



The Book Of The

Song Of Solomon

Guide For A Loving Relationship Between

A Husband and Wife

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Song of Songs

OVERVIEW:

SATURATED with stories of sexual escapades, secret rendezvous, and extramarital affairs, today's media preach that immorality means freedom, perversion is natural, and commitment is old-fashioned. Sex, created by God and pronounced good in Eden, has been twisted, exploited, and turned into an urgent, illicit, casual, and self-gratifying activity. Love has turned into lust, giving into getting, and lasting commitment into "no strings attached."

In reality, sexual intercourse, the physical and emotional union of male and female, should be a holy means of celebrating love, producing children, and experiencing pleasure, protected by the commitment of marriage.

God thinks sex is important, and Scripture contains numerous guidelines for its use and warnings about its misuse. And sex is always mentioned in the context of a loving relationship between husband and wife. Perhaps the highlight of this is Song of Songs, the intimate story of a man and a woman, their love, courtship, and marriage. Solomon probably wrote this "song" in his youth, before being overtaken by his own obsession with women, sex, and pleasure.

A moving story, drama, and poem, Song of Songs features the love dialogue between a simple Jewish maiden (the Shulammitte woman) and her lover (Solomon, the king). They describe in intimate detail their feelings for each other and their longings to be together. Throughout the dialogue, sex and marriage are put in their proper, God-given perspective.

There has been much debate over the meaning of this song. Some say it is an allegory of God's love for Israel and/or for the church. Others say it is a literal story about married love. But in reality, it is both—an historical story with two layers of meaning. On one level we learn about love, marriage, and sex; and on the other level we see God's overwhelming love for his people. As you read Song of Songs, remember that you are loved by God, and commit yourself to seeing life, sex, and marriage from his point of view.

THE BLUEPRINT

Song of Songs is a wedding song honoring marriage. The most explicit statements on sex in the Bible can be found in this book. It has often been criticized through the centuries because of its sensuous language. The purity and sacredness of love represented here, however, are greatly needed in our day where distorted attitudes about love and marriage are commonplace.

God created sex and intimacy, and they are holy and good when enjoyed within the bounds of marriage. A husband and wife honor God when they love and enjoy each other.

1. The wedding day (Song 1:1-2:7)

This is Solomon's Song of Songs, more wonderful than any other.

[2] Young Woman: "Kiss me again and again, for your love is sweeter than wine. [3] How fragrant your cologne, and how pleasing your name! No wonder all the young women love you! [4] Take me with you. Come, let's run! Bring me into your bedroom, O my king."

Young Women of Jerusalem: "How happy we are for him! We praise his love even more than wine."

Young Woman: "How right that the young women love you!

[5] "I am dark and beautiful, O women of Jerusalem, tanned as the dark tents of Kedar. Yes, even as the tents of Solomon!

[6] "Don't look down on me, you fair city girls, just because my complexion is so dark. The sun has burned my skin. My brothers were angry with me and sent me out to tend the vineyards in the hot sun. Now see what it has done to me!

[7] "Tell me, O my love, where are you leading your flock today? Where will you rest your sheep at noon? For why should I wander like a prostitute among the flocks of your companions?"

[8] Young Man: "If you don't know, O most beautiful woman, follow the trail of my flock to the shepherds' tents, and there feed your young goats. [9] What a lovely filly you are, my beloved one! [10] How lovely are your cheeks, with your earrings setting them afire! How stately is your neck, accented with a long string of jewels. [11] We will make earrings of gold for you and beads of silver."

[12] Young Woman: "The king is lying on his couch, enchanted by the fragrance of my perfume. [13] My lover is like a sachet of myrrh lying between my breasts. [14] He is like a bouquet of flowers in the gardens of En-gedi."

[15] Young Man: "How beautiful you are, my beloved, how beautiful! Your eyes are soft like doves."

[16] Young Woman: "What a lovely, pleasant sight you are, my love, as we lie here on the grass, [17] shaded by cedar trees and spreading firs."

[2:1] Young Woman: "I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley."

