

## SEPTEMBER 6

### Song of Solomon 1-4

It says of Solomon that he wrote proverbs about everything. In the Song of Solomon it seems that Solomon wrote a love song or poem regarding the events just before and just after his wedding. Most couples do photo albums; they did a song. Some of us might have a problem with this song simply because we know how Solomon's life ends. Solomon ignored God's Word and had 700 wives and 300 half wives, and they led him into idolatry. But in the beginning of his reign, like most of the godly kings, he was following the Lord and had a deep faith. It is thought that this might have been his first wife, an Israelite, whom he married before his first political marriage to Pharaoh's daughter. Or it might be that this relationship was the first where Solomon was genuinely in love and not marrying for what he thought, in his wisdom, would bring stability to the kingdom.

In the final event, God wanted this love song in the Bible. God created the union between man and woman and celebrated it in Adam and Eve in the garden. Every couple since Adam and Eve has experienced the wonder that God built into the relationship as it moves from the first attraction to marriage. And every couple has experienced the challenge of keeping that relation both romantic and healthy after marriage.

On the surface, the Song of Solomon is about raging hormones and poetic descriptions of bodies. Jewish men were not allowed to read this book until they were 30 years old. But apart from the raging hormones, you'll also notice some very significant, recurring themes that are signaled by repeated words and phrases. As you find them, underline or highlight what you see. They will give you some structure and there will be some interesting applications. Generally, we'll look at this song as a poem describing events, not as an allegory meaning something else. The [Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT](#) does a good job of describing what's going on in the Song of Solomon. According to the BKC, chapters 1-3 are just before the wedding, with Solomon personally taking her to Jerusalem for the ceremony. Chapter 4 is the wedding night and 5:1 is the afterglow. Chapters 5-8 are the "maturing" of their marriage, or I would say, some thoughts during the honeymoon. Who knows?

#### Song 1

This chapter describes their thoughts during the days leading up to the wedding and the couple's longing for one another.

Vs. 1-4 This can read as her desire and a request of longing, "*Let the king take me to his chambers.*"

Vs. 5-7 These verses seem to express some of her insecurity marrying a man like Solomon. Apparently her brothers were protective of her and kept watch over her, as we'll see later. The vineyard has a double meaning. She kept the literal, family vineyard, but didn't have time to cultivate her own beauty.

Vs. 8-10 In our culture, better, in my house, this comparison wouldn't do much for my wife. He apparently is saying that she is so beautiful that she stands out.

V. 11 The invisible chorus is saying that her beauty will be adorned richly. These people are being used as some sort of poetic device.

Vs. 12-17 These are lots of rolling hormones waiting for a wedding night. These thoughts and desires roll into the next chapter.

## Song 2

Vs. 1-2 She compares herself to an uncultivated, wildly-growing lily and he uses the image to say again that her beauty is such that it stands out and lifts her above the crowd.

Vs. 3-17 This seems to be the bride's premarital musing about her future husband.

Vs. 3-7 She is feeling so in love with him that she feels overwhelmed, sick so to speak. You have to have been in love like this to appreciate the feeling. I think that in v. 6, she is imagining him making love to her. We will see this same phrase again when he does make love to her after the wedding.

V. 7 We will see this refrain again too, and it comes across as good godly advice from the Lord. In nature, the mating only takes place at times God has appointed. Her advice is to allow God to be the one who determines when the time is right. In our world we push sexual attraction through the media and create desire in people inappropriately. God and the bride are saying not to rush things.

If you ask me, if she had been Solomon's only wife and he had been a focused husband, Solomon might have been a truly great man. Instead, Solomon started well, like a ball hit hard to right field that looked good, but went foul.

Vs. 8-14 suggest imagery relating to the waiting, the maturing of their premarital love, and the strain thereof, that she and Solomon experienced before the wedding. The ripening fruits are the images of the time arriving.

