

We thank You for Your finished work on the cross that gives us hope and not only now can we experience abundant life, but even in the life to come, we shall spend eternity with God. You designed it that way and we are so glad we can be part of Your family. We pray that you may bless us together as learn from Your Word especially as we talk about issues that are rarely talked about in church. When we have left them, we have been taught by the world and the devil, by televisions and movies. Lord, we pray that You may remind us that you created us with those physical and emotional sensations to glorify You. Lord as You captivate us, our passions may be directed You our God who we love because You first loved us. Bless us to the end that Christ may be glorified, in His Name we pray, Amen.

We continue with Song of Songs and what I thought we could do in four sermons this month given that there are eight chapters instead of going verse by verse, it's important to draw themes. At least to release ourselves to read the book. You've been in church perhaps on rare times when they have said our Old Testament reading is from Song of Songs and you have been, you yourself as a Christian in your quiet time when you have said, "I will read from Song of Songs," and when you read some of the Scriptures, you even feel ashamed and wonder whether you are still saved. We continue to deal with the great unmentionables and we keep giving the rationale that the church needs to teach sexuality, our maleness and femaleness, so that Scriptures like Song of Songs may not be so strange and out of place, which is why today, I'll share with you briefly some history so that you may understand where we have come from. Creating understanding is what we need. Ignorance has been used of the devil to keep us not only imperfect, but dissatisfied. The fact that this greatest of all songs which is what Song of Songs is focuses on romance and marital love. Shows us what a high regard God has for the institution of marriage. God has protected His Word, I don't know how many attempts were made to remove Song of Songs from the Bible, but it stayed so it's there, it's the Word of God and when Mrs. Kagina just read, said, "--the Word of God," and we said, "Thanks be to God." But as she was reading, you saying, "Oooh," and I was warning, it will happen to your too. You'll end up married some time and then it will be your turn. I heard when she was reading, it's like, "Oohh, Oooh," watch it.

Anyway, Song of Songs demonstrates that marital intimacy for mutual fulfillment is meant to be God-honoring. Those sensations that leave you feeling less Christian, but they keep with you even during Holy Communion.

They're still with you, "God, I'm here to be holy and I'm still feeling like that about that girl," and so they are there, but see if we don't have understanding of how God created us, the devil picks them and redirects the energy and passion to ways that do not honor God. As I said before, if our parents ever got to know what goes on in our minds as children, they would lock us in our rooms and we get out when we are 40 years. If our spiritual leaders got to know what goes on in our minds as a result of being male and female because of the energy of sexuality, they would wonder what church they are pastoring. But we got to know what goes on in their minds, we would wonder what pastors we have as well. These things are not very easy things you can just dismiss and say, "We are very saintly, halleluiah. Praise the Lord." Underneath, the nerves are quaking while you're praising the Lord and so Solomon allowed it and sang this song for us. This is because God created us with emotional and physical sensations through which he can be glorified by us who are His creatures and for human beings created in His image. We would expect that Song of Songs as a portion of Scripture should be a song that only praises God instead of one that celebrates love and sensuality within marriage and this is exactly what the early Christians struggled with, not the Jews, but early Christians as Christianity from Acts 15 went out of the whole of Jerusalem to the gentiles and then on from the apostles to the church fathers, people like Polycarp and others who followed centuries later.

Because of the Greek thinking that the spiritual thinking that the spiritual is good and the material is evil, issues like sex related with bodily appetites were regarded to be evil. You will see the Greek thinking actually shaping the world view that is even practiced today leading people to think that a sexless life is holier. Many religions, some Christian denominations still live up to that standard of being holy by not sleeping around. This idea generated a negative view towards marriage, so interfere with that sexual union, you interfere with marriage, you interfere with family, with society, with nations. If we had time just to go through and see what Martin Luther had to go through to bring the Bible to bear on the minds and practices of people, you would be surprised. The just very view of women until the protestant reformation about 500 years ago. Just the view of women coming from those Greek thinkers: Aristotle, Socrates, that said that women are botched males. Women were about to be humans, but unfortunately they were born women. Those views that penetrated through the church and therefore degraded women. And you degrade women, you can have a healthy society? Can you have a healthy home? Martin Luther, not only was

he a monk, his wife was a nun. You have a monk marrying a nun, that was unheard of. And then what was he preaching? "Hey, nuns. Get out of the nunneries and just get out and get married if you find a husband. Build a home, that's God's will. Men love your wives," and he was teaching these things and they were saying, "No, that's unholy. You're bringing an unholy rebellion here and you're causing people to be sleeping whereas they are spiritual rewards if they can abstain."

Christians were increasing the feeling so bad about feeling good. Each time they felt good, what we call asceticism. Asceticism is when you restrain yourself and through restraining yourself to a bit of suffering, you feel God must be happy with you because you are either fasting and you are restraining those bodily appetites and so on. Actually, was see, I don't sleep around, I'm able to contain my body. In 325AD at the Council of Nicaea, that's when actually the Nicene Creed came up, a proposal was made to prohibit all clergy from living as married. Let me give you some history so you know. That we are dealing with a world view that you cannot quickly just jump into Song of Songs and say, "Wow! Wonderful! Where has this book been all my life?" No, you'll read it, you feel guilty. What am I feeling after reading this? Am I godly, am I not-- You will wonder because there are those things that will come and they will cause you to even doubt about your faith. "God, am I still saved after reading this book? How do I apply it now? I wait for Valentine's or what?" all those things. But the council did not approve the proposal.