[2] Young Man: "Yes, compared to other women, my beloved is like a lily among thorns."

[3] Young Woman: "And compared to other youths, my lover is like the finest apple tree in the orchard. I am seated in his delightful shade, and his fruit is delicious to eat. [4] He brings me to the banquet hall, so everyone can see how much he loves me. [5] Oh, feed me with your love—your 'raisins' and your 'apples'—for I am utterly lovesick! [6] His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.

[7] "Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the swift gazelles and the deer of the wild, not to awaken love until the time is right.

2. Memories of courtship (Song 2:8-3:5)

"Ah, I hear him—my lover! Here he comes, leaping on the mountains and bounding over the hills. [9] My lover is like a swift gazelle or a young deer. Look, there he is behind the wall! Now he is looking in through the window, gazing into the room.

[10] "My lover said to me, 'Rise up, my beloved, my fair one, and come away. [11] For the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone. [12] The flowers are springing up, and the time of singing birds has come, even the cooing of turtledoves.

[13] The fig trees are budding, and the grapevines are in blossom. How delicious they smell! Yes, spring is here! Arise, my beloved, my fair one, and come away.' "

[14] Young Man: "My dove is hiding behind some rocks, behind an outcrop on the cliff. Let me see you; let me hear your voice. For your voice is pleasant, and you are lovely."

[15] Young Women of Jerusalem: "Quick! Catch all the little foxes before they ruin the vineyard of your love, for the grapevines are all in blossom."

[16] Young Woman: "My lover is mine, and I am his. He feeds among the lilies! [17] Before the dawn comes and the shadows flee away, come back to me, my love. Run like a gazelle or a young stag on the rugged mountains."

[3:1] Young Woman: "One night as I lay in bed, I yearned deeply for my lover, but he did not come. [2] So I said to myself, 'I will get up now and roam the city, searching for him in all its streets and squares.' But my search was in vain.

[3] The watchmen stopped me as they made their rounds, and I said to them, 'Have you seen him anywhere, this one I love so much?' [4] A little while later I found him and held him. I didn't let him go until I had brought him to my childhood home, into my mother's bedroom, where I had been conceived.

[5] "Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the swift gazelles and the deer of the wild, not to awaken love until the time is right."

3. Memories of engagement (Song 3:6-5:1)

Young Women of Jerusalem: "Who is this sweeping in from the deserts like a cloud of smoke along the ground? Who is it that smells of myrrh and frankincense and every other spice? [7] Look, it is Solomon's carriage, with sixty of Israel's mightiest men surrounding it. [8] They are all skilled swordsmen and experienced warriors. Each one wears a sword on his thigh, ready to defend the king against an attack during the night.

[9] "King Solomon has built a carriage for himself from wood imported from Lebanon's forests. [10] Its posts are of silver, its canopy is gold, and its seat is upholstered in purple cloth. Its interior was a gift of love from the young women of Jerusalem."

[11] Young Woman: "Go out to look upon King Solomon, O young women of Jerusalem. See the crown with which his mother crowned him on his wedding day, the day of his gladness."

[4:1] Young Man: "How beautiful you are, my beloved, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are like doves. Your hair falls in waves, like a flock of goats frisking down the slopes of Gilead. [2] Your teeth are as white as sheep, newly shorn and washed. They are perfectly matched; not one is missing. [3] Your lips are like a ribbon of scarlet. Oh, how beautiful your mouth! Your cheeks behind your veil are like pomegranate halves—lovely and delicious. [4] Your neck is as stately as the tower of David, jeweled with the shields of a thousand heroes. [5] Your breasts are like twin fawns of a gazelle, feeding among the lilies. [6] Before the dawn comes and the shadows flee away, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. [7] You are so beautiful, my beloved, so perfect in every part.

[8] "Come with me from Lebanon, my bride. Come down from the top of Mount Amana, from Mount Senir and Mount Hermon, where lions have their dens and panthers prowl. [9] You have ravished my heart, my treasure, my bride. I am overcome by one glance of your eyes, by a single bead of your necklace. [10] How sweet is your love, my treasure, my bride! How much better it is than wine! Your perfume is more fragrant than the richest of spices. [11] Your lips, my bride, are as sweet as honey. Yes, honey and cream are under your tongue. The scent of your clothing is like that of the mountains and the cedars of Lebanon.

