

## THE MARRIAGE PROJECT

### "SOMEDAY, MY PRINCE(SS) WILL COME" SONG OF SOLOMON 7:1-8.4

#### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Love** – I unconditionally and sacrificially love and forgive others. 1 John 4:10-12, *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another: No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

Commentators agree on this one thing, if not on anything else: Song of Songs 7:1-8:4 contains the third of the Song's four *wasfs*, arguably the most erotic one, and describes the beloved and her lover's maturing marriage; it depicts "a marriage that was deeper and richer in every aspect of their relationship—in their lovemaking, in their conversation, in all their experiences together" (Craig S. Glickman, *A Song for Lovers*, 81). As far as their lovemaking is concerned, the imagery is much bolder and even more intimate than on their wedding night (4:1-11), and as far as their conversation is concerned, it is much freer and more open. Consider the Shulammitte. She freely expresses her growing desire for greater intimacy by boldly suggesting the two "go to the countryside" where they can "spend the night in the villages" (7:11). Once they arrive, she assures him, "there I will give you my love" (v. 12).

In his comments on this passage, Glickman often uses the words "ideal" and "model" in reference to

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– Gary Thomas

this couple. He refers to "the growth of their ideal marriage" and calls Solomon "the model lover of our song" (80). What's more, readers already know that he "is altogether lovely" (5:16) and she is breathtakingly beautiful (6:4). It's not hard to imagine them as lovers, but what about those who see themselves as neither handsome nor attractive? What about those who consider themselves unattractive or in a marriage that's far from ideal or both? If they only reluctantly engage in sex with their partners, their reluctance may be taken as indifference, and so a vicious cycle begins. Makes sense; people do less what embarrasses them more. How to have an ideal marriage even if you're not a model lover is the problem.

In his book *Sacred Marriage*, Gary Thomas argues that marriage is a spiritual discipline. In other words, it's an experience that the Spirit of God uses to transform believers, that is, to sanctify them or make them holy. His comments on how average couples can respond to the idyllic Song of Songs are helpful. He writes:

"It is one thing to stand naked and relatively trim in front of your partner in your early twenties. But what about in your late thirties, forties, or sixties? What about after the wife has given birth to a child (or two or three), and the husband's metabolism has slowed down, depositing 'love handles' around his waist?

"Continuing to give your body to your spouse even when you believe it constitutes 'damaged goods' can be tremendously rewarding spiritually. It engenders humility, service, and an other-centered focus, as well as hammering home a very powerful spiritual principle: Give what you have.

"There are many times in which we are called to keep serving God even though we know that the

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situation is less than ideal. Maybe we want to share the gospel with a neighbor, but we just don't think we're smart enough or that we know the Bible well enough. Or perhaps we hear about a worthwhile charity and wish we could give thousands of dollars, all the while knowing it will be difficult to come up with even a twenty-dollar bill.

"Marriage teaches us to give what we have. God has given us one body. He has commanded our spouse to delight in that one body—and that body alone. If we withhold from our spouse our body, it becomes an absolute denial. We may not think it is a perfect body, but it is the only body we have to give.

"By no means am I suggesting that it is easy to give, but I am saying it is worthwhile to give. It is rewarding to say, 'I'm willing to give you my best, even if I don't think my best is all that great.' That kind of commitment reminds me of Peter, who told the Jerusalem beggar, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk' (Acts 3:6).

So many people fail to give God or others anything simply because they can't give everything. Learn to take small steps of obedience toward God—offering what you have, with all its blemishes and limitations—by offering what you have to your spouse" (218-19).

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Song of Solomon 7:1-8.4

#### Lover

1 How beautiful your sandaled feet,  
O prince's daughter!  
Your graceful legs are like jewels,  
the work of an artist's hands.  
2 Your navel is a rounded goblet  
that never lacks blended wine.  
Your waist is a mound of wheat  
encircled by lilies.  
3 Your breasts are like two fawns,  
like twin fawns of a gazelle.  
4 Your neck is like an ivory tower.  
Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon  
by the gate of Bath Rabbim.  
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon  
looking toward Damascus.  
5 Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel.  
Your hair is like royal tapestry;  
the king is held captive by its tresses.  
6 How beautiful you are and how pleasing,  
O love, with your delights!  
7 Your stature is like that of the palm,  
and your breasts like clusters of fruit.  
8 I said, "I will climb the palm tree;  
I will take hold of its fruit."  
May your breasts be like clusters of grapes on the vine,  
the fragrance of your breath like apples,  
9 and your mouth like the best wine.

