe you aren't speaking their language or maybe you haven't been willing to learn their language.

And then in romancing our spouse, there is something about a public show of romance that really secures our mates. Vs. 3-4, "Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall and his banner over me is love."

Now that is a common worship song, "His Banner Over Me Is Love." Most people don't know what it means, but it sounds nice. To say that someone's banner over me is love is to say that they are displaying love over your life for the entire world to see. This is no mere private, secretive conversation whispered in the shadows. My beloved's love is placarded over me. It is obvious to everyone. And I am his.

Let me ask you something, friends. When you think about romance, do you think about your expressions toward your mate in public? Is it evident to others around you in your community of relationships, in your kinship group, in your friendship circle, in your family circle, that you are still deeply romantically attached to your mate? I am not talking about clinging to each other like two adolescents insecurely clutching or where people can't stop groping each other in public. I am talking about the touches on the leg, the handholding as you walk, holding the door, the smiles, the teasing, the playful talk, the communication of respect and affirmation, and the absence of criticism or put-downs.

There is a much-neglected area of romance that the Song of Songs speaks about when he says, "His banner over me is love" that is the public face of our romance. How are you doing there? Do you give people something to talk about? Do they see something in your smiles and your touch?

And then the beloved goes on and describes her need for tender touch. Vs. 5-7,

“Strengthen me with raisins. Refresh me with apples for I am faint with love. His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me. Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and the does of the field, do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.”

It is clear that the touch that she wants is not as a prelude to having sex. V. 7 says be careful when you are courting in your touch that you don’t awaken love before it can be given full expression. Don’t start the car and rev it up in the driveway because you are going to have the urge to take it for a drive. There is a time to cool your engines.

And so the beloved recognizes that, but she has this yearning for touch. Marriage counselors talk about the fact that women would like to have between 8-12 meaningful touches a day to keep connected with their mate – a hug, a squeeze of the hand, a pat on the shoulder, a gentle kiss. There are 5,000,000 touch receptors on the human body and 2,000,000 in the hands alone. Touch releases a pleasant flow of chemicals.

Do you know that people get healthier just touching a dog or a cat? At Purdue University a study was conducted with librarians. Half of them were asked to touch those who came in to check out a book and the other half were simply to conduct business as usual; with no touching. The study concluded that those who were touched had a much higher regard for the librarians and the books in the library and that they followed the rules more readily.

Gary Smalley in his book, *Making Love Last Forever*, talks about a little study that a neurosurgeon friend of his conducted. When he made his daily rounds, he would stand exactly at the same distance from his patients and spend exactly the same amount of time with each of them. But half of them he decided to touch in some way – on the hand, on the arm – and half he didn’t touch. The only variable was the touch or the lack of touch. Those whom he touched he discovered felt that he had actually spent twice as much time with

them as he did and that he had visited twice as often as he did. Some medical schools are actually emphasizing the importance of touch in patient care.

The point is that God has made us to need and appreciate tender touch. And as this text indicates, not all tender touches are designed to lead to sex. Much of it would be during the day – a pat, a hug, a kiss, and a squeeze. That will rekindle romance.

As will stirring the feelings and the practices of your courtship and dating relationship. Vv. 8-13, “Listen my lover. Look, here he comes leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills. My lover is a gazelle, a young stag. Look there he stands behind our wall gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.”

You can picture this young guy still getting in touch with his body, racing up the walk, taking two or three steps at a time, knocking on the door and then peering in through the window to see where is she?

“My lover spoke and said to me, ‘Arise my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. The winter has passed. The rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth. The season of singing has come. The cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig trees form their early fruit. The blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come my darling, my beautiful one, come with me.’”

The writer is talking about getting back to “The Way We Were.” It wasn’t always like this, the drudgery, the laundry, the cold war, the grayness of the winter. He says remember when it was all brand new? Can you feel this scene? He is filling up our senses with sounds and smells and feelings. The fragrance of spring is in the air and the beauty of the flowers and sounds of the birds, even the cooing of the doves.

The English romantic poet Coleridge wrote, “When love comes the trees whisper. The roses exhale their perfumes. The nightingales sing. Nay, the very skies smile in unison with the feeling of true and pure love.”

