

“I CHOOSE TO DESIRE YOU”

CRAVING AND STIMULATING YOUR LOVER’S PASSIONS

There are lots of things in life that we all love—things that we enjoy doing that in some sense define our personality and determine our goals. For some it might be a certain food or beverage. For others, it might be a clothing style, sporting event, or a regular vacation spot. But when it comes to the things we say “love” in life, they pale in comparison to the love God has given to us for the “one” person we are privileged to share life with, our own spouse. Take a moment and *write down the top ten things you are thankful for* about your life partner, if you are married or engaged (if you are single, the top ten things that you would most value in a life partner):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

So far in our study of the Song of Solomon, we have seen this couple, still unmarried, build their relationship on the right things—respect for one another because of godly character, trust for each other because of tight accountability and purity, delight in one another because of a commitment to faithfully fulfill the Biblical roles that God has give them respectively, but now, as we shall see in **2:8-3:5**, one of the greatest evidences of a God-exalting romantic relationship is *intense erotic passion*—where both partners crave one another and in so doing, seek to stimulate one another’s romantic desires.

In right context and built on the right foundation, these passions, which pulsate strongly, are not only appropriate, they are essential, good, right, pure, lovely, excellent, and worthy of praise (**Philippians 4:8**). They are expected in a romantic relationship where Christ is Lord, because the God of the Bible put them in His Word and gives us His grace to make the experience in Song of Solomon ours. Both the man and the woman should expect to see these desires evident, growing, and maturing throughout their lives together.

While erotic passion might be manifest differently from relationship to relationship, depending on the couple and their temperaments, a healthy, normal, romantic bond is marked by a strong, intense, restless, and enjoyable desire for one another, sought and fulfilled. The couple that has little or no affection and erotic passion for each other are woefully lacking the things that produce it, and are in serious trouble. If you have a righteous commitment, you will experience romantic chemistry; but if you have all chemistry and no commitment, you will find the chemistry short-lived and dying, or eventually stimulated by the wrong things.

Nearing the point where it is time for the inevitable, this couple finds themselves in the place where they **MUST** take the next step, wherein their romantic desires must be fulfilled. These desires they have for one another, while built on the right things, **MUST** be given expression—and the only way to do that *fully* is in marriage. This section of Scripture, **2:8-3:5**, is the engaged couple living with the tension of being in between, having appropriate erotic passions, and being unable to fully relieve them. And while we will see them let out those passions completely in **4:8-5:1**, the build up from here on tells us something wonderful and exciting about God’s design in marriage and His gift of erotic, sensual love. *In specific, they model 5 expressions of holy passion that are present when both partners choose to desire one another as God intended.*

To DESIRE someone erotically means that you seek to _____ the intensely restless _____ that is in your body and soul towards your mate, by _____ and _____ private personal _____ together.

In other words, all Biblically righteous romantic relationships have within them a regular passionate build up of momentous affectionate tension that can only be relieved by the marriage partner through mental, emotional, verbal, and physical stimulation. Here is what it looks like:

- 1. GOD-CENTERED EROTIC PASSION IS _____ ! (2:8-13)**
 - A. What words would you use to describe the attitude of the Shulamite in **2:8-9** as it relates to her man?
 - B. What words does she use to describe him in **2:9** and what do they reveal about her desires?
 - C. Is there anything in her words that seems erotic? Why is that significant as it relates to romantic desires?
 - D. What is Solomon doing in **2:9** that matches what she is feeling?

- E. What does he say in **2:10** and what is he seeking (repeated again in **2:13**)?
 - F. What time of year is it according to Solomon in **2:11-13**, and what connection does that have to his feelings for her?
 - G. What does this say about the maturing and momentum of their affections romantically?
 - H. What is the next step and why is it important, based on what we have already seen in the near context of **2:3-7**?
 - I. How is Solomon being a good leader in this next step?
 - J. What does this say about the nature of romantic desires and how they are to be fulfilled?
 - K. How do we know that Solomon has in mind is the fulfillment of their erotic passion, according to **v. 14**?
- 2. GOD-CENTERED EROTIC PASSION IS _____ ! (2:14)**
- A. What does Solomon call the Shulamite in **v. 14** and how does it relate to the desires he expresses verbally?
 - B. Where does he want to go with her, according to the text?
 - C. What does he want to do with her, according to the text?
 - D. Why does he need to go to such a secret place for this? (HINT: the meaning of the word "face" in the Hebrew contains the answer)
 - E. What does this say about the way a man is typically stimulated in his erotic desires? How does this help the woman?

