

## THE MARRIAGE PROJECT

### "WE'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELING"

#### SONG OF SONGS 5:2-6:3

### 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.*

Love is a big deal. After all, God is love. Song of Songs is about love, that is, the unsurpassed power and value of love. It isn't a marriage manual, much less a sex manual. Yet, it portrays love's weight and worth in terms of a specific type of love, i.e., marital love between a man and a woman. The unity of the book is evident in its progression as it "moves logically from the courtship (1:2-3:5) to the wedding night (3:6-5:1) to maturation in marriage (5:2-8:4)" (Jack S. Deere, "Song of Songs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1010). For some readers it depicts a dream, for some a memory, for others reality.

The place of Solomon's Song in the canon should come as no surprise. The commentator above explains: "The purpose of the book is to extol human love and marriage. Though at first this seems strange, on reflection it is not surprising for God to have included in the biblical canon a book endorsing the beauty and purity of marital love. God created man and woman (Gen. 1:27; 2:20-23) and established and sanctioned marriage (Gen. 2:24). Since the world views sex so sordidly and perverts and exploits it so persistently and since so many marriages are crumbling because of lack of love, commitment, and devotion, it is advantageous to have a book in the Bible that gives God's endorsement of marital love as wholesome and pure" (1009-10).

One of the most touching love stories ever told is the story of Robertson McQuilkin and his wife

Muriel. Dave Boehi tells their story in an article entitled "Till Death Do Us Part."

"They met as students at Columbia Bible College. Robertson McQuilkin remembers sitting behind her in chapel, watching Muriel Webendorfer run her 'lovely, artistic fingers' through her 'lovely, brown hair.' As they began spending time together, he discovered Muriel was 'delightful, smart, and gifted, and just a great lover of people and more fun than you can imagine.'

"He proposed on Valentine's Day in 1948 and they married in August the same year. For the next three decades, they raised six children and served God together at a variety of posts, including 12 years as missionaries in Japan. In 1968 they returned to the United States and Robertson became president of Columbia Bible College (now Columbia International University). Muriel taught at the college, spoke at women's conferences, appeared on television, and was featured on a radio program that was considered for national syndication."

In 1978 Muriel began to experience memory loss, and by 1990 her condition deteriorated to the point that Robertson had to make a difficult career decision. He resigned as president to care for her.

"The school needed him 100 percent, and Muriel needed him 100 percent. In the end, Robertson says, the choice to step down from his position was easy for him to make. Perhaps the best explanation can be found in the letter he wrote to the Columbia Bible College constituency to explain his decision:

*... recently it has become apparent that Muriel is contented most of the time she is with me and almost none of the time I am away from her. It is not just 'discontent.' She is filled with fear—even terror—that she has lost me and always goes in search of me when I leave home. So it is clear to me that she needs me now, full-time. . .*

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The decision was made, in a way, 42 years ago when I promised to care for Muriel 'in sickness and in health . . . till death do us part.' So, as I told the students and faculty, as a man of my word, integrity has something to do with it. But so does fairness. She has cared for me fully and sacrificially all these years; if I cared for her for the next 40 years I would not be out of her debt.

Duty, however, can be grim and stoic. But there is more: I love Muriel. She is a delight to me-her childlike dependence and confidence in me, her warm love, occasional flashes of that wit I used to relish so, her happy spirit and tough resilience in the face of her continual distressing frustration. I don't have to care for her. I get to! It is a high honor to care for so wonderful a person.

"This simple story of a man who loved and served his wife has touched people in a way that he never anticipated" (<http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/staying-married/commitment/till-death-do-us-part>).

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

### Song of Songs 5:2-6:3

#### **Beloved**

2 I slept but my heart was awake.

Listen! My lover is knocking:

"Open to me, my sister, my darling,  
my dove, my flawless one.

My head is drenched with dew,  
my hair with the dampness of the night."

3 I have taken off my robe-  
must I put it on again?

I have washed my feet-  
must I soil them again?

4 My beloved thrust his hand through the  
latch-opening;  
my heart began to pound for him.

5 I arose to open for my lover,  
and my hands dripped with myrrh,  
my fingers with flowing myrrh,  
on the handles of the bolt.

6 I opened for my lover,  
but my lover had left; he was gone.  
My heart sank at his departure.

I looked for him but did not find him.  
I called him but he did not answer.

7 The watchmen found me  
as they made their rounds in the city.

They beat me, they bruised me;  
they took away my cloak,  
those watchmen of the walls!