[12] "You are like a private garden, my treasure, my bride! You are like a spring that no one else can drink from, a fountain of my own. [13] You are like a lovely orchard bearing precious fruit, with the rarest of perfumes: [14] nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, myrrh and aloes, perfume from every incense tree, and every other lovely spice. [15] You are a garden fountain, a well of living water, as refreshing as the streams from the Lebanon mountains."

[16] Young Woman: "Awake, north wind! Come, south wind! Blow on my garden and waft its lovely perfume to my lover. Let him come into his garden and eat its choicest fruits."

[5:1] Young Man: "I am here in my garden, my treasure, my bride! I gather my myrrh with my spices and eat my honeycomb with my honey. I drink my wine with my milk."

Young Women of Jerusalem: "Oh, lover and beloved, eat and drink! Yes, drink deeply of this love!"

4. A troubling dream (Song 5:2-6:3)

Young Women of Jerusalem: "Who is this sweeping in from the deserts like a cloud of smoke along the ground? Who is it that smells of myrrh and frankincense and every other spice? [7] Look, it is Solomon's carriage, with sixty of Israel's mightiest men surrounding it. [8] They are all skilled swordsmen and experienced warriors. Each one wears a sword on his thigh, ready to defend the king against an attack during the night.

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Young Women of Jerusalem: "Oh, lover and beloved, eat and drink! Yes, drink deeply of this love!"

5. Praising the bride's beauty (Song 6:4-7:9 a)

Young Man: "O my beloved, you are as beautiful as the lovely town of Tirzah. Yes, as beautiful as Jerusalem! You are as majestic as an army with banners! [5] Look away, for your eyes overcome me! Your hair falls in waves, like a flock of goats frisking down the slopes of Gilead. [6] Your teeth are as white as newly washed sheep. They are perfectly matched; not one is missing.

[7] Your cheeks behind your veil are like pomegranate halves—lovely and delicious. [8] There may be sixty wives, all queens, and eighty concubines and unnumbered virgins available to me. [9] But I would still choose my dove, my perfect one, the only beloved daughter of her mother! The young women are delighted when they see her; even queens and concubines sing her praises! [10] 'Who is this,' they ask, 'arising like the dawn, as fair as the moon, as bright as the sun, as majestic as an army with banners?'

[11] "I went down into the grove of nut trees and out to the valley to see the new growth brought on by spring. I wanted to see whether the grapevines were budding yet, or whether the pomegranates were blossoming. [12] Before I realized it, I found myself in my princely bed with my beloved one."

[13] Young Women of Jerusalem: "Return, return to us, O maid of Shulam. Come back, come back, that we may see you once again."

Young Man: "Why do you gaze so intently at this young woman of Shulam, as she moves so gracefully between two lines of dancers?"

[7:1] Young Man: "How beautiful are your sandaled feet, O queenly maiden. Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a skilled craftsman. [2] Your navel is as delicious as a goblet filled with wine. Your belly is lovely, like a heap of wheat set about with lilies. [3] Your breasts are like twin fawns of a gazelle.

[4] Your neck is as stately as an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the sparkling pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is as fine as the tower of Lebanon overlooking Damascus. [5] Your head is as majestic as Mount Carmel, and the sheen of your hair radiates royalty. A king is held captive in your queenly tresses.

[6] "Oh, how delightful you are, my beloved; how pleasant for utter delight! [7] You are tall and slim like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters of dates. [8] I said, 'I will climb up into the palm tree and take hold of its branches.' Now may your breasts be like grape clusters, and the scent of your breath like apples. [9] May your kisses be as exciting as the best wine, smooth and sweet, flowing gently over lips and teeth."

