



# SONG of SONGS

Lessons on Love

## Understanding the Greatest Love Songs

There are countless songs on the topic of love, but have you spent much time examining their lyrics?

Take Whitney Houston's cover of "[I Will Always Love You](#)" which often is in the top 10 love song lists...

If I should stay, I would only be in your way.  
So I'll go, but I know I'll think of you ev'ry step of the way.  
And I will always love you. I will always love you. You, my darling you. Hmm.  
Bittersweet memories that is all I'm taking with me.  
So, goodbye. Please, don't cry. We both know I'm not what you, you need.  
And I will always love you. I will always love you.  
I hope life treats you kind And I hope you have all you've dreamed of.  
And I wish to you, joy and happiness. But above all this, I wish you love.  
And I will always love you. I will always love you. (*repeated 4x*)  
You, darling, I love you. Ooh, I'll always, I'll always love you.

What is the story?

Who are the characters?

What is the lesson on love from this song?

Or Michael Bolton's cover of "[When a Man Loves a Woman](#)" ...

When a man loves a woman Can't keep his mind on nothin' else  
He'd trade the world For the good thing he's found  
If she is bad, he can't see it She can do no wrong  
And turn his back on his best friend If he puts her down  
When a man loves a woman Spend his very last dime  
And trying to hold on to what he needs He'd give up all his comforts  
And sleep out in the rain If she said that's the way, it ought to be  
When a man loves a woman I give you everything I've got  
Trying to hold on to your precious love And baby baby please don't treat me bad  
When a man loves a woman Deep down in his soul  
She can bring him such misery If she is playing him for a fool  
He's the last one to know Loving eyes can never see  
Yes when a man loves a woman I know exactly how he feels  
'Cause baby, baby When a man loves a woman (*repeated until the end*)

What is the story?

Who are the characters?

What is the lesson on love from this song?

## Dramatic Read through of Song of Songs

*Songs of Songs* is considered by some to be the hardest book of the Bible to understand, which makes sense if we understand it as a love song. Before we dive into studying individual sections and examining the details, let's look at the book as a whole. The dramatic reading that we will hear is from *The Bible Experience*. It is an audio version of the Bible published by Zondervan using the Today's New International Version (TNIV) translation. The re-enactment was performed by a cast of more than 200 African-American actors, singers, musicians, poets, personalities, and clergy. (If you are studying at home, feel free to use another dramatized reading.)

As you listen, answer each of the following questions...

Who is speaking in each section? Where are the divisions between the speeches? Use the rest of the page to list the sections, divisions, and the speakers.

Are there two main characters or three?

How much plot is there?

What is the literary structure of the Song? (E.g. Is it chronological? Is it a narrative or drama? Is it a unified composition or a grouping of disconnected songs like an anthology?)

How explicitly sexual is the language of the Song? If this were a movie, would you rate it G, PG, PG-13, R, or NC-17? Is it about the emotion of love or about the physical intimacy of sex?

How many of the details of the Song should I interpret? Are some of them just part of the color of the text which do not require specific interpretation? Basically, how well do I need to understand the details?

What are the main types of imagery and picture language which the poet uses? Which are difficult for us to understand culturally?

Is the Song about the love of man and woman, about God and his people, or both?

# The Song of Songs (Shir Hashirim)

שִׁיר  
הַשִּׁירִים

## Title: What's in a Name?

The term "song of songs" is a Hebrew superlative. It means "the best of songs" or, as one translation puts it, "the most beautiful of songs." This type of expression is common in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. We think, for example, of expressions like Lord of lords (that is, the greatest Lord), holy of holies (the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple), vanity of vanities (the greatest vanity; translated in the NIV as "Meaningless! Meaningless!").

## Author: Solomon



The opening verse of this book is: "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." The contents speak of Solomon and of things that Solomon knew. There are many references to plant life and animals - 19 plant references and 13 animal references. The book of 1 Kings relates Solomon's vast knowledge of flora and fauna, namely how he "described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls.

He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish" (4:33). The Bible also says that Solomon wrote many songs. "He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five" (1 Kings 4:32).

Either he personally wrote it or it belonged to him and was a part of his royal collection of literature. Given what we know about Solomon, it is assumed that he wrote this particular book during the early part of his reign. This would date the composition to around 965 B.C.



## Outline of Song of Songs

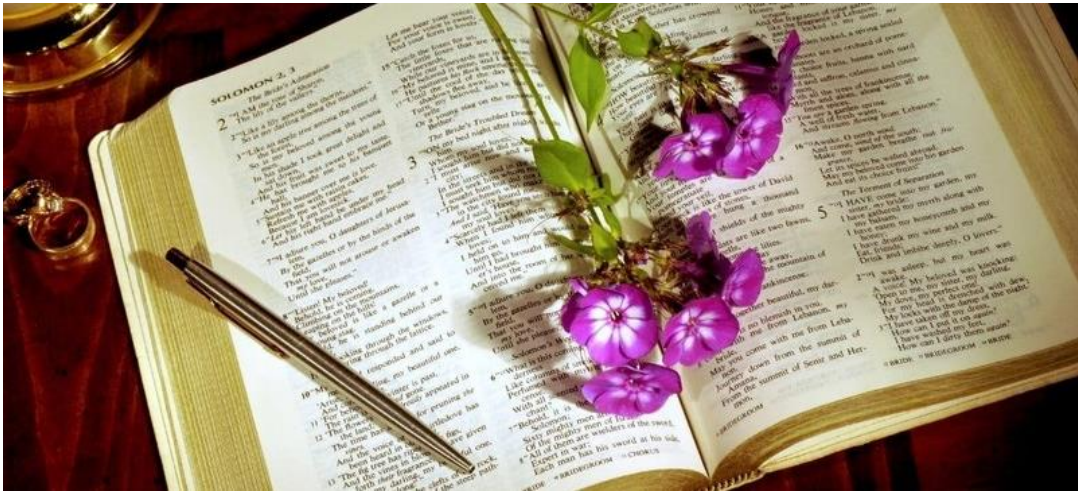
There are excellent reasons for taking this book as a single poem. The title calls it the Song, not songs. Common phrases appear throughout the book. For example, the expression, “Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires” occurs several times (**2:7; 3:5; 8:4**). The same chief characters - Solomon, the shepherdess, the friends - appear in the entire poem.