In 386AD, Pope Siricius commanded that all priests live as celibates; unmarried. Later all this order was extended to include deacons in the church. In this period, many people who were ordained as priest were already married. So Leo the Great, from 440 to 461, that's when he was ruling, out of concern for these wives, did not allow priests to put their wives away, but commanded that the priest and his wife live together, but as brother and sister; don't touch, so they were to live without any sexual-- you see the struggle, you think we have only began. This kiNigeria, Red Pepper, Onion stuff and blue movies, they know where to touch because we are created like them. They were trying to be holy. They were struggling. I want you to appreciate the struggle in history. This command led to the rule that a married man could not be ordained as a priest unless he and his wife took a vow that they would live as celibate and then led further to the refusal to ordain anyone who was or had been married. You're getting the history some holy people are holy because they are not married.

Protestant criticisms, and we are talking about the 16th century and Catholic concern for reform prompted what they call the Council of beginning 1546 responding to the revolution of 1517 of Martin Luther to address many things including matrimony. The assembled representatives began the first discussions. These are Catholics trying to respond to the protestant reformation. They began the first discussions of the sacrament of marriage in 1547. That's only two years after they had begun, but apparently the issues were so contentious and compromise was impossible to reach that the council did not issue its final decree on marriage until 1563.

I want you to appreciate hard religious men, bright, educated, even in their robes unable to handle this big elephant. They can't rub their arms around it. Reason is, because they put the Bible out. As soon as you put the Bible out, we have discuss our views and opinions and our biases and our presuppositions and our traditions and our cherished customs. That's what the church does. Each time the Bible is not taught, you can be sure will discuss. When the Bible is taught, we are leveled. It sorts us out. There are those who say I can't take it, meaning they go out. There are those who say I delight in it, meaning they stay, but when you paganize the church by suppressing the Word, then will have to have committees discussing a lot of things which the Bible teaches. Now the Bible had taught about sexuality, but they had put it aside and they having trouble all these years. For a thousand years, the single celibate life had been upheld as the Christian ideal until the protestant reformation, sex, though grudgingly permitted inside marriage, was not even to be enjoyed. I want to quote for you Jerome, a church father.

The church father, Jerome, declared in the 4th century. As early, can you imagine. In the 4th century, let me quote him, these are his words. "Anyone who is too passionate, a lover with his own wife is himself an adulterer."

Don't think we are just struggling now. I thought I would take you a bit into history so that you know that the image of God in us has been elusive, so slippery, people cannot even appreciate. This is Jerome. We appreciate Jerome for many, many things. I don't for this and Martin Luther didn't. He didn't have kind words for men like him. How couldn't they say anything good about marriage or women. Augustine advocated sexual relations within marriage to be without emotion and primarily for procreation. Enter like wood, come out like charcoal. If they catch you being like, "Honey, honey-- I love--" these things that Mrs. Kagina was reading here, they catch

you saying those things, you will lose sacraments and all these other things that the church will punish you. A catechism of the Catholic church written in 1494 applies the third deadly sin in purity to married people enjoying sex within marriage. You didn't know that. A catechism written in 1494, it applies the third deadly sin to married people because they are enjoying sex within marriage and they have broken the law. So they are impure. Are you appreciating history? We didn't know so much, right? And so I just thought jumping into these verses, you don't know where we have come from. We have relatives who the things this way, we have backgrounds that gave us these things, these views, we are surrounded with a world view, we don't know when we are holy and when we are whore and all these other things. Roman Catholicism reasserted that it was holier to remain in virginity or celibacy than to be joined in marriage. These were clear rejections of the protestant position on marriage and clerical celibacy. That's history that you can find.

Even the Puritanical and Victorian attitude, that's much later. The Puritans are going to North America and so on. They held that sex was a kind of necessary evil. Did you hear that? Even a Reverend Father when he's wedding you, he just has mercy on you, you can't stand so, poor you. Just go, maybe God can have mercy on you. Go try to love your wife. It's really law. The thing that God calls great, when was everything good God pronounced, after He had created man and wedded. After the first wedding, God said, "Everything was very good," but a man who is unmarried is right here wedding people who are going to get married and feeling holier than them. Apply logic, I'm not trying to demean any religion, I'm just bringing the truth. It's up to you. That something God called good, you're not in it and you sympathize with the bad people or less holy people who cannot even stand. "You can't endure, no patience, no perseverance, no steadfastness, no self-control, go. Maybe God will have mercy on you." They send you out in sympathy. Maybe God can have mercy, but he already has mercy only because for them they are not married. That's not a biblical view, I assure you.

By contrast, Genesis teaches that marriage and sex were given as a gift of God before, not after the fall. Did you hear that? Don't see sex in terms of the fall. No, see it in terms of creation. The fall spoils it pretty hard as it spoils everything else, but I tell you it was created good because even in the fall, people enjoy it. When they try to write, they write about it, they sing about it. Which song is not about love? I mean they call it love, I call it lust when I listen to the whole song, I realize they are singing about lust, but

they call it love. Love as Mr. Kagina read for us, husbands love your wives. That is sacrificial. How much? Like Christ loved the church. This thing is no joke. It means go and die if you must. How much did Christ love the church? That doesn't sound like Valentine, does it? It doesn't.

I was at St. Francis on Wednesday preaching and Reverend Onesmus reminded the verse that he gave to his people. I think Numbers 9:11, let's go for Valentine. The fourteenth day of the second month, right, go and do what? Bitter herbs and all these other things my friend. If you are thinking about vanilla ice cream.

Anyway, the idea that the truly spiritual cannot or should not be married and enjoy sexual love is not based on the Bible. Every patriarch, I mean Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, they were married. All priests were married and as far as we know, every prophet was married except for Jeremiah who was uniquely commanded by God not to marry; Jeremiah 16:2.

