

## Study Guide – “Love Songs 2 – Love Relationships”, *from 2-11-2018*

### Warming Up

The Bible mentions that in marriage “the two shall become one.” This exact phrase occurs in Genesis, in the Gospels (the words of Jesus), in 1 Corinthians, and in Ephesians. Not many phrases referencing the same context are repeated this much. So, what exactly do these words mean to you? How do you understand them? What is God trying to say to us? Discuss.

### Takeaway # 1 – Marriage Frustrations

In describing the time after the infatuation is over, Pastor Bobby said, “Before long, the marriage becomes a mirage and it causes a relation shift.” Do you ever dream of how your marriage could be, but it seems always out of reach? Is the mirage realistic? If not, have you given up on getting there? What’s wrong with this expectation?

Pastor Bobby contrasted two realities in marriage:

1. “To grow out of love, embrace a life of manipulation, which brings separation.” Or,
2. “To grow in love, embrace a lifestyle of cultivation, which brings integration.”

No one who is sincerely trying to improve their marriage thinks of themselves as being manipulative. Take a minute to pray for personal transparency, and ask if your words and intentions are truly manipulative, even if subconsciously. What are some examples?

Pastor Bobby said, “Only God can meet our deepest needs. A mate cannot meet that mandate.” Do you know anyone who is frustrated because they are subconsciously trying to have their needs met by their spouse? Is it fair to expect something out of someone that only God can do? Are you and your spouse equally yoked in pursuing God for your deepest needs?

Romans 8:29 reads, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Pastor Bobby pointed out how to stop being a manipulator. He said, “Stop trying to transform your mate and let God conform you to His son.”

Discuss why it is easier to have someone else change than to focus on letting God change you. What would a marriage be like if both parties just focused on conforming to the image of Jesus? Why is there so much resistance to this?

### Takeaway # 2 – Weeding and Feeding

Pastor Bobby compared marriage to a garden. Both parties want a good product to the result, but focusing on the end product needs to be preceded by what needs to be done to achieve that result. So, he said, “Every garden needs weeding and feeding.” List some specific examples of what might need to be weeded out of the garden of a marriage. Then list some things that need to be added to the marriage to feed it.

Re-read 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, James 3:14-17, and Philippians 2:3-4.

Discuss the possibility that the weeding needs to come from ourselves and the feeding to be done to our spouses? Discuss.

Do you know of someone who has come to the conclusion that they are just married to the wrong person? Do you think that in some cases this conclusion is reached before trying weeding and feeding the marriage? Do you think most people draw this conclusion instead of asking themselves if they are the ones who need to change?

### **Takeaway # 3 – Put-Downs / the Tongue**

Pastor Bobby referenced a study which showed that couples in their first 10 years who uttered 5% or less putdowns of their spouses tended to stay together, while those whose put-down comments were 10% or higher tended to split up. Honestly listen to the content of your comments to your spouse. What is your percentage? Are criticisms and put-downs of your mate 1 out of 10 of your total comments? Our words either build-up or tear-down.

Ruth Graham Bell said, “A good marriage is the union of two forgivers.” List and discuss some real obstacles that keep people from forgiving and being rich in mercy, as God is. Be specific.

When you read James 3:1-8, it’s easy to see what a problem the tongue causes – not the physical tongue, but the words that it forms. Verse 8 even says, “But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” Do words just come out, or are they driven by what is in the heart? If so, can we change our hearts?

Read these two scriptures together. Proverbs 4:23, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.” Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked.” So, while the heart is deceitful and wicked, Proverbs tells us that it can be controlled.

The question is whether the heart is being controlled by you or whether it is controlling you.

Do you think that most individuals trust their heart and follow it, or do they understand that their heart can trick them and must be mastered?

Discuss the trustworthiness of the heart (emotions) for dealing with real life relationships.

### **Conclusion**

*LOVE. CULTIVATE. INTEGRATE. FORGIVE. WEED. FEED. FORGIVE.*

*"God resists the proud,  
But gives grace to the humble."*