FBS “Marriage Matters—Sex” 4-30-17

Joel Breidenbaugh (Song of Solomon 5:10-7:13)

**Intro.** In 1964 Jewel Akens sang “Let me tell you bout the birds & the bees & the flowers & the trees & the moon up above & a thing called love.” That’s code for what Salt-n-Pepa sang in 1991 “Let’s talk about sex, baby.” Two different generations—one uses code & one can be crude, but it doesn’t do us any good to avoid the subject altogether. As a matter of fact, the bulletin insert today has notes that show how pervasive the subject of sex is in the Scriptures—both what to do & what not to do (see insert & reference other books). Not only are there numerous verses throughout the Bible on sex, there’s an entire book devoted to a husband & wife relationship saturated with sex. As we continue our series on “Marriage Matters,” we deal with the matter of “Sex” from the Song of Solomon 5:10-7:13.

Theme: Marital sex

Background: While it’s debated, I believe the Song of Solomon is a love song with a few voices—Solomon’s, the Shulammite woman (his 1st wife?), her friends & God’s. I think the song speaks of their courtship (1:2-3:5)—leaving father & mother; their wedding (3:6-5:1)—cleaving to each other; and their marriage (5:2-8:14)—weaving (two becoming one flesh). This interpretation is strengthened in that there is no sex in the courtship phase, but warnings not to “stir up or awaken love until it pleases” (2:7; 3:5; cf. 8:3-4 where she calls on her friends not to partake in sex until they each come to the right time at their own weddings)

* The Song of Songs is part of 5 small scrolls in the Hebrew Bible—the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes & Esther. As a book of both Poetry & Wisdom Literature, it relates well to these other books. One scholar insightfully notes, “If Proverbs 31 highlights sound advice on seeking a suitable mate and Ruth demonstrates the way that God brings the righteous together for marriage, the Song of Songs illustrates free and passionate love between a man and a woman. Ecclesiastes… states plainly that human love cannot take the place of one’s respect and love for one’s Creator. Thus, Song of Songs is introduced and qualified within the canonical context” (House, *OT Theology*, 464)
* The Song of Songs teaches that “marriage & fidelity within marriage are everywhere set forth as the boundaries of sexuality. But Song of Songs, unlike Proverbs, is not a series of warnings on the dangers of sexuality & the need for chastity. It is instead a celebration of the joy & passion of love” (Garrett, 377). One of the lessons of this book is for married couples to speak often & openly about their joy in each other. Likewise, “One of the book’s distinctive messages is that sex is God’s gift, His good gift, and that it should be enjoyed” (Akin, HOTC, 135).
* Marriage Matters because God blesses the gift of sex within the boundary of marriage.
* **3 factors in having godly sex:**

**1. Pay attention to what you communicate in having godly sex (5:10-16; 6:4-9; 6:13b-7:9a)**

**a. Husbands, realize the importance of verbal & vocal communication to your wife—the way to a woman’s heart is through her ear**

* While the Shulammite enjoyed his appearance & strength, she was most moved by his words
* Solomon shares words of attraction, affection, attention, affirmation & anticipation. Earlier, Solomon & the Shulammite shared words of desire & delight, but also discernment & delay—they did not rush sex until after the wedding

Illus: Teens & college students & young adults, you are wise to listen to the warnings of Scripture & not rush sex before marriage—I know of no one who ever regretted waiting until marriage to have sex, but I’ve known several who regretted not waiting. Think of a baseball diamond—holding hands & light kissing is 1st base; deep kissing & holding close is 2nd base; petting each other is 3rd base; sex is home plate. Moving beyond 1st base in dating/engagement will put you in scoring position & it doesn’t take much to get you home

Illus: Words of affection & attraction, desire & delight speak volumes to a wife (one of my poems to Annthea)

Illus: But such words are not the only needs your wife has. It’s been said that the 7 Basic Needs of a Woman: (1) A spiritual leader (5:10; Psalm 1; Ephesians 5:23-27); (2) Personal affirmation & appreciation (6:4; Proverbs 31:28-29); (3) Personal affection & romance (6:8-9, 11-13; Ephesians 5:28-29, 33); (4) Intimate conversation (5:16; 1 Peter 3:7); (5) Honesty & openness (6:10, 13; Proverbs 15:22-23; Ephesians 4:15); (6) Stability & security (5:9; 6:1, 13; 1 Timothy 5:8); and (7) Family commitment (6:9; cf. 8:1-2; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:19-20)

**b. Wives, realize the importance of visual communication to your husband—the way to a man’s heart is through his eye** (she didn’t wear sweatpants, flannel or burlap to bed!)

