



**LOVE**  
**LIFE**

**GOD'S DESIGN FOR DATING, MARRIAGE AND SEX.**

*Small Group Discussion Guide*  
**LOVE LIFE**



## PREPARATION

### ■ STUDY

Spend the week studying Song of Solomon 7:1–8:4. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

### ■ DETERMINE

Which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group.

### ■ PRAY

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

### ■ LANDING POINT

Knowing your spouse and serving their needs cultivates love and romance in a marriage.



## GROUP DISCUSSION

■ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

■ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

■ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

■ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

## FALLING OUT OF LOVE

Love is powerful. At times, it can feel almost intoxicating. But the sad truth is you can just as easily fall out of love as you fall into love. Romance can die in a relationship for three reasons. First, *sinful attitudes and actions* divide a couple. When sin goes unchecked, it's like a cavity working in a tooth. It causes decay. Second, *time and neglect* of the relationship threaten your caring, communication, affections, sensitivity, and intimacy. You get caught up in the routine of life—work deadlines, soccer practices, Bible studies—and fail to carve out time for each other. Romance begins to wither when you accept things as “normal” and tell yourselves, “Well, that’s just the way it is.” Third, *forgetfulness* makes you lose sight of how precious your spouse is. You take each other for granted. You forget what caused you to fall in love in the first place.

♀: *If love is so powerful, why is it just as easy to fall out love as it is to fall into love?*

♀: *What other things can cause romance to die in a relationship?*



## LEARN

*Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.*

## SENSUAL DELIGHT

Romance was alive between Solomon and his bride. Solomon’s description of his wife is anything but dull or drab. It’s erotic. However, in the context of marriage, this kind of language is celebrated. God takes delight in their union.

Solomon describes everything from his wife’s feet to her head, and every description is intended to be sexually alluring. Sight. Taste. Touch. Smell. He indulges the senses as he takes pleasure in her beauty. To him she is royalty. One look from her would hold the mightiest king captive. Her kiss is sweet like a drink of the best wine.

**READ:** *Read Song of Solomon 7:1-8:4. How does this couple keep romance alive?*

**Q:** *What are specific ways you maintain romance in your relationship?*

## IN THE VINEYARD

How does she respond? She is enraptured. Solomon's desire is for her, and she will not disappoint his desires. She invites him to go with her to the countryside and into a vineyard to inspect it to see whether the vines have budded and the fruit blossomed. She fully belongs to him, and they are free to enjoy the fruits of marriage as they please.

Once again, the young woman advises the daughters of Jerusalem to not awaken love before it's ready. True love—that is, *total love*—is powerful and precious, and it isn't hurried. You must wait for it to fully bloom as they did.

**Q:** *Sex is one fruit from marriage. What are others?*

**Q:** *What are the benefits of waiting for love to fully bloom?*



**LIVE**

*Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.*

## TENDING THE GARDEN

Love is like a garden. It must be tended well in order to be healthy and fruitful. God's plan is for you to continue to plant the seeds of love and romance long after you say "I do." Your garden of love and romance will always need work. But this is good, fruitful work. Let's look at some ways you can cultivate love and romance in your relationship.

♀: Describe the “work” a couple needs to do in order to have a healthy, fruitful garden.

## GIVE AND RECEIVE

You’re different and you give and receive love in a unique way. It’s essential that you know each other’s love languages. If you don’t learn them, you’ll end up frustrating each other, and your need to feel loved will go unmet. However, if you do learn them, you may find that no amount of chocolates or love letters can compare to taking a walk with your spouse, or doing the dishes makes your spouse feel more loved than holding hands.

♀: How do you best give and receive love?

## ROLLING WITH THE CHANGES

You and your spouse will change over time. Life and circumstances will change as well. As these changes occur, you need to learn to adapt to them as a couple. Reflect on the changes you see in each other and in life and discuss how they affect your relationship. Are they strengthening or threatening your love and romance?

♀: What changes can threaten love and romance?

## CONTINUE TO LEARN

The truth is that you’ll never figure out your spouse completely. We are extremely complex, and our hearts are full of mystery. You’re on a continual voyage of discovery with your spouse. You will learn things about your spouse years from now, and say, “I never knew that about you!” Therefore, continue to learn your spouse. Be curious and continue to plumb the depths of each other’s hearts to discover more.

Q: *What's something creative you can do as a couple to learn more about each other?*

## WORK TOGETHER

It takes two to tend the garden of love and romance. If you want your marriage to be life-giving and fulfilling, you have to do the work together. Get down in the dirt. Water those seeds with care. Pull out weeds when they spring up. If you put in the time and effort as a way to love each other and love God, you'll reap a harvest of love and romance only God can give.

Q: *What does a life-giving and fulfilling marriage look like? Describe it.*



### LEAD

*Select 1 question from this section to ask your group.*

## ROMANCE BY SERVING

What's at the heart of growing and developing a healthy marriage? Serving each other's needs. In your marriage, you will look most like Jesus when you serve your spouse. In John 13:1–10, Jesus gives us an example of service when He washed His disciples' feet. The Son of God humbled Himself, got down on the floor, and washed dirty feet. When He was finished, He told His disciples, "I want you to do the same."

Jesus came to serve and give His life for His bride, the church (Matthew 20:28). You can do the same for your spouse. Doing this will surely keep the flame of love and romance burning bright.

Q: *What can keep you from serving your spouse's (or others') needs?*

Q: *What's one way you can serve your spouse (or someone) this week?*



## PRAY

Pray for a heart that loves to serve your spouse and others. Pray for wisdom and patience to tend the garden of love well. Ask God to reveal ways you can kindle (or rekindle) romance in your relationship.



## FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- Read Philippians 2:1–11 and reflect on how Christ humbled Himself and served as an example of love.
- Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their lives.



## COMMENTARY

**GOOD DESIRE** The word “desire” in 7:1 only appears elsewhere in Scripture in Genesis 3:16 and 4:7, where it has a negative connotation. Desire can be unhealthy and destructive. You can desire the wrong things (sin) or desire good things too much (idolatry). In the context of 7:1, the desire is sexual and pleasing to the woman and to God.

**PATIENCE IN LOVE** James uses the image of a farmer who waits for the early and late rains as a metaphor for patience (James 5:7). Waiting for the early rains to sow and waiting for the late rains to reap was critical to having an abundant harvest.<sup>1</sup> Throughout Song of Solomon, Solomon warns the reader to wait on love to fully bloom. True love is patient before and during marriage (see 1 Corinthians 13:4).

**THE BRIDE OF CHRIST** Song of Solomon calls us to protect our vineyards and to wait on love, to wait for a husband or wife. As Christians, we also wait for the return of our Bridegroom (Christ), when He will come to claim us as His bride (Revelation 19:6–9). We are to be watchful and prepared for His return (see Matthew 25:1–13).

### ENDNOTES:

1. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2398.