



### A Few Key Words

Apples, raisin cakes, mandrakes \_\_\_\_\_

Garden \_\_\_\_\_

Fruit \_\_\_\_\_

North wind/south wind \_\_\_\_\_

### Song of Solomon 1:2-4

(Shulamith speaks)

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—

For your love is more delightful than wine.

Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes;

Your name is like perfume poured out.

No wonder the maidens love you!

Take me away with you—let us hurry!

Let the king bring me into his chambers!



**Philippians 2:3-4**

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,  
But in humility consider others better than yourselves.  
Each of you should look not to your own interests,  
But also to the interests of others.

**“Sloderbeck Paraphrase”**

Don't be selfish; Don't try to impress my spouse.  
Be humble, thinking of my spouse as better than myself.  
Don't look out only for my own interests,  
But take an interest in my spouse's too.



**Romans 12:10**

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.  
Honor one another above yourselves.

**“Sloderbeck Paraphrase”**

I choose to give my whole self,  
With tenderness and love, to my mate.  
I will respect, value, and  
Put the needs of my spouse ahead of my own.

- SERVE: put our spouse’s needs first, be patient, creative, seek to give more than to get.<sup>1</sup>
- LOVE: unconditionally, knowing we “belong” to our spouse.<sup>2</sup>
- PROTECT: safeguard, maintain purity, keep danger away from relationship.<sup>3</sup>
- FORGIVE: no words more powerful than “I was wrong—please forgive me.” Need to give the forgiveness we desire.<sup>4</sup>





## Interlude

### *Serving Each Other*

*When was the last time you found yourself asking, “Am I happier today than I was yesterday?”* While millions of couples evaluate their marriages by how happy their spouse makes them, Gary Thomas challenges us with a different question—one he believes is more like a prayer, rather than just a question. He says, “I think there’s a better and healthier question to ask... “*God, how can I love my spouse today like she (or he) has never been loved?*”<sup>5</sup> This viewpoint creates an attitude and an environment of satisfaction to our souls because God wired us to serve, and in marriage this type of service is often sacrificial.<sup>6</sup>

Love. Sacrifice. Service. These three Christ-like attitudes are foundational to what constitutes a servant lover—the kind of lover we want to strive to be to our mate. Let’s expand on this a little more from what was talked about in class to discover how we can become better servants and lovers in our relationship.

In order to practice being a servant to your mate, it not only requires love, but also humility. *And what is humility?* Here’s Gary Thomas’ definition:

**Humility is more than just being able to admit being wrong. It isn’t thinking less of ourselves; it’s thinking less about ourselves. Obsessing over what you aren’t makes you as self-absorbed as the person who obsesses about what she is. Humility is placing others above ourselves.**<sup>7</sup>

Humility in a marriage brings strength to both partners because it allows each of us to accept who we are; allows us to respect others for who they are; helps us to escape from the mindset that others are here to serve us because of our demands and desires.<sup>8</sup> “Humility is essential to marriage because without it, two strong egos do nothing but butt heads.”<sup>9</sup> When two people who are married to each other, embrace and practice humility, it causes each of them to have an attitude of service for each other. Just as Jesus came to serve and was humble, a married couple can use their energies to serve and love, rather than dominate and manipulate.<sup>10</sup>

In Ephesians 5:28-29, Paul says:

**Husbands, ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church. (NASB)**

A husband could look at these verses and ask, “*What do I need to do to make my wife feel loved?*” The answer would be to make her feel cared for, in ways you would care for yourself. When a husband cares for his wife, he takes responsibility for her and the things of his household. When things aren’t as they should be in the home, he steps up to the plate and does what it takes to make things better. This often requires initiative on his part to get his household in order.

