

# A Passionate Pursuit: The Wonder of Becoming One!

## I. Romance Defined

- A. Genuine Love Originates With God and Is Defined By God.
1. To understand love in marriage we must understand God's love for us.
  2. The foremost expression and definition of love is provided in the gospel. The starting point for understanding genuine love is experiencing God's love poured out on the cross of Jesus Christ.
- B. Genuine Love Is Gloriously Displayed In Marriage.
1. Marriage is a living demonstration of divine love in human relationship, and as men we have the privilege and responsibility of leading our wives by our example of God's love.
    - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her... (Ephesians 5:25)
  2. The culture is unable to define or display genuine love because it doesn't start with God and the gospel. As a result love becomes all about obtaining our selfish desires.
- C. Romance is the outward expression of the desire to love, nourish and cherish our spouse, of which affection, intimacy, and delight should be a regular experience. True romance is only possible where there is biblical love within the covenant of marriage.

The word “romance” does not appear in the Bible, but Scripture offers several powerfully inspiring examples of passionate love between man and woman:

- The redemptive love of Boaz for Ruth (Ruth 2:8-16, 3:11-12)
- Jacob’s passion for Rachel (Genesis 29:20)
- The Song of Solomon
- New Testament warning against physical separation(1 Corinthians. 7:5)
- Husbands “nourishing” and “cherishing” their wives (Ephesians 5).

D. Romance is not a natural state that is automatically maintained. Instead romance is a gift and an art that every husband and wife have the privilege to cultivate and display through all the years of their marriage.

## **II. Romance Spoiled**

### **A. Spiritual Neglect**

- To love and pursue God is the first and greatest commandment over our lives. (Matt. 22: 36-38). Neglecting one’s relationship with God is neglecting the greatest means of grace in your marriage.

### **B. Selfishness**

- This is the lie that believes that what I want is more important and better for me than what God wants. This can include laziness, ingratitude, pursuing romance primarily to get rather than give, or believing that other things are more important than my spouse.

### **C. Bitterness**

- This can be the result of disappointment, resentment, unresolved conflict or unmet expectations.

## III. Romance Redeemed

### A. Qualifications for Redeeming Romance

#### 1. Romance is to Occur in the Context of Commitment

- “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” (2:16, 6:3, 7:10)

#### 2. Romance is to be pursued wisely

- “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.” (8:4)

### B. Ways to Redeem Romance

#### 1. Affections

- “For love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised.” (*Song of Songs 8:6a-7*)

#### 2. Thoughts

##### - Thoughts of desire

- “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me.” (7:10)

##### - Thoughts unceasing

- “I slept, but my heart was awake.” (5:2-8)

##### - Thoughts of anticipation

- “My beloved speaks and says to me: Arise, my love, my beautiful one and come away.” (2:10)

### 3. Words

- Secret and public admiration
  - The bridegroom says to his bride, “Behold, you are beautiful my love, behold you are beautiful; your eyes are doves.” (1:15)
  - She says to her bridegroom, “Behold you are beautiful my beloved, truly delightful.” (1:16)

### 4. Actions

- Be a “student for life” of your spouse.
- Learn to appreciate your spouse’s interests.
- Begin to pursue planned and spontaneous expressions of romance in the measures that are appropriate and God glorifying for this season of engagement.

## A Passionate Pursuit

1. What effect should your experience of God's love for you, as displayed in the gospel, have on your love for your spouse?
2. Share with your fiancé/fiancée those qualities in him/her that inspire your gratitude, admiration, and respect.
3. What does your fiancé really enjoy? Do you know their favorite books? What about music, movies, restaurants, hobbies, clothes? If you don't know, take time to ask her or him today.
4. How would you evaluate your own devotional life? How would you evaluate your fiancé/fiancée's devotional life? In what areas do you desire to grow?
5. What "Romance Spoilers" – attitudes, practices, or patterns in your heart – are hindering your desires for expressions of romance, appropriate for this season of engagement? Explain.
6. From ROMANCE REDEEMED, which category would you like your fiancé/fiancée to pursue more consistently? Explain.