However, the Song does not tell a chronologically ordered story. It sets a mood of love by viewing the same basic emotions of love a number of different times from a number of different angles. In this respect its structure is similar to the cyclical structure of Revelation.

Following this progression and taking the book as a single poem, we can divide the Song into these four sections, or stanzas:

<b>The Springtime of Love</b>	(1:1–3:5)
<b>The Wedding</b>	(3:6–5:1)
<b>Separation and Reunion</b>	(5:2–8:4)
<b>Reminiscences</b>	(8:5–14)

*We will be using the Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV) Bible translation for this study. The text is printed for you and can also be found on [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com). If you are reading this by yourself, it is highly recommended that you purchase John Brug's Commentary on the Song of Songs available at [nph.net](http://nph.net).*



**Chapter 1** The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

*The Woman*

- <sup>2</sup>Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. Experiencing your love is better than wine.
- <sup>3</sup>Your perfumes are fragrant. Your name is perfume poured out. That is why the virgins love you!
- <sup>4</sup>Carry me away with you—let us run. Let the king bring me into his chambers.

The word used for "love" in this verse refers to an intimate sexual love. What does this tell us about the man and woman at this point? At what point of the relationship does this scene start?

The beloved wants her lover to kiss her "with the kisses of his mouth." What would such kisses signify? What might be a way that we term these kisses?



*Since Song of Songs has multiple ways it can be and has been understood throughout the centuries, we will discuss the possible understandings through the use of an online poll. To take this poll, use the website <http://etc.ch/FT4k> or scan the QR code. This poll only works in real time. If you are using this study, please reference the archived recordings.*



**Multiple Choice #1:** When the woman says, "Your name is perfume poured out," she is saying that...

- A. He has a wonderful name.
- B. She admires the fragrance of his character.
- C. His name pours off her lips like wine.

Write down your reason for your answer.

Having read through the entire Song, how do you understand "the king" in **verse 4**?

### *The Friends*

We rejoice and are happy because of you.  
We celebrate your expressions of love more than we celebrate wine.  
How right the virgins are to love you!

The woman's friends rejoice with her. Their words are addressed to the man, her lover. They agree with the woman that everyone ought to love her man, recognizing that he is special. They are not so much jealous of her as they are commending her good taste. Why would every woman want others to say this about her man?

## *The Woman*

<sup>5</sup>Dark am I, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon.

<sup>6</sup>Do not stare at me because I am dark because the sun gazed at me. My mother's sons were angry with me. They made me take care of the vineyards. I could not take care of my own vineyard.

By calling herself "dark," the woman is not referring to her race, but to her tanned complexion. Why does she apologize for being "darkened by the sun"?

What "darkness" covers us? (See **Isaiah 60:2**.) How does this situation reflect God's view of us sinners? (**Isaiah 1:18**)

**Multiple Choice #2:** When the woman refers to "vineyards" in this verse, she is speaking about...

- A. The place where grapes are raised.
- B. Her body.
- C. Both of the above.
- D. Neither of the above.

Write down your reason for your answer.

What point in their relationship does the woman seem to have in mind here?

## *The Woman*

<sup>7</sup>You whom my soul loves, tell me where you pasture your flock, where you rest your sheep at noon. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your companions?

**Evaluate:** Since the woman calls her lover a shepherd, the man in this song could not be Solomon, since he was a king.

The lover is both a shepherd and the king. How can we see Christ reflected in these illustrations?

**Multiple Choice #3:** The woman asks, "Why should I be like a veiled woman?" Which of the following statements best explains her comment?

- A. The woman is trying to disguise herself as she searches for her lover. Therefore, she is wearing a veil over her face. The problem is this makes her look like a prostitute (confer Tamar, **Genesis 38**), and she would rather not linger too long around some all too willing shepherds.
- B. An unmarried woman often wore a veil, especially in the presence of her suitor. It was a sign of modesty (confer Rebekah, **Genesis 24**).
- C. The veil is a sign of mourning (confer **2 Samuel 15:30**). She is mourning because she is not with her lover and can't seem to find him.
- D. The word for "like a veiled woman" comes from the verb meaning to "wander." She is saying, "Must I be like one who wanders?"

Write down your reason for your answer.

### *A Reply to the Woman*

<sup>8</sup>If you do not know, most beautiful of women, go out and follow the tracks of the flock and graze your young goats by the dwellings of the shepherds.

Does this section picture the couple during courtship or after they are married?

If the man is Solomon, what is he doing herding sheep?

### *The Man*

<sup>9</sup>My darling, I compare you to a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh.

<sup>10</sup>Your cheeks are adorned with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels.

<sup>11</sup>We will make for you gold earrings decorated with silver.

The lover compares his beloved to "a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh." In the Old Testament horses were a symbol of power and prestige more than being the most common form of travel. Solomon had quite a few "Mercedes" of horses in his garage. (**1 Kings 10:26; 2 Chronicles 9:28**) What problem would a mare cause among the chariots of Pharaoh? What's the point of the comparison?

The king has decorated his love with beautiful jewelry. What similar treatment do we receive from Christ? (See **Isaiah 61:10-11**.)

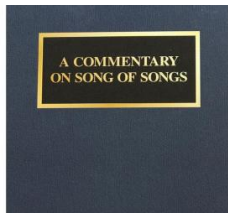
### *The Woman*

<sup>12</sup>While the king was at his couch, my nard gave off its fragrance.