When psychologist and family counselor Gary Smalley lectures, he often shares how a woman is connected to everything in her life. The children, the china, the decorations in the bathroom, the carpeting, her friendships—everything in her life is connected to everything else in her life in some way.<sup>11</sup> Her relationships and possessions say volumes of who she is. Because of these connections in her life, a husband shows his love for his wife when he chooses to care about the things that are important to her. Here are some ways in which a husband’s desire to serve and care for his wife will look:

- He will sacrifice for her. Just as Jesus went to the cross for all of us, a husband will lead the way to whatever “cross” is faced in their relationship.
- He will nourish her. Just as a gardener tends his field, a husband will help his wife “blossom” by helping her become whatever Christ wants her to be.
- He will cherish her. While nourishing is necessary, cherishing is “above and beyond.” It’s those special touches he does to make her feel extra special.
- He will strive to understand her. Spend time with her to find out what she needs, how she thinks, and find out how to meet these.

When a husband strives to do these things for his wife, he will not only show how much he cares for her, but will also bring strength and honor to the marriage. Here are the top 10 ways you can show your wife that you honor her.<sup>12</sup> Consider reading them aloud to your wife and asking her to comment on each one.

1. Praise her publicly
2. Say “thank you” often
3. Open doors for her
4. Wait on her joyfully
5. Wait on her patiently
6. Seek her opinion
7. Take her advice
8. Respect her feelings
9. Bring her a gift
10. Listen, listen, listen

In Ephesians 5:22, 33 Paul continues with:

**Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord...The wife must see to it that she respects her husband. (NASB)**

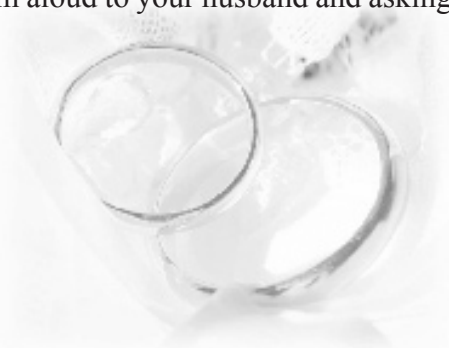
As a wife, you could look at these verses and ask, “*What do I need to do to make my husband feel loved?*” When you look at this verse, you read that your husband needs your respect. While this verse also talks about submission, it should be acknowledged. It doesn’t mean a wife to a second-class citizen or inferior in any way. It is a willingness on her part to put herself under the authority of her husband.

Although submission is part of this, it’s not the main thing. Respect is. Respect is as necessary for a husband as love is for a wife. While love is also an essential element for your husband, it’s not nearly as important to him as respect is. When a wife respects her husband, it tells him that she loves him. Here are some ways in which a wife’s desire to serve and care for her husband will look:

- She will respect him. This is a powerful gift a wife can give to her husband. It is essential to have and to enjoy in a healthy marriage. This begins when a wife chooses to focus on what her husband does “right,” rather than dwelling on what he does wrong.
- She will trust him. This is how a wife says she believes in him. Even when he makes a wrong or bad decision, a wife can choose to trust him. This is a powerful way to say how much you love him for who he is. This will ultimately be “easier” for a wife when she has learned to put her trust in God first and foremost.
- She will support him. You’ve heard it said, “Behind every good man is his wife.” This is where a wife can give her support and choose to back him up. It shows him you believe in him and want him to succeed.
- She will accept him. A wife can only do this when unconditional love is expressed. It’s not a wife’s job to “fix” her husband. When she tries to do this, anger and resentment will become a part of her demeanor and a wall in their relationship. While changing her husband is not the goal, communication is. A wife is encouraged to communicate, but not to nag. She should feel free to share her thoughts, ideas and suggestions with her husband, but then let God take over. When a wife does this, her husband is usually receptive.

When a wife strives to do these things for her husband, she will not only show how much she respects him, but will also bring strength and love to the marriage. Here are the top 10 ways a wife can show respect for her husband.<sup>13</sup> Consider reading them aloud to your husband and asking him to comment on each one.