Since the office of the high priest was hereditary, priests gave birth to priests, they high priest had to marry showing that only a married man could experience this most intimate closeness and communion with God as the high priest did by entering the most holy place on the Day of Atonement. Intimate with God, intimate with one another. Our sexuality teaches us about God. The relationship God teaches us about sexuality. Jesus reaffirmed the value of marriage in Matthew 19 when the religious leaders came to Him with a question about divorce. Hebrews 13:4 tells us that the marriage, not the marriage home or house; bed, what happens on the bed? The marriage is understood as the place of sexual relations in marriage is undefiled and should be honored by all. This is the Bible talking about sex. Marriage bed, not the marriage home or the marriage sitting room, not the marriage dining. Marriage bed, do you know what happens in bed my friend? Paul told us that it was desirable for elders and church leaders to be married, 1Tim 3, and Titus 1:6-7. Jesus began His ministry by blessing a wedding in John 2 and the final step in a man's relationship and fellowship with God is pictured as a wedding feast; Revelations 19:6-10. This is the Bible. You can go through it and you'll see that we have gone wrong or we have not allowed our Christian biblical faith to influence our thinking about these issues. Not even asking the right question; therefore, we are not finding the right answers and the devils knows. We can be here in majority, but when he hits us on those sexual points, he really weakens us by the roots. Our families can't stand, our children have little to learn about



us and therefore their families get worse and the families that follow get even worse and then the church is weak.

The Bible affirms that the unmarried state can also be a calling just as marriage because marriage is a calling and celibacy can be a calling and even sometimes though in rare cases preferable, we know that. Jesus said that the state of a eunuch, an unmarried person for the Kingdom of Heaven could be good in Matthew 19:11,12 and Paul recognized that singleness could be an advantage in a time of distress, 1 Corinthians 7:26, but it was never commanded. The Bible encourages those who are single to use their singleness for God's glory, 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 while assuming the married state for others.

There's a flexibility, discernment and once you make the goal to glorify God, He will see how you should if you make it a goal to glorify God. The Bible does not see marriage as an inferior state or a concession to human weakness nor does it see the normal physical love within that relationship as necessarily impure. No, it doesn't. Marriage was instituted before the fall by God with a command that the first couple become one flesh. That's what it means, one flesh applies to the results; mental, emotional to sexual union. How do we know that? Paul is warning, "Don't you know the one who lies down with a prostitute becomes one with her." The one flesh mystery is also tied to sexual union, to become one with somebody.

Hundreds and hundreds of years in Christianity, the dominant view was that sexual passion and true spirituality were contradictory and they were opposed to each other. This idea that the truly spiritual sexuality was replaced led to a greater emphasis on the idea that we are to be passionately devoted to Jesus as a superior replacement for our sexual desires. Seek Jesus, don't look for men, don't look for wives, seek Jesus. Did you hear that? That's what they say. You know this guy who was in a comma for a long time went to a Catholic hospital like you see Nsambya where some nuns are also nurses, had a heart problem and was there for a long time in comma, but they worked on him, he came up. Had been there, the bills were high so they said, "Now, you're all right, you need to pay and go back home." He said, "I don't have any money. I didn't have a job and I don't--" "But you must be having some relatives who can handle this." Then he said to these nuns, "I have one sister. She is a spinster nurse. She's just--" "What! How dare you say that? You fool, we are married to Jesus." They told him, then he said, "Then let my brother-in-law handle the bill."

The prospect of children is not necessary to justify sexual love in marriage. I tell you, you produce children, but you don't go to bed to produce them. You go to bed to enjoy a few other things. Significantly, the Song of Songs, I want you to note that makes no reference to procreation or child bearing. In Song of Songs, no children. It's like in their goal, the lover and loved, children are not in the equation. Then we will produce and have more. No, it's not there. If we produce, it will be a result of our enjoyment, but never the ultimate goal so you can see they were trying to change the Bible to try and make sure, "You go just to produce children, but nothing else. We catch you being happy in it--"

Solomon's song teaches us that love expression is intended by God to be an elaborate and pleasurable feast of the senses. You see as this man and woman enter into love expression. For me that's my replacement for lovemaking. I don't want to call it making as many people do because you don't make love in that way. You only can express it. It was made before. So what was made before is what you go to do express to each other. You don't come out like loving each other more than you did. Actually you come out looking at each other even ashamed. And say, "We are even sweating, what was this?" It can be really funny. You even switch off the lights so you don't see each other in the face. This is serious business my friends.

This man and woman, they enter into love expression, they do not hold back nor does scripture refrain from recording intimate details of their mutually delightful encounter far from a mechanical recitation of who touched where. No, we read of the extravagant indulgence of all the five senses: touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing are put into full use. They are lost into each other. There is a holy immersion in erotic joy, that's what I can call it. A holy immersion in erotic joy. That liberates us from all this history I have told you. We ought to be inspired by this powerful piece of poetry by the romantic, the sensual, the erotic, and the tasteful, but specific description of the physical relationship enjoyed by these two lovers. Solomon gives us the divine perspective on the gift of sex. If the church doesn't teach these things, you'll still be taught. Unfortunately, you'll still be taught. KiNigeria will be available and a few other things to show us what to do.

