

1

DEEPENING DESIRE

SESSION



DESIRE

BEFORE THE SESSION

1. Test the DVD and electronics.
2. Prepare the room for an effective group time.
3. Have enough personal journals available for all participants.
4. Pray with your spouse for the session and each participant.
5. Study the material closely. Watch the DVD twice and take notes.

FOR OPENERS

1. Describe your feelings in regard to leading a study about godly romantic love and the Song of Solomon. What did you know about this biblical book in the past?
2. Ask, Why do you think so many people are reluctant to discuss love and marriage in a group? What about as a couple? What makes this a unique topic?

PLAY THE DVD

1. Point out the “notes” section for each session in the personal journal. Make sure people have writing instruments.
2. Make sure people are ready to pay close attention, and then play the 10-minute Session 1 clip of The Song.

REACT

First, people will want to discuss the story segment. Ask what they thought about the vignette of a couple meeting for the first time. What elements can make this moment awkward? How did these characters create first impressions with each other? How did their attraction play out?

BONUS: Head Over Heels

*What happens when we fall “madly in love” with someone?
It can feel like temporary insanity!*

Psychologist Dorothy Tennov coined the term limerence in 1979 to describe the process of head-over-heels love in human nature. She studied five-hundred “lovesick” individuals and made some interesting observations.

Limerence doesn’t happen for every person or in every relationship. But it’s quite common. It includes intrusive, perhaps obsessive thoughts about the one we love. An agonizing fear of rejection and a true euphoria, fueled in our systems by the chemical dopamine, occurs when we focus on that person. Meanwhile, levels of serotonin—the chemical that restrains us from doing crazy stuff—drop. It’s not primarily a sexual attraction but an emotional yearning. When there is a setback in the relationship, the object of desire becomes even more attractive. And there may be some combination of thrills, energy surges, insomnia, lost appetite, mood swings, and rapid heartbeat.

If it lasted forever, we’d burn out pretty quickly. But limerence subsides into a deeper, more substantial attachment—if things work out. As you read Song of Solomon, you may see the signs of limerence and its emotional roller-coaster ride. God wanted love to be an adventure for us—and he knew some people needed an extra boot in the pants to be more romantic!

DISCOVER

1 Comment that the Bible has an entire book devoted to romantic love between a man and a woman. This is the Song of Solomon. In your own words, share some of the following insights about this book.

The Song of Solomon is part of what we call the “wisdom literature” of the Bible, including Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, or Song of Songs. These books tend to be poetic and openly emotional. Solomon was Israel’s second king, the son of David and a conflicted man—he loved God and had great wisdom, yet he was deeply flawed. Kyle pointed out in our video presentation that it’s normal to

question why we should look to an error-prone individual for guidance. The answer is that some of the deepest wisdom comes from our lessons in pain and failure.

Solomon was the “song” writer, but others accompanied him. We hear the voice of his beloved, whom he marries in the course of the book, and occasionally others. The song moves through the exhilaration of “head-over-heels” love, into inevitable stormy conflicts, and finally to the deeper commitment that lies beyond them.

(a) Ask your group members if they’ve ever encountered the Song of Solomon. What are their thoughts about studying it?

(b) Ask someone in the group to read Song of Solomon 1:1–7 aloud. Alternatively, divide up the reading. In these first verses, what elements of attraction and desire are evident?

(c) Appearance seems important to these two. Ask, Should that surprise us? After listening to replies, remind your group that God wired us to respond to beauty. Ask your group how much importance we should give to physical appearance.

(d) The Bible also teaches that appearances are “deceiving and declining,” as Kyle said on the DVD. What does this mean? Read Proverbs 31:30 together as a group, and discuss its simple point. What is the beauty of personal godliness? Are there examples in the DVD’s story? How about in the personal experiences in your group?

2 Instruct the group to turn back to the first seven verses of Song of Solomon. Explain that the reference to “dark” is the young lady’s tan from working out in the field with her brothers. The implied contrast is with girls who might be pampered and paler.

(a) What ideas of beauty are here? How does “work identity” enhance our attraction?

(b) In verse 7, the young lady asked Solomon where he grazes his sheep. She was arranging a meeting at midday, when workers rested. What part does initiative play in attraction and finding a mate?

c) What false ideas about taking the initiative do we hear about in our culture? (Examples: “playing hard to get,” waiting for God to send someone, or, conversely, taking too much initiative and playing mental games. Point out Kyle’s remarks on the DVD: God gives us needs and the initiative to act on them.)

d) The mention of a “veiled woman” in verse 7 refers to prostitution. Why might the young lady have drawn this contrast? (“Veiled women” probably made themselves available in the workplaces of men. She probably wanted to contrast herself through modest dress and, of course, modest behavior.) How can we apply the ideas here to a modern workplace?

3 Divide into smaller groups. Based on the size of your group, each subgroup will ideally be two or three couples. There, each couple should share a brief account of how God brought them together. What elements sparked the attraction? How did the attraction change over time? Finally, each person should name one element of “beauty” that God has displayed through time in that person’s spouse.

4 Bring everyone back together and draw the discussion to a close by discussing the elements of true beauty that attract us. Make a list of the character attributes that make someone truly appealing beyond first glance. You might finish by asking everyone to turn to Galatians 5:22–23. Challenge group members to choose one of these nine traits to meditate on through one full day as the week goes by.

PRAYER

Always begin and end each session with prayer, reminding group members that it’s more than a “punctuation mark” for Christian meetings. It’s your group locking arms to come before God himself. Ask for any personal prayer requests. Then ask the group to consider what ideas from today’s meeting should be taken before God and prayed for. Begin your prayer with a time of

praise and worship, and then spend a few moments expressing thanks for specific blessings from God. Finally, pray for the requests and for application of the ideas discussed this week. Ask God for true and concrete breakthroughs in personal relationships in the group. Acknowledge any “silent needs” that may have been too painful or private to discuss during the session. God knows our pain and has a plan for its healing.

HOMEWORK

Meditate on one trait per day from Galatians 5:22–23. The Spirit of God wants to grow these in us as a natural consequence of our relationship with him. Be prepared to report on which one you found the most powerful and transformational during the week.

TEASER

Just before people prepare to leave, say something such as, “SEX! Now that I have your attention, you absolutely won’t want to miss our next session.”

NOTES:
