



SONG OF SONGS

DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Biblical Vision for Marriage, Sex, and the Body

THIS IS MY FRIEND

Read the Text

Song of Songs 5:10-5:16

¹⁰ My beloved is radiant and ruddy,
distinguished among ten thousand.

¹¹ His head is the finest gold;
his locks are wavy,
black as a raven.

¹² His eyes are like doves
beside streams of water,
bathed in milk,
sitting beside a full pool.

¹³ His cheeks are like beds of spices,
mounds of sweet-smelling herbs.

His lips are lilies,
dripping liquid myrrh.

¹⁴ His arms are rods of gold,
set with jewels.

His body is polished ivory,
bedecked with sapphires

¹⁵ His legs are alabaster columns,
set on bases of gold.

His appearance is like Lebanon,
choice as the cedars.

¹⁶ His mouth^[d] is most sweet,
and he is altogether desirable.

This is my beloved and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

Main Point

We were created for relationship. This is one of the reasons we're diving into Song of Songs. Today's passage has us considering God's design for relationship in the form of friendship – both inside and outside of marriage. Friendship can sometimes feel elusive and nebulous. What does friendship – TRUE friendship – really mean? ***Tim Keller defines the four marks of true friendship as requiring constancy, care, candor, and counsel.***

Even if we have a solid definition of friendship though, how do we find it? It's not something we can manufacture. Rather, friendship is built upon something simple whether it's a common interest, a shared activity, or something shared between two people. ***Friendship can't be created; it must be discovered.*** In marriage, this friendship is a key element in a flourishing relationship.

Once we enter into friendship, it doesn't take long to realize that although it's a beautiful gift, friendship can be hard. Keller's four marks of true friendship take a long time to build! Add to that other challenges like the transient nature of where we live and our packed schedules, and friendship can seem nearly impossible to find! And within marriage, there can be a myriad of other underlying issues that make friendship within a marriage challenging. No matter how hard we try, we are always going to fall short, and our friends and spouse will never be able to fulfill our every need. The good news though, is that Jesus is the ultimate friend. He perfectly fulfills the four marks of friendship and he sees how we fall short of them, and yet he pursues us no matter what. ***The best way to grow in our friendship abilities is to enjoy the friendship of our Savior.***

Reflect Together

1. Consider the four marks of friendship: constancy, care, candor, and counsel. **Take the self-assessment below.** Marrieds – take one based on friendship in marriage, and another based on other friendships. Which of these marks are you weakest in, and which is a strength? (1 is bad, 5 is excellent)
2. **Who has been a good friend to you?** How have they been a good friend, and what impact did that have on you?
3. How is friendship going in your life? If you're married, can you honestly look at your spouse and say "this is my love, and this is my friend?" **What is a change you could make to grow in your friendships whether that's within or outside of marriage?** It can be tempting to start with what *you* need and how the *other* person has failed you. Resist that temptation. Start with how you could be a better friend to the other person.

FRIENDSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

CONSTANCY

Does your spouse or those that you would call friends know confidently that you'd actually show up if in need?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you move toward your spouse or friend when things are tense or conflict arises?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you see your friends regularly or spend regular quality time with your spouse?

1 2 3 4 5

TOTAL FOR CONSTANCY:

CARE

Do you ask good questions that draw the other person out?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you know which of your friends is hurting and struggling and what your spouse is specifically hurting and struggling with?

1 2 3 4 5

Are you willing to do something about your friend or spouse's needs right now?

1 2 3 4 5

TOTAL FOR CARE:

CANDOR

If you have a friend that's wandering or one that's chasing idols, will you speak up?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you tell your friend or spouse when you've felt hurt or missed by them?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you confess and apologize when you've hurt your spouse or friend?

1 2 3 4 5

TOTAL FOR CANDOR:

COUNSEL

Do you share your own life and hardships to empathize with your spouse or friend (but without making it all about you, of course)?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you meet your friend or spouse with Gospel truth and the hope we have in Jesus?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you lean more towards compassion and encouragement as opposed to advice and Christian platitudes?

1 2 3 4 5

TOTAL FOR COUNSEL: