

Pastor Mark: Well, howdy. Mark here, and-

Grace Driscoll: Grace.

Pastor Mark: Grace here with the Real Romance, looking at sex in the Song Of Songs, session number two. And we're going to get into a lot in this session, but one of the big concepts is En Gedi.

Grace Driscoll: Yes.

Pastor Mark: And maybe tell them where En Gedi is. Because we hear that and we think, what does that mean? And we're going to get into it. It's in the Bible. We'll be there in just a minute, but we, some years ago took a trip to Israel, hiked up, it was the middle of the summer. I mean, it was super, super hot and just barren desolate desert waste land.

Grace Driscoll: It's an oasis in the desert.

Pastor Mark: It's an oasis in the desert. You show up at this place called En Gedi. It's still there. Song Of Songs is written 3000 years ago, but En Gedi's still there. Just in the middle of nowhere in the desert.

Grace Driscoll: It's beautiful.

Pastor Mark: Water is just bursting forth, fresh water. Cool, fresh water. A little waterfall, greenery, life, birds, animals.

Grace Driscoll: Right around the water.

Pastor Mark: Right around En Gedi. We live here in the desert of Arizona. And you can always tell where there's water because it's pretty obvious. It's the only place that there's life.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: And what they're talking about in their conversation in this session is En Gedi. And so sometimes it's super important for a couple to get out of the house, get out of the routine, go somewhere to reset, time together and build new memories.

So I just thought it'd be fun maybe at the beginning. What are some of the favorite places that we have been to that really helped to build our friendship and relationship?

Grace Driscoll: Most recently, I would say Montana.

Pastor Mark: Okay. And do that again.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. That was interesting. Most recently I would say Montana. We went for our 50th birthdays and it was just us and we just did fun stuff. We just kind of winged it. We didn't plan much. We just knew where we were going to stay. And we looked at some highlights in the area, but we just kind of drove around and figured out what we wanted to do.

Pastor Mark: I was kind of surprised because it was around our 50th birthday and it was in the fall and I was like, "Where do you want to go? Do you want to go to Italy?" Do you want to go to Paris?" And you said, "No, I want to go to" ...

Grace Driscoll: Montana.

Pastor Mark: Montana. And I don't look at you and think Montana, but you wanted to go to Montana. And so we went and it was perfect. We stayed in a beautiful lodge right on the lake. We got some boat days. We got to watch the sunset. We spent most nights by a big rip roaring fire right on the shore.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: Just having a glass of wine. If you're Baptist, it was grape juice. And we were watching the sunset.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. And it was just being together. And what was great is we didn't didn't have a lot scheduled. So we got up whenever we wanted to. We'd have dinner whenever we wanted to. We got to go do some hiking, do some hiking up in the Glacier National Forest. Some shopping.

It was kind of just like when do you want to get up? And what do you want to do today? And when your life is very organized and architected and full, sometimes it's really great to just not have anything planned and just do what you want. Other places that we've been that you fondly remember most frequently.

We've been a lot of places as a family. I loved Australia.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. We spent time 30 days on Darling Harbor down in Sydney as a family. Walked to the restaurants.

Grace Driscoll: [inaudible 00:03:45] so we got some dates.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. I just want to publicly thank your mom. When the kids were growing up, she was always there to travel with us so that we could go out and get dates even when we were out of country.

Grace Driscoll: Scotland was great.

Pastor Mark: Scotland.

Grace Driscoll: You've been blessed to speak in a lot of places. And so we get to travel as a family to those places together because they pay for it and it works out nice. But yeah, just getting those moments, whether it's internationally or even locally.

Since we've moved to Arizona, we've taken some fun trips up to Prescott and Sedona and the White Mountains and just getting time talking driving and looking at the scenery and going into fun shops and just investing in fun together.

Pastor Mark: And I always like to have, I said in the last session fun on the calendar, fun on the horizon. Hey, where do you want to go? What do you want do? What can we look forward to? Then start saving money for that in the budget. Maybe racking up frequent flyer miles to put the plan together. A lot of times, especially if you've got kids, somebody's got to watch the kids or you take them with you and how do you coordinate all of that.

But to me it's very, very important for our relationship to get out of the house, to get out of the routine, to go somewhere. and would you say that you're very spatially aware that your environment and surroundings is a really big deal to you compared to me?

Grace Driscoll: No.

Pastor Mark: Okay. Explain that.

Grace Driscoll: I could be home all day and just working on stuff and being with the kids, being with you. I love to see beautiful places, but it's not a have to for me. I think for you're affected by space more and visual. And so for you, it's really important to change the environment here and there to just free your mind in different ways and be able to focus on.

For me, if I stay home too much, I only focus on the task. So you have to get me away from the house to really remember, okay. Yes, we need to go have fun. And it's not that I don't enjoy it. I just get so into my tasks.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. That's where, when we're home, you've raise five kids and the house has got chores and tasks. I've always had a library at home where I study and write and work from. And so to me, we do rest at home, but we work at home as well. And sometimes to get out of that work life balance, I just like to go somewhere and just change the routine.

Well, that's kind of what they're talking about with En Gedi. So what we're going to do now, we'll read this section of the Song Of Songs.

Grace Driscoll: Okay.

Pastor Mark: And it starts in chapter one, verse eight. Why don't you read the friends section first? So they're extended family, wise counsel, friends, jump in and then I'll read what he said. And then you can read what she said.

Grace Driscoll: Okay.

Pastor Mark: We architect.

Grace Driscoll: He said, she said.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. He said, she said.

Grace Driscoll: The friends say, "If you do not know most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds."

Pastor Mark: And then he says, "I liken you, my darling, to a mare." Calls her a horse. We'll have to definitely explain that. [inaudible 00:06:50] Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. I'll write that down. "Pharaoh's chariot horses, your cheeks are beautiful with earrings," which may be not the best translation. Any woman who's got cheeks in her earrings, she missed.

Your neck with strings of jewels. We will make you earrings of gold, studded with silver. And then she jumps in. It's a series of conversations and poetic love songs.

Grace Driscoll: While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance. My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts. My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi, which we talked about.

And henna blossoms, we still have henna. You see people using henna to do designs on their arms and stuff. They used it similarly, but also in hair to dye hair. But henna blossoms were a flowering white fragrant bush. And basically here, she's talking and she's talking about him being a cluster of henna blossoms to her. Meaning if he's compared to flowery white fragrant, that means he's grooming himself.

Pastor Mark: Okay. You're going to use this ancient Hebrew concept to make men take showers and clip their nails and-

Grace Driscoll: Yes I am.

Pastor Mark: Use deodorant.

Grace Driscoll: Yes.

Pastor Mark: All right.

Grace Driscoll: You can be fragrant in a good way or a bad way. And this is asking to be fragrant in a good way.

Pastor Mark: Okay. So men should shower.

Grace Driscoll: Yes.

Pastor Mark: Clean their nails.

Grace Driscoll: Yes. Have two eyebrows.

Pastor Mark: Have two eyebrows. Not one. Brush their teeth. Breath mint.

Grace Driscoll: Yes. Yes.

Pastor Mark: Okay. And all of that is right there. Just, they should trust you. It's in the original Hebrew. She's an expert in ancient Hebrew. Trust her on this. And then he says, "How beautiful you are, my darling." He's got a lot of nicknames for her.

Grace Driscoll: Endearing.

Pastor Mark: Oh, how beautiful. Your eyes are doves.

Grace Driscoll: And doves can represent messengers of love.

Pastor Mark: And peace.

Grace Driscoll: So it's very important how he's speaking to her right now. It's very tender. It's building her up and drawing her in.

Pastor Mark: It's a little flirty-

Grace Driscoll: Yes, it is.

Pastor Mark: Little creative.

Grace Driscoll: I'm sure there's something on the other side of this that he's hoping for. She says, "How handsome you are, my beloved. Oh, how charming. And our bed is verdant.

Pastor Mark: So they're engaged here, to use our modern vernacular looking forward to their wedding. And then he talks about their home, how we can't wait to be married and live together and just be at home together. He says-

Grace Driscoll: They're dreaming together.

Pastor Mark: The beams of our houses are cedars; our rafters are firs. And so the moral of the story is put beams in your house if you want to be biblical.

Grace Driscoll: And then she says, "I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys." And lilies can symbolize purity. So she's going into this pure. And she's wanting to enter into the relationship in a pure way. And if you aren't entering into a relationship being pure, there's redemption in that. God forgives that he can wash you clean and you can enter in a second purity.

Pastor Mark: So then he jumps in and he says, "Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women." And he's comparing her to this exquisite blessing in his life that is greater than any other woman he's ever met. So he is making sure that she's got her confidence established and then she speaks last.

Grace Driscoll: And then she speaks and she's comparing him to, she says, "Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men." And so she's, if you can imagine, green forest trees and then there's this one apple tree, which is a sweet illustration.

It's a tree that bears sweet fruit. She's giving him an imagery of sweetness that he means to her. And he stands out among them. So she's really complimenting in a manly way, really complimenting and respecting him for his uniqueness as a man in a good way. Not like you're unique in a bad way.

"I delight to sit in his shade and his fruit is sweet to my taste. Let him lead me to the banquet hall and let his banner over me be love." So they're dreaming of making love there.

