

A sunset over the ocean with the text "Love Song" overlaid in a large, white, decorative serif font. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The text is centered and has a slight shadow, making it stand out against the background.

Love Song

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible is a profound book that speaks to all matters of the human heart, even love, sex and marriage. People are often surprised to find out some of the topics covered in the Bible, especially the area of intimacy.

Think about this: the creator of all things was also the creator of sex and intimacy. God wasn't unaware of this activity, he was the author. Literally, he was the author of the Old Testament book Song of Solomon. Also known as Song of Songs, this book dedicates eight chapters to the topic of marriage and intimacy between spouses.

We believe that in the 21st century no institution is being attacked more than marriage, and that is why we wanted to design this Community Group series around the theme of *Love Song*. For the next five weeks, we are going to discuss the following topics as we seek to answer the question, *What did God intend for intimacy to look like?*

Week 1: The Art of Attraction

Week 2: A Season for Everything

Week 3: Let's Talk About Sex

Week 4: Trouble in Paradise

Week 5: Till Death Do Us Part

We look forward to hearing about the conversations that occur in your Community Group and how God is using this material to enrich your marriage. In addition to the group discussion material, we have included a bonus section called *Take-Home Assignment*, which we designed to help create conversations for you and your spouse.

We are trusting and praying that God will do a great work in your marriage as you foster your relationship the way that God intended.

— your c/Life co-pastors

SESSION 1:

THE ART OF ATTRACTION

For most of us, being attracted to another person is not the problem. The problem exists when we are attracted to another person for the wrong reasons. Most relationships fail because their attention was misplaced. In short, they had an improper attraction.

As believers, what should we find attractive in a mate? What are the things that God says we should be looking for? In week one of our series, we are going to dive into Scripture and see what God has to say about attraction and what we should be searching for in a spouse.

SESSION 2:

A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING

Most couples recognize that there is a season for everything, and one of those seasons is the honeymoon period. You may remember what this was like: there was no fighting, everything was perfect, and the areas that weren't perfect were *cute*. This season quickly faded, however, and *cute* became *annoying*. Everything stopped being perfect. There are many seasons of marriage, and one season that is often grossly overlooked is the season of preparation. The discussion this week centers around the importance of preparing yourself for marriage.

SESSION 2 DISCUSSION GUIDE

WATCH THE DISCUSSION VIDEO

youtu.be/K-hqgx9Ok3E

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-18.

What stood out most to you in the video?

How long did you and your spouse date before getting engaged?

What are some of the pitfalls that people make in dating?

Discuss the importance of “becoming a person, and not just finding a person.”

Discuss reasons why you think it is a problem for so many to become physically involved in a dating relationship.

Talk about the problems that can occur when you build a relationship outside the standards that God has given you.

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT:

This week, think about how you are preparing yourself for the next stage of life. Write out your two-year, five-year, and ten-year goals. If possible, talk with your spouse about these goals.

SESSION 3:

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

FOR MARRIED FOLKS
(unmarried version begins on page 11)

Do you remember the popular song from the '90s, *Let's Talk About Sex*? Just the title alone was taboo for Christians, but ironically enough, it's a great message for married couples. Talking about sex is important for a healthy marriage. In Christian circles, the topic of sex is typically disregarded, but the truth is that many marriages are struggling because they *aren't* talking about sex. Maybe they don't know how to broach the subject, or maybe one partner doesn't feel as passionately about sex as the other. So, what happens? Nothing. No communication, just frustration. Like all areas of life, an open dialogue may be all it takes. So, this week, let's talk about sex.

SESSION 3:

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

FOR UNMARRIED FOLKS
(married version begins on page 9)

So, this is awkward. You're going through a dating, marriage and sex series, and you're not married. We know this could be uncomfortable, but we wanted to make sure that each session has something to offer every person going through this study. Session three is focused on sex, and this is a study for you!

We believe that God created sex for us to enjoy, and the Bible makes it clear that he created it specifically for married couples. With that in mind, how do we create a healthy view of sex? How do we create boundaries? How do we live our lives to honor God with all of our relationships?

SESSION 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR UNMARRIED FOLKS

WATCH THE DISCUSSION VIDEO

youtu.be/KSnh_78OfTQ

What stood out most to you in the video?

What do you think is the most prominent worldview of singleness and sex in our culture?

Read Hebrews 13:4, Psalm 119:9, Romans 13:14 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

What boundaries are helpful in a relationship? How do you keep those boundaries?