Again just recap a bit of sexuality and spirituality, it is crucial to understand the interpersonal dynamics that express who we are as men and women, known as sexuality or our maleness and femaleness of our being. These two belong at the center of God's ultimate purpose, our being male and female. If marriage is immensely important to God and it is, and if sex is a



marvelous gift from God to married couples, which it is, it is entirely appropriate for God to tell us in scripture how to understand and enjoy this. It only makes sense. He wouldn't create us like this and then leave us in the dark. Would God leave us? He's most beloved creatures on our own when it comes to something as powerful and universal as sexuality? Would He give us such a gift without also giving guidance? He knows the energy that is in this, what do we read in Song of Songs can kill us. This love is like death. It's like a big dam you have opened. You can't stop. When a man like is in love, my goodness, spins himself in the dust. You say, "Hello, hello." "I can't hear. My heart is stolen." God would leave us without any guidance knowing there is this electricity that just goes through us to finish us off. Where is a Christian couple supposed to look for a model of God-glorifying sexuality. Where?

I really think that even if we cover anything in this month, let our feet be pointed to further study finding out in our group discussions, in our readings, let our minds-- just let this month begin a journey of understanding these issues. Understanding them from the perspective of God gives us 90% of the victory. We think we lack finances, we think we lack jobs, no. This is the big deal. This one destroys homes. This one destroys children. This one destroys society. This one brings down a nation. This one we are talking about. Where is a Christian couple supposed to look? If not to scripture, where? You want to go to look to Hollywood or to pop culture? Will pornography teach us? We must not and we cannot take our sexual cues from the sinful impulses of ourselves. Our bodies deceive us. The energy is true, but the direction works in fallen nature.

I told you when you look at-- especially you men, when you look at her and she's beautiful, what's the first thing you're supposed to do? "God is an Artist!" Isn't it? Let God first receive the glory of His creation before you enjoy the sight of it. Doesn't that make sense? "This woman is beautiful, my goodness! But I'm saved, what's happening?" Then you look again, but she's still beautiful. "God, halleluiah," you quote verses, but she's still beautiful, what are you going to do about it now? You need to exclaim and say "God is an Artist! Look at how he made her." And then you let God receive the glory of His creation before you receive the excitement of watching it, Amen? How do you exclaim when you look at beautiful flowers? Yeah, God is still an Artist. What about a good scenery? God is still an Artist and so the first thing is that that woman is God's creation. Why not exclaim the same way? God is an Artist, but when you try to remove God and handle it, the energy you follow. "This is my number." Who asked you for your number? Some

sober girls say, "Who told you I needed it?" We need to go on friends. These things are very hot.

God has not left us in the dark. Scripture illuminates, it shines light on the path on marital intimacy. The Song of Solomon shines brightly showing us the way into the best sex we can possibly experience. Through this combination of communication and creativity, we can unlock the passion already present in our lives and cultivate a fresh and growing passion for the rest of our life together. This is good for the married, this is good for the unmarried, but prospective, right and then this is good for even those who are single and have decided they'll be single, or they think they'll be single all through because they will teach, they will guide, they will counsel, they will be of help. All of us need to understand that, young and old.

In all ways, what we do with our sexual thought have spiritual implications at every turn, but the truth is that behind every sexual longing, there is an even deeper spiritual longing. There is always much to learn about God through our understanding of human sexuality and there is much to learn about our sexuality through a deeper exploration of God. As I told you the entire Old Testament can be understood on the premise that God is the Husband of Israel. The entire New Testament can be understood on the premise that Christ is the husband of His bride, the church. The whole Bible is done with husband and wife. Hosea is there to teach us all those things. The words we use for marriage, we use for God and His people. Adultery, adulterous nation. Covenant, betrothed. The vows, I make a new covenant so when Jesus was saying this cup, the cup of my covenant, a new covenant. It's like the words you use if you are married, the words that used as you place the ring fulfilling the covenant.

Ezekiel 36, "You will be My people, I will be your God." That's the new covenant being prophesied ahead. "I will remove the heart of stone, I will give you the heart of flesh." What's the difference between those hearts? The heart of flesh is flexible, obedient and it responds to the commands of God. "I will wash you with water like water washes impurities, I will wash you from your idols," meaning that your allegiance and loyalty will be only to Me. Now, Jesus comes and in His death, fulfills that. He weds his church, the church He died for. His rings is stained by His own blood because the church is blood bought. That's how the church is the bride of Christ.

Marriage really teaches us about God and His people. When we are in marriage and you read Ephesians for us. There is that portion, perhaps you

didn't-- I don't know whether you got there, Paul says and this is a profound statement, and I'm talking about what? Christ and the church. We thought you were talking about human marriages. No, human marriages are photocopies of the real marriage. The real marriage is Christ and the church, but human marriage is only a metaphor that teaches you about God and His people.

Now, let me give you three things and there's a lot, but we will finish it next Sunday. The connection between sexuality and spirituality is the equivalent of the connection between body and spirit and I'm going to explain. The purest undertakings of life are associated with sexuality. Why do I say that? All the sins that a man commits are outside the body, but sexual sin is against a man's own body. So that's the basis on which I can make such a statement. So that's why I say the purest undertakings of life are associated with sexuality. In other words things that make us very holy and the things that make us very unholy are associated mainly with sexuality. So transgender, when you're dissatisfied as a man, you want to be a woman, you're dissatisfied as a woman, you want to be a man, you're dissatisfied as a man to marry a woman so you marry a man or you marry a cow or-- all those things are really serious, but you can see that those are the drivers even of politics now, isn't it? Our politics is driven by sexuality, gender battles and all these, lost identity, feminism, male chauvinism, all those things are the ones that will get a president elected or not elected in the world. When Obama needed a second term in office, he went on television and he said, "I have seen the light--" Which light Obama? "A man can marry a man and it's okay," and he was elected.

