

## **"I CHOOSE TO COMPLETE YOU"**

### FILLING AND MEETING YOUR LOVER'S NEEDS

Without any question, one of the clearest and funniest realities about couples, which everyone understands is that men and women are different – **very different!** For example, a man has six items in his bathroom – a toothbrush, shaving cream, razor, a bar of Dial soap, and a towel from the Holiday Inn Express. The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 437. A man would not be able to identify most of these items.

If Gloria, Suzanne, Debra and Michelle go out for lunch, they will call each other Gloria, Suzanne, Debra and Michelle. But if Mike, Phil, Rob and Jack go out for lunch, they will affectionately refer to each other as Fat Boy, Bonehead, Pencil-neck, and Useless. A woman makes a list of things she needs and then goes out to the store and buys these things. A man waits till the only items left in his fridge are half a lime and a soda. Then he goes grocery shopping. He buys everything that looks good. By the time a man reaches the checkout counter, his cart is packed tighter than the Clampett's car on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Of course, this will not stop him from going to the 10-items-or-less lane.

If a woman is out driving, and she finds herself in unfamiliar surroundings, she will stop at a gas station and ask for directions. Men consider this a sign of weakness. Men will never stop and ask for directions. Men will drive in a circle for hours, all the while saying things like, "I know exactly where I am going, I am just taking a different way to get there – a short cut." Women do laundry every couple of days. A man will wear every article of clothing he owns, including his surgical pants that were hip about eight years ago, before he will do his laundry. When he is finally out of clothes, he will wear a dirty sweatshirt inside out, rent a U-Haul and take his mountain of clothes to the Laundromat.

Single-tasking men do one thing well at a time: e.g. drink a cup of coffee. In the same time a single-tasking women can make breakfast, make the children's sandwiches, organize the window cleaner, phone the office, dress the children, write a shopping list, iron a shirt and de-flea the cat. A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and soccer games and best friends and favorite foods and secret fears and hopes and dreams. A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house. Best of all, and my favorite, women love cats. Men *say* they love cats, but when women aren't looking, men kick them.

Men and women are different. They think different, act different, talk different, like different things, and respond with different emotions. How men and women actually come together and learn to relate to one another is actually nothing short of a divine miracle. Surprisingly, these differences are by design—God's design. He made men and

women different for a reason, so that when they come together as one in marriage, they experience together what they could never experience alone.

In short, he made men and women to need one another. Neither of them is complete in and of themselves. God made men need women, and He made women need men. When a man and woman come together in the most intimate relationship that two people could enjoy this side of heaven, they experience the full benefit of being made whole, humanly speaking<sup>1</sup>.

It’s no surprise then, as we continue in our study of the Song of Solomon, we see the differences between men and women exemplified and celebrated, early on in the relationship, even before marriage. In **2:3-7**, these lovers exalt and enjoy the God given differences that fill and meet one another’s needs.

- To what does the Shulamite compare Solomon in **v. 3**?
  
- How is this an equal exchange of his praise for her in **v. 2**?
  
- What is a better understanding of this kind of fruitful tree, other than **“apple”**?
  
- According to the end of **v. 3**, what two functions does Solomon provide, which are like this tree? What then is she praising about him?
  
- What is her personal attitude towards him because of this and what words does she use to describe it?
  
- How is this especially refreshing and satisfying to her, in light of the metaphors she used in **1:5-6**?
  
- In **v. 3**, she declares that underneath him, as a tree, she **“sat in his shadow”** – what does that posture indicate?
  
- What is the **“banquet house”** in **v. 4**?

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<sup>1</sup> This in no way means that a person set apart by God for singleness is incomplete before Him (1 Corinthians 7:7-9) or that married people are totally complete – that is the work of the Son of God (Colossians 2:9-10). If God chooses to work through another to meet those needs, great! If He chooses to meet those needs personally Himself, even better.

- What were the uses for a **“banner”** in the ancient world and what significance would this have that his banner is over her and that it is a banner of **“love”**?
- Swooning in **v. 5** over the kind of man Solomon is, what does this woman crave and why?
- What is a **“raisin cake”** and what is its significance in Bible times (**Hosea 3:1; 2 Samuel 6:19**)?
- What is the significance of **“apples”** and what were they used for?
- What is her longing in **v. 6** and how does that enhance your understanding of **“lovesick”**?
- Given the erotic nature of these desires, what does she invoke in **v. 7** that this couple invokes every time they come close to consummating their union?
- How does this help you understand the place of natural affections and passions within a solid romantic, pre-marital relationship?
- What does it say about the need for close accountability for the sake of purity?