How can someone abstain from the desires of the flesh?

What causes people to stumble in the realm of purity?

SESSION 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR UNMARRIED FOLKS *(continued)*

Why does abstaining from sex before marriage matter to God?

How can you honor God with your singleness?

Read Romans 8:1

Your past has the ability to influence you positively and negatively. For those who still feel guilt and shame from past mistakes, we encourage you to memorize Romans 8:1. If you are in Christ, you are forgiven! The cross is more powerful than your sin, more powerful than your past, and more powerful than anything else you can think of. Regardless of what you may have done, Jesus knew your past — and died for it — before you were ever created.

SESSION 4:

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Conflict in marriage is inevitable. It will happen. The idea that great couples don't fight is a myth. The truth is that great couples know how to fight the right way.

In marriage, you are taking two people – who have their own ideas about where to sleep, what to do, what to eat and where to go – and asking them to compromise. This is bound to cause friction. Eventually, there will be trouble in paradise. If even great couples fight, how do they handle tension? What are they doing that the rest of us aren't?

In this week's discussion, we will cover some practical advice to help you handle disagreements in your marriage.

SESSION 4 DISCUSSION GUIDE

WATCH THE DISCUSSION VIDEO

youtu.be/gODgjSRZNIo

Read James 1:19-20.

What are the things that cause the most tension in your marriage or relationships?

How do you respond to conflict in your marriage or relationships?

Is respect an important factor in your relationship? How so? What about security?

How does a lack of communication play into the conflict in your marriage or relationships?

How does the question “Does my spouse want to ruin my life?” help frame the conflicts you are having in your relationship?

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT:

This week, develop a plan to handle conflict in your marriage or relationships better.

SESSION 5:

TILL DEATH DO US PART

Most married couples have stood in front of friends and family and uttered those famous words, *till death do us part*. Think about the power of those words and the promise they create. It means that the only thing that will separate the marriage is death, and divorce is not an option. Marriages are under attack, and we need to protect the institution that God created. In this week's discussion, we will look at some practical and biblical ways to protect your marriage.

SESSION 5 DISCUSSION GUIDE

WATCH THE DISCUSSION VIDEO

youtu.be/5eEPZWF2bAU

What stood out most to you in the video?

Couples don't typically enter into marriage expecting to get divorced. So how do you think people get to that place?

Since love is a choice, what are some ways that you can exercise or plan to exercise love every day in your marriage?

What are some areas where you could do a better job giving your spouse the benefit of the doubt?

As a group, discuss what a successful marriage looks like.

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT:

What areas in your life could you improve in order to be in a God-honoring, successful marriage?

If you haven't already, take the love languages test based on the book *The 5 Love Languages* by Gary Chapman. This is great tool to help you know yourself better, and when you are in a relationship, to love the other person well. (5lovelanguages.com)

additional resources

We understand that a series like this may lead to some unexpected conversations between you and your spouse or significant other, or it could just bring some things to mind that need to be talked through with someone. We want to help however we can, so here are some resources that we offer at c|Life. *Remember, you are not alone.*

PASTOR COUNSELING

All of our pastors and their email addresses can be found at clifec.com/staff. If you are not sure who to contact, please email info@clifec.com with your name and campus, and we would love to connect you with one of our pastors.

additional resources

JOURNEY GROUPS

The following list contains just some of what we have available through Journey Groups, our support and recovery ministry. Visit clifec.com/JourneyGroups to learn more.

Re:generation

Re:generation is a biblically based 12-step discipleship program for healing, recovery and freedom from any type of struggle. In Re:generation you can deepen your walk with God and find release from struggles like addiction, anger, anxiety and depression.

DivorceCare

This group is for individuals who are separated, divorcing or divorced. Divorce care helps group members apply biblical principles as they heal from the hurt of separation and divorce. Using testimonies, videos and a workbook, participants see how the gospel brings hope and restoration. Attendees will also gain practical skills for navigating the new season of life.

Merge

Merge is for couples who are seriously dating or engaged. This group provides valuable tools that couples need to begin their marriages on the right path. This eight-week class covers a biblical overview of marriage, including communication, conflict, biblical roles in marriage, strengthening your relationship, finances, expectations, family and in-laws, sexual intimacy and understanding your spouse.

Re|Engage

Every marriage has room for improvement. Whether you're struggling to stay connected with your spouse or simply seeking to deepen your connection, Re|Engage is the group for you. Re|Engage is a safe place to share your struggles and victories as you allow God to breathe new life into your marriage.