Therefore, these things of mind, they render us pure and righteous or impure. They can leave us filthy and defiled in body, in mind and in spirit. They can be the most glorious and the most scandalous in similar measures. If newspapers don't have scandals of affairs and other, very few people will buy them. Gossip is who is seeing who. The one who eloped with who now. That's news because they touch those nerves that burn in us. And when the devil knows that, where does he bring it? In the church, right in the church.

Here the God-honoring pleasure in marital intimacy is about communion which is where I want to end perhaps for today and I want to give you three things. Communion or oneness in marriage. And oneness in marriage can be understood on the spiritual level, on the psychological level, and the physical level. Three, beginning with the spiritual.

Spirit, on the deepest level, we are spiritual beings created in God's image to have an eternal relationship with Him. He breathed in us, we became spiritual beings. He did that only for us, not for dogs, not for anybody else. Nothing short of this relationship will satisfy our God-given needs at spiritual level for unconditional love and acceptance, significance and identity, competence and achievement. The first resolve is spiritual. Everything goes wrong first, but it will go wrong spiritually. If it goes right, it will be spiritual, that's why changing laws may not help. you know laws can minimize sin or the effects of sin, but laws cannot remove sin, isn't it? Even the policeman who knows that you are sharpening that knife to go and kill somebody, they cannot do anything to you. When will they do anything to you when you have killed? You have to kill first. If you attempt, they will charge you for what you were going to do but lightly. If you kill, the laws are different. They can follow you, know you're going to kill your brother who stole your cow, but they can't really charge you properly because they can't look in the heart, but they wait, "Ah, we got you now." Jesus said, "You've heard it's said that you shall not commit adultery, but whoever looks at a woman--" now, we don't wait for you to go to bed, you've already sinned. You look at a woman lustfully, it's already done because he was taking sin where, in the heart from the book, from the stone. No spouse, at spiritual level can ever deliver these things. What things? Unconditional love, acceptance, significance. That I married her and she's supposed to make me feel significant and worthy and find this identity, come out of the identity crisis and feel like important. My wife has no capacity to do that. No spouse has capacity to do that. Only God can. The other spouse also came to look for them. You can't give them: significance, identity, competence, achievement. "I thought when I marry you, I would feel good. Now look, I'm still feeling bad. I thought if I married you, society would respect me." You are looking for something in the spouse, they cannot give that to you. No spouse can deliver these.

It is a reminder that we are enjoy the pleasure of intimacy as God-centered rather than spouse-centered lovers. Focus on your spouse, no joy; focus on God, great joy. The closer you are to God, the closer you are to each other. There are those who say, "Honey, I think we are so apart, we're so busy. This year has been so tough." I'm thinking of a couple that I know. They were rich people in Florida and they were so busy and we would correspond, and their marriage was struggling. They kept thinking it was because they were not being together. Later they gathered money and went to Hawaii to rest. In Hawaii, they divorced. Sometimes it's not-- You can see, it's deeper. They

thought we need. Now they looked at each other and they realized, "You're this bad? I didn't know you're this bad. Now that I know, you know what, interesting. Our jobs have kept our marriage because I didn't discover how bad you were." They divorced, they came back in different planes.

If we look to our marriage partners to get such personal worth, needs met, we will be exploiting the relationship to get something the other person can never deliver, but if we look to Christ and daily renew our minds with the truth that our needs are fully met in Him, we will liberate our partners from unrealistic demands and find fulfillment rather than frustration. See, when you are married, what you have become in Christ, that's what you bend to the other. If you haven't become anything in Christ, you have only sin to bend: selfishness, inconsiderate, hurts, unkindness, mercilessness, that's what you bend, but if you have received mercy, you bend mercy. You've received forgiveness, you bend forgiveness. You've received acceptance, you accept the other. What you become in Christ, that's what you bend. You go to marriage to give, never to get. Make your intention to get, you'll come and tell me how much you get. You really get nothing. Marriage is a paradox, you get without intending. If you intend to get, the other one also Mukuuzi, you kukuula each other until you're fighting. But when you go to serve your spouse and you seek to outcompete each other in serving, you don't know where the joy has come from when you're serving your spouse. "No, honey I'll do that, I'll do that." "No, sit, I'll bring the tea." When you're trying to outcompete each other, "You must be tired." "No, I'll do that." Change it the other way, "But I did that yesterday, what's wrong with you? Don't you know where the tea leaves are?" "But I did the bed--" you change it the other way, to get and tell me how much joy you have. If you're trying to outcompete each other, never getting tired of serving, seeing it as a call, maybe as a husband to offer that spiritual leadership, to lay down yourself like a doormat so your wife can walk nicely. What a joy! But we think, "What!" Then we try our human means. That's a spiritual level, when we trust God, God's love for us and believe His promise that our deepest longings are satisfied in Him, we are then free to give the other person without expecting or demanding anything in return.

I learnt to make it my call to serve my wife in ways that I can. How long will I do that? For as long as I live. When will I get tired? No, I won't. With that attitude, then there is less friction. "You make the bed, I made the bed yesterday." "You have no mercy, why don't you at least once do something, look?" How long will I make the bed? All through. Of course now when I leave her in bed and I'm working and I need a cup of tea, I come, because

I'm the one who makes the bed. I come and I say, "Please, wake up." "Why? Let me sleep." "I want to make the bed." It's interesting. I wish she was here, she would share perhaps something more. "You're waking me up from my bed to make it?" "Yes. I'm the one who makes the bed," but I know when she wakes up, soon the cup of tea will be ready. The oneness we read about in the Song of Solomon takes place on the spiritual when both partners look to the Lord to meet their needs and encourage each other.