There is a reason why for thousands of years spring has been the setting and backdrop for romantic literature. Everything is fresh. Everything is new and alive.

In keeping the romance alive for a lifetime, it is important to date again. It doesn’t have to be expensive. It may simply be going out for a long walk and a cup of coffee. Or in the spring or summer having a little picnic by the river or at a park. Or, as my wife likes, a candlelight dinner while you pack the kids off to their friends’ homes. Part of the reason we get so little return from the time we spend with our mates is there is so little investment. We have done virtually no planning. There is no anticipation. It is nothing like the way it was when it was all new and you would anticipate being together and plan it and prepare and fix yourself up.

What do you want to do tonight?

I don’t know, whatever.

What do you want to do?

I don’t care. You pick.

No, you pick.

Ah, let’s just stay home and watch television.

OK. I will fall asleep here on the sofa.

With that kind of investment you aren’t going to get much fruit. But as I said at the beginning of this message, the writer of this Song of Songs is very realistic. He knows something about life and he knows that there are a lot of threats and challenges to their romance. Look at what the writer says in v. 15:

“Catch for us the little foxes that ruin the vineyards. Our vineyards that are in bloom.” A vineyard is the picture of their relationship of being in love. The foxes or probably jackals used to go through the grapevines and eat the grapes and destroy the vines. Here is a couple that recognized that there are things in our lives that can threaten and destroy our love. And they both take a responsibility in catching the foxes. The verse literally reads, “Let us catch the little foxes that ruin the vineyards. Our vineyards that are in bloom.” It is not, “Well, the reason why we don’t have any romance is because of you, my insensitive husband.” Or “You my cold wife.” But both husband and wife share the responsibility of catching the foxes, of dealing with the things that destroy their romance. It is not one or the other person’s job to inject romance back into the relationship. It is both parties job.

I want to talk about two little foxes that can destroy romance. The most destructive little fox is buried unresolved anger. A lot of people here might listen to a talk like this and say, “Yeah, that’s what I want. I want some zip back in my marriage. I don’t want the cold rainy days of winter. I want a little bit of spring. I want the fizz put back in my coke. It’s gone flat over time.”

Again, quoting Gary Smalley in his book *Making Love Last Forever*, he talks about a counseling situation in which a couple came in for marriage counseling. They were on the verge of getting divorced. The marriage counselor said to them, “Listen, I am not a miracle worker. I can only do what I can do, but if you follow my counsel I think you will have a pretty good chance of saving your marriage.”

He said to the husband, “I want to talk with you alone for a few minutes.” Then he gave the husband some secret counsel. He said, “Three times a day, totally unsolicited, I want you to praise and compliment your wife for the next week. Three times a day. Record in this little journal exactly what you said.”

So the husband did this three times a day for the next week – 21 compliments in all and little praises, words of encouragement. They went back into the counselor the next week. The counselor said, “How are you guys doing?”

The wife said, “Nothing’s changed, nothing at all. He still speaks to me in the same way.”

The counselor said, “Didn’t he give you any words of praise at all during the week?”

She laughed and said, “Him? He never says anything good or encouraging.”

The fellow said, “I praised you 21 times this past week.”

She said, “You are a liar. You never said anything nice to me.”

He pulls out his journal and read exactly what he had said, the time when he said it, the context. 21 times.

The wife’s mouth fell open. She didn’t hear one of those words of encouragement. And do you know why not? Because when there is bitterness and unresolved anger it is like going to the bank when it is closed and trying to make a deposit. It doesn’t matter that you intend to make a deposit and that you have the money with you. The bank is closed. And until they open for business, you won’t be able to deposit your money.

Too many mates plan for a retreat weekend or hear a talk on romance and they say, “Hey, this is what we need to do.” It is what you need to do. And they set out to be a little more romantic to their mate. They don’t get the kind of overwhelming response that they expected. They say, “What’s wrong here?”

What’s wrong is that the bank is closed for business. And until you deal with the issue of unresolved anger, all the efforts at romance are probably going to fall on deaf ears. I know some of us want to race past the past. “It is water under the bridge. We can’t do

anything about it. Lets just move forward.” But I am sorry; we are simply not wired to move forward unless the past is healed.