#### Beloved

May the wine go straight to my lover,  
flowing gently over lips and teeth.  
10 I belong to my lover,  
and his desire is for me.  
11 Come, my lover, let us go to the countryside,  
let us spend the night in the villages.  
12 Let us go early to the vineyards  
to see if the vines have budded,  
if their blossoms have opened,  
and if the pomegranates are in bloom—  
there I will give you my love.  
13 The mandrakes send out their fragrance,  
and at our door is every delicacy,  
both new and old,  
that I have stored up for you, my lover.  
8:1 If only you were to me like a brother,  
who was nursed at my mother's breasts!  
Then, if I found you outside,  
I would kiss you,  
and no one would despise me.  
2 I would lead you  
and bring you to my mother's house—  
she who has taught me.  
I would give you spiced wine to drink,  
the nectar of my pomegranates.  
3 His left arm is under my head  
and his right arm embraces me.  
4 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you:  
Do not arouse or awaken love  
until it so desires.

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

\* Box "like" indicating comparison.

\* Underline "prince's daughter" in v. 1.

\* Circle "legs" in v. 1.

\* Circle "navel" in v. 2.

\* Circle "waist" in v. 2.

\* Underline "ivory tower" in v. 4.

- \* Underline "like the tower of Lebanon" in v. 4.
- \* Bracket "pools of Heshbon" and "gate of Bath Rabbim" in v. 4.
- \* Underline "Mount Carmel" in v. 5.
- \* Circle "fruit" in v. 8.

- \* Circle "mouth" in v. 9.
- \* Circle "teeth" in v. 9.
- \* Circle "mandrakes" in v. 13.
- \* Circle "brother" in 8:1.
- \* Highlight v. 4.

## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Explain the *relationship* of 7:1-7 to 6:13.
2. Contrast the movement of the beloved's eyes in her description of him (5:10-16) with the movement of the lover's eyes in his description of her (7:1-6).
3. The *comparisons* in verses 2-6 are not primarily visual. Explain.
4. Identify the *simile* or *metaphor* in verses 2-6 you consider most bizarre and difficult to interpret.
5. Explain the *relationship* of verse 6 to verses 1-5.
6. Both partners candidly express their desire for each other. How so?
7. If "mouth" is a figure of speech for "kisses," what does verse 9b mean?
8. Identify some of the literary images associated with lovemaking in verses 11-13.
9. The beloved wished her husband were "like a brother." What would that enable her to do?
10. **Discussion:** How would you describe the couple's relationship at this stage in their marriage?

Song of Solomon 7:1-8:4 contains two soliloquies, monologues, or lyrics. In the first, the lover speaks (7:1-9); in the second the beloved speaks (7:11-8:4). The transition between them is marked by a change in speaker in the middle of verse 9. On this passage, one commentator writes: "This section portrays the maturing of the couple's marriage. The progress in their love is revealed in two ways. First, the imagery in these verses is much bolder and more intimate than the imagery the lover used on the wedding night (4:1-11). Such an increase in sexual freedom is a normal part of a healthy, maturing marriage. Second, the climactic nature of the refrain in 7:10 also speaks of this maturation . . . The refrain of mutual possession was already given in 2:16 and 6:3. Here, however, the clause my lover 'is mine' is replaced with his desire is for me. This is a more emphatic way of stating possession. How much more could a husband belong to his wife than for him to desire only her? She had so grown in the security of his love that she could now say that his only desire was for her. She had become so taken by his love for her that here she did not even mention her possession of him" (Jack S. Deere, "Song of Songs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1022).

When the lover speaks, his description of the beloved's physical charm leads him to express his admiration for her and his desire for sexual union with her. When the beloved responds, her statement of mutual possession leads her to invite him to the countryside for a time of lovemaking.

The lover's description of his beloved (vv. 1-9) is filled with comparisons, which for the most part are not intended to be taken visually. The metaphors and similes he uses do not describe what she looks like. Rather, they describe her value, that is, what she means to him. In his description of her, he begins with her "sandaled feet" (v. 1)—perhaps because 6:13 alludes to her dancing-and moves upward to her "head" and "hair" (v. 5), quite the opposite of her description of him (5:10-16). Her feet are lovely, her curvaceous thighs the work of an artisan. Her body, as desirable and intoxicating as wine, nourishes and satisfies him. Her breasts are irresistible. Her silhouette is statuesque, her eyes

mesmerizing, and her hair captivating. Such a sensuous description arouses his desire for her. She is stately like a date palm; he wants to hold on to her curls as he makes love to her.

