

Sex In the Song  
Week 5: Straight Masterpiece

I. We desire to be a church that is:

[Slide]: pushing through boundaries to share God's story from Norfolk to the nations!

That mission sums up everything we do, and we have a place for you to make a difference.

- A. Pastor Ed set the standard last week on the sex talk! I've been up here sputtering my way through for 3 weeks and then Pastor Ed just knocks it out of the park! Thank you, Pastor Ed! You're my pastor and I love and appreciate you more than I could ever say.
- B. We're continuing our study through the Song of Songs and next week will take a noticeably different tone. Next week we're looking at the essence of love, so we're on the home stretch on a series in which we've covered some stuff. We've said the Song of Songs is an anthology of poems (a literal song) which makes interpretation a bit more challenging. We have to keep that in mind when studying the Song. It's not a narrative with a linear story line. There are several reoccurring themes and repetitive lines much like a song today.
- C. I take Song of Songs 6:4 to be the start of a new cycle. As I understand the Song, there are 6 cycles of poetry total. The cycles operate much like individual songs would on an album. The way we can differentiate between the individual poems is that the poems either end with the couple having sex (after 5:1) or prior to 5:1 with the warning that has served as a reoccurring theme throughout the Song:

Song of Songs 3:5 (CSB) [Slide]: 5 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and the wild does of the field, do not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time.

1. That verse is a great line of defense against sexual sin, but the Bible isn't strictly a defensive approach. Single or married there are behaviors that are out of bounds for the Christ follower, but the best line of defense is a high-powered offense! Many times, we just focus on the "what not to do's." Don't do this and don't do that! But relationships are like a garden. Sexual or nonsexual relationships take cultivation and intentionality, but this is certainly true for a marriage.

II. So my challenge today, whether your single or married, is this:

[Slide]: If relationships are like a garden, we can't focus exclusively on what we don't want to grow. We must be intentional about what we do want to grow!

Romans 12:2 (CSB) [Slide]: 2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

- A. In other words, in life and in relationships we don't avoid the pitfalls and traps by constantly sitting on edge trying to fend off those things. We avoid being conformed to this age (world) by engaging in the transformation process which is always empowered through the Holy Spirit to redirect or reformat our thinking. The battle occurs there!
- B. So we must ask ourselves, what am I planting in the garden? If I'm single, what am I currently planting in the garden of my life that will eventually bear fruit? If I am married, what am I currently planting in the garden of my relationship with my spouse that will eventually bear fruit? This is where the rubber meets the road! And here is the tricky part:

[Slide]: Seeds don't bear fruit overnight. It takes time!

1. Some of us are planting seeds in our relationship that will bring up some nasty fruit. But right now, we're getting away with it. Those seeds haven't germinated and somehow, we're defying the system. However, we reap what we sow. Time will tell.
  2. Some of us are planting seeds in our relationship that will bring up beautiful fruit. But right now, we may be on the verge of throwing in the towel. The discipline of planting good seed is hard but planting good seed will produce good fruit. Time will also tell.
- C. Chapter 6 verse 4 of the Song begins a new cycle of poetry and while most scholars take Song of Songs 6:4-8:4 to be a unit of poetry comprised of individual songs, this cycle has one common theme:

[Slide]: Think about what we're planting in the garden!

Let's dive in!

**Song of Songs 6:4-5 (CSB) [Slide]:** 4 You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, lovely as Jerusalem, awe-inspiring as an army with banners. 5 Turn your eyes away from me, for they captivate me. Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down from Gilead.

1. Let's not forget that our couple is married at this point. We aren't told time increments because it's a poem, but the point is that romance, or the desire to date your spouse, shouldn't end with the marriage ceremony. The feelings or emotion of a new relationship won't last forever, but we can still cultivate those feelings through our words.

2. This too is a major theme of the Song of Songs:

[Slide]: The most potent seeds are often planted through our words!

The husband verbally expresses to his wife that she is beautiful like a city. She stuns him like an army. Beauty expresses itself in multiple ways and it's more than just aesthetics. The man is going to move back into more physical expressions of beauty in a moment, but these descriptions reflect a more mature depth in the couple's relationship.

a. Tirzah and Jerusalem were both renowned ancient cities, and in an ancient agrarian world, cities evoked a sense of wonder or otherness compared to the vast landscapes around them. It's almost a mesmerizing sight to behold.

If you ever have a chance to drive down I-20 (southern U.S.), you'll notice that between Shreveport, LA and Dallas, TX there's not much of anything! From I-20 you can't see Dallas but as soon as you turn onto HWY 80 the Dallas skyline is in full view. After 200 miles of flat farmland, the city (especially at night) is a magnificent sight! That's what the husband is describing as he sets his sights on his lady.

b. "An army under a banner" is a similar concept. These words aren't describing the sexual attraction of his wife. It will lead to that, but for now the husband is describing the magnificence that is the totality of his wife. This isn't a promotion of false idealism.