Pastor Mark: They're consummating their honeymoon night.

Grace Driscoll: Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples. Apples could be an aphrodisiac in that time.

Pastor Mark: She's expecting to get tired. She's going to need some snacks in a halftime.

Grace Driscoll: "For I am faint with love. His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me. Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field, do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires."

Pastor Mark: Okay. So it's a series of conversations. The song of songs is between a man and a woman that become a husband and a wife and throughout the friends are speaking in. Talk about in the dating years, how important it is that if a man really does want to pursue a woman, that he also pursues her friends, family, friends, wise counsel, church, the community of support that's around her. And that proves that he's a good guy and any guy who doesn't do that is a bad guy.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. It's important. If you have healthy friendships, it's important to have them give input into their relationships because they may see things that if you're love struck, you may not see. And so it helps you with discernment. I didn't always have healthy friendships.

And so my friends didn't tell me one way or another, but now that I'm in that I have friends that invest in encouraging me as a wife and encouraging me how to be a better wife. That's super important in relationships.

Pastor Mark: So explain that. Just sort of friends versus wise counsel.

Grace Driscoll: Well wise counsel are people that actually care about your relationship with Jesus, your relationship with your spouse, with kids, friends, family. They want to help you get better in all those areas and help point you to Jesus constantly because they know that's what will help you grow and become a better Christian and wife and mother, whatever God calls you to.

And so wise counsel is very important to have, and it's usually a relationship that's built over time and you build trust and you share a little bit of information and see what they do with it. If they betray you, or if they use it against you and not help build you up, then that's not a good friend and not a wise counsel, but if they're really wanting to, and you're mutually in each other's lives, trying to help be more Godly in all areas, then that's a good person for wise counsel.

Pastor Mark: And so if you're single, before you get married, your single friends may not be wise counsel for your marriage because they've never been married. Just because somebody's a relative or a family member doesn't mean that they're wise counsel. They may have an opinion.

Grace Driscoll: Right.

Pastor Mark: But they may not have wisdom. And there's a big difference. Wise counsel is who you as a couple agree that you're going to invite in to speak in.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: They have a view as to what's going on in your relationship. They have a voice about things in your relationship. As a couple, you vote on what you want to do. There's a difference between a view of voice and a vote, but this was one of the first things that we really kind of had to work through as a young married couple because friends would all say, "Oh, let me tell you what to do."

It's like, "Well, you've never been married. You don't know what you're talking about." Or family members that maybe they had opinions, but they didn't have wisdom. And they're telling us to do things. It's like, that's not what we're going to do. We don't agree with you.

And sometimes it's even, we don't even respect your marriage or the way you've architected your life. So we're not going to do what you're telling us because we don't think that you know what you're doing.

Grace Driscoll: Right.

Pastor Mark: And so you've got to have wise counsel and it has to be agreed upon people that you both will welcome in. And that's the position of the friends throughout the book.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: Now let me talk about him and what he says. And then you can talk about her and what she says and what he's saying to her first and foremost is that she is a priority.

And as you're moving toward marriage, if you're a couple that's moving in that direction, your priorities do shift. Your extended family, your friends now are going to have displacement and it's going to be God. And then your spouse or spouse to be is your highest priority.

And he's just telling her though, he's the king and he runs the nation. He's got a lot of responsibility that she is an incredibly high priority. How important is this for a husband to continually tell a wife despite work and duties and responsibilities, "You're still my first priority?"

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. It goes back to what we talked about in the previous session with security for women. And that's part of it and she feels affirmed. She feels priority. Then she's going to feel free in the relationship to be who she is and to continue to grow alongside. And it's just absolutely necessary for a woman to have that.

Pastor Mark: Well, and then it invites her to say, "Hey, I need some time. I need you to" ...

Grace Driscoll: She doesn't feel like a bother.

Pastor Mark: She says, "I am a priority, so I don't need to wait. And if there's a minute left at the end of the day, that's mine, I get to tell him if I have a real need for time priority energy." He also compliments her a lot. So throughout the book, it's very flirtatious.

So a lot of times what happens in the bedroom is the result of what happens outside of the bedroom. If there's flirtation and warmth and fun and friendship outside of the bedroom, that warms things up for the bedroom. But one of the compliments that he gives her, he talks about horses and chariots.

And so Solomon being the king, the Bible says he's got 12,000 Egyptian horses in his stable. Today, this would be like a guy who has 12,000 cars in his car

collection. He's doing really well. And then he has 1400 chariots. This would've been custom built, gold inlaid, diamond studded.

Grace Driscoll: That's amazing.

Pastor Mark: He's rolling with rims. He's really doing good. And he says, "I've got 12,000 horses. I've got 1400 chariots." He said, "But I've only got one mare."