* Because of the way men are wired, it is helpful to have a dim light or candle lit rather than a completely dark room.
* Women often think, “But I cover up because I don’t like how my body looks,” but their husband views them differently with his eyes

Illus: A wife who wears tank tops to bed, even when she isn’t going to have sex, tells her husband, “I want you to look at me!” If King David, a man after God’s own heart, got to looking in the wrong place, don’t you, as a wife, want your husband to look in the right place?

Illus: That’s not your husband’s only needs, though. The 5 Basic Needs of a Man: (1) Admiration/respect (5:10-15; Ephesians 5:22-23, 33); (2) Sexual fulfillment (5:16; 6:2-3; Proverbs 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5); (3) Home support (6:3; Proverbs 9:13; 19:13; 21:9, 19; 25:24); (4) An attractive wife (6:4-9; cf. 7:1-9; 1 Peter 3:1-5); & (5) A best friend (5:16; cf. 8:1-2, 6)

**2. Reserve yourselves exclusively for each other in having godly sex (6:1-3, 10, 13)**—reserve your sexual activities for your spouse (talk, experiment, play games)

* When the Shulammite’s friends were asking her about him, she responded that he was with her & no one else—they found their sexual satisfaction in each other & no one else

Illus: Barbara DeAngelis writes on “How to Make Love All the Time” & cautions about 5 Traps to Avoid: (1) Waiting until late at night to have sex; (2) Falling prey to statistical paranoia; (3) Stalling until you’re “in the mood” for sex; (4) Getting completely out of the habit; and (5) Using fatigue as a cover-up for other problems.

Illus: She also provides a 4-fold Strategy to Turn Things Around: (1) Plan time for sex; (2) Plan decompression time after work; (3) Give yourself permission to have “quick sex;” & (4) Stop trying to fill a sexual quota; enjoy the sex you do have

**3. Meet each other’s needs in having godly sex (6:2-3, 11-12; 7:6-13)**

Illus: A few years ago, the British Heart Foundation found out that men who have sex 3-4x per week cut in half the risk of having a major heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years (Akin, 327)

**a. Husbands, work at lengthening the intimacy & sexual experience of your wife**

Illus: Men are like microwaves & women are like crockpots—most men are satisfied after a couple of minutes, but women often need 20 minutes or more to be satisfied; work on satisfying each other & seek medical help, if necessary, because sexual intimacy is an important part of marriage

**b. Wives, initiate the romance & sex at times with your husband**

* 4x the Shulammite says “let’s go” (7:11-12)—she plans their getaway

Illus: I love it when Annthea goes shopping & returns with a Victoria Secret’s bag—I start singing The Black-Eyed Peas (2009) “I gotta feeling that tonight’s gonna be a good night!”

Illus: Because women can lose the passion sooner than men, Ginny Graves offers 7 Essentials for a Woman to Keep the Flames of Romance Burning: (1) Adjust your hormones—don’t let menopause rob you of your sex drive; (2) Sleep well—7-9 hours per night; (3) Exercise wisely—1 hour of aerobic exercise per day; (4) Beat depression; (5) Watch those anti-depressants—often cause sexual dysfunction; (6) Manage stress; and (7) Communicate

**Conc.** In school most students dislike being given homework. How many of you want homework today & this week? I’ve talked about sexual union, but the Apostle Paul says sexual union in marriage is intended to communicate a picture of Christ’s union with His bride, the church. But to be part of His bride, you have to surrender to Him. That means repenting, if you are having sex out of wedlock. Will you repent & trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?