V. 15 This is a verse of warning. Here and elsewhere, the vineyard is an image of a relationship or marriage. These *little foxes* are issues or problems that destroy the marriage and relationship. Apparently she saw things in Solomon's busy life and/or personality that gave her a sense of worry and insecurity. Every marriage has these; but two people, who are each independently in love with Christ and following Him, can kill the vermin and make the vineyard "foxproof."

Vs. 16-17 We'll see this again. Here, it is the declaration of her love and submission to him. Now, it is just longing. Later, it will be the prelude to a kiss (and more).

## Song 3

Vs. 1-5 This is one of her two dreams of worry. Apparently she worried about losing him, and when she found him, she took him to the safest place she knew. A bedroom? Where she was conceived? I'd say she was ready to be married. Notice v. 5, and the advice again about not stirring sexual desire before its time. I think she was feeling the stirrings.

Vs. 6-11 This is Solomon collecting his bride and taking her to Jerusalem in a procession for the wedding.

## Song 4

This is the wedding night. Notice that it is all Solomon. There are lots of comparisons, images, poetic descriptions, veiled requests, and, of course, hormones. The description of this night should also include 5:1. According to the BKC, her words at the end of chapter 4, his first words of chapter 5, and the words of the "others" (some say God) mark the consummation of their relationship (they make love).

In your discipleship group you might want to discuss how to keep romance alive in marriage. In today's climate this is a worthwhile thing to talk about. Christian marriages do fall apart; and for guys, even devoted disciples, the sexual temptations have multiplied with the media and internet. The sad reality is that as long as we've been on this planet, we still don't understand "sex;" and so it keeps harming us. People following Christ are just as liable to make mistakes that hurt themselves and their relationships.

Regarding the romance and health of the relationship, sex is never the issue; and the climax is often the enemy of real fulfillment. Generally speaking, for 98% of mankind, when the God-ordained time comes in marriage, God made the sexual side of being one flesh just as vital and irresistible to us, particularly to a man, as breathing, eating and sleeping. The goal is completion and connection, not desire and a climax. This is why Solomon was such a poor man. He was sexually saturated, but had no real completion. It was like drinking water and dying of thirst. Any man who has fallen into the rut of the typical "end of the night, for a few minutes," snuggle with his wife is primed to stay unsatisfied and liable to fall into sin. It is like drinking and still being thirsty and always needing something more.

I think that God has meant the event to take a long time, for her and for him. The husband needs to make sure it goes as long as possible and focuses on her, and he'll be surprised that the ending is actually anticlimactic in comparison to the fulfillment found in the entire process. And for both, the depth will go to the soul.

I've known couples that tried to read the Song of Solomon to one another and were seriously hurt when they both fell off the couch laughing at *Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus* (Song 7:4). So, look for love songs. You can find them on YouTube and buy them on iTunes or somewhere. Here are some suggestions: "I Could Not Ask For More" and "A Real Fine Place to Start," by Sara Evans; "Now and Forever," by Richard Marx; "My Valentine," by M. McBride; "Looking in the Eyes of Love," by Alison Krauss; "Longer," by Dan Fogelberg; "We are Man and Wife," by Michelle Featherstone; "When the Stars Go Blue," The Corrs and Bono (studio version); "Then," by Brad Paisley; lots of stuff by Alabama; lots of country....just for starters.

Vs. 1-8 This could be Solomon describing her on the wedding night, seeing her naked for the first time.

Vs. 9-15 This sounds highly hormonal. Now she's a good smelling garden. Notice in v. 12 that there is a reference to her virginity. She was a locked garden until this night.

V. 16 I'm not sure what Solomon was saying here. I think his senses were completely overwhelmed by what he was feeling and saw and smelled. It almost sounds like, "Hi Ho, Silver, away!"

On the other hand, without a lot of interpretive energy, we can grasp what she was saying. She was unlocking the door to the garden. Read v. 1 of the next chapter to see the rest of the story.