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. That's quite a comparison.

Pastor Mark: And what he's saying is, "You're my one mare. And I've only got one like you." And what happens when a mare goes around the horses, the horses get very excited. And what he's saying is when you're around, that's how I'm feeling. I'm pretty excited. So he's finding sort of a creative farm way to flirt.

If you live on the farm, farmers.com. You got to get real creative with your flirting. He also is going to give her gifts and he says he's going to have earrings for her, gold studded with silver.

So how important is it for some gals, one of their love languages, we'll get into this in another episode, but why are gifts sometimes really important, especially to certain women?

Grace Driscoll: It can help them feel appreciated. I'm not a person that cares much about gifts.

Pastor Mark: No, you shop at ...

Grace Driscoll: At Ross.

Pastor Mark: Secondhand stores and you like to buy things on discounts and-

Grace Driscoll: Yes, I'm a good steward.

Pastor Mark: You use coupons and I don't understand any of that. Yeah.

Grace Driscoll: A prudent wife is from the Lord.

Pastor Mark: Amen. Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

Grace Driscoll: Yes. I think she feels valued obviously. If [inaudible 00:17:52], if this is the woman, he feels like he knows her well enough to know-

Pastor Mark: Buy specific gifts.

Grace Driscoll: And not just buying gifts, but things that she would feel loved by and appreciated by.

Pastor Mark: And if she's the gal would think she is, she grew up poor. She's never gotten gifts like this. This would be all new for her. This is kind of the Cinderella story of the Old Testament. She's a poor working class gal who now is marrying the king and she's the queen. This is the Cinderella story of the Old Testament.

Grace Driscoll: She's used to working hard for what she has. And here he's offering it to her because he loves her.

Pastor Mark: He's being very generous toward her. And it's important to be really generous as a husband, whether you make a lot or a little, be generous with whatever you have.

Grace Driscoll: Absolutely.

Pastor Mark: And then he has nicknames for her. And I always like to say, we have nicknames for the people we love the most and we hate the most. True?

Grace Driscoll: Yes.

Pastor Mark: All right. We won't talk about one category. We'll talk about the other category. We have a few nicknames for each other. Can't share them all or we can edit it out either way. We're fine.

Grace Driscoll: No.

Pastor Mark: What are some of the nicknames that I call you? I call you best friend all the time.

Grace Driscoll: Yes.

Pastor Mark: We call each other best friend and for us, we think that friendship is absolutely essential in marriage and that the friendship is one of the deepest parts of the relationship. Ever since we were in high school, I always called you beauty.

And so sometimes it's just little fun pet nicknames that other people can't use. And it just shows an intimacy within the relationship. So what he calls her is my darling. He says your eyes are doves. And doves are really interesting because they're faithful to one mate for their whole life.

And what he's saying is, "You and I, we're together forever." And what he's saying is, "You don't have eyes for anyone else." And I just want to publicly honor you. We've been together since March 12th, 1988, which is a while.

Grace Driscoll: It's a little, little while.

Pastor Mark: But I've never seen you flirt with another man. I've never seen you emotionally engage or get around another man and your eyes light up in such a way that my eyes turn flaming red.

And there's that fidelity. And there's that dependability there that is really, really sacred. And what he's saying is that he appreciates that about her. there's something devastating in a relationship when it's like, they don't have eyes for me.

Grace Driscoll: Absolutely.

Pastor Mark: Their eyes are always wandering. What he's saying is your eyes are doves. And he says she is a lily among the thorns. And what he's saying is I looked at all the other women. And to me, they're kind of like thorns and you're the lily.

Grace Driscoll: That's sweet.

Pastor Mark: And I always tell our sons, "You're going to meet two kinds of gals. You're going to meet gals you can live with and you're going to meet the gal you can't live without." I said, "Marry the gal you can't live without."

Grace Driscoll: Amen.

Pastor Mark: And I married the gal I can't live without. So thanks for sticking around. But what he's basically saying to her is there's a lot of great women, but he said, "I only see you. You're the center of the universe. You're my first round draft pick." That's my romantic-

Grace Driscoll: Every woman wants that, but not every woman gets that. So the goal and even teaching through these is to make men aware of what women desire and feel appreciated by and to make women understand how men are and how they can inspire things in them as well.

Pastor Mark: Well, then he talks about lastly, the provision and what he says is, "Here's our house and it's made of these elements," and it's provision. And there's something in a man that when he provides for his wife and his kids, there's something in a man that just sort of speaks to his dignity.

And we talk a lot about grace and God is a God of grace. Men providing for their families is one way that men demonstrate grace. And so what he's trying to do for her is say, "I'm doing the best I can to provide for you and for a family."