It's at this point that the transition in speakers occurs. He desires to receive her sweeter-than-wine kisses (9a), and she desires to give them to him (9b). "The rapid interchange of speakers reflected their excitement in giving and receiving kisses and caresses. The intermingling of their lips in kisses was stylistically reflected by the poem's intermingling of their voices" (1023). This is imagined to take place as they fall asleep in each other's arms.

No longer insecure (1:5-7), the beloved's invitation to her lover (vv. 11-13) is daring and confident. In fact, this is the first time in the Song where she makes a direct unambiguous request for sex. Previously her desire had been expressed in the third person (e.g., 1:2a; 2:6). Now, having grown more secure in the love of her husband, she feels free to initiate the lovemaking. Her passionate invitation is replete with images associated literarily with love: springtime in the countryside, budding vines and blooming pomegranates, not to mention fragrant mandrakes. There she will give him her love (v. 12); there he will enjoy delicacies old and new that she has stored up for him (v. 13). In the same speech she imagines him to be her brother. If that were the case, she could express her love for him publicly with no disgrace. She could take him to the home of the mother, who taught her about love, where the two could play freely like brother and sister. The poem ends with the familiar refrain suggesting that love is patient, and its expressions must not be forced.

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## *The Message of the Passage*

*A more mature marriage is marked by security and confidence in one another that enables the couple to communicate openly and expresses their love freely.*

### day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the three "living questions" below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

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# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **prince's daughter** Or "noble daughter." Cf., "nobleman's daughter" (NET); "noble daughter" (ESV). "As in 6:12, the meaning is not necessarily that the girl is of royal birth, but rather that she is of gracious and noble character and person" (G. Lloyd Carr, *Song of Solomon*, TOTC, 194; see The NET Bible, 2<sup>tn</sup> on 7:1).

v. 1 **legs** Or "thighs." The Hebrew term refers to the outside of the thigh from the hip down (Ex 32:27; Jdg 3:16, 21; Ps 45:4; SS 3:8) (The NET Bible, 4<sup>tn</sup> on 7:1). "The term refers to the upper thigh or hip. We have chosen to translate the term as 'hip' because it seems the most appropriate of the two for one to describe as rounded or curved (*hammuq*)—yet the term is not incompatible with her thigh either, especially the inside of her thigh" (Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs*, NICOT, 194).

v. 2 **navel, waist** Cf., "belly" (ESV, NET, NRSV, et al.). While the woman's physical appearance may suggest the comparisons, the correspondence is not necessarily or primarily visual (see Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 283). "The comparison of the beloved's navel to a rounded goblet of wine would be grotesque if taken as a visual comparison. The lover meant that her body was as desirable and as intoxicating as wine (cf. 4:10). Likewise the comparison of her waist to a mound of wheat would be absurd if interpreted visually. Wheat was one of the main food sources in ancient Palestine (Deut. 32:14; 2 Sam. 4:6; 17:28). Thus his wife was both his 'food' (wheat) and 'drink' (wine) in the sense that her physical expressions of love nourished and satisfied him" (Deere, 1022).

v. 4 **ivory tower** "It is not that the woman's neck is long, fat, thick, or the like, but that it is grand, strong, dignified, and perhaps elegant . . . Ivory, of course, is a precious material. It too suggests strength, and the tusk is an apt image for a long, elegant neck" (Longman, 195). "The beauty, elegance, and smoothness of a woman's neck is commonly compared to ivory in ancient love literature" (The NET Bible, 11<sup>tn</sup> on 7:4).

v. 4 **pools, gate** "The soft glance of her eyes reflects the peace and beauty of the Heshbon pools" (S. M. Lehrman, "The Song of Songs," in *The Five Megilloth*, SBB, 26).

v. 4 **tower of Lebanon** "Whether the 'tower of Lebanon' is some actual tower or in fact is Mount Hermon, the point is neither that her nose is large or that she is superhuman. Viewed from a distance, a mountain (or tower) adds symmetry and comeliness to an otherwise, nondescript horizon. Her nose complements and sets off her facial beauty" (Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, 422).