*“She wants their love to be consummated, but she is in great tension, because she knows that the time is not yet ripe. In speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, she is speaking to herself. She is basically telling herself to cool it, to wait for the appropriate time. For the Christian, the appropriate time is always within marriage, never outside of it. We are all so clever at rationalizing our own desires, at excusing our own lack of self-discipline of our bodies and of our thought lives. But we need to be ruthless in this matter, as Jesus himself taught (Matthew 5:29-30). If what we see, touch, feel, read, or hear, causes a wrong chain of thought to originate in our minds, then we are to be severe on ourselves, and shut our eyes, and refrain from touching or reading or watching. Not that the desire or instincts are in any way wrong in themselves. What is wrong is when those desires run away with us, and spiral totally out of control, and find their fulfillment in illegitimate ways.” – Tom Gledhill, *The Message of the Song of Songs*, p. 129.*

- More pointedly, what does it say about the impact of and need for faithfulness to the God given roles within marriage?

To **COMPLETE** someone in marriage means you \_\_\_\_\_ together in a unity of \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_, mutual \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

This definition captures the essence of the Biblical teaching on roles within marriage and are explained in the following sections of Scripture:

**1. Genesis 2:18–25 —Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” 19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.**

- A. In v. 18, what does God say about the man in his pre-fall condition and how is that different from everything else God has made?
  
- B. What is a **“helper”** and what does it imply about Adam’s need and her function, especially as it relates to God’s mandate in **1:26-28**?
  
- C. What is his relationship to the woman in terms of function? Is one inferior to the other?
  
- D. What does **“suitable”** mean and what does it suggest about the adequacy and competency of her role?
  
- E. What is the purpose of parading the animals in front of Adam according to this section?
  
- F. What is Adam’s reaction to having a wife?

- G. How does Moses say this pattern relates to future unions in **v. 24**? What does it mean to be **“one”** in a marriage?
- H. Why does the text add **v. 25** and how is it that they felt shame there after the fall into sin (**3:7**)?
2. **Ephesians 5:15–32**—Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. **22** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. **25** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, **26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. **28** In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, **30** because we are members of his body. **31** “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” **32** This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
- A. What is the broader context of this teaching on marriage, according to **v. 15-20**?
- B. How does the mutual submission principle of **v. 21** flow into the marriage context of **v. 22-33**?
- C. How does Paul elevate marriage by his quotation of **Genesis 2:24** and the statement of marriage as a divine **“mystery”** of Christ and the church? What does this say about the ultimate purpose for which God created marriage?
- D. What does this say about who can truly fulfill and embody God’s design in marriage? What is at stake for not fulfilling the marriage as God intended?

- E. How then does Paul use the illustration of Christ and the church as the basis for his commands concerning the roles within marriage?
- F. What is the command to the wife in **v. 22**? What does it mean and what does it not mean?
- G. How does Paul posture this command to the wives and why is it significant that he speaks to them in this way?
- H. In explaining the wife’s role in relationship to her man, what does Paul teach about the nature of the husband’s role according to **v. 23**?
- I. According to **v. 23-24**, what is the extent to which she is subject to her husband and in what manner should she fulfill it? Does Scripture allow for any exceptions (**Acts 4:19; 5:29**)?
- J. How does a wife submit to a husband that is not acting like Christ?
- K. What is the command to the husband in **v. 25** that superintends everything else that is said with regard to his role in the marriage? What kind of commitment is this?
- L. How is this evidence of submission to her? Does this mean that Christ subjected Himself to the church? If so, how?
- M. What does this say about the use of the husband’s authority in the relationship (cf. **2 Corinthians 13:10**)?
- N. Following Christ’s example in **v. 25**, how does the husband “**give himself up for**” his wife? What are some practical examples?
- O. Knowing that Christ’s intent in giving Himself away for His bride in **v. 26** was to “**sanctify her**” what does this mean and how does it translate into the mindset of the husband as he shepherds his wife? What is the tool that Christ/husbands use?

- P. What ultimate motivation is beneath Christ's purifying work in the church according to **v. 27**? How does it relate to the way husbands should treat their wives and how does it not relate?
- Q. To what extent are husbands to care for their wives according to **v. 28-30**?
- R. What is the difference between the terms "**nourishes and cherishes**"?
- S. What words does Paul use to summarize his teaching on the attitudes (rather than functions) of men and women within marriage, according to **v. 33**?
- 3. Titus 2:3-5—Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.**
- A. What kind of relationships does Paul command Titus to put into place within the context of the church?
- B. What does this say about the kind of input women should have into each other's lives?
- C. What does this section add to what has already been said about the role of the wife in relation to her husband?
- D. What, according to Paul in **v. 5**, is at stake if God's design is unfulfilled?
- 4. 1 Peter 3:1-7 – Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. 5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do**