1. Ask for his opinion
2. Tell others where he excels
3. Listen to his ideas
4. Prepare his favorite meal
5. Don’t mother him



6. Encourage his interests
7. Give him time to be alone
8. Say “thank you” often
9. Respond to his touch
10. Let him be himself

Being a servant lover means being a servant to our lover. This can be hard work sometimes. It requires a constant mindset of trying to meet your spouse’s needs in the way Christ would have you do. When you choose to focus your efforts on what you can do for your mate, it’s amazing how little time you have left over to be consumed by your own desires and demands. “God places us within marriage to learn the importance of serving by giving us someone to serve every day.”<sup>14</sup>

So the next time you find yourself tempted to ask, “*Am I happier today than I was yesterday?*” remember “you” are not the focus. God wants you to instead ask the question, “*How can I better love my spouse?*” and once you go searching for the answer, you’ll find it’s not about you at all!

### ***Let’s Hear It For Kissing!***

Kissing! *Do you remember the kind of kissing you did when you feel in love with your mate?* These probably felt like fireworks inside and made you tingle. *Do you still kiss that deeply and passionately?* *Since those early days of courtship and marriage, how’s your kissing?* *Do your kisses still rival the Fourth of July, or do you need a good refresher course?*

*How do you define a kiss?* Well, according to Ediel Jarboe in his article entitled, “Kissing Connectivity:”

**A kiss is more than the sharing of lips and breath. It is a mingling of hearts and souls. A slight tingle, a funny feeling in the tummy, a racing heart, is to be expected. A kiss is an intimate connection to another human being and a simple way to express love and affection. It is also a way for us to confirm that our partner is “the one” and traditionally, the marriage vow is sealed with a kiss as well. What better way to seal the promise of love?<sup>15</sup>**

Kissing is also a very investigatory process. Here’s how Dr. Helen Fisher, professor of anthropology at Rutgers University in Newark, N.J. explains this:

**By the time you’re kissing someone, you’re right up next to them, and you are in their personal space. That in itself means you have trusted them. You’re also learning quite a bit about them—you touch them, smell them, taste them, see the expressions on their face, learn something about their health status, and learn a great deal about their intentions.<sup>16</sup>**

Whenever you share a great kiss with your spouse, the rest of the world seems to momentarily disappear and can really get your arousal meter shifted into gear. Kissing can be one of the most passionate things you do. It has the potential to lead you as a couple into some wonderful times of intimacy and lovemaking.

*Did you realize that kissing is extremely important to a woman?* According to Dr. Leslie Parrott, co-director of the Center for Relationship Development at Seattle Pacific University,

women read more into kissing than men. “It can make them feel attractive, cared for, and even boost their self-esteem. Women unconsciously use kissing as a barometer for how much they’re respected, valued, and loved.”<sup>17</sup> So, if kissing is this important to a woman, then it’s certainly worth taking the time to put some special effort into this.

*Did you know that kissing has some wonderful health benefits as well?* Discovering these may encourage you to kiss more often! According to an article entitled, “What’s So Great About Kissing?” from WebMD Health on the internet, “a serious, tongue-tangling kiss triggers a whole spectrum of physiological processes that can boost your immunity and generally spruce up that body you work so hard to keep attractive.”<sup>18</sup>

- Whenever you experience a really serious, “tongue-tangling” French kiss, you actually exercise all the underlying muscles of your face, which may not only help to make you look younger, but will certainly keep you looking happier.<sup>19</sup>
- Dr. Bryant Stamford, Ph.D., professor and director of the health promotion center at the University of Louisville says, “Kissing might even help you lose weight. During a really, really passionate kiss, you might burn two calories a minute—double your metabolic rate. (This compares to 11.2 calories per minute you burn jogging on a treadmill.)”
- Stress relief is another health benefit of kissing. Psychologist Joy Davidson, PhD, likens kissing to meditation. “It stops the buzz in your mind, it quells anxiety, and it heightens the experience of being present in the moment. It actually produces a lot of the physiological changes that meditation produces.”
- Kissing can also lead to touching, which is also a good thing. Touching and massaging release oxytocin, a hormone known to have a calming effect on the body.<sup>20</sup> (And as a side note—“Oxytocin makes us feel good about the person who causes the oxytocin to be released, and it causes a bonding between the two persons.”<sup>21</sup>)
- And according to some researchers, for the best health benefits, kiss more and kiss longer!

