

REACHING THE SUMMIT AND 50 SHADES OF GREY

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How ambitious are you for the greatest kind of love?

Valentine's Day shared it's glory with opening weekend of 50 Shades of Grey, inspired by a series reputed to be shockingly erotic — and currently has millions of people in an uproar. For equally as many reasons. Originally, I had zero interest in joining the chorus of conversation because to be honest, I just feel like all of the well-intentioned Christian opinions out there are just starting to make us all sound like a bunch of prudes exercising self-righteous opinions about another "issue." But something got to me. The movie brought in a record breaking \$81.7 million over the weekend — which means that this is how a lot of people celebrated their Valentine's Day. And you guys, we can do better than that.

"My beloved is mine and I am his..." Song of Songs 2:16

Let me continue in total humility with the purpose of promoting hope. Sweet friends, we cannot whisper our confessions of love, proclaim our promises of passion — and then take our eyes off of our beloved and watch the erotic "romance" on the big screen (or the one in our own bedroom). There is a better option. But 50 Shades isn't

the only intruder on our marriages — pornography is alive and well bringing in more than \$3,000 to the industry per second. It is hypocrisy you guys, and it makes our life giving words fall dead at our feet. Meaningless noise — intentional or not. **Love does not borrow intimacy from another's efforts.** Love cannot afford the expense of arousing your senses by anyone other than your beloved. It's *stealing* from them. And it is really hard to erase a well worn path; and even more frighteningly easy to need it more to get there again.

"They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity — for people are slaves to whatever has mastered them." — 2 Peter 2: 19.

Let's refuse to be slaves to imitation intimacy. Let's put in the work to actively romance our beloved.

How ambitious are you for the greatest kind of love?

Summitting Mount Everest is the greatest of all achievements in the world of mountain climbers. According to [National Geographic](#), "The success rate of climbers has more than tripled since 1990, largely due to more guides and better gear." In 2012, 547 people (56% of those who attempted to summit) were successful. There are currently only 2 routes guides take climbers through — *and there are no shortcuts.* **Great achievements aren't claimed by casual climbers.** Everest is a lot like marriage — most of us have ambitions to summit; but like the mountain, there aren't any quality shortcuts to get us there in one piece.

Love that reaches the summit does not take shortcuts.

[Love protects.](#) Love perseveres. It might take more work to explore your beloved's heart and build a meaningful history than it does to pop in a porn (or engage in the books that flirt with the category). *But only one breathes life.* **It might take more of an effort, more patience, and more deliberate investments to spark the flames that are easily mimicked with imitation intimacy; but it will be better.** It will be more glorious. Love with a love that is worth reveling over. Love with a love that cannot be inspired any other way but by building your own story.

I believe it also must be acknowledged:

It is not wrong to want great sex for your marriage. Live it up, people! Here's what bothers me: I honestly feel like MOST of us grow up with this impression that if you

really want to enjoy sex, you have to break some rules. Otherwise it's probably going to get boring fast. *What does that say about our perspective on who God is and what he wants for us?! We claim to trust him with our eternities — shouldn't we be able to trust him with our sex lives?*

Consider this.

God designed sex, and God is not boring. Read Song of Songs if you are curious as to whether he wants us to enjoy it. He put up some really clear boundaries around it in order to protect us. Because he IS love. **God designed all of everything — he has a track record for being creative.** Intimacy his way is going to be awesome. Truth. **Our enemy hates it when we experience God's best. So he offers cheap imitations designed to steal from what we're made for.** So we end up waltzing around satisfied with fake pearls when God has promised us the glory of having the real thing. In fact, since he designed something so powerful that it also happens to be the platform for creating *life*, he gives us boundaries in order to ensure that we don't end up scalding one another because we forgot that fire is hot.

Let's strive to do love greatly.