8 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you-  
if you find my beloved,  
what will you tell him?

Tell him I am faint with love.

#### **Friends**

9 How is your beloved better than others,  
most beautiful of women?

How is your beloved better than others,  
that you charge us so?

#### **Beloved**

10 My lover is radiant and ruddy,  
outstanding among ten thousand.

11 His head is purest gold;  
his hair is wavy  
and black as a raven.

12 His eyes are like doves  
by the water streams,  
washed in milk,  
mounted like jewels.

13 His cheeks are like beds of spice  
yielding perfume.

His lips are like lilies  
dripping with myrrh.

14 His arms are rods of gold  
set with topaz.

His body is like polished ivory  
decorated with lapis lazuli.

15 His legs are pillars of marble  
set on bases of pure gold.  
His appearance is like Lebanon,  
choice as its cedars.

16 His mouth is sweetness itself;  
he is altogether lovely.

This is my lover, this is my friend,  
daughters of Jerusalem.

#### **Friends**

6:1 Where has your beloved gone,  
most beautiful of women?

Which way did your beloved turn,  
that we may look for him with you?

#### **Beloved**

2 My beloved has gone down to his garden,  
to the beds of spices,  
to browse in the gardens  
and to gather lilies.

3 I am my lover's and my lover is mine;  
he browses among the lilies.

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

\* Bracket 5:2a.

\* Circle "sister" in v. 2.

\* Circle "latch-opening" in v. 4.

\* Circle "myrrh" in v. 5.

\* Underline "beat," "bruised," and "took away" in v. 7.

\* Bracket "faint with love" in v. 8.

\* Bracket "outstanding among ten thousand" in v. 10 and "altogether lovely" in v. 16.

\* Circle "garden" in 6:2.

\* Highlight v. 3a.

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. The "Lover" and the "Beloved" are now husband and wife. Describe the wife's state of mind in verse 2 (cf., 3:1-4).

2. Contrast the husband's attitude toward his wife with hers toward him (vv. 2-3).

3. She has a change of heart (vv. 4-5). How so?

4. Explain the *contrast* in verse 6.

5. The watchmen abuse her. Given her state of mind, what does this suggest to you?

6. Put what "faint with love" means in your own words.

7. The wife's description of her husband (vv. 10-16) suggests the cause of their separation has been overcome. How so?

8. According to 6:2, she knows her husband's physical whereabouts. What does that suggest about their separation?

9. **Discussion:** Talk about what the Beloved's declaration (v. 3) indicates to you about their relationship.

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## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

The third major section in the book of Song of Solomon extends from 5:2-8:4. One commentator writes: "This section of the Song of Songs deals with the growth of the couple's marriage. The intimacy, joy, and physical desire of their wedding night did not fade as is often common in many marriages. They nourished their life together so that the joy of their married life increased rather than decreased. This does not suggest, however, that they did not encounter problems potentially harmful to their relationship. This section opens with the problem of indifference and offers a paradigm for the successful resolution of a serious marital problem" (Deere, 1020).

Song of Songs 5:2-6:3 contains a string of lyric poems, soliloquies delivered by the "Beloved," punctuated by questions from the "Friends." The gist of the poems is quite obvious, in spite of the fact that the precise meaning of the imagery and metaphors in them is rather obscure. The first (vv. 2-8) contains a dream similar to the one in 3:1-4, in which the wife's indifference results in her husband leaving and their separation. In her dream, he comes to the door of her bedchamber. It's late; she has gone to bed. Rather than grant to his affectionate request to enter, she initially makes excuses. In the words of one commentator: "The husband's fervent address to his wife is a startling contrast to her listless response. He says, 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one.' Nowhere else in the song does he address her with so many affectionate terms . . . Yet his words served only to provide an eloquent contrast to the apathetic response of his wife. 'I had put off my tunic; must I put it on again? I had washed my feet; must I soil them again'" (S. Craig Glickman, *A Song for Lovers*, 62). She had much to learn from the girl in one Egyptian song who says to her lover: "My heart remembers well your love, one-half of my hair was combed and I came rushing to see you and I forgot about my hair" (63).