Certainly the expression of “Darling, I want to have a good relationship with you. I want to rekindle our love. I want what is being described in today’s talk in our marriage” sets the context for clearing the air. The air needs to be cleared.

And if I can, let me give you a few quick steps for resolving anger. Not that anger is quickly resolved. But there are some things that we must do in dealing with past hurts. The hurt has to be named. What specifically did our mate do that caused us to shut down or to withdraw or to stop wanting to be romantic. What did they do? Or what did someone else do? It may not be our mate. It may be a parent. Someone else rang up a bill and our mate has to pay it. What did they do?

It sometimes helps to write it down. It sometimes helps to get alone and put it in a journal and write it all out. This is what they did and this is what I lost. You get it all out there. If it is your mate, they need to know what they have done. And they need to ask forgiveness. Not, it’s no big deal! No, forget about it. Forgive me – You’re forgiven. Once it is out there and it has been expressed and forgiveness has been asked, we need to release them, to let them go, to open our hearts again. But the little fox of unresolved anger will destroy romantic love.

And so will the little fox of busyness and chasing success. The faxes, the phones, the appointments, the demands, the deadlines, the clients, the requirements for certain numbers of billing hours, the competition, the need to keep our heads above water in business, add to that the fact that we men are never praised for being good husbands. And wives, if you don’t do it, if your man doesn’t hear from anyone a word of encouragement because they are trying to be a good husband, they will never hear it. Ladies, let me let you in on a little

secret. In the locker rooms at the gym guys are not sitting around saying, “Give me five! You bought your wife some flowers. What a guy. Come on show me some skin. You treat your wife like a queen? You are getting home early to take her out? We are all impressed.”

Ladies, whether you realize it or not, that conversation has never occurred in a locker room. You will hear things like, “Hey, saw your new van. Check out those wheels.” Men will talk about their accomplishments in business and sports, church and ministry. Men will talk about the outward trappings of success – one more client, one more account, one more sale. But ladies, if you want to feel romance, you tell your husband, if this has integrity for you and if you can say it truthfully, that you would do it all over again, that he has been a good husband to you, and that you want romance in your relationship.

Busyness and the quest for success destroyed the vineyard. We need time to catch up with each other. Shut the TV off during dinner and don’t answer the phone. We have a rule at our house that we try to have dinner as a family together as often as is humanly possible. I try not to schedule appointments over dinner. And we are really strict with our kids that they are not permitted, generally, to do a bunch of activities over dinner. Now that they are teenagers, they fuss and feel like it is really unfair, but we are committed to stay in touch with each other.

Marlene and I have always done well in taking walks. From the time we were first married and didn’t have any money, that was a cheap date. We would take a long walk and maybe get some ice cream. We still do that. We take long walks together and talk.

Maybe for you it is going out for cup of coffee or playing sports together. Spend some money on a babysitter. Spring for it even if it means that you can’t afford a night out except to take a walk. But you need the time alone.

Once a year, plan for a romantic getaway for an overnight. Whatever you need to do to fight the busyness to stay in touch, do it. At least once a week couples need a long period of meaningful talk—a date night, a long breakfast together. If your schedule permits and you are able to do a lunch in an unhurried way, do it.

Let me finish with a word of encouragement to those of you who are committed Christians. You know having a great relationship with your mate is part of your devotion to God. A lot of times people do separate out their relationship with God, which ought to be of the highest quality. They want to put God first in their lives and they earnestly seek to serve God as committed Christians. They strive to be excellent in child raising, on their jobs and excellent in devotions or ministry. But their marriage? Well, good enough is good enough. Marriage is the one area where they don't aim at excellence. When you read over what God's Word says about marriage and what God's Word calls us to – for example, it calls husbands to keep on treasuring their wives. Ephesians 5:25 says to cherish them, to love our wives as Christ loved the church. When you read the expressions of the woman in Song of Solomon for her man – “My lover is mine and I am his,” her availability to him – her openness to him or pursuit -- “I looked for the one my heart loves. I will search for the one my heart loves. Have you seen the one my heart loves? I found the one my heart loves and I held him and would not let him go.”

Committed Christians, part of your commitment to following the Lord Jesus Christ is putting romance back in your marriage and making an excellent marriage one of your top priorities. You are not fully following God unless you lean into having a great marriage. Let's pray.