

The Missional Marriage Study

Session #8: Romance as the Reflection of God's Love

"Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me..."

-Song of Solomon 2:13

"Sexuality is designed by God as a way to know God, in Christ, more fully; and knowing Christ more fully is designed by God as a way of guarding and guiding our sexuality. All misuses of our sexuality distort the knowledge of God; and all misuses of our sexuality derive from not having the true knowledge of God."

- John Piper - Sex & The Supremacy of Christ

Conceptual Ideas to Convey:

- ❖ In our first couple of sessions, we identified that God created marriage as an illustration of Christ's love for the church. And in that, we discussed how our marriages were meant to serve as an example of that love, as a witness to the world around us. This session seeks to expand on that concept, by showing how even the romantic (i.e. - sexual intimacy) in our marriage serves as a reflection of God's love and desire for us.
- ❖ Romance & Intimacy are God's Idea. Marriage is the union that reflects God's desire for intimacy with us. Through Marriage, we can come to understand the kind of intense desire and passion God feels for us, His bride.
- ❖ We were made to experience intimacy with our spouse, yet marriage is only the foretaste of an even more deeply fulfilling union. The feelings of love and fulfillment we experience in our marriages point toward a grander fulfillment in God.
- ❖ We need to seek to deepen the levels of love, romance, and sexual intimacy in our marriage- as well as guard against a lack of love, romance, and sexual intimacy in our marriage- for three primary reasons...
 1. It's good for US... God is the originator of romance in marriage; and therefore He sees it as something that is good for us; and makes our marriages healthier. (i.e.- He wired us to need intimacy with our mate)
 2. It's good for GOD... God is glorified in us having intimacy with one another because it reflects an accurate picture of His love and passion towards us.
 3. It's good for the WORLD... God uses romance in our marriage to serve as a witness to the world around us just how much God loves His people.

Romance as the Reflection of God's Love:

Review:

- ❖ **Genesis 1:27...** God made man in His image / **Genesis 2:18-25...** God made marriage as well
- ❖ **Ephesians 5:31-33...** the Mystery of marriage is about Christ & the Church...
- ❖ **Isaiah 54:5 / Jeremiah 31:32...** Your real husband is your Creator!

God's Passion for Us:

- ❖ **Isaiah 54:10...** "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken- says the Lord who has compassion on you."
- ❖ **Jeremiah 31:3...** "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you to Me with lovingkindness"
- ❖ **Hosea 11:8...** "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? ...How can I treat you like Zebouim? My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled."
- ❖ **Zephaniah 3:17...** "He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing..."
- ❖ **John 3:16...** "For God so LOVED the world, that He GAVE His one and only Son..."

Improving Romance in Marriage:

Intimacy = "In-To-Me-You-See"

Seven Ways to Pave the Road to Intimacy & Romance in Your Marriage...

1. *Spend quality time with one-another (face-to-face conversation) daily*
2. *Esteem one-another regularly (compliment, edify, uplift, i.e. - positive language)*
3. *Pray together daily*
4. *Play together regularly*
5. *Learn each other's Love Language and find ways to speak it each day*
6. *Go on dates regularly- that support an atmosphere of romance*
7. *Learn to forgive one-another, quickly*

Questions for Dialogue:

- What is romance?
- How important are one's feelings to romance?
- What were your expectations of Romance prior to marriage?
- What examples of Romance have you seen outside of your marriage? Which ones are realistic & healthy, and which ones are fabricated or exaggerated?
- Think of some couples you know. How do their relationships demonstrate romance?
- How can a relationship *not* demonstrate true romance?
- What is the most romantic thing that your spouse has done for you? How did you feel?
- We know that God loves us, but sometimes we find it hard to believe He is passionate about us. Why? What hinders us from realizing this foundational biblical truth?
- What, if any, connection do you see between your ability to receive God's love and your ability to give God's love to others (namely, your spouse)?
- How does romance factor into your relationship with God?
- What words best describe God's love for you? What words best describe your love for your spouse?
- In what ways have you exhibited a good jealousy in guarding your marriage relationship?
- Why is God glorified when we experience the fullest extent of sexual intimacy and romance with our spouse in marriage?
- How can you be more romantic with your spouse? i.e. - in what ways can you seek to improve the romance and passion in your marriage?
- In what ways does your marriage look different from when you were dating/courting, if at all? Why?
- What things serve as the greatest deterrent to romance in your marriage? How can you seek to better guard against those things and keep them from stealing your desire for your mate?
- In what ways does the world around you benefit from seeing a biblical passion and romance lived out in your marriage?

Homework:

- ❖ Take some time in the next day or so to sit down with your spouse and thank them for the way he or she has shown love to you. Spend a few moments in prayer, surrendering your past, present, and future of your marriage, to the One who made you and loves you with an everlasting love. Affirm your love for one another and ask for God's unconditional love to flow into your marriage and deepen your romantic intimacy with one another... Pray also that your marriage, your intimacy, your romance, would serve as a reminder both to you and to those around you just how much God loves His people and is passionate towards them!
- ❖ Use this session as your chance to increase the depth of romance and intimacy that God desires in your marriage...
 - Offensively... If your marriage is lacking in intimacy, make it your goal, starting this week to romance your spouse in a way that he or she might best receive love. Find one or two things you can do to add the spark that your marriage is lacking. If the romantic fire is burning strong in your marriage, continue to seek out ways, this week, to add more embers.
 - Defensively... If there are any "foxes" (S.O.S. 2:15) in your marriage, that are seeking to sneak in and destroy the intimacy you have; sit down with your spouse and identify what those "foxes" might be, and come up with a game plan of accountability to guard against them in your marriage.