As her husband reaches out his hand to unlock the door, she changes her mind. Her passion is aroused; she hastily perfumes herself as she moves toward the door. But, having second thoughts, he turns and leaves before she can get there. When she opens to him, he's gone, and she's disappointed. She heads into the city to find him. She looks for and calls after him but to no avail. And then, in her dream

something really bizarre happens; contrary to their conduct in her previous dream (3:3), the watchmen find her and abuse her, suggesting that she blames herself for her husband leaving. By this time, she wants nothing more than his embrace (v. 8).

The second (vv. 10-16) contains the wife's answer to the daughters' question, "How is your beloved better than others?" (v. 9), which evokes a lyric praising the physical attributes of the husband. Literary critics refer to such poems as *emblematic blazons*, a term borrowed from Renaissance love poetry, because they blazon forth the beauty or virtues of the beloved by cataloging his or her attractive features and comparing them to objects or emblems in nature. In ancient Egyptian love poetry the same type of lyric poem is called a *wasf*. According to one critic, the Song of Songs contains four blazons (4:1-5; 5:10-15; 6:4-7; 7:1-5) (Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 283). As one might expect, the wife's blazon is replete with figures of speech such as hyperbole, metaphor, and simile. The point of her praise is summarized in verses 10 and 16: her husband is "one in ten thousand" (GNT) and "altogether desirable" (ESV).

While there is no consensus as to the precise meaning of each figure, the following interpretation of them is typical: "The brevity of the introduction sharpens the assertiveness of her love: 'He is the best man of all!' she replies. He is radiant and well tanned, which implies not just good looks but health and vitality. His face is like gold not only in that it is tanned but of the highest value to her. The thickness and blackness of his hair speak of his youth: He is neither gray nor bald. Judging from 4:1, 'eyes like doves' seems to be a stock metaphor. 'Washed in milk' may refer to the white of the eye, in which the pupils are like bathing doves. 'Mounted like jewels' is a hypothetical translation. In describing his cheeks and lips in terms of fragrant spices, she is not referring to their appearance but their effect on her. In particular she seems to have his kisses in mind. This description is, as Carr puts it, 'purely poetic hyperbole.' It is a mistake to try to deduce any sense of what the man looks like from these words. Rather, her words convey her estimation of his value" (Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, 414). After all, they are the words of a woman in love.

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The third (6:2-3) contains the wife's answer to the daughters' question, "Where has your lover gone . . . Which way did your lover turn?" (v. 1), which evokes a lyric affirming the couple's enduring relationship, "I am my lover's and my lover is mine" (v. 3). In the estimation of one commentator: "This indicates that the emotional distance had been overcome on her part and she was confident that it had also been overcome on his part. All that was needed for a

complete reconciliation was a statement of forgiveness or acceptance from the lover" (Deere, 1021)—which follows in verses 4-9.

While it was the wife's indifference to her husband that produced the separation in 5:1-8, the passage isn't about how wives per se should treat their husbands; it's about how husbands and wives should treat one another.

## *The Message of the Passage*

*An attitude of indifference must be replaced by an attitude of appreciation before the reunion of alienated lovers can take place.*

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 **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

**On imagery and metaphors** Some interpreters argue that sensual imagery and erotic double entendres abound in Song of Solomon (e.g., Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, and Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs*, NICOT), but sometimes a "latch-opening" is just a latch-opening and "garden" is just a garden.

v. 2 **slept . . . awake** Scholars have interpreted 5:2a in two basic ways: (1) The Beloved had been asleep or was just about to fall asleep, i.e., near-sleep, when she was awakened by the sound of him knocking on the door of her bedroom chambers; (2) The Beloved was sleeping, but her mind was dreaming, and in her dream she heard him knocking on her door. Cf., "I was asleep, but my mind was dreaming" (NET); "While I slept, my heart was awake. I dreamed my lover knocked at the door" (GNT). "The most common approach to this section is to take it as a dream sequence" (G. Lloyd Carr, *Song of Solomon*, TOTC, 143).

v. 2 **sister** Not lit., a sibling. The word is a term of endearment (cf., "my darling," "my dove," "my flawless one") used affectionately in the Near East to refer to one's wife (cf., 4:9, 10) (see Deere, 1019).

v. 4 **thrust** More often translated "put" (ESV, GNT, NKJV); cf., "extended" (NASB), "reached" (ISV).

v. 4 **latch-opening** "The lock is placed on the inside of the door, and a hole is made in the door near the lock, through which the hand can be passed, and the key inserted" (James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, 122).