**good and do not fear anything that is frightening. 7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.**

- A. What is the context of **1 Peter** and what is his overall theme?
- B. To whom is this section written and what is the situation these people are in specifically?
- C. What is the command in **v. 1** and how does it compare to what has already been said in other passages? Why is it not different?
- D. What is the key to winning these disobedient husbands – what works (**v. 1, 4**) and what doesn’t work (**v. 2-3**)?
- E. What is **“gentle”** and **“quiet”** and what are their opposites?
- F. What word is used to describe Sarah’s attitude towards Abraham in **v. 6** and how does that show up in her speech?
- G. How can a wife have such hope in this context that she is **“not frightened by any fear”**?
- H. What command and sober warning does God give to husbands in **v. 7**?
- I. How does this speak to the concept of personal faithfulness of one partner towards the other, even if that other partner is unfaithful?

### **TAKING IT HOME AND MAKING IT REAL:**

Completing one another is a choice – it’s a daily commitment to be used by God to fill and meet the needs of another, with whom you partner together in everything. Your diligence in this partnership reveal whether you truly believe that the one whom God has graciously and sovereignly given to you is the one you need and who needs you in order to be the man and woman He desires.



- A. If you are married, take some time and honestly consider how you encourage your partner and the use of his/her role, and then how you are doing at yours:

**WOMEN:**

- How would your man say you free him up and celebrate his work?
- Do you thank him and encourage your kids to do the same?
- Do you create a haven for him to come home to after work?
- Are you a good steward of what he provides?
- Do you express your fears, worries, and concerns so that he can protect you?
- Are you eager to place yourself under his leadership?
- Are you willing to shoulder his burdens?
- Do you wait for the proper time to share concerns or do you dump your burdens on him?
- Are your expectations of him reasonable and attainable?
- Do your thoughts and words respect him? Words spoken to him? Words spoken about him to others?
- When you have to disagree with a direction where he leads, do you disagree honorably and reverently, gently and quietly?
- Do you not only love him with your commitment, do you passionately like him?
- Do you fulfill the tasks he gives you promptly and cheerfully?
- Do you interfere with your husband during discipline and correction of the children?
- Do you have a good attitude when you are with your husband, modeling gratitude for who he is?
- Do you have women in your life who model and encourage your relationship with your man?
- Does the way you dress and conduct yourself both publicly and privately show your submissive heart?
- Do you draw from Christ what you need ultimately, and through that relationship, press into your marriage to be what God wants you to be and help him be the man God wants him to be?
- In what ways do you need your man? Tell him this week.
- Do you have greater personal oneness with your man than with your mother, sister, or girlfriends?

**MEN:**

- What are some ways that your woman needs your protection – ask her, write them down, and strategize about how to step up the security under which she rests.
- Knowing that Jesus will treat you as kindly as you treat your bride, what changes do you need to make, realizing that if He truly didn't temper it with His mercy, you'd be in a world of hurt. What needs to change?

- Would your bride say you are an active or passive leader – that is, do you initiate in the relationship with an active pursuit of clear goals or will you only step forward when pushed, nagged, or forced?
  - What are your wife's spiritual gifts and how are you freeing her up to use them?
  - How are you discipling her? What are you teaching her?
  - Where are you spiritually in relationship to your wife? Are you in a position to lead?
  - What are the ways you serve her, beyond just going to work and bringing home a paycheck?
  - Do you show her appreciation for how she cares for you, verbally and otherwise?
  - Do you handle finances properly?
  - Do you lead your family to engage in family and corporate worship?
  - Do you plan fun and nurturing times together to relax and enjoy fellowship?
  - Do you have any habits that annoy her?
  - Do you help out at home cheerfully?
  - Do you listen to suggestions about ways that you can improve personally without becoming upset?
  - Do you give her freedom to use an appropriate amount of money as she deems best?
  - Do you give her your undivided attention when she wants to talk?
  - What are you doing to prepare her for the day when she will meet Christ?
  - Are you a more of a compelling and influential motivating leader who leads with your wisdom and example; a harsh, domineering, and authoritarian leader who threatens, manipulates, and controls; or a disengaged, withdrawn, dispassionate leader who abdicates your role and just lets things happen?
  - Do you have men in your life who model godly leadership in marriage?
  - In what ways do you need your wife? Tell her this week.
- B. If you are not married, it's important to realize that you don't have to have a partner in order to be the kind of Christian that lives with this sort of character. Take some time this week to study **1 Corinthians 7** and consider the amazing benefits of God's gift of singleness. Especially note how Paul demonstrates the possible distractions a married couple has in this life, which distracts them from their eternal perspective and usefulness.