At soul level, a spiritual oneness that develops between husband and wife is the basis for unity on the psychological level. So from the spiritual level, we go to the psychological level. Married couples have been called to an interpersonal oneness of mind, oneness of emotion, oneness of will, that's at soul level, psychological level, making decisions and feeling together and hearing God together and responding to situations together, not uniformly, but in that kind of unity. The sexual relationship was never no, here while they cannot alter the reality of their individual security and significance in Christ, they can enhance one another's realization of this truth. Once we are both in Christ, next is let's spend time and hear our own experiences, enter each other's life.

Now, at body level, that's physical where I will spend longer and then take us to Song of Songs as we come to the end. Oneness on the level of the spirit and soul provides the basis for physical oneness in marriage. The two bodies that physically come together house two persons who are already together in spirit and mind. You were already together spiritually, so the one flesh mystery does not begin when you sleep together, no. Even from your relationship, belonging to each other, vowing to live together and so on, you're already together in mind, your will is for him and her and so on. The sexual relation was never intended to lead to a good marriage, but to be the outcome or result of it. If those sexual actions were meant to deliver any good, the prostitutes would be the happiest. Sexual relations do not cause love, but sex expresses and strengthens the love through oneness that is already there. Many confuse love with lust and think they are loving when they are actually lusting.

In chapters 4 and 5 of the song, Solomon gives us a glimpse of ultimate physical passion as this couple prepares to come together for sexual intercourse. The restraint that has characterized the book to this point no longer applies. The time has come for sexual union. The encounter begins with the woman inviting the man to come and enjoy her love. Let me quote canticle 4 verse 16. "Awake, oh north wind and come. Oh south wind, blow



upon my garden. Let its spices flow. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its choicest fruit." You think they are talking horticulture? No. In the next verse, the man eagerly responds. Even here the poetry is discrete and restrained bursting with passion yet completely devoid of vulgarity. There's no vulgar language here. Chapter 5:1, "I came to my garden, my sister, my bride; I gathered my myrrh with my spice. I ate my honeycomb with my honey; I drank my wine with my milk." You think that's dietary language? No. Here myrrh and spice, honeycomb, honey, wine, milk he likens her sensual delights to the most extraordinary luxuries available in that culture at that time. Nine times he employs the word "my" as one by one he claims her choice fruit as his own possessions. She is his fully, completely and without reservation. This is union now.

Then at the end of verse 1, we find this ringing affirmation of sexual indulgence within marriage. "Eat, friends, drink and be drunk with love." Here as elsewhere in the song, Solomon employs a chorus which stands outside the narrative as witness and commentator. The chorus encourages the couple to enjoy love expression to the fullest, to be intoxicated with one another in their love." All that's very crucial. With God as the author of life and of Scripture, there can be-- can there be a clearer expression of the divine approval and encouragement of sexuality within marriage than this. Those of us who are married ought to be reminded that when we express love in physical ways during intimate moments as just the two of us, we are still not alone. Christians know they are not alone, even when they switch off the light, they are not alone. God is present and He's pleased when we find erotic satisfaction in one another. He receives the glory. You didn't create yourself. You didn't increase your sensations. Even if you do-- what is that-- Viagra, was it? You're only improving what God already created, but you're not innovating anything. No, it's God who gave us. He who created us with electrifying sensations receives the glory of His handiwork. Indeed God encourages with the same and qualified approval with which Solomon and the Shulamite were encouraged, be drunk with love.

Many passages of scripture liken the experience of sexual intimacy to intoxication. The two are to drink deeply enough of one another's sensual joys to come to that place of sweet, holy drunkenness, if you can call it that. Oneness on the level of the spirit and soul provides the basis for those concerns and so let me now encourage us and then we'll look at how to best conclude. As I do, C.S. Lewis said to his nephew, he was called Wormwood in the Screwtape Letters, some of you have read that. He said, "Never forget that when we are dealing with any pleasure in its healthy and normal

and satisfying form, we are in a sense on enemy's ground. As soon as we are enjoying it, we are on enemy's ground. Satan will not go on leave at that moment." He goes on to say, "I know we have won many a soul through pleasure. All the same, it is His (God's) invention, not ours. He made the pleasures. All our research so far has not enabled us to produce one. In that way, we can remind ourselves that we have said before that intensity, physical intensity cannot stand in or replace intimacy. Don't confuse intensity with intimacy. Pornography gives us intensity, no relationship, leaves us emptier than it found us. Working at it with body energy is not the beginning, but the result. If there was no beginning of working at it spiritually, working at it psychologically, the body doesn't do anything. That's water that has no direction. But physical connection with someone with whom we also share strong spiritual and emotional bond is pure love. It is romance, it's passion, it's intimacy, it's ecstasy, it's euphoria.

Think of kissing, canticle 4 verse 10 and 11. There are numerous references in Solomon's song to kissing. At one point, the man declares, let me read now the scripture. "How beautiful is your love, my sister." There's also what he means by my sister, don't think he was-- "--my bride. How much better is your love than wine and the fragrance of your oils than any spice. Your lips drip nectar." How did he know that." "My bride, honey and milk are under your tongue." Kissing. There was clearly some serious kissing going on here. The man delights in the kisses of his beloved. Deep, long and passionate kisses, you can read. The honey and milk mentioned in this verse are symbols of fruitfulness, of satisfaction and pleasure. He's a skillful kisser so the enjoyment is mutual. His bride says of him, canticle 5:16, "His mouth is most sweet." What? Are you eating people's mouths? These two are obviously very familiar with each other's lips and mouths. They revere in the touch, in the tastes, in the sense associated with their kissing. Their kissing is erotic, it's sensual, it's enjoyed and it's apparently prolonged. Think of touching and caressing, physical again. Sexual touching and caressing of many kinds are found throughout the song. Canticle 7:7 and 8, "Your stature is like a palm tree." Now, if you say that to a modern woman you can fight, but this one enjoyed it. And your breasts are like its clusters. You need to find the meanings here. "I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its fruit. Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine."