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. And you've always done that. And I appreciate that. I've never had to worry about that. We haven't been loaded or anything, but that's not the point. You've provided our needs.

Pastor Mark: In the early years we were very, very broke. We were married in college as college students.

Grace Driscoll: Yep.

Pastor Mark: And then we started ministry to college students, which is never-

Grace Driscoll: Good idea.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, we believed in Jesus, but not math apparently. But God was always gracious, but you never made me feel bad for what I made or what I was able to provide. There was always a gratitude and I was working hard. And what he's saying is, "I'm doing the best I can to provide. I really do care for you. And I want our home to be a place that our family can dwell."

And so then she speaks as well. She's really passionate and flirtatious.

Grace Driscoll: Yes.

Pastor Mark: And she concludes many of these sections, her or the friends do talking about timing. And she says, "Do not arouse or awaken love until it's time or until it desires." So talk about the issue of it's not where's the line, but when's the time.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. Like I said in a previous session, passion is a good thing. It's just needs to be in the hearth of marriage and it's not wrong to have it. It's normal to have that. But timing is super important because God's timing is in marriage.

And so if we talked about before as well, like healing up and we did it wrong and we didn't work through our pains and our wrong thinking beforehand. And so it took us a long time to get to a place of talking through that. But God wants us to have a healthy, flourishing, enjoyable marriage.

And so the timing of that is if we're getting so emotionally or physically involved with someone, but we're not actually working on the stuff beforehand that we need to be a healthy person, both of us, then the timing's wrong. Because then we're going to have a broken relationship together. Because we're both so broken. We're not actually working together in a healthy way.

And so really timing with the Lord. It's okay to keep waiting until you see that you're in a place that you're ready for marriage. And I think a lot of people rush into it thinking, "Oh, once we get married, it'll be better. These things will either go away or it'll just we'll work on it together." And that just isn't always the case. And so we need to pay attention to the Lord's timing in that.

Pastor Mark: So then she talks about I'm faint with love. I'm going to need snacks. I mean, she's planning on this taking a while of being intimate and not rushing it. And

then she said, "His left arm is under me and his right arm embraces me." She's literally telling him, "I like it when we snuggle and you hold me like this."

And for guys just so you know, ladies, we don't know. You've got to tell us and we won't be offended. We're just happy to know. And so maybe you've said something before and you got it from pastor Jimmy Evans, I think who we love. And he is one of our overseers at the church. Non-sexual touch, which men have never even conceived of. So share that concept.

Grace Driscoll: It's just what it says.

Pastor Mark: And again, we don't understand that. So please explain.

Grace Driscoll: It's snuggling. It's holding hands. It's taking a walk together.

Pastor Mark: Not driving toward an end zone just for the sake of.

Grace Driscoll: Just for the sake of time together and investing in just passion for each other, that doesn't necessarily, but could lead toward sex, but it doesn't have to. That's important for a woman just to be loved for who she is rather than just love for what she can do.

Pastor Mark: Okay. And so I would say then it's helpful for the wife to literally just say, "Here's what I want. I want to sit together. I want to snuggle together. I want to go for a walk. I want you to rub my back. I want to sit in the tub." Just literally tell him.

And I think sometimes in marriage, we're frustrated with one another, but we're not articulating to one another. And if you have a servant's heart, it's like, "Well just tell me what it is you would like. And I would like to make you happy. And I just don't know what that is." And she does that. Actually, she does that throughout the whole book.

Grace Driscoll: Yes.

Pastor Mark: She speaks first. She speaks most. She's very frank. She's very clear. She's very overt. She's very direct. She's like, "Do this, don't do that." Yes ma'am. Reporting for duty. And so then we get into some interesting interpretive options. She says like, how do you say it again? The sachet?

Grace Driscoll: Sachet.

Pastor Mark: Sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts. And she's saying you're like a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts. Now, as soon as we hit any Bible verses on breasts, the theologians immediately don't know what to do. It's like, "Oh, allegory, allegory, allegory." Because usually there are single guys who are [inaudible 00:26:38]

Grace Driscoll: Mountains.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. Well this is what they do. So some scholars would say that this is speaking to the Shekinah glory between the two cherubim that stood over the Ark of the temple.

Grace Driscoll: Wow. That is quite a stretch. Just to not be honest.

Pastor Mark: Just so you know, that guy was single. And it wasn't by choice. He just didn't have a lot of options. No women wanted to sign up for a lifetime [inaudible 00:27:01].

But it is this sort of weird ... It's like, "Oh, God's talking here and he's speaking through the husband and the wife and they're talking about their sexuality and their body. Oh, we obviously can't do that." And my point would be, if you're more conservative than God, you need to scoot over.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: That some people are to the right of God. Now some people are to the left. The sex as God people, they're to the left of God. They're too far progressive. Those who are more conservative than God, the sex is gross people, they need to scoot to the left.

