

“I CHOOSE TO RESPECT YOU” FEELING AND EXPRESSING YOUR LOVER’S WORTH

Love. Throughout the ages, men and women have tried to define it, communicate it, and capture its essence in various ways: poetry, art, and especially music. The Song of Solomon, which is the greatest Biblical song ever written, stands head and shoulders above all the other love songs, including the ones in our day. As we come to the first poem within the Song of Solomon (1:1-4), at first glance it appears to be the simple, young, playful love of a dating couple expressing admiration for one another as newly enchanted couples do—and while that is partly true, a closer look at the reason they are so drawn to each other is much deeper.

- A. How does the song open in v. 2? Who is speaking and what is desired?

- B. What kinds of “kisses” are intended according to the word play in v. 2?

“What matters is that the girl is giving vent to her deepest feelings. She wants to be kissed by her lover, and not just a formal peck on the cheek from cold, passionless lips. She wants to feel his mouth’s deep kiss inside her own, and to know his fond embrace...She is very tactile [physical]. She wants to be touched and to be held; not just as an object of his desire, but because she wants to be stirred to give herself to the one whom she loves” (Tom Gledhill, *The Message of the Song of Songs*, p. 94).

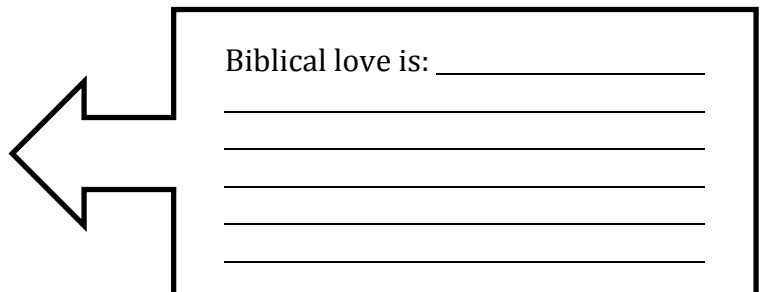
- C. What is the reason for this strong desire according to v. 2?

- D. What makes “**wine**” a fitting analogy of his love, and how does it relate to the kisses she has expressed longing for?

- E. What is the “**love**” they have for one another (v. 2, **5b**) and how is it different that the general kind of “**love**” they experience with others (v.3, **5c**)?

F. What is love, Biblically defined?

- 1 Corinthians 13
- Romans 12:9-21
- Ephesians 5:25
- Titus 2:3-4



Biblical love is: _____

- G. What does this tell you about the underlying motivation for her passion and attraction?
- H. Continuing with her praise, what does the Shulamite focus on next in **v. 3**?
- I. What was the purpose of fragrant oils in the ancient world?
- J. Name some of the other practical purposes for olive oil in Bible times, other than for perfuming.
- K. What is purified oil and how is it different from normal, common olive oil?
- L. To what does she liken Solomon's oils?
- M. What is the significance of a person's **"name"** in Biblical times, especially beyond mere identification?
- N. Given the significance of his love and his name, properly understood, what is she really extolling about her man?
- O. What consensus does she have of Solomon's reputation for godliness in **v. 3**?
- P. Because he is this kind of man, what desires does she express in **v. 4**?
- Q. What affirmation and approval does this relationship have in the end of **v. 4**?
- R. What does this say about the kind of qualities that should be evident in a person before you are seriously involved in dating?
- S. How can a single man or woman cultivate these qualities without a partner?

- T. What does this say about the kind of affirmation a godly couple will have from others in the community of faith?

- U. How does this limit the options for a potential mate in the dating phase of the relationship?

- V. What are some tests you can use to discern whether someone you might marry is indeed solid in his or her character and commitment?

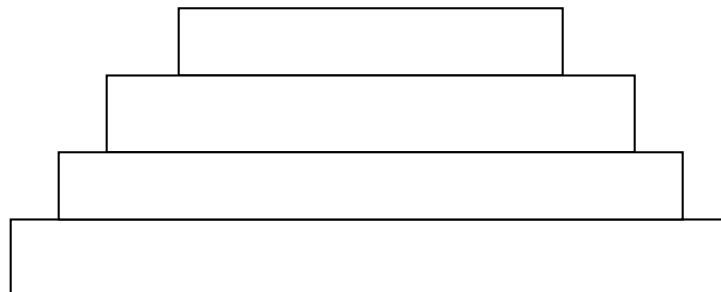
- W. What are the dangers of not building a romantic relationship on a righteous life?

- X. What does this say about the place of romantic affections and desires for intimacy when these character qualities are in place?

- Y. How does this differ from the way relationships are formed in the world? What is usually first and last?

God has made us as creatures who relate to one another in four areas: *intellectually, physically, spiritually, and emotionally*. Given those dimensions, fill in this pyramid chart with the most important of these four at the bottom, and organize them according to priority:

1. *Intellectually* – what we think
2. *Physically* – what we act
3. *Spiritually* – what we believe
4. *Emotionally* – what we feel



In a word, the foundation that this couple has laid in their early days of young love is one of RESPECT. She respects him because he is a godly man. His character and commitment are clearly intact. He is not like other men – he has been through the

refining process with all of the impurities and dregs removed. He is being sanctified and has a proven pattern of righteous living. She knows it. She loves it. She celebrates it. She declares it! She is turned on by it. She honors him for it! As you read the rest of Song of Solomon, you quickly discern the same thing from him.