So here are a few other tips to help make kissing once again a favorite pastime with your spouse:

- Make eye contact with one another as you kiss. Kissing with your eyes open can help to keep you focused on one another.
- When kissing, relax. Remember, kissing helps to relieve stress.
- Remember just how special you and your spouse are together.
- Enjoy kissing more than just your spouse’s lips. Be creative. Try kissing your spouse’s forehead, eyelids, nose, chin—you get the idea.
- When kissing, allow your hands to get involved as well. Try gently caressing your spouse’s neck, back, and even hands while kissing.

Wives, here’s another valuable reason for making kissing a priority:

A German group of psychologists, physicians, and insurance companies cooperated on a research project designed to find the secret to long life and success. They made a surprising discovery. The secret? Kiss your wife each morning when you leave for work! The meticulous German researchers discovered that men who kiss their wives every morning have fewer automobile accidents on their way to work than men who omit the morning kiss. The good-morning kissers also miss less work because of illness and earn 20 to 30 percent more money than non-kissers. How do they explain their findings? According to West Germany's Dr. Arthur Szabo, "A husband who kisses his wife every morning begins the day with a positive attitude." How would your husband's attitude change in your home for the evening if you greeted your spouse when he got home with a hug and a kiss? Over time there would probably be some tangible results.<sup>22</sup>

If you feel like your kisses lack the spark they once had, rediscover passionate kissing. Take your time. Enjoy the touch and taste of each other's lips. Dr. Clifford and Joyce Penner, Christian sex therapists who've written many books about sex for marriage, talk of how important it is to connect with each other on a daily basis. One of these "daily connections" is kissing. In their book, *Men and Sex*, they suggest the following:

**Celebrate your relationship with kisses. Kiss daily. Kiss softly and tenderly. Kiss passionately and warmly. Kiss when you feel sad. Kiss when you feel happy. We see kissing as the barometer to measure the degree of intimacy and passion between a couple. Rarely have we had a couple seek sexual therapy who was still kissing regularly and passionately. Ask your wife how she feels about your kissing. If either of you is not happy with your kissing, take a private evening to teach each other how you like to kiss. Take turns leading; talk and show each other how you like to kiss and be kissed. A good kisser is usually not too hard and not too tentative, not too wet and not too dry, lingers but not too long, uses his tongue gently and playfully but not forcefully. Test how many ways of kissing you know.**<sup>23</sup>

### *The Eyes Have It*

If you've been married for any length of time, you probably have experienced how quickly intimacy can fall by the wayside when careers, family, busyness, and stress find their way into your marriage. The intimate feelings that used to spark romance between you both can seem harder to find after awhile.

Try to remember back when the two of you were first attracted to each other. According to the Twelve Steps of Pair Bonding, eye-to-eye contact is a very private activity.<sup>24</sup> When you find yourself looking at someone who is important to you, this type of contact will usually include a smile or an inviting look. "This type of contact is reserved for those we know and trust."<sup>25</sup> Here's how author Nancy Anderson describes the importance of eye-to-eye contact in her book, *Avoiding the Greener Grass Syndrome*:

**Couples who are in love want to gaze into each other's eyes. Prolonged eye contact is one of the most powerful nonverbal ways we communicate interest in others...**

**When we learn to communicate effectively and honestly, our verbal and our nonverbal messages will be the same. You are important to me. I want to know you and share myself with you.**<sup>26</sup>

Direct eye contact can be a very emotional action. It stirs sentiments within you that can create very intense feelings. Gazing into your mate's eyes can really give intimacy a kick. It can set the mood in a unique way and it has the ability to turn on your mate, without even saying a word.

