

Song of Solomon 8:1-4

Song of Solomon 8:1,2 I wish you had been my twin brother, sharing with me the breasts of my mother, playing outside in the street, kissing in plain view of everyone, and no one thinking anything of it. I'd take you by the hand and bring you home where I was raised by my mother. You'd drink my wine and kiss my cheeks. (The Message)

In these verses the young woman expresses her desire to be with and to freely express her affection for her young man. This desire is so intense that she is frustrated by the constraints of her culture, she would just love to be holding and being held, kissing and being kissed without any worries about what people might say or think. She warns the "sisters in Jerusalem" - "Don't excite love, don't stir it up, until the time is ripe - and you're ready."

The nature of romantic love is that it is very intense and at the time when a person first falls in love the tendency is to experience such an obsession with your special person that you neglect other responsibilities, since all you want is to be with the object of your affections. There are different seasons of life and a romantic relationship is not always appropriate. For example, 1) If you

are too young. Teens can fall in love just as deeply as anyone but a love obsession is unhealthy as it will distract from their studies, replace healthier interests, and actually delay their readiness to take on the responsibilities of adulthood. 2) If you have school aged children then a romantic relationship will often spawn competing priorities that lead to the neglect of the children. Adults should be more realistic than thinking... "Well, I know that a lot of parents have neglected their kids when they fell in love but I would never do that." One frequent issue is the natural but dysfunctional competition for time and attention that occurs between the oldest sons of previously single moms and their step-dads. 3) If you are engaged in work or schooling that requires all you have to offer then you would probably need to complete that or make a change that would free you up to give yourself to a romantic relationship.

For those who are dating, the wise way to do so would be to purposefully time physical involvement so that is appropriate at each stage of the relationship. The goal should be to ultimately come to your wedding day emotionally, physically, and vocationally ready to establish a life together. When these issues are out of

balance, it leads to frustration and obsessions that become destructive instead of being the blessing that they are intended to be by the Lord.

Spiritually, romantic love serves as a metaphor for loving God. His love for us and commitment to us is seen in His creation and in the sacrifice of the cross. The order of acknowledgement usually begins with self-realization of our brokenness and the admission that we need a Savior. When we find in Jesus the one who is able to forgive and heal us we are then open to see that He is also the Creator who made us. All the good present in our lives is the gift of God to us. He knows us and He still loves us!

The relationship between Jesus and His disciples is a great example of the kind of relationship that God wants with us. They answered the call to follow Jesus. They sat at His feet and learned from Him. They treasured His Word and incorporated His teachings into the way they thought and lived. They left everything behind in order to be with Him. They learned by His example to go apart and to pray and to be in the presence of the lord. They lived everyday with the consciousness that Jesus was with them and that He cared for them.