It is remarkable how Solomon's language, while obvious in its intent is never biologically specific in a way that is either vulgar or even clinical. He's not a vulgar man. As a result, while we can clearly say that the song features some pretty provocative stuff and that sexual intercourse is

definitely included in the subject matter, we cannot point to a specific phrase to do with the action. Although sexual intercourse is certainly an ultimate expression of a married couple's erotic encounter, it is not the outstanding central figure of the song. So the book is not about the act of sexual intercourse, the book is about remarkable nature of the couple's overall relationship. What you read is a relationship. You're not just reading tactics of sexual intercourse. You're looking at oneness in all its romance, its yearning, its desire, its sensuality, passion, in its eroticism. These two desperately desire to be together, but not simply so they can experience sexual gratification. As I said it's a result. They want to be together because they are in love and the sex they enjoy with one another is an expression of that love. Their mutual attraction is not primarily hormonal, it's primarily relational. Remember chemistry and character. Did we say that before? Chemistry and character. You follow hormones, you can mess up. Hormones are there, thank God for hormones.

The soul that feels the electricity is not a guide, it's a gauge. Character is the guide, the soul, so it's like, "Man, I'm feeling so electrified by my lover." You're telling yourself those feelings, but they are not a guide, they are giving you the state of your chest, inside your chest and in your head. They're giving you the temperature, but they're not diagnosing the disease nor can they prescribe the medicine. What prescribes, the guide is character. Five times in Solomon's song, the man calls his beloved my sister, my bride. My sister, my love. She refers to him as my beloved and my friend. Their love is comprehensive, their love is complete. They love one another on multiple levels.

We will look next Sunday at the language of romance, look at their carefully composed words, we'll look at the creative compliments, we'll find application especially for you men. You know women are ready to receive love, but the men sometimes, they want to give it like-- anyway, my father would come loving my mother. The way this Mukiga man loved his Mukiga wife is interesting. I look back, so it's coming to Christmas and how best-- they can't do poetry like Solomon and they can't do a few other things. They can't even call each other honey and so comes with a good cloth from a tailor. "Imwe baana, nyoko araahe?" Where is your mother? And then he throws, "Here! Ssente zangye busha." My money is all-- he's like complaining, but my mother knows my father is loving her. For us we think my father is very angry and he's complaining all his money has been wasted. My mother is very, very happy and my father is just walking from this side to this side complaining my money just going-- he's complaining.

Why did he buy? That's why they were loving each other. That's how. Because if it was not a gift and he gift and he asked, "Imwe baana, nyoko araahe?" My mother would hear maybe from the kitchen or behind somewhere and she knows the moods that bring my father home. She replies, "Listen to that fool." That's how they would communicate. How many Bakiga, Banyankole are here? I can take you through a wonderful lesson especially you men. There are those names you call your wife and she will grow big without eating. It just builds her from inside. I will take you through that but after Song of Songs. I will take you to creative compliments. And women respond to that very happily and when you have a very happy wife, my goodness, your life is so happy.

The conclusion is that it points us still to the fact that sexuality is wholeness. When we understand marriage as the model of Christ and the church, first, it lifts marriage out of the disgusting sitcom images and gives it the magnificent meaning that God meant it to have. When we understand marriage biblically, it lifts out of the ghetto. It lifts it out of the movies and it gives it that vision that Jesus gave in Matthew 19. When he gave that vision and the disciples listened to Him and all those who were listening, the men said, "Eh! Perhaps it's even better for a man not to marry." because the vision was so high. They had asked Him, "Is it in order for us to divorce our wives for any and every reason?" Do you see how divorce was? And Jesus gave God's vision of marriage that lifted it from that selfish thing that was destroying marriage and men said, "Maybe it's even better not to marry because this vision is high."

Secondly, what it does when we understand marriage as the model of Christ and the church, it gives marriage a solid basis in grace and Christ obtains and sustains His bride by grace alone. The grace we receive, we bend it to each other so the covenant of grace.

Thirdly, it shows that the husband's headship and wife's submission are crucial and woven into the very meaning of marriage as a display of Christ and the church. So we let Christ and the church teach us about our marriage. As we experience in our marriage, we start to have a sense of Christ and the church, the intimacy, emotional involvement. We call it the passion of Christ, don't we? Mm-hmm. In Mark 10, he said when these guys came with their mother and there was politics. "Hello. Hey, Jesus, hello. Where is my son?" This woman was...Salome...is it Salome who was asking? Jesus' aunt. So these boys are there and there's politics going on. You know when you get there, actually you should allow one of my sons to sit on your

left. So the mother was involved and Jesus asked them, "Can you drink the cup?" Passion. "Can you be baptized with the Baptism?" and that's the love. "Can you die?" "Ahh, bring it on," they said, "Yes, we can." And Jesus looked at them and he didn't know--He knew that they didn't know the kind of love he was talking about. He said to them, "You will." Who's that? John and James, sons of Zebedee. "You will," but I'm sure He didn't add on, "Not in the way you think," because when it came to love, I love John 3:16 but I love 1 John 3:16. 1 John 3:16 tells us this is love. How does John define love? A brother lays down his -- Ahh! They had learnt and you want to ask John what took you so long to understand this, what Jesus was saying. That, "Yes, we can." He said, "You will." So who was the first martyr at the beginning of Acts 12? James is beheaded then the others die in between and who is the final martyr? John. So they come as bread sandwich, they begin the death and complete it and then they wanted to sit on the right and the left, now they have known what love is.