<sup>13</sup>My lover is to me a sachet of myrrh, spending the night between my breasts.

<sup>14</sup>My lover is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi.

### **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Scents of the Song**



Nard is an aromatic oil which is made from the valerian plant which grows high in the mountains of India. However, the Old Testament "nard" may have been made from camel grass, a fragrant grass that grows in Arabia and North Africa... "A sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts." The word that is translated "resting" here means to "spend the night." In modern Hebrew the same root means "hotel." The thought is that her lover is near and dear to her heart. Myrrh is a fragrant perfume made from the sap of a shrub that grows in Arabia, Africa, and India... The henna plant has yellow-blue or pink flowers, like the clusters of the lilac. It was valued not only for its odor, but for an orange cosmetic dye which was produced from it. En Gedi is a beautiful oasis on the shores of the Dead Sea, a great spot for a getaway.

### *The Man*

<sup>15</sup>How beautiful you are, my darling! How beautiful! Your eyes are doves.

The lover says, "Your eyes are doves." What quality in the woman does this picture? (See **Matthew 10:16**.)

### *The Woman*

<sup>16</sup>How beautiful you are, my lover. How delightful! Yes, our bed is fresh.

<sup>17</sup>The beams of our house are cedar. Our rafters are fir.

The lover and beloved are more interested in praising each other than they are in praising themselves. What can we learn from this?

The couple refer to their bed and their house. What does this tell us about their relationship at this point?

## *The Woman*

**Chapter 2** <sup>1</sup>I am a wildflower of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.

**Multiple Choice #4:** When the beloved calls herself a "wildflower" and a "lily," she...

- A. Means that she is a symbol of love and beauty.
- B. Is expressing her modesty and humility.
- C. Is referring to her country roots.

Write down your reason for your answer.

## *The Man*

<sup>2</sup>Like a lily among thorns, so is my darling among the girls.

Describe in your own words what the man is saying to his beloved in this verse.

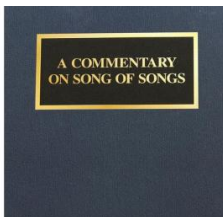
## *The Woman*

<sup>3</sup>Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my lover among the boys. I desire to sit in his shade. His fruit is sweet to my taste.

<sup>4</sup>He has brought me to the reception hall, and his banner over me is love.

<sup>5</sup>Strengthen me with raisin cakes. Refresh me with apples, for I am weak from love.

<sup>6</sup>His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me.



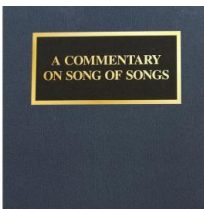
### **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Eating Fruit**

In the culture of the Song, eating fruit or going to the garden is a frequent symbol for sexual love. In modern Hebrew תפוח means apple, but it is uncertain what fruit is referred to. The apricot, citron, and quince have been other suggestions

In what two ways is her lover like an apple tree?

In what ways is our heavenly Father like the lover in this verse? (See **Psalm 121:5-6; 119:103.**)

**BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Banner of Love**



"His banner over me is love" is one of the most popular lines in the Song, but its meaning is uncertain. The root גלג usually refers to a military unit or its insignia. The ancient versions, however, translate it as a verb in this verse, "he assigned love to me." Others translate "his look on me is love." In any case, the phrase is a celebration of his love for her.

**Multiple Choice #5:** When the beloved asks for apples and raisins, she is...

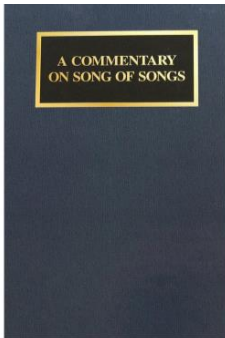
- A. Requesting physical nourishment to satisfy her hunger.
- B. Alluding to her desire for the love of the king.
- C. Asking for a remedy for her love sickness.
- D. Looking for her favorite food.

Write down your reason for your answer.

<sup>7</sup>Daughters of Jerusalem, you must swear to me by the gazelles, or by the does of the field, that you will not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you." "Daughters" is a feminine word; however, the word "you" in this verse appears to be a masculine form. Why might Solomon have chosen the masculine form rather than the feminine?

"Swear... you will not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." What does this refrain teach us about love?



**BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Do Not Awaken Love Until...**

As so often in the Song, in situations that seem to be approaching intimacy the scene fades out, as love scenes did in old romantic movies. The intimate love of the couple takes place "off-camera" beyond the gaze of the audience. The intimate scene is interrupted and dissolved by the words of the refrain in verse 7... the story reverts again to an earlier stage of love. This is similar to the literary technique found in Revelation, which repeatedly arrives at the brink of Judgment Day, only to revert again to earlier times. As the scene is becoming too intense, it is interrupted, to be resumed later.

*The Woman*

<sup>8</sup>Listen! It's my lover! Look! Here he comes, leaping on the mountains, bounding over the hills. <sup>9</sup>My lover is like a gazelle, or like a young buck.

Look! There he is, standing behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peeking through the lattice.

<sup>10</sup>My lover responded and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come."

The beloved compares her lover to "a gazelle or like a young buck." What does she mean by this? (See **2 Samuel 2:18; Psalm 18:33.**)

**Multiple Choice #6:** "Our wall" refers to...

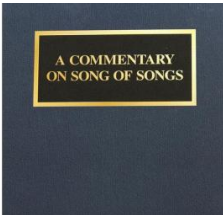
- A. The married couple's home.
- B. The woman's family home where she lived while they courted.
- C. Sin that separates God and people.

Write down your reason for your answer.



*The Man*

<sup>11</sup>Look! Winter is over. The rainy season has come to an end. <sup>12</sup>Flowers appear in the land. The season of singing has arrived. The cooing of the turtledove is heard in our land. <sup>13</sup>The fruit of the fig tree is beginning to ripen. The grapevines are in blossom. They spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling. My beautiful one, come.



**BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Rainy Season**

In Israel the winter is the rainy season. The rainy season is followed by four or five months of no rain, but immediately after the rainy season is over, the land is briefly blanketed with flowers. Spring is also the season of singing; the cooing of turtle doves, the love birds par excellence, adds to the romantic atmosphere.

Does this section describe the couple before or after they are married? Explain.

*The Man*

<sup>14</sup>My dove is in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside. Let me see how you look. Let me hear your voice, because your voice is pleasant, and you are lovely to look at.

**Multiple Choice #7:** When the lover calls his woman a "dove...in the clefts," he...

- A. Feels separated from her at the moment.
- B. Is referring to her beauty and innocence.
- C. Is promising to protect her from harm and keep her safe.

Write down your reason for your answer.

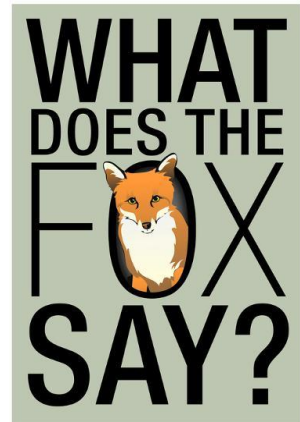
*To the Workers*

<sup>15</sup>Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in blossom.

At this point the lovers seem distant. They are concerned about losing each other. Are they speaking from the viewpoint of a married couple or of a dating couple?

The foxes mentioned here are probably people or problems that can hurt a relationship. Which of the following "foxes" do you think pose the greatest threat to the love between a man and a woman? How can these "foxes" be overcome?

- A. Lack of communication / lack of understanding
- B. Being too critical
- C. Unrealistic expectations
- D. Too little time
- E. Unjust comparisons
- F. Problems with children
- G. In-laws and relatives
- H. Spiritual differences
- I. Annoying habits
- J. Others?



*The Woman*

<sup>16</sup>My lover is mine and I am his. He browses among the lilies.

<sup>17</sup>Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, turn, my lover, and be like a gazelle, or like a young buck on the divided mountains.

What attitude does the beloved display in spite of the "foxes" that threaten their relationship?

What does the beloved mean when she encourages her lover to "be like a gazelle"?

Read **1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 7:3-5**. What is the "ownership" among spouses? How does this compare to our relationship with God?

On the basis of **Song of Songs 2:16**, would you say her relationship with her husband is based on the feelings of love or the commitment to love? Explain.

Why is this intimate scene a beautiful sequel to the scene with the foxes?

## *The Woman*

**Chapter 3** <sup>1</sup>All night long on my bed I sought the one my soul loves. I sought him, but I did not find him.

<sup>2</sup>I will get up now and go around the city. I will go through its markets and squares. I will seek the one my soul loves. I sought him, but I did not find him.

<sup>3</sup>The watchmen who patrol the city found me. "Have you seen the one my soul loves?"

<sup>4</sup>I had hardly passed them, when I found the one my soul loves. I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me.

Describe the beloved's state of mind at this moment. What fears does she have regarding her lover?

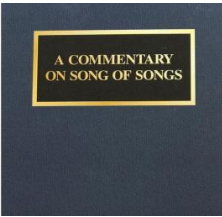
**Multiple Choice #8:** The watchmen are...

- A. The Lord's watchmen (teachers, prophets, pastors) who point out sin to warn people and point people back to God for forgiveness and restoration.
- B. Ignorant helpers, seeking the protection of the people.
- C. Extremely helpful people who helped restore the separated lovers.

Write down your reason for your answer.

What is our role as the Lord's watchmen? (See **Ezekiel 33:7-9**.)

<sup>5</sup>Daughters of Jerusalem, you must swear to me by the gazelles, and by the does of the field, that you will not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.



**BRUG'S COMMENTARY: The Refrain**

The refrain is repeated from **2:7**. Here it again divides sections by interrupting a scene of potential intimacy, in which the man has entered the bedroom of the woman's house. The basic point of the scene seems clear: in spite of intense desire the couple must wait.

These scenes change so quickly from verse to verse. There are scenes of passionate pursuit and invitation followed by bewildering scenes of absence. It's confusing as to where this couple's relationship is at. How does this structure reflect real life?

The lover was not with the beloved, and she could not find him. How does this reflect how Christians think of their Lord? How easy was it for the beloved to find the lover?



### *The Friends and Other Bystanders*

<sup>6</sup>Who is this woman coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and with incense, made from all the fragrant powders of the merchant?

<sup>7</sup>Look! It's Solomon's own carriage. Sixty warriors surround it, the most heroic of Israel, <sup>8</sup>all of them wearing a sword, all trained for battle, each man with his sword at his side, ready for the terrors of the night.

<sup>9</sup>This palanquin King Solomon made for himself out of wood from Lebanon. <sup>10</sup>Its posts he made of silver. Its base he made of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple. Its interior was inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.

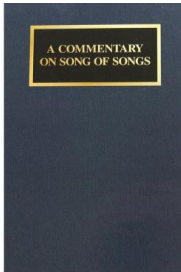
<sup>11</sup>Come out, you daughters of Zion, and look at King Solomon wearing the crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day his heart rejoiced.

**Multiple Choice #9:** Solomon is mentioned in these verses because...

- A. He is the lover - the man - of the whole Song.
- B. He is a type of Christ, used throughout this Song as a foreshadowing of the relationship between Jesus and the Church (all believers).
- C. He is the owner of the most exquisite and royal things, lending them to the couple to make use of and is personally coming to escort the woman to the man.
- D. His name is a nickname for the man - the lover – such as "Prince Charming."

Write down your reason for your answer.

