

Romance Is Dead. Long Live Romance!

Canticles 4; 5:8-16; 8:6-7

Introduction

The first chapter of Gary Chapman's book *The Five Love Languages* is "What Happens to Love after the Wedding?" In the first chapters of the book, he contrasts "limerance" or "romantic obsession" with real, long-term marital love. He references psychologist Dr. Dorothy Tennov, agreeing "the average life span of a romantic obsession is two years."

Most of us have been married for far longer than two years, so it's probably that the "romantic obsession" is long gone.

I want for us to return to a simpler day. A day when you weren't as busy, didn't have kids, or email, or the internet, or a cell phone, or as many bills... ...and a day where you were in love with someone enough to have committed to them for the rest of your life.

In those early days when you were courting, engaged, and newly married, there were probably a lot of things you did for your spouse that you no longer do. I want us to remember those days, and even get some ideas from them may spark the romantic side of our relationship for the upcoming Valentine's Day.

To get us thinking, I've chosen some Scripture passages where a husband and wife had quite a romantic fire burning.

Bible Study

SoS 4:1-15 - ¹You're so beautiful, my darling, so beautiful, and your dove eyes are veiled by your hair as it flows and shimmers, like a flock of goats in the distance streaming down a hillside in the sunshine. ²Your smile is generous and full—expressive and strong and clean. ³Your lips are jewel red, your mouth elegant and inviting, your veiled cheeks soft and radiant. ⁴The smooth, lithe lines of your neck command notice—all heads turn in awe and admiration! ⁵Your breasts are like fawns, twins of a gazelle, grazing among the first spring flowers. ⁶The sweet, fragrant curves of your body, the soft, spiced contours of your flesh invite me, and I come. I stay until dawn breathes its light and night slips away. ⁷You're beautiful from head to toe, my dear love, beautiful beyond compare, absolutely flawless.

⁸Come with me from Lebanon, my bride. Leave Lebanon behind, and come. Leave your high mountain hideaway. Abandon your wilderness seclusion, where you keep company with lions and panthers guard your safety. ⁹You've captured my heart, dear friend. You looked at me, and I fell in love. One look my way and I was hopelessly in love! ¹⁰How beautiful your love, dear, dear friend—far more pleasing than a fine, rare wine, your

fragrance more exotic than select spices. ¹¹The kisses of your lips are honey, my love, every syllable you speak a delicacy to savor. Your clothes smell like the wild outdoors, the ozone scent of high mountains. ¹²Dear lover and friend, you're a secret garden, a private and pure fountain. ¹³Body and soul, you are paradise, a whole orchard of succulent fruits—Ripe apricots and peaches, oranges and pears; nut trees and cinnamon, and all scented woods; ¹⁴mint and lavender, and all herbs aromatic; ¹⁵a garden fountain, sparkling and splashing, fed by spring waters from the Lebanon mountains. (The Message)

What are your thoughts after hearing that?

What stood out to you?

SoS 5:8-16 - ⁸I beg you, sisters in Jerusalem—if you find my lover, please tell him I want him, that I'm heartsick with love for him. ⁹What's so great about your lover, fair lady? What's so special about him that you beg for our help?

¹⁰My dear lover glows with health—red-blooded, radiant! He's one in a million. There's no one quite like him! ¹¹My golden one, pure and untarnished, with raven black curls tumbling across his shoulders. ¹²His eyes are like doves, soft and bright, but deep-set, brimming with meaning, like wells of water. ¹³His face is rugged, his beard smells like sage, his voice, his words, warm and reassuring. ¹⁴Fine muscles ripple beneath his skin, quiet and beautiful. His torso is the work of a sculptor, hard and smooth as ivory. ¹⁵He stands tall, like a cedar, strong and deep-rooted, A rugged mountain of a man, aromatic with wood and stone. ¹⁶His words are kisses, his kisses words. Everything about him delights me, thrills me through and through! That's my lover, that's my man, dear Jerusalem sisters. (The Message)

What are your thoughts after hearing that?

What stood out to you?

Practical Application

Months ago I began preparing for this lesson when I lifted my head up above the constant busyness and tried to remember the last time I did something romantic for Trenna – and even had a hard time remembering what she would like.

When you were trying to win your spouse, what did you do?

What are your spouse's favorite things for you to do for them?

When was the last time you did something on the list?

It's time to put a plan together for Valentine's Day. Otherwise you'll lose one of the most obvious opportunities for marital romance this year.

What are some ideas about what you can do that would make for a great Valentine's Day for your spouse?

Conclusion:

SoS 8:6-7 - ⁶Hang my locket around your neck, wear my ring on your finger. Love is invincible facing danger and death. Passion laughs at the terrors of hell. The fire of love stops at nothing— it sweeps everything before it. ⁷Flood waters can't drown love, torrents of rain can't put it out. Love can't be bought, love can't be sold— it's not to be found in the marketplace. (The Message)

For some this lesson was a page out of the current playbook. For some, it may stir up the imagination a bit and make for an unexpectedly great Valentine's Day. But I am most concerned for the marriage is dead – a marriage in name alone.

“The closest thing to heaven or hell on earth depends on what goes on in your marriage...” – Missy Hunt, in the “What Divorce Taught Us about Marriage blog.

Don't let the years of baggage keep you from living and loving today. It is worth whatever it costs for you to move toward your spouse.

Today I'm challenging each one of us to take a step, a big step, toward our spouse. What would it take to let your spouse know you want more? Do it.

Wives, answer the following questions.

What are your husband's three most attractive physical attributes?

_____/_____/_____

What are your husband's three best personality traits?

_____/_____/_____

What impresses you the most about your husband?

_____/_____/_____

What do your children admire most about your husband?

_____/_____/_____

What do others admire most about your husband?

_____/_____/_____

What are the two things your husband does for you that you enjoy most?

_____/_____

How often does your husband hear these things from you? _____

For extra credit, share your answers above with him.

Other questions for thought:

What are the two things you do for your husband that he enjoys most?

_____/_____

What are your husband's three favorite hobbies?

_____/_____/_____

What have you done recently to take part in any of them? _____

To support his involvement with them? _____

What is your husband's number one long term goal? _____

What have you done recently to help him achieve it? _____

If someone were to ask your husband if you are happy with him, what would he say? _____ What would be his reason for the answer? _____

For extra, extra credit, use the space on the back to write a paragraph of a canticle, using the responses to the first eight questions above as fodder. You can use the Song of Solomon passages we studied as a guide.

Husbands, answer the following questions.

What are your wife's three most attractive physical attributes?

_____/_____/_____

What are your wife's three best personality traits?

_____/_____/_____

What impresses you the most about your wife?

_____/_____/_____

What do your children admire most about your wife?

_____/_____/_____

What do others admire most about your wife?

_____/_____/_____

What are the two things your wife does for you that you enjoy most?

_____/_____

How often does your wife hear these things from you? _____

For extra credit, share your answers above with her.

Other questions for thought:

What are the two things you do for your wife that she enjoys most?

_____/_____

What are your wife's three favorite activities?

_____/_____/_____

What have you done recently to take part in any of them? _____

To support her involvement with them? _____

What is your wife's number one long term goal? _____

What have you done recently to help her achieve it? _____

If someone were to ask your wife if you are happy with her, what would she say? _____ What would be his reason for the answer? _____

For extra, extra credit, use the space on the back to write a paragraph of a canticle, using the responses to the first eight questions above as fodder. You can use the Song of Solomon passages we studied as a guide.