And so as you hear this and you read some of this, if it bothers you, the question is why? Because it doesn't bother God. Why does something that doesn't bother God, why should it or does it bother you?

Another interpretation that these two breasts are the Old Covenant and the New Covenant or the Old Testament and the New Testament. So I'll just ask you as a woman and a theological expert, is that what it's talking about?

Grace Driscoll: No.

Pastor Mark: Okay. Well thank you. And then the other would say that the sachel of myrrh is Christ resting between the Old and New Covenants.

Grace Driscoll: No, I don't want to think about that. If you have to think that hard about it, it's probably not what it means.

Pastor Mark: Well, yeah. And it doesn't make it any better. It's not like it was awkward and now it's not.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah, exactly.

Pastor Mark: It's like it was awkward. Now it's really awkward.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah, exactly.

Pastor Mark: And so she is talking about her own body and she's talking about her own body in a sexual way. So is that okay for a godly Christian Bible believing woman?

Grace Driscoll: Wife.

Pastor Mark: Wife, not just woman.

Grace Driscoll: Yes. Wife. Yes. Yes. She displays that for us here. And she's, like we've talked about, aggressive in an appropriate way inside the bounds of marriage, showing that she loves her husband, is passionate for him and wants to engage with him in all kinds of ways. And so ...

Pastor Mark: And she's flirty. She's inviting him. She's saying, "I want your head to rest here." I assume-

Grace Driscoll: Women get resentful when they feel like that their husband isn't reading their mind. But she's clearly saying what's on her mind. So we need to do that. We need to be clear with our spouse about what we enjoy.

Pastor Mark: But that can take some, for anyone, husband or wife, that could take some significant bravery.

Grace Driscoll: Oh yeah. It takes courage. but again, if you're building this relationship together, you're building trust, you're building safety, you're building security. Those things will get easier to discuss together because it's just your best friend and you enjoying each other.

Pastor Mark: And that's where we would say friendship is so crucial. Because you can talk about things and flirt about things. And if it's your friend, there's not this expectation of perfect performance. It might be awkward. Something might not work and-

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. Just laugh.

Pastor Mark: There was a couple, one time. I shouldn't say this. So I will. The wife, when we taught this years ago, we've taught this a few times, the wife always wanted to be intimate with her husband on the coffee table. I don't know why this was her thing.

And so her husband came home and she's laying on the coffee table and he ... And she broke the coffee table. And if you're not friends, that's an awkward moment. But if you're a friend-

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. You don't want to tell that story at the ER.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. But you do want to tell it on the Real Romance Song Of Songs Bible study curriculum. And I said, "What did you guys do?" They said, "We just laughed and laughed and laughed."

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. You have to.

Pastor Mark: Because if you're friends, you're going to flirt. You're going to say, "I want to try this. That didn't go so good." And that's okay. That's just friendship and marriage and freedom. All right. So now the moment we've all been waiting for maybe the most controversial debated explicit section in the whole Bible.

Grace Driscoll: Okay. Quote someone else then.

Pastor Mark: Okay. Yeah, exactly. She says, "He's like an apple tree. I like to be in his shade under him. And his fruit is sweet to my taste."

Grace Driscoll: Just like it sounds. Well, Joseph Dillow in his book-

Pastor Mark: We'll quote a theologian. A trained, degreed."

Grace Driscoll: That's right.

Pastor Mark: The key is when you get in trouble, put a footnote and blame someone else.

Grace Driscoll: He says we have a faint and delicate reference to an oral genital caress.

Pastor Mark: So this is 3000 years ago.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: This is in a conservative religious environment. This is with Hebrew people. And what they are articulating is that God's way is the best way. That God's way is a passionate way. That God's way is an erotic way and that marriage can be magnificent.

And so sometimes what we tend to think is, "Well, God's people we should be sort of anti-sex because the world is so pro sex." No. We should be pro marriage. We should be pro Godly. We should be pro Bible.

Grace Driscoll: We should have the happiest marriages.

Pastor Mark: We should have the happiest and the most free because we're operating according to God's design. And for most people it's pretty shocking to think the Bible talks about oral sex. Well, apparently it does. And it's going to talk about it again a little bit later in Song Of Songs. So please come back for that session.

And it's intimate. It's very poetic and it's very frank without being crass. It's very clear without being clinical. It's very beautiful without being pornographic, but she's going to invite him to do the similar to her, to do the same to her.