v. 5 **Mount Carmel** "By comparing her head to Mount Carmel, he meant that she had a queenly bearing that was majestic and awesome. (On the majesty of Mount Carmel see Isa. 35:2; Jer. 46:18)" (Deere, 1023).

v. 8 **fruit** Cf., "fruit stalks" (NET); "branches" (NKJV, NRSV, NIV), et al.). "This is the only use of this word in the Old Testament. Gordis (p. 97) links the word with the Akkadian *sinnsinu* 'the top-most branches of the palm'. Most commentators identify her breasts as the object of his grasping, but this word suggests rather her hair (v. 5), in which he is willing to be entrapped, as the thing he will grasp in their embrace" (Carr, 177; see also Longman, 197).

v. 9 **mouth** Or "kisses" (NRSV, NLT, TLB). "In saying that her mouth is like wine, he means her kisses (c. 1:2)" (Garrett, 422). In verse 9a the lover is speaking of his beloved. In verse 9b there is an abrupt switch as the beloved speaks. "The girl . . . now responds with a reaffirmation of her commitment to her lover/spouse" (Carr, 178).

v. 9 **teeth** Cf., "lips of sleepers" (NIV marg.). The ASV is closest to the Hebrew: "And thy mouth like the best wine, that goeth down smoothly for my beloved, gliding through the lips of those that are asleep."

v. 13 **mandrakes** "Mandrakes, plants similar in size to apples and red in color, were supposedly aphrodisiacs (cf. Gen. 30:14-16). Not that these lovers needed any additional stimulation, but the use of such items has long been a part of the lore of love-making" (180). The beloved's words are filled with "master images," e.g., "wine," "spring," "countryside," "vineyards," "pomegranates," that belong to the language of love, thus support the couple's ideal experience of lovemaking (see Ryken, 25-29).

v. 8:1 **brother** "In the ancient Near East public displays of affection were frowned on except in the case of certain family members. Thus the beloved wished that her husband were . . . like a brother to her so that it would be acceptable to display her affection for him at any time" (Deere, 1023).

v. 4 **do not arouse** This refrain, spoken by the beloved to the daughter of Jerusalem, appears in 2:7 and again in 3:5, as well as here. "In these three verses the refrain serves as a structural indicator to mark the ending of one section and to introduce the next one. The meaning of the refrain is that love cannot be forced but must be patiently waited for" (Deere, 1015). "The refrain is a plea for patience in situations where the anticipation is almost overpowering" (Ryken, 286).

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## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Parents, PantegoKids will not be aligning with the adult series, *The Marriage Project*. Instead, we will be studying different aspects of godly friendships in the Bible. In our five-week series, *Better Together*, kids will learn why we should have good friends, how to be a good friend, how to resolve conflict in friendships, and who our best friend is! In our passage this week, Paul and Barnabas, who had been great friends and co-laborers in the work of spreading the gospel, had a sharp disagreement over whether Mark should travel with them. Paul said no because Mark had deserted them before. Barnabas wanted to give him another chance. Second chances in friendship are important. Most of us have made a mistake and hurt a friend. As people who have been forgiven by God, we should forgive others. To have a long-lasting faithful friendship we must be willing to work through the hard stuff. In our throwaway culture, it's beginning to be uncommon for people to persevere in their relationships. Does your family have life-long friends? If so, share with your child how valuable those have been. Have there been hard times in those friendships? Tell your child how you resolved them and moved on. Our kids are learning how to negotiate friendships by watching how we treat our friends. Let's commit to be families that go the distance with our friends!

### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Acts 15:36-41

1. Where did Paul and Barnabas want to go together?
2. Who did Barnabas want to take?
3. Why didn't Paul want him to come along?

### What Do You Think

1. Do you think Paul had a right to not trust Mark?
2. Have you ever had a friend who was untrustworthy? How did you feel?
3. Are you a friend who will go the distance and be faithful?

### What R U Going To Do

You have been memorizing 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Say your verse to three different people this week and have them sign their names below.

### Core Comp

Faithfulness - I am loyal to God and others, so they know they can count on me.

### Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 13:7 - *It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

## KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse \_\_\_\_\_, completed *Scrolls* \_\_\_\_\_, brought Bible \_\_\_\_\_, brought a friend \_\_\_\_\_.

**Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.**

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.**  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).