## **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Look at King Solomon**



Another possibility is that Solomon appears here as a guest, not as the groom. Verses 7 to 11 then are not the answer to the question of verse 6, but an interruption that momentarily diverts attention from the answer to that question, which begins only in **4:1**. Solomon with his wealth and prestige, momentarily draws attention from the guest of honor, but in **4:1** she receives her due. If this is the case, Solomon, the author of the Song, introduces himself in an ironic, self-satirizing way. Throughout the Song he appears as the wealthy owner of almost everything. He is a foil to the humble lovers of the story. According to this view, Solomon, the author, is introducing himself into the story the way medieval painters sometimes inserted themselves into the crowd at the foot of the cross or in Pilate's judgment hall.

On the Last Day our heavenly Bridegroom will come to get us, his bride. Read the following passages and note how the Bible describes this grand procession.

**Matthew 24:29-31**

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

**Revelation 19:6-9**

**2 Timothy 4:8**

**Revelation 21:1-4**

*The Man*

**Chapter 4** <sup>1</sup>Look at you. You are beautiful, my darling! Look at you. You are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats which flows down from Mount Gilead.

<sup>2</sup>Your teeth are like a flock, ready to be sheared, which comes up from the washing. Each is a twin. Not one of them is left by itself.

<sup>3</sup>Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon. Your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.

<sup>4</sup>Like the tower of David, your neck is adorned with rows of stones. A thousand shields hang on it, all of them the equipment of warriors.

<sup>5</sup>Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that browse among the lilies.

<sup>6</sup>Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of incense.

<sup>7</sup>You are altogether beautiful, my darling. There is no flaw in you.

What point does Solomon make by each of the following comparisons?

"Your eyes are doves behind your veil"

"Your hair is like a flock of goats"

"Your teeth are like a flock"

"Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon"

"Your cheeks ... like the halves of a pomegranate"

"Like the tower of David, your neck is adorned with rows of stones "

"Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle"



The man refers to going to the "mountain of myrrh." The woman is likely using myrrh to perfume her body. Favoring the literal interpretation, this seems to refer to the man enjoying physical intimacy (having sex) with his wife. (For further study on myrrh, read **Genesis 43:11; Exodus 30:22-25; Esther 2:12; Psalm 45:8; Proverbs 7:17; Matthew 2:11; & John 19:39.**)

The man praises the physical beauty of his bride. Why is this an important thing for a husband to do? What will happen when he criticizes her looks?

**Evaluate:** Since our society places too much emphasis on physical attractiveness, a Christian should not let it be a factor in choosing a marriage partner. Consider also **Genesis 29:17; Proverbs 31:30; & 1 Peter 3:3-4.**

Solomon writes freely about the intimacy the man will enjoy with his bride. Why is a subject like this discussed so openly on the pages of Scripture?

Read **Ephesians 5:25-27.** Christ considers the church a perfect bride. Where does the church's beauty and perfection come from?

**Homework for Couples:** Have an honest discussion and share of how you find the other person attractive.

*The Man*

<sup>8</sup>Come with me from Lebanon, my bride. With me from Lebanon, come. Descend from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, and from the mountains of the leopards.

**Multiple Choice #10:** Verse 8 is...

- A. The couple's honeymoon escape to a remote, romantic location.
- B. God's promise to rescue the church from the evils of the world represented by this northern mountain, as Israel's enemies usually attacked from the north, and represented by the wild animals, as they symbolized ungodly nations.
- C. A promise from the man to protect the woman from all harm and danger.
- D. Solomon summoning his bride from her northern home.

Write down your reason for your answer.

<sup>9</sup>You have stirred my heart, my sister, my bride. You have stirred my heart with one, just one of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.

The man says the woman stirred his heart with a single glance. Does this mean that the Bible is teaching that it's possible for people to fall in love at first sight? Explain your answer.

<sup>10</sup>How delightful it is to experience your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice!

<sup>11</sup>Your lips drip like a honeycomb, my bride. Honey and milk are under your tongue. The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

<sup>12</sup>You are an enclosed garden, my sister, my bride. You are an enclosed spring, a sealed fountain.

**Multiple Choice #11:** When we compare these verses with **Song of Songs 1:2-3**, we see that the man repeats some of the phrases he spoke to his wife earlier. This tells us their relationship was...

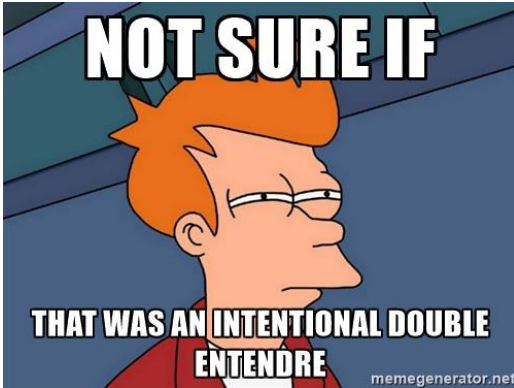
- A. Purely physical.
- B. Beyond the physical to the emotional.
- C. Alive with the touch of romance.

Write down your reason for your answer.

**Multiple Choice #12:** When Solomon calls his bride a "garden locked up," he is describing...

- A. Her mystique as a woman.
- B. The fact that she is hard to figure out.
- C. Her sexual purity.
- D. Her mysterious manners.

Write down your reason for your answer.



The lover calls his beloved "an enclosed spring, a sealed fountain." What does that mean? Compare to how Solomon uses a similar illustration in **Proverbs 5:15-21**.

