

SONG of SOLOMON

Part 2

Big Idea

Current dating customs often lead to painful break-ups and repeated patterns of pain and tragedy in relationships. While we readily trust our culture's thesis of "you play like you practice" when it pertains to sports, we often ignore the same advice in our relationships. Many couples worry that thinking too much about the future will tie them down. Instead of practicing dating according to God's standard, they are blinded by and tend to follow their immediate feelings, attractions, and sensations.

Feelings of attraction are part of God's design, but Solomon and the Shulamite woman recognized that God's desire was that they wait for the right season to express those feelings. God has defined seasons for relationships—a season of perfection, a season of preparation, and a season of purity. The key to setting a relationship on a solid foundation and making it work is living a God-first life no matter the season.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. — Ecclesiastes 3:1

Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires. — Song of Solomon 3:5

Discussion Questions

- How do you define today's dating and courtship customs? What are healthy ways to "play like you practice" in relationships?
- Discuss the three seasons for relationships: 1) The season of perfection — a time for couples to limit time together, limit their talk, and limit their touch. 2) The season of preparation — a season for you to become the right person, walk in love, and fix all hopes and dreams on God. 3) The season of purity — a time to put parameters around your passion, use family as a safeguard, and let Jesus make all things new. Which season do you or have you found to be most difficult? How did you overcome those difficulties?
- Pastor Chris shared that 1 out of 3 marriages result in divorce. He also shared that a study revealed that only 1 out of 1,246 couples divorce if they do just three simple things together on a regular basis: pray, discuss the Bible, and attend church. Were those stats surprising for you to hear? Discuss your thoughts. Can you attest to how those things keep a marriage healthy? Share your experience.

Prayer Focus

Ask God to help you stand firm in upholding a God-fearing home and living a God-first life. Ask God to expose any areas that do not align with His word, surrender unhealthy habits, turn from those ways, and walk in godly confidence with new healthy habits.

Next Step

Identify who you consider to be family and can hold you accountable in your relationships. Be transparent with them on areas that you need to work on in order to live a God-first life. Also, if you are married or engaged, consider making plans to attend the Highlands Marriage Conference this week. For more details and to register visit churchofthehighlands.com/marriage/.

Leader Tip

This is a great time to make suggestions on books, small group curriculum, and archived messages related to marriage, dating, or courtship. Encourage your group to attend the Highlands Marriage Conference this week—the Montgomery and Tuscaloosa campuses still have availability!