

PURE

THE ONE

Week 1

Song of Songs 1:1-8

Icebreaker:

What does our media-saturated culture tell us about “chemistry”, or instant attraction, between two people? Do you think lasting relationships are based on “chemistry”?

Questions:

³ How fragrant your cologne; your name is like its spreading fragrance. No wonder all the young women love you! –*Song of Songs 1:3*

¹ Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold. –*Proverbs 22:1*

¹ A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume.
And the day you die is better than the day you are born. –*Ecclesiastes 7:1*

“Names carry more value and importance in biblical than in modern usage. Not only may a name identify, but it frequently expresses the essential nature of its bearer; to know the name is to know the person.” –*Erdman’s Bible Dictionary*

A good name, or reputation, involves certain characteristics such as honesty or integrity that other people can see in a person’s life.

- What kinds of character qualities tend to attract you to another person?
- What criteria do you use to determine whether someone is of good character or not?
- Is it important what others think about a person with whom you are friends/dating? Could this help or hinder a relationship?
- How does the concept of “reputation” differ from gossip?

On the Journey:

Over the next week, think about the qualities you’d like to see in a potential friend or mate. Are you becoming that kind of person yourself? How would apprenticing to Jesus help you develop these qualities?

DATING

Week 2

Song of Songs 1:9-2:7

Icebreaker:

What does our culture tell us about the purpose for dating?

⁹ You are as exciting, my darling, as a mare among Pharaoh's stallions. ¹⁰ How lovely are your cheeks; your earrings set them afire! How lovely is your neck, enhanced by a string of jewels. ¹¹ We will make for you earrings of gold and beads of silver.

Young Woman

¹² The king is lying on his couch,
enchanted by the fragrance of my perfume.

¹³ My lover is like a sachet of myrrh
lying between my breasts.

¹⁴ He is like a bouquet of sweet henna blossoms
from the vineyards of En-gedi.

Young Man

¹⁵ How beautiful you are, my darling,
how beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves.

Young Woman

¹⁶ You are so handsome, my love,
pleasing beyond words!

The soft grass is our bed;

¹⁷ fragrant cedar branches are the beams of our house,
and pleasant smelling firs are the rafters. —*Song of Songs 1:9 – 17*

- The couple is completely open in their praise for each other. What does this indicate about their relationship?
- How can praising another person be used for selfish reasons?
- What are some of the signs that a relationship is a healthy one?

⁴ He escorts me to the banquet hall; it's obvious how much he loves me. —*Song of Songs 2:4*

- Another translation says “. . . let his banner over me be love.” (TNIV). This was an obvious sign that these two were a couple. What does our culture say “going public” with a relationship means? What are the advantages and disadvantages of going public?

⁷ Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer, not to awaken love until the time is right. —*Song of Songs 2:7*

- Why is it wise to establish boundaries early in a relationship?

- If someone begins to pressure you to participate in actions against God's commands, what does that tell you about how they view you? What about how they view God?

On the Journey:

“The first Christians had a phrase for what happens when people properly respect and acknowledge the image of God in those around them . . . The first Christians called this the ‘new humanity’. . . The new humanity is about seeing people as God sees them.” (Rob Bell)

As a next step on your journey, ask God to help you begin to see people as He sees them. How does this awareness influence your daily relationships and contacts with people?

COURTSHIP

Week 3

Song of Songs 2:8 – 3:5

Icebreaker:

What comes to your mind when someone mentions “courtship”? Do you think this concept is relevant to today’s culture?

Questions:

⁸ Ah, I hear my lover coming!

He is leaping over the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

⁹ My lover is like a swift gazelle
or a young stag.

Look, there he is behind the wall,
looking through the window,
peering into the room.

¹⁰ My lover said to me,

“Rise up, my darling!

Come away with me, my fair one!

¹¹ Look, the winter is past,
and the rains are over and gone.

¹² The flowers are springing up,
the season of singing birds has come,
and the cooing of turtledoves fills the air.

¹³ The fig trees are forming young fruit,
and the fragrant grapevines are blossoming.

Rise up, my darling!

Come away with me, my fair one!” –*Song of Songs 2:8-13*

“She says, ‘There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.’ In the days these lines were written, people often married as teenagers, so this courtship we’re reading of is probably between high school students . . . She’s still living at home . . . He’s inviting her to a new life. A life with him”. (Rob Bell)

- This woman was living a well-protected, sheltered life at home, which her beloved was asking her to leave. Each new step in a relationship involves risk. What kinds of “what if” questions would be going through your mind in this type of situation?
- How could those questions be resolved in a way that would move the relationship forward?
- What kinds of answers would justify slowing the relationship down, or even ending it?

¹⁵ Catch all the foxes,
those little foxes,

before they ruin the vineyard of love,

for the grapevines are blossoming! –*Song of Songs 2:15*

- What are some of the “little foxes” that affect a relationship? How do you “catch” them before they do harm?

⁵ Promise me, O women of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles and wild deer,
not to awaken love until the time is right. –*Song of Songs 3:5*

- Why do you think this concern is repeated here?

On the Journey:

Over the next week, take a look at all the relationships in your life, not just romantic relationships. Ask God to make you aware of those irritations or unrealistic expectations (the “little foxes”) that might be damaging your relationships. Spend some time talking to Him about those situations.