**PUN**  
VERSUS  
**DOUBLE ENTENDRE**

<p>Pun is a word play which exploits different possible meanings of a word or similarity in appearance and sound between two words.</p>	<p>Double Entendre is a word or phrase open to two interpretations, one of which is usually indecent or sexually suggestive.</p>
<p>Pun is a play on words.</p>	<p>Double Entendre is a literary device.</p>
<p>Pun can be used to create a double entendre.</p>	<p>Double Entendre can be formed using puns.</p>

Solomon recognized his bride's purity. As our heavenly bridegroom, Christ makes the same statement about us in a spiritual sense. Read **Hosea 1:2; 2:16-23; Revelation 14:4; & Galatians 3:26-27**. Even if we roused love before we should have and are no longer a virgin, what does God do for us? What status do we have before him?

- <sup>13</sup>Your plants are an orchard, pomegranates with other choice fruits, henna with nard,
- <sup>14</sup>nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, myrrh and aloes, with all the finest spices.

<sup>15</sup>You are a garden fountain, a well of water flowing and streaming down from Lebanon.

The word for orchard could also be translated "paradise." The man calls his bride a paradise filled with choice fruits and rare spices. What does this tell us about his love for her?

# Solomon's Seven Spices In His Description of a Woman



**Henna** - Possibly from a shrub grown in the Holy Land; its rose-scented, pink blossoms are quite fragrant.

**Nard** - Aromatic oil taken from a plant with a fragrant, fibrous part just above the root; imported from India; very costly.

**Saffron** - Single ounce required 4,000 blossoms; most likely imported from India; used as a perfume, dye, and medicine.

**Calamus** - a sweet cane with a ginger-like smell. Perhaps the variety referred to here is an Indian grass, similar to lemon grass

**Cinnamon** - an aromatic oil made from the bark of a tree which is native to Sri Lanka.

**Incense** - Frankincense, imported from Arabia; made from tree resin.

**Myrrh** - Costly but commonly used perfume made from the sap of a shrub that grows in Arabia, Africa, and India.

**Aloes** - Different from the aloes we know today; a perfume made from the bark of a tree native to India and East Africa.

*The Woman*

<sup>16</sup>Arise, north wind! Come, south wind! Blow on my garden, so that its spices spread abroad. Let my lover come into his garden, and eat its choice fruits.

*The Man*

**Chapter 5** <sup>1</sup>I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride. I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk.

*The Friends Address the Couple*

Eat, friends! Drink! Be intoxicated with love!

**Multiple Choice #13:** This scene depicts...

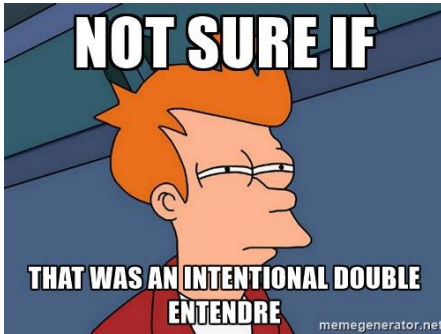
- A. A gardening tutorial.
- B. When Solomon and his wife consummated their marriage on their wedding night.
- C. The emotional highpoint in this romantic atmosphere harkening back to the Garden of Eden as this couple enjoys God's gift of the two being one flesh.
- D. God the Holy Spirit coming to people to create faith in their hearts to believe in him and belong to him.

Write down your reason for your answer.

**Multiple Choice #14:** We should understand the second half of verse five to mean...

- A. The bride and groom are inviting the friends to share the experience in love akin to "We hope you find love like the love we have found."
- B. The friends are giving a wedding couple blessing, wish, or congratulations.
- C. God is blessing the marriage of this couple.
- D. The bride and groom are inviting their guests to join in their lovemaking.

Write down your reason for your answer.



This is the center point of the Song, the climax, if you will. If we understand the Song literally, we will understand this as the physical consummation of the couple's love, and that might make you feel a little uncomfortable. Why include this in the Bible?



For a really good biblical approach to the topic of sex, watch the "Sexpectations" sermon series by Pastor Mike Novotny either on the [Time of Grace Youtube Channel](#) or the [922 Ministries The CORE Youtube Channel](#).

In what ways are this the entire scene (**4:16–5:1**), reminiscent of another garden—Eden?

The lover and beloved have found great joy in their marital love. Read the following passages and note how this reflects our relationship with the heavenly Bridegroom, Christ.

**Matthew 9:15**

**John 3:29**

**1 Corinthians 6:17**

## *The Woman*

<sup>2</sup>I was sleeping but my heart was awake. A sound! My lover is knocking: "Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one, because my head is soaked with dew, my locks with the dampness of the night."

<sup>3</sup>"I have taken off my robe. Why should I get dressed again? I have washed my feet. Why should I get them dirty again?"

<sup>4</sup>My lover thrust his hand through the opening in the door.

My feelings were aroused for him. <sup>5</sup>I arose to open for my lover. My hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with flowing myrrh, on the handles of the lock.

<sup>6</sup>I opened for my lover, but my lover had left. He was gone. My spirits sank when he left. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him, but he did not answer.

**Multiple Choice #15:** Moving from the physical consummation of their love to this scene is jarring. We should understand this scene as...

- A. The movements of marriage relationship in a sinful world, that it goes from the highest highs to the lowest lows.
- B. God knocking on the door of our hearts as an invitation to hear his Word and be close to him.
- C. The wife fell asleep waiting for her husband and started dreaming. When he woke her up at the door, she was still drowsy and didn't realize he was actually at the door.
- D. The wife giving all sorts of excuses to avoid physical intimacy with her husband, possibly because he had sinned against her.

Write down your reason for your answer.

**Multiple Choice #16:** By the time the beloved got to the door, the lover was gone. Why do you think he left?

- A. He felt rejected.
- B. He was angry.
- C. He was tired.

Write down your reason for your answer.



**Evaluate:** A romantic relationship is the result and not the reason for a good marriage.

**Homework for Couples:** Discuss ways that you can keep the spark of romance in your marriage. Here are some starter ideas...

- Send an unexpected card or flowers.
- Put a love note where your spouse will see it.
- Plan a date night for all your spouse's favorite things.
- Give your spouse time from their normal obligations.
- Read your spouse's favorite book and discuss it with them.
- Do a task that normally your spouse does.