v. 5 **myrrh** Frankincense and myrrh are among the Bible's best-known spices used to make fragrant oils and perfumes. "Ahasuerus' fabulous wealth is revealed by the fact that before 'a girl's turn came' to go to him, she would be 'anointed for six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics' (Esther 2:12) . . . At Egyptian banquets, people started out the evening wearing a cone of tallow infused with myrrh. The cone melted during the banquet, filling the air with the fragrance. Queen Hatshepsut was said to have rubbed myrrh on her feet" (Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Women in the time of the Bible*, 78-79). It is sometimes associated with love-making (Pr 7:17). "There is nothing in the passage to indicate by whom the myrrh was placed, whether the lover who left it as a token of love, or the girl who, in her response, took time to prepare herself for the encounter" (Carr, 149).

v. 7 **beat, bruised, took away** "The fact that in her dream the watchmen beat her may indicate that she subconsciously felt that someone should punish her for refusing him" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Song of Solomon," 2016 ed., 30, [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)); cf., 3:3. "In her dream this action by the watchmen may indicate that she was to blame for her separation from her lover" (Deere, 1021).

v. 8 **faint with love** Cf., "Tell him that I am lovesick" (NET). "The Beloved was (physically/emotionally) sick because of her unrequited love for him" (the NET Bible, 19<sup>tn</sup> on 5:8).

vv. 10, 16 **outstanding, altogether** "The metaphors in verses 11-15 were not meant to be taken as visual comparisons for the most part. They indicate her husband's value and attractiveness" (Deere, 1021). "This section is of particular interest, for it records what was apparently the epitome of male physical beauty, just as the lover's description of his bride (4:1-5; 6:5-7; 7:1-5) preserves the ideal of female beauty. The two most detailed accounts, here and 7:1-5, share many common features: an orderly progression from head to foot (vice versa in the case of the description of the girl); animal comparisons (ravens, doves, 5:11f.; gazelles, 7:3); geographic comparisons (Lebanon, 5:15; 7:4); flowers and spices (5:13;7:2), springs and pools (5:12; 7:4); the work of architects (5:15; 7:4), goldsmiths and jewellers (5:14; 7:1); etc. The emphasis in these two poems is on colour, form, beauty and strength" (Carr, 153). The bride's husband is "one in ten thousand" (GNT) and "altogether desirable" (ESV).

6:2a **garden** While "garden" is used metaphorically to refer to the Beloved (4:12, 15, 16; 5:1), it need not be taken that way here (cf., 8:13). "Having expressed her love for her husband, the Shulammitte now knew where to find him. Solomon loved his gardens (Eccles. 2:5). This may be an allusion to the 'garden' of his work as the king of Israel, which, like a garden, needed tending" (Constable, 32).

v. 3 **I am my lover's . . .** "Her statement of mutual possession (I am my lover's and my lover is mine, v. 3) is the inverse of her earlier passionate declaration (2:16a; cf. 7:10). *This indicates that the emotional distance had been overcome on her part and she was confident that it had been overcome on his part.* All that was needed for a complete reconciliation was a statement of forgiveness or acceptance from the lover" (Deere, 1021, italics added)—which follows in verses 4-9.

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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! Friends are gifts from God! Sometimes friendships come very easily. There are people that we instantly connect to and feel like we've known forever. Most of the time, friendships grow over time and take a little work. As parents, we want our kids to develop strong friendships with like-minded kids. It's important that we remind our kids to have a good friend, we must be a good friend. Here are some tips to discuss with your child about being a good friend. (1) Listen and remember important things about people. This includes birthdays or special events they are involved in. (2) Be reliable. Reliability builds trust and trust is essential to friendship. (3) Be kind in your actions and words. (4) Help out when a friend needs it. Be willing to be inconvenienced to help a friend. (5) Spend time together. All relationships require a time commitment. (6) Have fun together! (7) Pray for your friends! As our kids move into adolescence, their friends become a powerful influence in their lives. Let's teach them early on how to have God-honoring friendships!

### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read 1 Samuel 18: 1-4

1. Describe Jonathon's love for his friend, David.
2. What did Jonathon give David?

### What Do You Think

Jonathon and David were instant friends. Have you ever made a friend instantly? If so, what did you like most about that person? What characteristic do you look for first in a friend?

### What R U Going To Do

One of the greatest ways we can love our friends is by praying for them. Make a list of your friends and then ask each one how you can pray for them. Check in with them occasionally to see when your prayer is answered.

### Core Comp

Kindness/Goodness - I treat others better than myself.

### Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 13:5 - *It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

## 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).