When you get into the heart of Dallas, there's trash on the ground and potholes in the streets. We all have cracks in the facade. But when we take a step back and look intentionally at the whole, we're reminded of all the beauty that comprises an individual.

We don't deny the imperfections, but we also are intentional about considering the big picture!

3. A seed that we want to plant and cultivate is one that celebrates:

[Slide]: Uniqueness.

I suppose males and females struggle with this in different ways, but in our hyperconnected society this is a real struggle. We can easily start comparing our spouse to some idealized standard we think we see in others on Instagram or TikTok. The husband is in awe of his wife as he considers the totality that comprises her and it leads him to celebrate the fact that she isn't like any other woman! Planting the seed of comparison will always yield rotten fruit! Identify and celebrate the uniqueness in one another.

**Song of Songs 8-10 (CSB) [Slide]:** 8 There are sixty queens and eighty concubines and young women without number. 9 But my dove, my virtuous one, is unique; she is the favorite of her mother, perfect to the one who gave her birth. Women see her and declare her fortunate; queens and concubines also, and they sing her praises: 10 Who is this who shines like the dawn, as beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun, awe-inspiring as an army with banners?

a. This guy is good! He says you could go and find any other lady from a queen to a store clerk, and there is no other person like her!

When God made her, He:

[Slide]: Broke the mold!

b. That is 100% true. God really did do that for this man's wife, but God has also done that for each of us! We're all unique. A great seed to plant and cultivate in your relationship is the desire and discipline to

study the mannerisms and features of your spouse that make them unique. God knit us and handcrafted us in our mother's womb, which means that trying to turn someone into someone else is a foolish pursuit. Marriage is a gift and a unique opportunity to explore the depths of our partner's soul. That's a lifelong pursuit!

4. All this talk of the wife's uniqueness has turned this cycle back into a Spicy McChicken Sandwich!!  
The fruit that's come forth in their garden has led to a strong desire to be together physically!

Song of Songs 6:11-12 (CSB) [Slide]: 11 I came down to the walnut grove to see the blossoms of the valley, to see if the vines were budding and the pomegranates blooming. 12 I didn't know what was happening to me. I felt like I was in a chariot with a nobleman.

- a. The husband has planted some really good seeds and the wife is metaphorically joining him in the garden. As she inspects or considers the fruit of their relationship, she loses it!  
This is a married couple, and they are having really great sex.

Why?

[Slide]: They've allowed the spiritual to lead the physical!

- b. Sex outside the covenant can gratify the flesh, but the moment we start feeding the flesh, the more the flesh will take. Sex in the garden is incomparable to anything the world has to offer, because it is the mingling of souls in a God ordained way. Don't buy into the lie! The Song says that the sex was so good it was like a chariot ride with a prince. I.E., it took my breath away like a roller coaster at Disney World!

- c. Verse 13 is tough, and interpretations go different ways but here's my humble thoughts.

The young ladies in the Song often serve as a restraining mechanism. The husband and wife are married, so they're acting as husband and wife should, but that's for the husband and wife alone.

The young women though are:

[Slide]: Jealous.

- (1) They want what this couple has. We don't achieve a notable marriage by trying to chase after what everyone else has! The irony of not tending to our own garden and chasing after what someone else has, is that they're doing the same thing! The husband takes note of the young ladies envious of his wife and points them out. He acknowledges that his wife is in fact mesmerizing.

Song of Songs 6:13b (CSB) [Slide]: 13b How you gaze at the Shulammit, as you look at the dance of the two camps!

D. Chapter 7 doesn't introduce any new themes.

1. It comprises another Wasf, which we mentioned a few weeks ago. It's a metaphorical description of the human body that celebrates the aesthetics of another person. This one though is unique in that it starts from the feet up and shall we say covers or uncovers some new territory.

Chapter 7 ends again with a moment of intimacy between the couple.

2. I take 8:1-4 to go with this cycle as well,

but since we've covered a lot of ground already, let's pick up here next week as we conclude.

E. Here's the big takeaway for today, what seeds are we planting? Are we using our words to honor, and build up one another? Certainly in a marriage, but in all relationships. Are we taking a step back to look holistically at our spouse? We can easily get irritated by a few things, if we aren't being intentional about seeing the big picture. Are we celebrating those characteristics that make our spouse unique? These are actions that we can take to plant seeds that will produce good fruit. The germination process takes time. It won't necessarily produce good fruit overnight, but what we sow, we will also reap. There isn't a lottery selection on who gets a good marriage and who does not. Anyone with a great marriage has one because they've been intentional about what they're planting.