- F. How is that different from the way a woman is typically stimulated in her erotic desires? How does this help the man?
- G. How can both of these co-exist together in a mutually satisfying way, being so different?

3. **GOD-CENTERED EROTIC PASSION IS _____! (2:15)**

- A. How is this interruption of their erotic passion like the other ones (2:7; 3:5)?
- B. In what ways is this *call to purity* different than the others?
- C. What is the effect of a **"fox"** in a **"vineyard,"** according to the text?
- D. What is the difference between a **"fox"** and a **"little fox,"** which seems to be more dangerous?
- E. What then is the interpretation of the analogy in this miniature proverb?
- F. What are some examples of **"foxes"** and especially **"little foxes"** that can ruin a marriage relationship (both in this context and beyond)?

"FOXES"

"LITTLE FOXES"

- G. How is it possible to have pure erotic desire?

H. How is it possible to corrupt an otherwise pure erotic desire?

4. **GOD-CENTERED EROTIC PASSION IS _____ ! (2:16-17)**

A. As the Shulamite speaks in v. **16-17**, having already reaffirmed her strong commitment to purity, how does she reassure Solomon that her feelings are mutual?

B. How does Paul affirm this principle in **1 Corinthians 7:3-5**?

C. Following the shepherd theme already used in Song of Solomon, what statement does the Shulamite make about Solomon as it relates to **“lilies” (2:1-2; 4:5-6)**?

D. What is **“the cool of the day, when the shadows flee away”** in v. **17**? What is she saying?

E. What invitation does she give to him at the end of v. **17**?

F. What is the difference between a **“gazelle and a young stag”** (cf. **2:9**)?

G. What is a more literal translation for **“cleft mountains [NASB, the mountains of Bether]”** in the Hebrew?

H. How would you summarize her invitation to him (keeping in mind v. **15**)?

I. What does this reveal about her openness to him as it relates to his erotic desires for her? What about her erotic desires for him?

5. **GOD-CENTERED EROTIC PASSION IS _____ ! (3:1-5)**

A. What is the most realistic interpretation of **3:1** and why (what indicators do we have in the context)?

- B. Where, according to this line of interpretation, is Solomon (cf. **3:6-11**)?
- C. What does this say about the difference between times together and time apart?
- D. What phrase does she rehearse to herself throughout **3:1-4**?
- E. How is that different than simple erotic passion?
- F. Where does she want to take him in **v. 4** and what is so significant about that room?
- G. What kind of dream is this? Is this wrong? Why or why not?
- H. When would a dream like this be wrong?
- I. What principle does she employ in **v. 5** that has become her “go-to” in times like this?

TAKING IT HOME AND MAKING IT REAL:

Desiring one another is a choice – if this is God’s standard, then there is more than abundant grace by the giver of marriage to enable you to enjoy it as you were made to. Even if sin, past hurt, coldness or another “little fox” has devastated your marital vineyard, God can rebuild and restore this! Whether you are just starting out, rebuilding, or maturing in them, these desires can and must be a part of your lives if you are to have a marriage that is pleasing to God.

1. If you are married, take some time together to plan an event this week where you can release your righteous, romantic desires. Put thought, care, and the best interests of the other into it, discuss it, and enjoy it! It is good, holy, pure, and amazing. But before you do, make sure that you have a good talk about what stokes the fires of marital erotic passion beyond the physical, and concentrate on that in preparation. Afterwards, discuss what was different or meaningful about it and commit to plan regular ways and places where you can express and enjoy one another.

2. If you are engaged and affirmed by those around you who see God at work moving you towards this—get married, ASAP! In addition, and if you are single, connect with some married couples this week and interview them about their relationship, their pre-marital purity, what they saw in each other, how they built their relationship on Christ, and combine the lessons you learn and submit them for a special prize for next week's drawing!
3. List some examples of ways to cultivate purity in your romantic relationships that include keys to affair-proofing your marriage, serving your partner with your affections, and how to avoid letting your oneness be all about intimacy.
4. Write down some examples of consequences to immorality – write down at least 10 and pray together against such a thing happening to you.