Now, before we pray, tell me if this is -- I'm reading this and then pray. Tell me if this boy from Lira is not trying some Songs of Songs using some English thinking that the English language will actually express those pomegranates and all those other things. Some schoolboys used to write love letters to girls in the '70s and '80s and perhaps '90s. This is Dochbella (ph) P.O. BOX 72 Lira. The letter is dated 13 June, 1973.

*Dear sweet girl, time and ability plus double capacity has forced my pen to dance automatically on this benedicted sheet of paper. I hope you're seeming in the wonderful pool of Mr. Health there. I'm also perambulating in the cool breeze of wellness here. How is the cool breeze of that joint flowing on you, queen of my heart?*

What is on his mind?

*Sweet pie.*

There you go.

*The reason why this miraculous thing is happening is because honey, I love you spontaneously and as I stand horizontally parallel to the wall and vertically perpendicular to the ground now, I only think of you since you are a fantastic and fabulous girl put together as fantabulous.*

What is happening in the life of this boy? How different is this from Song of Songs. For him, he has gone into some kind of English, but at least you can

see he's trying to express...something is refusing to come out but it's in him. Let me go on.

*I implore you to decipher this my anthem of love oozing out from the innermost pendulum of my thorax cavity. Darling, please stop haranguing with the feelings of my heart because I love you more than a snake loves a rat. To me each day, I start by dreaming of you. Each time I see you, my metabolism suddenly halts and my peristalsis goes in reverse gear.*

Now, I wish I knew what exactly happens when he sees her.

*My medulla oblongata also ceases functioning.*

So this -- because we used to write these letters and I found one. I'm showing you this thing is electrifying. This guy from Lira is trying to put something across, but it's failing and medulla oblongata and all the chemistry. There's one from Kigezi College, Butobeere, "You are my calcium carbonate," he wrote. So the letter goes on here.

*Crazy, crazy, crazy you may say but this is -- this is very, very veritable. If only you knew what was going on in my encephalopathy, you would prostrate. That's why I need to see you vis-à-vis soon for a better elucidation through tête-à-tête. No hyperbole and onomatopoeia; simple candidness.*

Something is not coming out, it's only in this boy and you may not understand it as he gives these terms, but if you are to see him, he must be even shaking thorax and other things. He says;

*By the way, only you and me are protagonists in this subtle affair. As I cogitate and lunate over last episode, I genuflect before the omnipotent and implore Him to let this affair emulsify.*

I last saw that word when I was doing biology; emulsification of fats.

*By the way, I was bamboozled, scintillated, exhilarated and left in a state of prolonged euphoria by the contents of your missive which was quite edifying and exalting. It left my biochemistry in a paradise-like equilibrium. Empirically speaking...*

Now, I don't know how to speak empirically but here it is.

*...I love you chemically...*



Now, I don't know also that.

*...I don't ever want to see gloom and doom looming over your angelic live portrait. Let my appellation be scribbled across your heart with indelible ink. If any boy tries to ask for your companionship, tell him that you are blessed and caveated.*

Any lawyer? Caveat.

*I think I have to pen off here because I still haven't finished studying electrolysis polymerization, but before I evaporate, I like to revitalize your memory with those encapsulating lyrics which proclaim that you're curtal is my butter, your peace is my mimble, the world's greatest lover is me.*

So here, this is a young boy, he's no different from -- I don't know how you young people do it today, but we used to write these letters. So this one said, "You are my zinjanthropus and all -- okay, whenever you studied but the whole thing is this, you call them anything and the meaning was in you. Like you can't really understand what this man, how different is it from Song of Songs. Solomon is singing, the Shulamite is singing. They are trying to express, poetically they are likening and we read milk and we read honey and it's about diet. We read palm trees and we read what, it's not about agriculture or horticulture. We are likening. There's when he said, next Sunday we'll see that, that, "You are like mare." You know mare? A horse. "You are like a mare of Egypt." Now, I looked for that. You call your wife a mare today, you will end up in court. But when I read, mares never pulled carts and as I read the meaning, I said wow. If the Shulamite understood this, she must have felt, "Yes, I am." You try that, apply it. This is not applied Song of Songs here. You can apply the Christianity in it, but don't try it at home. If you are misunderstood, you will receive -- if she's doing some kawunga, she will turn the mulawo on you.

But anyway, you get the idea that it's in us, God created us with it to understand it, we can direct it well for His glory. Next Sunday, we will conclude and we will look at a few more verses in order to affirm marriage, amen? Let me pray, but as I pray, let's close our eyes.

There are many perhaps among us who have had difficult sexual paths and I would like to pray for us, each one of us in our thoughts, even actions, we have regrets, we feel guilty, I want to assure you that God restores completely, restores and that the consequences physically may stay but he cleanses us spiritually; therefore, our mental, our spiritual, our

psychological, all those restored, make us new beings. Remember Gomer, Gomer was a prostitute but married to Hosea. If you found her and said, "Hello, prostitute," she wouldn't say "Yes," she would say, "No, no, I'm Mrs. Hosea." God restores completely. I don't know your state and I don't know what you are thinking. Now, that what you've always struggled with actually you can thank God for it beginning by saying all these struggles oh Lord means I'm normal. All along I have struggled with my normality, that's how you created me. Now I want to take my being normal and use it for your glory. Let me pray. Is there any person like that with any struggles, we can pray that we can overcome?