



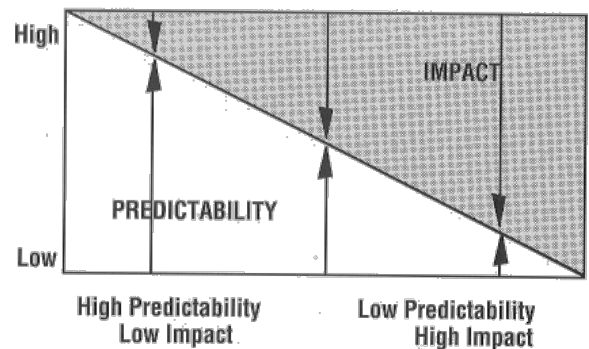
## PART THREE: PURSUE

People do some dumb things in the name of love, don't they? Men will go chick flicks and pretend to like them. They will talk on the phone for hours and hours at a time. Women will drive 2 hours to go somewhere else to see the one that they love just to spend 15 minutes with them. Why? Because when they're in love? They pursue one another. But once they get married, many times they stop pursuing each other. And that is when all sorts of problems start.

**BIG IDEA:** Pursue your spouse every single day, because what is won can be lost.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name one thing in your life you are constantly pursuing? Examples could be a relationship, a dream, success or a financial goal. What are some specific ways in which you pursue this thing?
2. If you are married, what are some of the funny or special things you did while pursuing your spouse? (If you are not married, describe how you would like to be pursued.)
3. Chris said that an *obstacle of keeping the passion in our marriage is that we become predictable*. Do you agree or disagree?
4. Read Song of Solomon 4:1-7, 11 and 5:10-16.



*He said, "You are beautiful, my darling, beautiful beyond words. Your eyes are like doves behind your veil. Your hair falls in waves, like a flock of goats winding down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are as white as sheep, recently shorn and freshly washed. Your smile is flawless, each tooth matched with its twin. Your lips are like scarlet ribbon; your mouth is inviting. Your cheeks are like rosy pomegranates behind your veil. Your neck is as beautiful as the tower of David, jeweled with the shields of a thousand heroes. Your breasts are like two fawns, twin fawns of a gazelle grazing among the lilies. Before the dawn breezes blow and the night shadows flee, I will hurry to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. You are altogether beautiful, my darling, beautiful in every way. Your lips are as sweet as nectar, my bride. Honey and milk are under your tongue. Your clothes are scented like the cedars of Lebanon."* Song of Solomon 4:1-7, 11

*She said, "My lover is dark and dazzling, better than ten thousand others! His head is finest gold, his wavy hair is black as a raven. His eyes sparkle like doves beside springs of water; they are set like jewels washed in milk. His cheeks are like gardens of spices giving off fragrance. His lips are like lilies, perfumed with myrrh. His arms are like rounded bars of gold, set with beryl. His body is like bright ivory, glowing with lapis lazuli. His legs are like marble pillars set in sockets of finest gold. His posture is stately, like the noble cedars of Lebanon. His mouth is sweetness itself; he is desirable in every way. He is my lover, my friend." Song of Solomon 5:10-16*

5. Do you think that the passion is still there in this relationship? Why or why not? How do you think they kept passion in their marriage?
6. Chris said that an *obstacle of keeping the passion in our marriage is that we stop pursuing our spouse*. What advice would you give a couple that's stopped pursuing one another? How would you counsel them to rekindle their passion? How does placing the marriage relationship on autopilot kill a marriage?
7. Why do we tend to pursue what we don't have? Why is this especially true for men?
8. *Read Genesis 29:16-30.*

*Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face. Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you for seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife." "Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me." So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days. Finally, the time came for him to marry her. "I have fulfilled my agreement," Jacob said to Laban. "Now give me my wife so I can sleep with her." So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast. But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her. But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! "What have you done to me?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?" "It's not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn," Laban replied. "But wait until the bridal week is over, then we'll give you Rachel, too—provided you promise to work another seven years for me." So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and he loved her much more than Leah. He then stayed and worked for Laban the additional seven years. Genesis 29:16-30*

9. How would you feel if you were Jacob in this story? How would you feel if you were Rachel? How would you feel if you were Leah?
10. When you were dating your soon-to-be spouse, what sort of creative things did you do to win him/her? If you were doing now what you did then, do you think she would have said yes? Do you think he would have proposed?
11. Describe how God has pursued you in your life and how you have pursued Him. How has His pursuit of you changed and deepened your relationship with Him?

## THINK ABOUT IT

If we want to regain the passion that was once in our relationship, then we have to do what we once did. Though that's bad grammar, it is good for a marriage. You can fall back in love as easily as you fell in love, because our actions always precede our feelings.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

If you are married, talk to your spouse and ask them what was the most memorable date. Now, both of you plan a memorable date to go out on this week. *Make it happen, baby!!*

If you are single, write a letter to your future spouse telling them how you long for them and how you want to pursue them, not just while you're dating, but your entire life. Then put that letter in a place where you can give it to them one day. Pray every day for your future spouse that they would place God as number one in their life.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days. Genesis 29:20*



## GOING DEEPER

1. Describe a time when you were lost from your family or a group as a child. How were you finally found?
2. Read Luke 15:1-7.

*Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them! So Jesus told them this story: “If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven’t strayed away! Luke 15:1-7*

3. Who had gathered to hear Jesus? (15:1)
4. What were the Pharisees and teachers of the law doing? (15:2)
5. What did Jesus do instead of directly rebuking the religious leaders? (15:3)
6. What does a conscientious shepherd do when one of the flock is lost? (15:4)
7. How does a shepherd bring a lost sheep home? (15:5)
8. What happens when a shepherd returns to his home and flock after finding a lost sheep? (15:6)
9. How does heaven react when a sinner repents? (15:7)
10. What causes God to rejoice most? (15:7)
11. What kind of people do not need to repent? (15:7)
12. Why did the religious leaders miss the point of what Jesus’ ministry was about?
13. Why did Jesus choose a parable about sheep to make His point?
14. How might the one sheep have gotten lost?
15. In what ways do we sometimes go astray?
16. In what situations are you most tempted to stray from God?
17. What can you do this week to help or “pursue” another believer who may be straying from their relationship with God?

## HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO USE FOR YOUR TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:

**Day 1:** Read the story of how Jacob pursued Rachel in Genesis 29. For couples, pray that God will keep the fire burning in your marriage and that you will continue to pursue each other. Pray for your spouse. For singles, ask God to continue to pursue you and promise to pursue Him.

**Day 2:** Read Hebrews 3:13. Ask for God’s assistance in speaking words of encouragement in all of your relationships.

**Day 3:** Read James 4:17. Confess to God those times when you knew you should have done good, but did not. Ask for His forgiveness. Seek God’s help in doing what is right in all areas of your life.

**Day 4:** Read Luke 15:1-7. Thank God for the transformation He has done in your life and for His continued pursuit of you.

**Day 5:** Read Romans 12:2. Ask God to continue to transform your mind so you may focus on following His ways above all else.

