Song of Soulmates

Main Idea: Soulmates are created, not found.

Week 1: Anticipation for Marriage

Main Idea: A Godly relationship is created through intentionality.

Passage: Song Solomon 3:1-5

1. Build the relationship before you plan the wedding.
   a. The first 2 full chapters focus on the love that they have been building.
   b. Chapter 1 alludes to the fact that they are searching for a mate based on personality and integrity.
      - 1:4 – they 'rightly' love you because his character is attractive
      - 1:6 – "My own vineyard I have not kept" implies that she thinks her labor has made her less attractive, but he sees her character.
   c. Chapter 2 tells us the maiden was 'lovesick' but they did not marry in the throes of infatuation, they let their love mature.
   d. In verse 1, the maiden describes him as "him whom my soul loves."
      - This is repeated four times throughout the passage.
      - This is not infatuation or lust, this is a soul-to-soul connection.

2. Your partner is not designed to fulfill you, Christ is.
   a. Soulmates are not found; they're made through the two becoming one
      - There is no "one" right person for each of us, all marriages take work
      - Fulfillment comes through Christ first, then filters into other relationships
   b. This passage has a strong theme of searching and longing. Verse 4 "I held him tightly and did not let go. This mirrors how we should long to be in the presence of Christ and cling tightly to Him.
   c. The Bible tells us over and over to find fulfillment in Christ, not other people
      - Psalm 37:3-5, Psalm 34:8, Matthew 5:6, 1 John 2:15-17, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 146:3-5
      - We are instructed over and over to put not only our faith but our hope, trust, commitment, and even our delight in the Lord instead of people.

3. Sexual desires are a gift with boundaries. (verse 5)
   a. God's law demands sexual purity.
      - Talk to your kids about sex early (where appropriate) and often.
      - Talk about your expectations of sex within the bounds of marriage.
      - Desires/urges change. Talk about them with your spouse often.
   b. Verse 5 has two interpretations, relationally: Let our love progress until it is fruitful and pleasing. Physically: Do not start until we can go all the way.
      - God knew when he created sex that it would have intense emotional consequences if used outside the bounds of marriage.
   c. In an overly sexualized world, we must learn how to guard our hearts.
      - Romans 12:1-2 shows us that it's not about sex specifically, it's about living your life in a way that is holy and acceptable to Christ.

Next Step:

It's important to talk to our partners, potential spouses, and our children about the expectations and taboo topcs surrounding sex. Take a look at the exercises "Sexpectation", and "Let's Talk About Sex" in the toolbox to get some helpful pointers on how to initiate tough or uncomfortable conversations.

Week 2: Fulfillment in Marriage

Main Idea: A Godly marriage takes work and friendship.

Passage: Song of Solomon 4 & 5

1. Marriage is designed to be mutually satisfying.
   a. There is a longing and urging to consummate the marriage. "Before dawn breeze blows" and "night shadows flee" imply they were both excited for the evening so they could be together intimately.
      - Both partners use verbiage that encourages enjoyment and exploration from each other.
      - Verse 16 shows the moment of given virginity. This is the first (and only) time in this section that the maiden speaks and her wording shifts from "my garden" to "his garden." Her previously protected virginity has been given to her beloved and the two become one flesh. Soulmates.
   b. Chapter 4, the celebration of love mirrors Christ and His love for the Church
      - Praises seven parts of her body: eyes, hair, teeth, lips, temples/cheeks, neck, breasts. This is likely because 7 is considered the perfect number in their culture and he believed she was perfect.
   c. Expressing our love and sexuality with our spouse is an act of worship.
      - Discussion of the Garden through chapter 4 and chapter 5 verse 1 refers to both the maiden's Virginity and as a parallel to Eden when sexuality was expressed freely and without guilt.
      - We see the lovers called "beloved." This implies that they are loved not only by each other but by God. He has given his blessing to their sexual relationship.
      - Marriage and sexuality expressed without shame is a gift

2. A healthy marriage still has conflict.
   a. After some sort of argument, he unexpectedly goes to her (and presumably his) house and uses a warm and affectionate appeal for her to let him in.
      - The beloved standing outside the door appealing to the maiden for entry may be a reference to Revelation 3:20 – "Behold I stand at the door and knock…."
      - Chapter 5 verse 3 indicates that her reluctance is based on unwillingness rather than impossibility
   b. Verse 4 may be a double entendre for initiated intimacy, but this is less important than noting he would not enter without her invitation. It also shows that she still yearned for him despite her resentful feelings.
      - The roles are then reversed as she goes on a disappointing search for her mate.
   c. This displays a very realistic conflict dynamic between partners.
      - Instead of demanding respect, he responds with love that would eventually evoke a loving response from her. We should try to approach all disagreements with our spouse this way.
   d. If our relationship has a Godly beginning, it is easy to find God with us in relational difficulties.

