

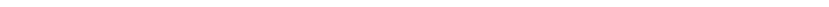


Group Discussion Guide



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50 Shades of Color

Group Discussion Guide

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Series Overview

Our subtitle for this series is “Discovering a red hot marriage in a shades of grey world.” We explore marriage, sex, and dating from God’s point of view. We will study the Song of Solomon to show how God brings intimacy through healthy sexual activity in the context of marriage.

Purpose of This Guide

The primary purpose of this group guide is to reinforce and deepen the lessons of the Grace Church message series: **50 Shades of Color**.

You may choose to use this guide:

- with your Grace Group.
- with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

1-God's Goal for Marriage

Scripture: [Song of Solomon 1-2](#)

Icebreaker: Leave It All Behind

Discuss times when you have left it all behind and started fresh. What was the circumstance? What was difficult about leaving it all behind? What helped give you the determination to move forward?

Discussion Questions

- What types of things do people leave behind when they get married ([Song 1:1-8](#), [Gen 2:24](#))? What types of things in our old lives do we leave behind as we move forward with Christ? In both instances (marriage to your spouse; marriage to Christ), how does leaving things behind convey your commitment to the relationship?
- Most of us experience insecurity or think of ourselves as unworthy ([Song 1:5](#)). In what ways do you reassure your spouse ([Song 2:2](#))? In what ways can reassuring your spouse deepen the intimacy in your relationship? How can you get reassurance from Christ when you feel insecure in your relationship with Him?
- Doves' eyes are large and beautiful ([Song 1:15](#)). Doves depict gentleness, innocence, and constant love. While your spouse may appreciate a compliment on appearance, praise of character qualities can provide much encouragement.
 - ▶ What character qualities are you most likely to praise in your spouse?
 - ▶ Which of your character qualities would you most like your spouse to praise?
 - ▶ Which of your character qualities do you think Jesus appreciates most?

- In your eyes, what is special about your spouse (**Song 2:2-3**)?
 - ▶ How is your spouse like a lily among thorns?
 - ▶ How is your spouse like an apple tree among trees of the wood?

Dig a Little Deeper: Purposes

Study these verses to deepen your understanding of the purposes of marriage.

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Verses</i>
Provide a vehicle for producing divine character.	Gen 1:27-28, Rev 19:6-9
Learn how to be one with God.	Gen 2:24, Mark 10:6-9
Produce godly children (physical or spiritual).	Psa 128:1-6, Pro 5:18

Application Exercise

Compare your goal for marriage to your understanding of God's goal for marriage. In what ways are they alike? In what ways are they different? What changes will you make?

2-Leveraging Conflict & Obstacles

Scripture: [Song 3](#), [Song 5:1-8](#)

Icebreaker: Getting Through It Together

Discuss how going through a tough time with someone beside you can deepen the bond of your relationship. Share examples of your experiences.

Discussion Questions

- [Song of Solomon 3:1-3](#) speaks of loneliness, separation, and being unfulfilled. With God's help, how can a couple use those challenges to bring them closer in their marriage?

- [Song of Solomon 5:2-8](#) describes how we drift away from intimacy, the wounds in our relationships, and how we long to be truly united.
 - ▶ What things do you allow to cause you to delay in seeking closeness with your spouse? What can you do to be more responsive to your spouse?
 - ▶ What can you do to be more responsive to Christ?

- Compare the dreams in [Song of Solomon 3:1-4](#) and [Song of Solomon 5:2-7](#).
 - ▶ What is the main difference between the dreams?
 - ▶ How can you relate the dreams to the difference between those who accept or reject Christ?

Dig a Little Deeper: Myth Busters

Think about some common marriage myths that distort our expectations.

<i>Myth</i>	<i>Truth</i>
Religion doesn't matter.	Marrying someone who you think you can convert later is a risk. Each of you has free will. Your marriage is more likely to begin on solid ground if you are both fully committed to Christ before you get married (1Cor 3:11 , 2Cor 6:14).
Everyone who looks happy is happy.	You might feel jealous of a couple who looks happy. Consider that many people hide their problems. Every couple has problems because people are not identical. The surest road to happiness is making Christ the focal point of your marriage (Rom 12:1-2 , Rom 13:14).
Romantic love is true love.	The truth is that true love mellows with time and deepens. It is a sacrificial act of will (1John 3:16 , Gal 5:13-14).