And so all of this is to say that if you are not in your marriage talking about some things that you would like to do, you're probably not in a healthy place. And you're probably not enjoying the fullness of freedom that God gives. And it doesn't mean that everything that you want to do and you discuss, you have to do.

We'll talk about that. That there's freedom to say no. You don't need to exercise the fullness of your freedom, but it's important to have some discussions about, well, what would you like? What would you like to try? What are you interested about? And let me ask you this. Why is it sometimes that married couples that have even been married for years and they're having sex, they don't talk about sex?

Grace Driscoll: Well, that's like you said. It's not a healthy thing and you're probably going to end up living two separate lives. If there's no intimacy at all in your marriage and especially not free intimacy, ultimately, this doesn't always happen overnight. It takes time to build, like we said. It takes time to trust and build safety. But if there's not any of that, it's actually a really dangerous place. It opens your marriage up for the enemy to come in and divide even more.

Pastor Mark: And what this is, she's telling him things that she's looking forward to. And what this is is this is building anticipation. This is building excitement. This is something to look forward to. And it means that their relationship will always be growing, changing, maturing.

I always say, if you're quoting the same verses you did 20 years ago, if you're going on the same dates you did 20 years ago, if you have the exact same menu of sexual positions you did 20 years ago, you're probably stuck and it's time to make some forward progress and be a little more creative and find your freedom in Christ.

And so growing up as a pastor's daughter, would you have been a little shocked to hear that something like this is in the Old Testament?

Grace Driscoll: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, no, I had no idea.

Pastor Mark: Well, you're welcome. I've been studying the Bible and I'm glad to share with you. And so then back to this concept of En Gedi, they're talking about their relationship is an oasis. Place of rest and refuge and replenishing and flourishing.

And they're talking about their home being a place of En Gedi. They're talking about then going on dates or vacations to places of En Gedi.

Maybe just in closing, talk about how to treat home and architect it and design it in such a way that it can be a bit of En Gedi. It can be a refreshing place for the couple to connect, to flirt, to relax, for the woman to have non-sexual touch, for them to have sexual intimacy, for home to be the place that is the beginning of En Gedi.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. I haven't always done a good job of this because I'm not interior designer in gifting, but I've worked at trying to create spaces. Even if the whole house isn't an En Gedi, to create spaces that you like to be in. And I think the bedroom number one needs to be a place that you both enjoy. It doesn't feel frantic. There's not an office on the side with all the work to do.

Pastor Mark: We've never had work in the bedroom. We don't have a TV in the bedroom. We told the kids, "This is not your room." With five kids, they will take over the whole house if you let them.

Grace Driscoll: We have a lock on the door.

Pastor Mark: Well, yeah. Okay. I didn't know we'd get into that. But there was one counseling session we did just comes to mind and the husband was like, "Yeah, she's not very free. She's very timid. We don't have sex very often." And so I looked at her, I said, "Well, is there anything we could change that?" She said, "Well, he needs to put a lock on the door."

I was like, "Well, why?" She said, "Well, we were doing some stuff. And the kids walked in."

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. That'll-

Pastor Mark: And she's like, "Ever since then my little PTSD impairment."

Grace Driscoll: Oh yeah.

Pastor Mark: And so were the kids.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: They're like, "Oh, this is how we got here." And I asked him, I said, "Why didn't you put a lock on the door?" I said, "Well, I just don't feel like it's important." I was like ...

Grace Driscoll: Wow.

Pastor Mark: It is.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: I said, "Buddy this is a self-inflicted wound."

Grace Driscoll: Absolutely.

Pastor Mark: And so it is telling for us, when the kids were little, it was like, "This is not your room. This is mommy and daddy's room. This is sacred. It's holy. It's set apart." We don't want to see fishy crackers and GI Joe's in here.

Grace Driscoll: Step on Legos.

Pastor Mark: Step on Legos in the middle of the night. And so we told them, "This is not your room. And if you want to come in or you need us, knock on the door. Don't just walk in."

Grace Driscoll: Be respectful of the space.

Pastor Mark: Be respectful. And we did always have a lock on the door. And so let's talk about then too, couples that have kids and they have the family bed.

Grace Driscoll: Well, yeah. It's a belief system that I'm not in agreement with, but ...

Pastor Mark: So you're saying it's demonic.

Grace Driscoll: When we first had kids, we had a bassinet next to the bed. When the babies were really little and yeah, when you're letting your kids into that place where you and your husband have opportunity for intimacy and safety and freedom, it really distorts I think for a woman too, I think it distorts her perception of sex being a gift because there's always something there to prohibit that.

So sometimes women allow that because they do need to heal up. And so that's kind of their wall that they use to guard from not having to engage in sexual activity because they're wounded and don't know how to experience freedom. And for men, it can just be really like, you feel put aside.