3. The core of a happy marriage is continued friendship.
   a. Notice the theme of resolution/reconciliation through Chapter 5
      - She is immediately regretful of her actions and seeks out her beloved.
   b. Verses 10-16 she returns the praise of his body and his character in equal poetry as he did hers.
      - She finishes her description in 16 when she sums him up as "altogether lovely."
      - We can draw a parallel in this to the relationship between the believer and Jesus who is altogether lovely. He also is white (pure) and ruddy (bloodstained), etc., a picture of divine glory.
   c. She finishes verse 16 with what she believes to be the most important trait of all. Friend.
      - Common Hebrew word "rea" that is commonly used in the Old Testament to mean friend or companion without any sexual overtones.
      - The eroticism of Song of Solomon is remarkable, but it is only meaningful if there is a foundation of trust and commitment. We must delight in the person before the sexuality.

Next Step:

An important part of any relationship is continuing to check in on aligned goals and expectations. Check out "Agree/Disagree/Haven't Discussed" in the toolbox to make sure you're on the same page. Also, don't forget the importance of fun! The exercise "3x6" in the toolbox can create intentional friendship while learning how well you know each other.

Week 3: Commitment to Marriage

Main Idea: A Godly marriage should inspire others to marry.

Passage: SoS 8:6-7, 8:14

1. Commitment is intimate and enduring. 8:6-7
    a. Verse 6 uses the imagery of a "seal" to reinforce the permanence of their marriage, imagery of the grave/death to show the power of their commitment, and flame imagery to show their passion.
    b. Some bible translations show the "vehement flame" to be the flame of Yahweh or Jehovah, insinuating that the fire of love is from God Himself.
        i. This flame should be as bright in a mature marriage as in a brand new one, and as bright in a mature relationship with Christ as a new one.
    c. While it can be good to have a healthy jealousy for our partner, the jealousy in verse 6 should, more importantly, point to the jealousy we should have in our hearts over our love for Jesus. Jesus is also jealous towards us. Our jealousy should protect us against anything that separates us from Him.
    d. Verse 7 reminds us that love is precious because it cannot be bought or sold. Only given.

2. Love is a verb. 8:14
    a. We see distance between the lovers, but she calls for him to "make haste" in coming home to her.
        i. Solomon ends the saga of the lovers with the same passion and intensity as it started.
        ii. This also mirrors the "make haste" that is used to describe the desire for Christ's return.
    b. We see a mature marriage, with confident partners in each other. We see a secure wife and a loving husband, the fullness of physical intimacy, and a model of "couple goals."
    c. Why? They choose to put each other first daily. Love is not about feelings, it's about actions.
        i. Love needs to be communicated, demonstrated, and cultivated. Not just felt.
        ii. Not feeling it? (as long it is not an abusive situation) Act it out anyway. Christ calls for sacrificial love for each other no matter how we feel.
        iii. This mirrored love calls to Genesis 2 which describes a covenant between God/Adam/Eve as well as the covenant of Christ/The Church in Revelation 19. The Bible begins and ends with the covenants between God and his people.

3. Our commitment to each other should impact others.
    a. Throughout Song of Solomon, we have heard from the "chorus" of people who were impacted by their relationship. Verse 13 implies that these others delighted in their company and looked to them as a model of healthy marriage.
    b. Biblical marriage is countercultural, we need to champion it!
        i. Many studies show that children of happy, married parents are more likely to succeed in school, be healthier mentally/physically, have lower divorce rates, and have overall better life outcomes than those with divorced or single parents.
        ii. Your healthy marriage can serve as a role model for those with a negative view of marriage.
    c. Normalize marriage enrichment before there is a problem.
        i. Plug any upcoming marriage events.
        ii. Encourage healthy couples to become mentor couples in marriage or pre-marriage programs in the church.
        iii. Encourage Life Groups where married adults can minister to and learn from each other.
    d. Isaiah 62:5 shows the direct correlation between marriage and Christ and the Church.
        i. A healthy marriage can bring people to Christ by mirroring His love.
        ii. The Lord rejoices in His Church, we should readily share that love with others.

Next Step:

Commitment is the most important part of any relationship but it's easy to lose site of priorities as we move through different seasons of life. Check "Outside Looking In" and "Weekly Check-In" in the toolbox to find tips on how to take intentional steps to make sure your relationship and family stay aligned.