*Does all this sound good to you? Then, what are you waiting for? Go find your spouse, gaze deeply into each other's eyes, then start kissing!*

### **“Duet” Together**

\_\_\_\_\_ Share with each other what your reaction was when you listened to the retelling of *Song of Solomon* in class.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Based on this week's lesson and the retelling of Song of Solomon, do you think your view of sexuality will need to change in order to agree with God's view? If yes, how?*

\_\_\_\_\_ *To the extent that you can remember, what was your parents' view of sexuality? Would you say that your own view is similar to theirs, or is it a rejection of their view?*

#### ***Kissing***

\_\_\_\_\_ This week, find some time to be alone—schedule this time if you have to! Using a kitchen timer or watch, perform the following activity. Begin by kissing your mate for:

- 5 seconds
- 10 seconds
- 15 seconds

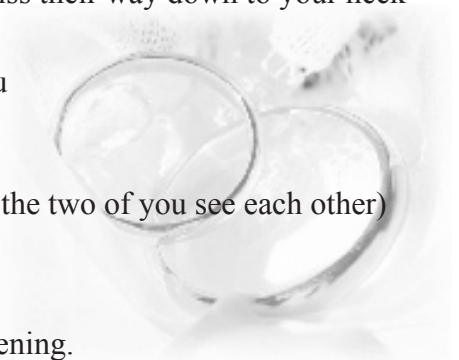
\_\_\_\_\_ Now share with your spouse which of the three kisses was your favorite and why.

\_\_\_\_\_ Share with your mate how you like to be kissed. Some examples could be:

- a) Slowly and deeply
- b) Softly, and for a long time
- c) Gently, starting at the lips, then having your mate kiss their way down to your neck and back up
- d) Having your mate hold your head while kissing you
- e) You get the idea!

\_\_\_\_\_ Every day until the next class meeting (or for the days the two of you see each other) purposely kiss each other for 5 to 10 seconds...

- Before one of you leaves in the morning.
- When the two of you come back together in the evening.



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On the day of the next class, share with each other how the daily “kiss” has personally affected you.

### ***An Eye-to-Eye Activity***

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Sometime this week, do the following activity:

1. Begin by sitting on your bed in a comfortable position, facing each other. (Clothing is optional.)
2. Now without speaking, close your eyes and take four deep breaths to relax.
3. Then open your eyes and take four more deep breaths.
4. Continue to look into each other’s eyes and take four more deep breaths.
5. Now for the next 10 minutes, use just your eyes to communicate with each other. Try communicating love, respect, sexual arousal, embarrassment, and support.
6. Once the ten minutes are over, continue sitting face to face and answer the following statements out loud to each other:
  - “The difficult part of this assignment for me was...”
  - “The easiest part was...”
  - “I felt awkward when...”
  - “I really liked it when...”
  - “I felt myself beginning to get aroused when...”
  - “If we ever do this again, I would like to try...”<sup>27</sup>

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Discuss with each other the following: *When it comes to intimacy, what have we lost or neglected since our early years of marriage?*

### ***A Couple’s Prayer:***

Dear Lord:

Thank you for bringing the two of us together in marriage. We praise You for the gift of our union. Help us as we study Your truths found in *The Song of Solomon*. We ask for Your blessings upon our marriage as we work together to grow closer as a couple and deeper in our relationship with You. *Amen*.

## **Rehearsing for Next Week**

Be sure to bring your Bibles to class. You will need it each week as we study *Song of Solomon* together. We will be using the NIV for class discussions.

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Read *Song of Solomon* 1:5-8, and 1:15 through 2:7 in preparation for next week’s class.

Next week’s class discussion will be about body image, complimenting each other, and foreplay.