To RESPECT means you feel the weight of someone's _____ and express it through _____, _____, and _____.

- What is the importance of respect in a romantic relationship?

- What is the special importance of respect for a man and the level in which he "needs" it from the woman in his life?

- What are some reasons couples lose respect for each other?

- What happens when respect goes?

- How percentage of this respect **given** and how much is **earned** in this poem?

Of first importance, in the opening stanza of this award winning, God-breathed love song, is a demonstration of RESPECT. *In this text, these lovers model respect and demonstrate 4 ways it can and should happen in a righteous relationship, where both partners choose God's design over their natural, fickle impulses.* Read any book on the topic of respect and you will see these ways taught and explained in every one of them. Amazing that it has been in God's Word all this time.

1. RESPECT IS SHOWN BY PHYSICAL _____.

- A. Which came first for the Shulamite: the respect or the romantic desires?

- B. What does this say about physical desires that do not come from respect?

- C. Compare the story of Amnon and Tamar in **2 Samuel 13:1-15** for an example of physical desire without respect.

- D. How does physical desire show respect?

- E. How does withholding and/or neglecting physical interest communicate disrespect?
- F. What are some ways a man can show his woman respect within the realm of the physical (dating and married)? What about the woman to the man?

2. RESPECT IS SHOWN BY PERSONAL _____.

- A. How would you describe the way in which she tells her man about her admiration for him?
- B. How does separating the exclusivity of their love from all others show respect?
- C. Why is it important for couples to remind each other of their regard and appreciation one for another?
- D. What is the difference between true admiration and token compliments?
- E. How does affirmation show respect?
- F. How does a lack of affirmation demonstrate disrespect?
- G. What are some respectful ways that a man can affirm his woman? What about the woman to the man?

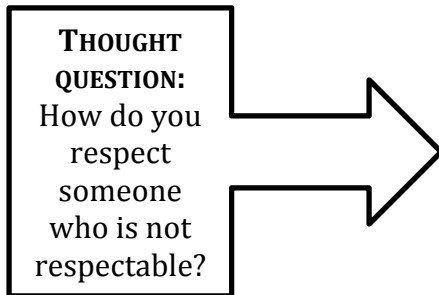
3. RESPECT IS SHOWN BY PUBLIC _____.

- A. According to the bride, what is widely known about Solomon among the women of the land and what response do they have (v. 3)?
- B. What public display does she want to have with him according to v. 4?

- C. In the second half of v. 4, how has her admiration of him affected the onlookers to their relationship?
 - D. How should you speak about your mate in public? Explain your answer. **Compare Song of Solomon 4:7.**
 - E. Is there ever a time you should speak to others about the shortcomings of your mate? Discuss.
 - F. How is public adoration a sign of respect?
 - G. How does speaking about your mate's flaws to others or in front of others dishonor him or her?
 - H. What are some practical venues in which a couple can properly express their affection for one another?
4. RESPECT IS SHOWN BY PRIVATE _____.
- A. How do you know, according to v. 4, that she longs to continue with these expressions of love and affection in private?
 - B. What are the "chambers" of the king? What is she saying?
 - C. What word does she use in v. 4 to describe him? Why is this significant (cf. 1 Peter 3:6)?
 - D. Why is a display of reverence important in private and how can it coexist in a relationship that is so intimate and familiar?
 - E. How is private affection a display of respect?
 - F. What happens in a relationship if there is lots of public adoration but not private affection? What is the word the Bible uses to describe this?

G. What effect does ridicule, scolding, and faultfinding have on a couple's relationship? Why?

H. What are some respectful ways that a couple can nurture and encourage one another privately?



TAKING IT HOME AND MAKING IT REAL:

Respect is a choice – it's a daily commitment to honor, appreciate, and delight in someone, thereby placing great value and worth upon them personally. Without it, no marriage will succeed. It's rubber meets the road time. How are you doing in your respect of your mate?

A. If you are married, rate yourself; then ask your spouse to rate your respect levels in terms of quality and frequency:

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Attracted				Indifferent					Repulsed
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Affirming				Apathetic					Condemning
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adoring				Silent					Faultfinding
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Affectionate				Tolerable					Withholding

- B. If you are not married, it's important to realize that you don't have to be married or dating in order to be the kind of man that this woman loves (or vice versa). If you are the godly person you should be, the right person will see recognize you and be drawn to the right things in you. Character building and selfless commitment do not require a romantic partner. Discover what is lacking in your character and fill in the holes. Remember that you will never become what you are not already pursuing.

- C. Start a notebook or journal on your mate – something that records and tracks your personal investment in him or her. Record ways your partner is unique, areas where your help or care is needed, ways to communicate, reasons you need that person in your life, gift ideas, vacation ideas, key information, ways that you can serve your mate in obedience to God's Word.