

## **CULTIVATING A GOD-EXALTING MARRIAGE**

*(Song of Solomon 8:6-7)*

In the book of Song of Solomon, God calls us to celebrate the beauty, intimacy, sacredness and joy of marriage. This love song, inspired by the Spirit of God, teaches us the glorious truth that though it's impossible to experience a perfect marriage in this fallen world, it is possible, by God's enabling grace, to enjoy a strong, vibrant, growing and God-exalting marriage. Reflecting upon the wife's description of her husband's love, let's consider these essential attributes of a God-honoring marital love.

- 1. A God-exalting marriage cultivates an \_\_\_\_\_.**  
In this section of this inspired song, the wife expresses her earnest plea for the assurance of her husband's exclusive devotion. She pleads that her husband would seal and engrave her as a seal upon his heart and arm. This imagery of a seal signifies personal belongingness and identification (Song of Solomon 8:6; 6:3,8-9; 7,10,13). The love of the husband for his bride is also likened to the power of death, "for love is as strong as death" (Song of Solomon 8:6). Marital love is likened to the force of death because death seizes and captures the lives of men with unrelenting power (Eccl. 8:8; Ps. 89:48). The unstoppable nature of God-exalting love is also understood through the very word that is used in reference to love in this text. The word for love used here pertains to the faithful, clinging, unrelenting and steadfast love of the Lord for His beloved people (Deut. 7:7-8; Jer. 31:3). A God-exalting marital love is the kind of love which says, "I'm staying with you no matter what!"
  - 2. A God-exalting marriage cultivates a \_\_\_\_\_.**  
The 'jealous' love of the husband for his wife is described as "the very flame of the Lord" (Song of Solomon 8:6). Godly jealousy is motivated by one's zealous commitment to protect the marriage relationship from the intrusion of covenant unfaithfulness (Deut. 32:20-21,23). Throughout the Scriptures, God is depicted as a jealous God, who demands exclusive love, pure devotion and undivided affection from His people (Exo. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24). A God-exalting marriage cultivates this protective love which guards the spousal relationship from the threat of inappropriate affection and misplaced intimacy. On the positive side, this protective love in marriage should also exert active and diligent efforts in nurturing passionate affection between the husband and the wife (Hosea 11:8-9).
  - 3. A God-exalting marriage cultivates a \_\_\_\_\_.**  
As many waters could not quench love, the God-exalting love of the husband for his wife should endure and prevail against the onslaught of life's trials and adversities. This God-honoring love should also reflect the invaluable and uncompromising love of Christ for His beloved church (Song of Solomon 8:7; Isa. 43:1-2; Ps. 36:7; Matt. 4:8-10; Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 12:2).
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