How can the following Bible passages help with communication issues in any relationship?

**Colossians 3:12-14**

**1 Peter 4:8**

**Ephesians 4:15, 25-27, 29**

Read **Revelation 3:20**. How are we to respond when Christ knocks at the door of our heart?  
How does this mirror **Song of Songs 5:2-6**?

<sup>7</sup>The watchmen who patrol the city found me. They beat me. They bruised me. They took my shawl away from me, those watchmen of the walls!

**Multiple Choice #17:** These watchmen are...

- A. Not really the official watchmen.
- B. Taking advantage of and abusing an unprotected woman.
- C. Bad church leaders.
- D. Representative of God calling believers to repentance when they refused to open the door when he knocks on their hearts.

Write down your reason for your answer.

Read **Matthew 7:15**. How do false “watchmen” in the church hurt people? How might that fit with the scene we just read?

<sup>8</sup>Daughters of Jerusalem, you must swear to me—if you find my lover—what will you tell him? —that I am sick with love.

**Multiple Choice #18:** The woman is making her friends swear...

- A. To tell the man that she is lovesick for him and sorry for not opening the door - in the hopes that this will get him to return.
- B. To NOT tell the man that she is lovesick since this will embarrass her.
- C. As a representation of a believer repenting and seeking reconciliation with God.

Write down your reason for your answer.

## *The Friends*

<sup>9</sup>What makes your lover better than any other lover, most beautiful of women? What makes your lover better than any other lover, that you make us swear in this way?



A COMMENTARY  
ON SONG OF SONGS

### **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Deliberately Confusing?**

It is best not to try to remove all the confusion and uncertainty that is prevalent in the scene, because this tension and ambiguity may be a literary device intended to picture the confusion that often abounds during a quarrel as the two lovers try to figure out why their partners are acting so strange.

## *The Woman*

<sup>10</sup>My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand.

<sup>11</sup>His head is the best gold, the purest gold. His locks are wavy, black as a raven.

<sup>12</sup>His eyes are like doves by streams of water. They are washed in milk. They are set in sockets.

<sup>13</sup>His cheeks are like a bed of spice, like towers of perfumes.

His lips are lilies, dripping with liquid myrrh.

<sup>14</sup>His arms are rods of gold, set with topaz.

His stomach is like polished ivory, decorated with sapphires.

<sup>15</sup>His thighs are pillars of marble, set on bases of pure gold.

His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as cedars.

<sup>16</sup>His mouth is so sweet. He is completely desirable.

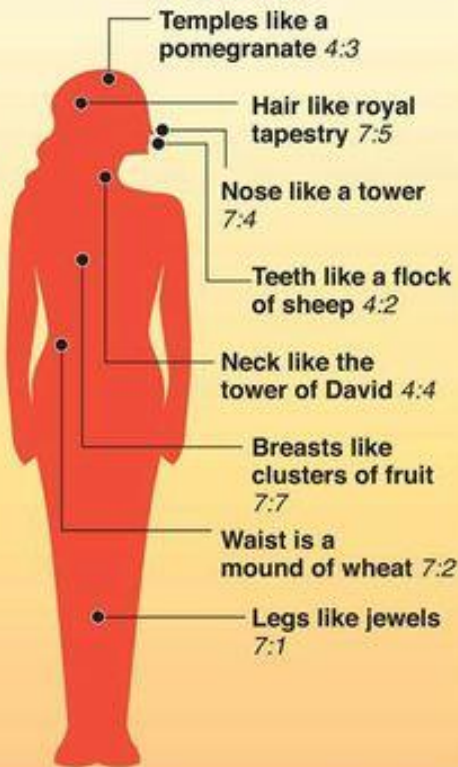
This is my lover. This is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

The friends ask the woman, "What makes your lover better than any other lover?" How does the woman answer this challenge?

# Awkward Compliments

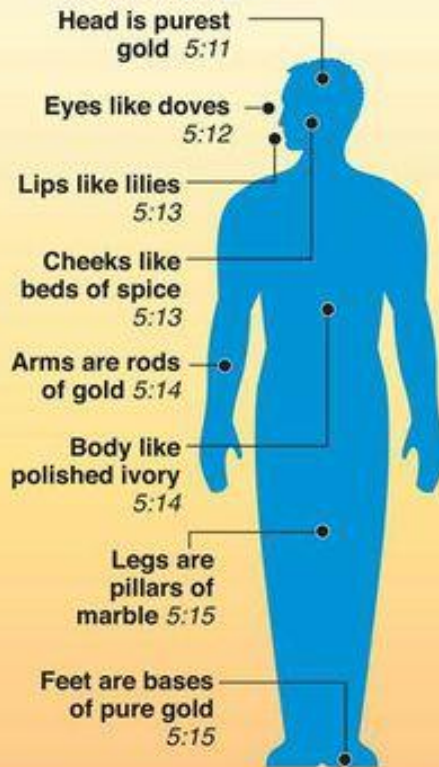
The two lovers in Song of Songs praise each other's bodies with words that were considered compliments at that time but sound strange to today's readers; here are some of the affectionate words they shared:

## WOMAN



**OVERALL APPEARANCE:**  
One of Pharaoh's horses 1:9

## MAN



**OVERALL APPEARANCE:**  
Like the land of Lebanon 5:15

Source: The NIV Quickview Bible - [www.thequickviewbible.com](http://www.thequickviewbible.com)

### **Mixed Metaphors**

The beloved says her lover is one in a million. She then goes on to describe his unique qualities. "Such descriptions of the beauty of a man are rare in ancient poetry" (Brug, p. 62). The beloved uses many figures to describe her husband's beauty. "She compares his features to precious metals (gold), birds (ravens, doves), jewels (chrysolite, sapphires), spices, myrrh, perfumes, flowers (lilies), ivory, marble, and majestic trees (cedars). While modern writers usually avoid mixing so many different comparisons in such a short space, the ancient oriental poet had no such qualms" (Ehlke, p. 193). Note also that there are ten parts of the man's body listed. In the Bible, ten is often a number symbolizing completeness. Is this another way of saying that her man is the "complete package"?