Pastor Mark: You feel like you've been displaced as a priority. Like the child is now the priority. And I am just the provider.

Grace Driscoll: And there's seasons when kids struggle and have nightmares and all that.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Grace Driscoll: That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about like their place in the bed next to you constantly for however many years. It's not healthy for the kids either, honestly. And they need to be able to have their own space. You need to have your own space. There's not boundaries in that are appropriate. And so it can really lead to some confusion in all areas.

Pastor Mark: Well, Hebrews says to keep the marriage bed pure. It doesn't talk about the family bed.

Grace Driscoll: Right.

Pastor Mark: And so to me-

Grace Driscoll: It's a sacred space.

Pastor Mark: Our bedroom is sacred. If you have a master bathroom, it's sacred. If your kids do have a nightmare, you can pull them into bed. When they're little, you can put a bassinet next to the bed. If they're sick or teething and mom's swaddling them and sleeping or whatever, we're not legalistic about it, but if you don't have a clear boundary between we are married and this is our married space, and this is our married life, and this is our married privacy, then I think what you're doing is you're really damaging your marriage.

And I would go so far as to say you're also damaging your children and you're setting for them a bad example of what marriage looks like. It's not sacred. It's not set apart.

It's not private. It's like, that's not what we want to communicate in any regard or way. And so En Gedi at home, so for us, it's always been how do we set up our bedroom that at the end of the day, we can get a little bit of a break there.

It becomes a bit of an oasis. In addition, there are places in the home that we can sit and snuggle and watch a movie. Or we can sit outside. I love sitting outside. I love being outdoors. We've got a fireplace outside so we can sit out there.

I just like having places that are just little vignettes of En Gedi. Like we can go here, we can go here, we can go here. I like going for walks. I like going to certain places for dinner. I like going to certain places for date night. I like going certain places for vacations.

I just like sacred space. I like place that's put together. I don't like it chaotic. I don't like it disorganized. I don't like it disheveled. I apologize for all of this. I'm very high maintenance. I always say we're drama queen. She's a queen. I'm all the drama, but for me, space is really, really important. Because in a chaotic environment, I have a hard time relaxing. Are you like that or are you okay in chaos?

Grace Driscoll: I'm okay in chaos.

Pastor Mark: That's why I'm still there.

Grace Driscoll: Which got me through 5 kids.

Pastor Mark: Yeah. Yeah.

Grace Driscoll: But yeah, there's a time and place and space that we need to reserve for that marriage area.

Pastor Mark: So we're going to give you one discussion question as a couple. There are more in the study guide, but just one discussion question and this is in private conversation. So you're not involving your kids or your extended family or anybody else. And turn your phones off. Make eye contact.

Be dialoguing. Share, number one your past favorite memories. It could be, we just went for a walk or we had a picnic or we went for a hike. It doesn't have to be a big thing. It was just something about that day, that weather, that place being together that became En Gedi for us. That's just a sacred time and space that I carry in my heart.

Grace Driscoll: And ask why each other liked that memory because that's a window into what other things they might enjoy. And it gives you ideas for what you can plan for future.

Pastor Mark: Absolutely. And and sexual experiences together. She's talking about something that she's really looking forward to once they're married. What are the places that you have been that were like En Gedi and what are the times that you've been sexually intimate that are your favorite memories?

So rather than starting with criticism, here's what I wish we were doing, start with encouragement. Here's the best day of my life, where we did that. And that was incredible. And that was amazing. And encourage and thank one another and then share so it's En Gedi place you were sexual experience, one of your favorite or some of your favorite memories and if it gets to the point where your spouse is blushing and uncomfortable, you're probably doing good.

And then lastly, what are you looking forward to in the future? Where would you like to go and what would you like to do? I always ask you, "Honey, what's in your heart? Where do you want to go? What do you want to do?" I'm trying to figure out what your dreams are, because I want to make those dreams come true. And we'll give that to you as your assignment.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah. And if you have a hard time discussing those things, then talk about ways that you can help that healing process so that you can get to those conversations in the future.

Pastor Mark: And stop and just pray for each other.

Grace Driscoll: Yep.

Pastor Mark: So why don't you pray for them?

Grace Driscoll:

Okay. Dear Lord. Thank you so much for the picture of En Gedi. Thank you that ultimately heaven is an oasis for us to love and enjoy each other and be with you. But Lord, as we are here together as spouses, I just pray that we would desire to set up spaces for that sacred marriage space.

That would be enjoyable, that would feel safe. Lord, just help us to be creative and not get stuck in ruts. And if we are stuck in a rut, help us to pray through that, talk through that dream through that, about what can look different and be pleasurable on the other side in Jesus name. Amen.

Pastor Mark:

Amen.