Application Exercise

Think about your role in creating or resolving conflicts or obstacles in your marriage. What does God want you to do to improve your relationship with Him and your spouse? Are you willing to make the changes God desires, regardless of what your spouse does? Are you willing to let Him be in control?

3-Intimacy

Scripture: [Song 4](#), [Song 7](#)

Icebreaker: I Just Want to Be Close to You

Make a list of the ways in which a married couple can be close to one another.

Discussion Questions

- God intends love within marriage to be more than a feeling. His plan is for there to be physical expression ([Song 4:10](#)). According to [Song of Solomon 4:15](#) and [Proverbs 5:15-20](#), in what way does God intend sex in a marital relationship to be satisfying?
- Look over the spice list in the table below based on [Song of Solomon 4:13-14](#). Which ones would best spice up your marriage? How could you apply that spice?

<i>Spice</i>	<i>Represents</i>
Pomegranate	Love , overall
Henna	Joy , love exulting and tender
Spikenard	Peace , love at rest, devoted
Saffron	Long-suffering , love during trials
Calamus	Kindness , love with thoughtfulness
Cinnamon	Goodness , love in action, blameless
Frankincense	Faithfulness , love resisting temptation, pure
Myrrh	Meekness , love with humility
Aloe	Temperance , love with self-control

- Regardless of how long you have been married, how do you continue to assure your spouse of your love ([Song 7:10](#) and [Gen 2:23-24](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper

What do the following verses say about the importance of oneness?

- **Matthew 19:4-6**
- **Amos 3:3**
- **1Corinthians 1:10**
- **2Corinthians 13:11**
- **Philippians 2:2**

Application Exercise

Think about how you view sex. Compare that to how God views sex. What changes will you make to how you view sex?

- **Genesis 1:26-28**
- **Genesis 2:20-25**
- **1Corinthians 7:1-10**

4-Dating

Scripture: [Song 1:1-5](#), [Song 5:8-6:3](#)

Icebreaker: Getting to Know You

Make a list of some questions that people could ask someone they are dating to get to know them better.

Discussion Questions

- In [Song of Solomon 1:1-5](#), the daughters of Jerusalem rejoice over the love they clearly see in the couple.
 - ▶ What can others see in your relationship that makes them rejoice over your example of marriage and intimacy?
 - ▶ What about your relationship pictures Christ's love for His Church?

- In [Song of Solomon 5:8-16](#), the daughters ask the Shulamite bride what makes her husband so special.
 - ▶ What makes your spouse (or person you are dating) special to you?
 - ▶ What makes Christ special to you?

- In [Song of Solomon 6:1-3](#), the daughters ask if she knows where her beloved is.
 - ▶ How well do you know your beloved? What is important to your beloved? Which of your beloved's priorities do you share?
 - ▶ How well do you know Christ? What is important to Him? Which of His priorities do you share?

- Compare [Song of Solomon 2:16](#) to [Song of Solomon 6:3](#). Notice the reverse order of the words she uses. What is the significance of saying you belong to Him **before** you say He belongs to you?

Dig a Little Deeper

Study the following example of dating criteria [[1Cor 1:4-10](#)].

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Questions to Ask</i>
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Does the person place Christ as top priority?● What evidence is there of spiritual growth?● What are the person's spiritual gifts?
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What is important to the person?● Does the person adjust thinking based on God's Word?
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How often does the person pray?● How often does the person read God's Word?● How does the person relate to key people in his/her life?
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Does the person listen carefully to you?● Does the person share on a deep level?● How well do you relate to the person intellectually and emotionally?
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How do the two of you make decisions and resolve disagreements?● Does the person fully participate in decision making without being controlling?

Application Exercise

- If you are dating, create your criteria for a suitable mate. Consider the example in Dig a Little Deeper.
- If you know believers who are dating, discuss the example of dating criteria in Dig a Little Deeper with them.



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