

Song of Solomon

The Christian Marriage Life (3)

Opening Readings: Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Peter. 3:1-7

I. The *purified character* is the foundation stone of the marriage relationship

II. Practicing Praise to build up or maintain and enrich the marriage relationship

A. Most people enter into the marriage relationship with an inner sense of insecurity

1. The 'insecurity' may be hidden but real (Song 1:5-6)

a. What caused this bride's sense of insecurity?

- her view of her body in comparison with others
- her dysfunctional upbringing

2. Her 'insecurity' lingers (Song 2:1) even though she is praised (1:9-10)

B. How can such insecurity be overcome (both in men and women)?

1. Song of Solomon illustrates the power of *words of affirmation*

2. Yet the first step to overcome someone's insecurity isn't the *words spoken*

3. Realistically, words don't always resolve all deep-seated problems

4. Yet healthy praise *builds up what may have been lacking* in the past

5. Solomon's practiced praise focused on *outward beauty* and *inward character*

6. Besides 'words of affirmation' there are four additional love languages that needs to be remembered and practiced

a. Words of affirmation: *actions don't always speak louder than words. If this is your*

love language, unsolicited compliments means the world to you. Hearing words like "I love you," are important. Hearing the reasons behind that love sends your spirits skyward. Insults can leave you shattered and are not easily forgotten.

b. Quality time: *In the vernacular of Quality Time, nothings says "I love you" like full,*

undivided attention. Being there for this type of person is critical, but really being there – with the book down, the paper away, the computer off, all the chores and tasks on standby – makes your significant other feel truly special and loved. Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to really listen can be especially hurtful.

c. Receiving Gifts: *Don't mistake this love language for materialism; the receiver of*

gifts thrives on the love, thoughtfulness, and effort behind the gift. If you speak this language, the perfect gift or gesture shows that you are known, you are cared for, and you are prized above whatever was sacrificed to bring the gift to you. A missed birthday, anniversary, or a hasty, thoughtless gift would be disastrous – so would the absence of everyday gestures.

d. Acts of Service: *Can vacuuming the floors really be an expression of love? Absolutely! Anything you do to ease the burden of responsibilities weighing on an "Acts of Service" person will speak volumes. The words he or she most wants to hear are "Let me do that for you." Laziness, broken commitments, and making more work for them tell speakers of this language their feelings don't matter.*

e. Physical Touch: *This language isn't all about the bedroom. A person whose*

primary language is Physical Touch is, not surprisingly, very touchy in the positive sense. Hugs, pats on the back, holding hands, and thoughtful touches on the arm, shoulder or face – they can all be ways to show

excitement, concern, care and love. Physical presence and accessibility are crucial, while neglect or abuse can be destructive and unfixable.

C. A sampling of Solomon's word pictures in overcoming insecurity in his bride

1. He used pictures that related to her everyday scenes and experiences: 1:9; 4:2

2. She also used pictures of the familiar: 2:3

3. Chapter 4 is a pure transcript of their intimate love (wedding night?)

a. if the wedding night, then insecurity and anxiety often fills the heart

b. yet before Solomon touches her physically, he affirms her beauty and character in seven word pictures (4:1-6)

c. after that he shares his loving desire to know her intimately (4:6-16a)

d. she responds with a wholehearted invitation in which she gives herself (4:16b)

Conclusion: The Bride's security grew throughout this Song as result of her husband's Praises (Eph. 5:25-27)!

A. Trace her reflections in 1:5-6 – 2:16 – 6:3 – 7:10!

Follow Up!

1. Evaluate yourself and your spouse on these 'pictures of praise.'

a. On a 1 to 10 scale, how well are you doing at praising your spouse and making him or her feel more and more secure? Your self-grade: _____

b. Do the same in evaluation of your spouse: His/Her grade: _____

2. All of us have insecurities, either based on real weaknesses or comparison to others. Be open with each other about your own sense of insecurity or inadequacy. Be prepared to give and to receive feedback that is both reassuring and challenging.

3. Be creative and enjoy a romantic evening in which you share with each other the word pictures you have created about each other.

4. Think back about one or two small gestures your spouse did that were more meaningful than words or very expensive gifts. Share with each other why such gestures were the most meaningful to you.

5. Notice that the Lord Jesus also used word-pictures of His love toward His Church. For example, He says to His children, "I am the good Shepherd who giveth His life for the sheep." Try to find a few more of these word pictures in which the Lord describes His love for His Bride but in which He describes His Bride and His people Him. The only book you may not quote from is the Song of Solomon!

6. Study the five main love languages as outlined. Nobody speaks only *one* of these five but all of us have one or two primary ones out of these fives.

a. Think of your spouse and identify what his or her primary love language is. Then share it with him or her and see whether you were correct.

b. After having identified your primary love languages with each other, discuss how you can meet each other's love language better.