6. The bride's tender appeal (Song 7:9 b-8:4)

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[10] Young Woman: "I am my lover's, the one he desires. [11] Come, my love, let us go out into the fields and spend the night among the wildflowers. [12] Let us get up early and go out to the vineyards. Let us see whether the vines have budded, whether the blossoms have opened, and whether the pomegranates are in flower. And there I will give you my love.

[13] There the mandrakes give forth their fragrance, and the rarest fruits are at our doors, the new as well as old, for I have stored them up for you, my lover."

[8:1] Young Woman: "Oh, if only you were my brother, who nursed at my mother's breast. Then I could kiss you no matter who was watching, and no one would criticize me. [2] I would bring you to my childhood home, and there you would teach me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, my sweet pomegranate wine. [3] Your left hand would be under my head and your right hand would embrace me.

[4] "I want you to promise, O women of Jerusalem, not to awaken love until the time is right."

7. The power of love (Song 8:5-14)

Young Women of Jerusalem: "Who is this coming up from the desert, leaning on her lover?"

Young Woman: "I aroused you under the apple tree, where your mother gave you birth, where in great pain she delivered you. [6] Place me like a seal over your heart, or like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, and its jealousy is as enduring as the grave. Love flashes like fire, the brightest kind of flame. [7] Many waters cannot quench love; neither can rivers drown it. If a man tried to buy love with everything he owned, his offer would be utterly despised."

[8] The Young Woman's Brothers: "We have a little sister too young for breasts. What will we do if someone asks to marry her? [9] If she is chaste, we will strengthen and encourage her. But if she is promiscuous, we will shut her off from men."

[10] Young Woman: "I am chaste, and I am now full breasted. And my lover is content with me.

[11] "Solomon has a vineyard at Baal-hamon, which he rents to some farmers there. Each of them pays one thousand pieces of silver for its use. [12] But as for my own vineyard, O Solomon, you can take my thousand pieces of silver. And I will give two hundred pieces of silver to those who care for its vines."

[13] Young Man: "O my beloved, lingering in the gardens, how wonderful that your companions can listen to your voice. Let me hear it, too!"

[14] Young Woman: "Come quickly, my love! Move like a swift gazelle or a young deer on the mountains of spices."

MEGATHEMES

THEME: Sex

EXPLANATION:

Sex is God's gift to his creatures. He endorses sex, but restricts its expression to those committed to each other in marriage.

IMPORTANCE:

God wants sex to be motivated by love and commitment, not lust. It is for mutual pleasure, not selfish enjoyment.

THEME: Love

EXPLANATION:

As the relationship developed, the beauty and wonder of a romance unfolded between Solomon and his bride. The intense power of love affected the hearts, minds, and bodies of the two lovers.

IMPORTANCE:

Because love is such a powerful expression of feeling and commitment between two people, it is not to be regarded casually. We are not to manipulate others into loving us, and love should not be prematurely encouraged in a relationship.

THEME: Commitment

EXPLANATION:

The power of love requires more than the language of feeling to protect it. Sexual expression is such an integral part of our selfhood that we need the boundary of marriage to safeguard our love. Marriage is the celebration of daily commitment to each other.

IMPORTANCE:

While romance keeps a marriage interesting, commitment keeps romance from dwindling away. The decision to commit yourself to your spouse alone *begins* at the marriage altar. It must be maintained day by day.

THEME: Beauty

EXPLANATION:

The two lovers praise the beauty they see in each other. The language they use shows the spontaneity and mystery of love. Our praise should not be limited to physical beauty; beautiful personality and moral purity should also be praised.

IMPORTANCE:

Our love for our spouse makes him or her appear beautiful. It is the inner qualities that keep love alive. Don't just look for physical attractiveness in a spouse. Look for the qualities that don't fade with time—spiritual commitment, integrity, sensitivity, and sincerity.

THEME: Problems

EXPLANATION:

Over time, feelings of loneliness, indifference, and isolation came between Solomon and his bride. During those times, love grew cold and barriers were raised.

IMPORTANCE:

Through careful communication, lovers can be reconciled, commitment can be renewed, and romance refreshed. Don't let walls come between you and your partner. Take care of problems while they are still small.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print