



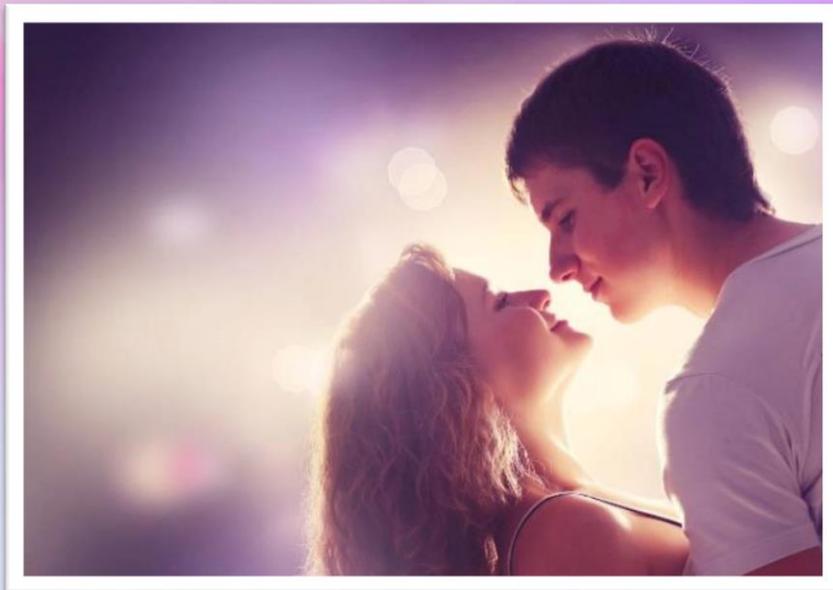
THE ROYAL LOVE SONG

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Sexual relations are a taboo topic in many cultures. They've been generally treated as something sinful.

Nevertheless, the Bible teaches that God created man and woman not only to procreate, but to enjoy an intimate and satisfactory relationship, both physically and spiritually.

Sexual relations are a gift from God. How can we enjoy them in a correct way? What are the limits in this kind of relationship?



How to express our love:

- ♥ **The physical and spiritual love**
- ♥ **Love and friendship**
- ♥ **The physical expression of love**



How to keep the love alive:

- ♥ **Love that waits**
- ♥ **The limits of love**

THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL LOVE

"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:20)



There's a wrong Greek idea that permeated Christianity almost since its beginning: that our physical side is inherently bad and our spiritual side is inherently good. As a result, sexuality was considered sinful.

However, the physical and the spiritual aspects are inseparable in the Bible (Genesis 2:7). Holiness is not incompatible with sexuality. A healthy sex life doesn't prevent a married person from being consecrated to God in body and spirit.

The Song of Solomon addresses physical relations as being natural. Feet, belly button, breasts, kisses, caresses... God made all those things for the physical pleasure of couples (5:10-16; 7:1-9).



LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

"His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!" (Song of Solomon 5:16)



In order to enjoy their relationship to the fullest, the man and woman who marry must be friends first. Best friends.



They spend time together, communicate openly, and care about each other.

That loving friendship helps the spouses to come together, showing their mutual attraction with compliments and affectionate gestures.



However, true love is not natural for us, but it's a gift from the Holy Spirit. This committed and selfless love is a strong and long-lasting bond.



THE PHYSICAL EXPRESSION OF LOVE

"Let my beloved come into his garden and taste its choice fruits." (Song of Solomon 4:16 NIV)

God encouraged Adam and Eve to become "one flesh" in the Garden of Eden. In this metaphor from Song of Solomon, the bodies of the spouses become gardens that they can enjoy.

These kind of expressions show that sexual relations in marriage are a gift from our Creator.

The most common expression referring to intimate relations in the Bible is "to know" (Gn. 4:1, 17, 25; 1S. 1:19; 1K. 1:4; Lk. 1:34).

This verb is also used to describe the relation between a person and God (John 17:3).



LOVE THAT WAITS

"A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." (Song of Solomon 4:12)

The ideal in Song of Solomon is that man and woman remain virgin ("enclosed garden") until their marriage.

In Song of Solomon 8:8-10, the family of the young Shulamite was wondering if she was a wall (closed) or a door (open).



She affirms that she's still a virgin (wall). This appeases her, and both lovers enjoy the "milk and honey" (4:11) of a full and reciprocal surrender.

That is, they feel like they've arrived at the Promised Land [flowing with milk and honey] together.

THE LIMITS OF LOVE

"Put me over your heart and on your arm, never to be taken off. For love is as strong as death. Jealousy is as hard as the grave. Its bright light is like the light of fire, the very fire of the Lord."

(Song of Solomon 8:6 NLV)

The union of a man and a woman reflects God's image (Genesis 1:26-27).

However, sin has damaged the sexual relations. Therefore, God has set limits to sex. He has specified what is right and what is not (Leviticus 20:7-21; Romans 1:24-27).

Adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality and other unacceptable sexual practices are considered sin in the Bible.

We are encouraged to accept that our body and sexuality belong to God. We must use them according to His plan—with His help.



“The divine love emanating from Christ never destroys human love, but includes it. By it human love is refined and purified, elevated and ennobled. Human love can never bear its precious fruit until it is united with the divine nature and trained to grow heavenward. Jesus wants to see happy marriages, happy firesides.

Like every other one of God’s good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty...

The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven.”