Remember that this wasn't written "real time," as it happened. That would have been funny if it had been. "Hey, wait a minute, let me write that down." What this means is that the first days of the marriage were so extraordinary that they realized they had been deeply blessed by God. Too bad that Solomon didn't understand the true blessing of that relationship and that he would have to deny all others in order to keep it.

## **2 Corinthians 8:16-24**

Vs. 16-17 Notice that Paul is telling the Corinthians that the heart of working for the Lord comes from the heart of God Himself. And in all of this conflict and distress for Paul & Co., God is the one who is creating that desire. Ministry is primarily not a work of man and the carrying out of plans. In all of these instructions you see God's heart in Paul's ministry.

Notice that Paul excluded himself from the carriers of the gift. In these verses Paul showed that Titus was the lead person who, himself, had a genuine love for the Corinthians. This would disarm the critics who were so focused on Paul. It is sad that an act of love like this gift had taken on such a political and controversial tone.

Vs. 18-21 Now Paul mentioned the brother who was a very good preacher. No one knows who this is. If it had been Apollos, Paul would have used his name. Notice that this person was not

appointed by Paul, but by the other churches who were contributing. Even a man like Paul came under intense suspicion and was willing to step back and humble himself and submit to other authorities and opinions. This is an example of what he mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9:19ff.

V. 22 And to boot, they are sending that other "brother." Notice how this is all being done because of the immaturity of the Corinthian church and the critics.

Vs. 23-24 And again, Titus would be leading the organization around the collection and the group that would carry it to Jerusalem. Since Paul and others had taken this much care to insure that everything was done well under the scrutiny of the critics, Paul urged the Corinthians to finish well in completing what they had begun.

As disciples in the harvest, we need to be able to work with the immaturity of those who are not fully devoted to the Lord and are not totally willing to follow Him in the harvest. There is a sense of making disciples of the resistant, while we are working with the willing to reach the lost and make disciples, who make disciples. This is what we see Paul doing.

### **Psalm 50**

This is an easy psalm to break into sections, so give it a try before you read below.

Notice the silence of God that is mentioned in vs. 3 and 21. People think God is silent today too. Interestingly, I just talked to a neighbor who missed driving through an accident last night on his way to work, because his motorcycle wasn't running right and had to come back and get his truck. He's the one who mentioned God. God isn't as silent as we think.

Vs. 1-2 God summons the entire earth to judgment and His throne is in the beauty of Zion. This sounds like the judgment of the nations after Jesus returns as the Son of Man and begins His millennial reign in Jerusalem.

Vs. 3-6 This is very "end of the age" imagery. God is no longer silent. He commands all of creation to come together, judging the nations and His people. In all of this, He calls His faithful followers to gather to Him. Jesus spoke of stuff like this.

Vs. 7-13 This is really interesting to think about. "Doing something for God" was never the purpose of sacrifice. It was a sign of faith that men understood they were lost, under judgment and needed to have their sins covered. God Himself never needed animals. He owned them all. I was reading this morning in Romans 11:33-36, *O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Vs. 14-15 This is all that God really wants. God asks us to praise Him in thankfulness and to make Him our only hope. I was reading this morning in John 14, *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word."* It begins with love and flows into obedience.

Vs. 16-21 You understand that the wicked here are the religiously wicked. These are those who use the name, but do not know Him. Verse 21 is a great indictment. God's silence doesn't mean He approves of our religion. How many people worship every week, totally in vain.

Vs. 21-23 This is interesting. Inherent in what God is saying here is that the sacrifice and worship should be according to His Word and in thankfulness to Him. The *sacrifice* of thanksgiving is giving testimony to God for His salvation and mercy. The ordering of our way in Christ involves taking a cross and following Him into the harvest. That is obedience to the Word and thanksgiving in action.

### **Proverbs 22:22-23**

This really fits well to the psalm.