What equivalents can you suggest for the Song's "awkward compliments"?

**Evaluate:** A husband is to see his wife as the most beautiful person in the world.

Note how John describes the appearance of our heavenly Bridegroom in **Revelation 1:12-16**. What parallels can you see with the description of the man in **Songs of Songs 5:10-16**?

*The Friends*

**Chapter 6** <sup>1</sup>Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Where did your lover turn? We will look for him with you.

*The Woman*

<sup>2</sup>My lover has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

<sup>3</sup>I am my lover's, and my lover is mine. He browses among the lilies.

When the beloved speaks of the garden and the lilies, she is echoing previous scenes in the Song (**2:16; 4:15–5:1**). What light do those sections shed on the meaning of this scene?

The beloved once again says, "I am my lover's, and my lover is mine." How often should a husband and wife restate their vows to each other?

In what different ways does God express his commitment to us?

## The Man

<sup>4</sup>You are as beautiful, my darling, as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, majestic as troops with banners.

<sup>5</sup>Turn your eyes away from me, because they arouse me.

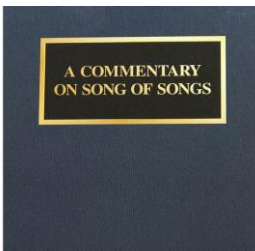
Your hair is like a flock of goats flowing down from Gilead.

<sup>6</sup>Your teeth are like a flock of ewes coming up from the washing. Each has its twin. Not one of them is alone.

<sup>7</sup>Your cheeks behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.

<sup>8</sup>There may be sixty queens, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number, <sup>9</sup>but my dove, my perfect one, is one of a kind. She is the only daughter of her mother, pure to the one who bore her. The girls saw her and called her blessed. The queens and concubines also praised her.

### BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Beautiful as Tirzah & Jerusalem



Tirzah was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel for a short time. It was not a very famous city, nor is its location especially beautiful. It was probably chosen for this comparison because its name contains the Hebrew root which means "pleasing." Indeed, the ancient versions do not translate it as a city name, but as an adjective "pleasing." In the same way the name Jerusalem contains the Hebrew root which means "perfect."

**Multiple Choice #19:** When the lover says his beloved is "majestic as troops with banners," he means...

- A. She has a hold on him - that she came, she saw, she conquered him.
- B. Her looks could knock out an army.
- C. Her appearance is like a Fourth of July parade, complete with fireworks!

Write down your reason for your answer.

This description of the woman's hair, teeth, and temples is the same one used earlier (**4:1-3**). Why is repeating compliments an important tool in building a strong relationship, especially between a husband and wife?

**Multiple Choice #20:** The mention of queens, concubines, and virgins refer to...

- A. Solomon's harem. (c.f. **1 Kings 11:1-3**)
- B. The contrast of people like Solomon with his large harem who don't know the beauty of a monogamous marriage such as the lover and the beloved have in the Song.
- C. Unbelievers of other nations who try to led believers astray, much like the great prostitute in the book of *Revelation*.

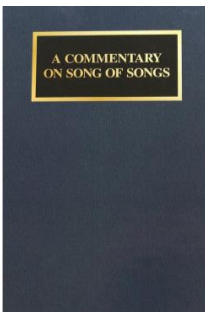
Write down your reason for your answer.

**Evaluate:** Because Solomon didn't practice what he preached in the *Song of Songs*, the message of the book is diminished.

### *The Friends*

<sup>10</sup>Who is this woman that appears like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, clear as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?

### **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Heavenly Beauty**



The comparison of the woman to the heavenly bodies reminds us of the similar description of the church in **Revelation 12**. The Hebrew words for "sun" and "moon" are not the common words, but rarer, poetic words. The last part of the comparison in verse 10 is identical to the last part of verse 4. It literally reads "awesome as bannered ones." The word "stars" does not appear in the Hebrew, but it is supplied by analogy from the preceding phrases. The first and last lines of the section thus end with identical words—the first time describing troops in procession, the second time describing stars in procession.

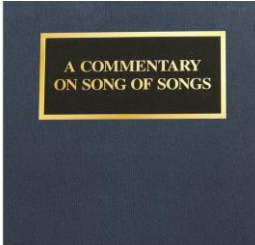


## *The Woman or The Man*

<sup>11</sup>I went down to the grove of nut trees, to look at the new growth in the valley, to see whether the vines had budded, whether the pomegranates had blossomed.

<sup>12</sup>Before I realized it, my desire set me among the chariots of my willing people.

### **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Discerning the Speaker**



In the Song it has been the man who goes down to the garden to enjoy its fruits. The garden has represented the woman. This suggests that the man is the speaker of verse 11. Later in the Song, however, the woman is the owner of a vineyard, so it is difficult to say with certainty who is speaking here. Some commentators interpret verse 11 as the woman's admiration of the garden the man has planted.

**Multiple Choice #21:** Verses 11-12 are a picture of...

- A. Christ gathering believers with him through the "chariot" of the Gospel.
- B. Solomon asking the Shulammitte woman to take a ride in his chariot. (c.f. **1 Kings 10:26**)
- C. The first time the Shulammitte met her beloved or went on a date.
- D. A yearning of the beloved to have her lover back as they have been temporary separated, as if he had gone away on a trip.

Write down your reason for your answer.

### *The Friends*

<sup>13</sup>Turn back, turn back, O Shulammitte. Turn back, turn back, so that we may look at you!

### *The Woman*

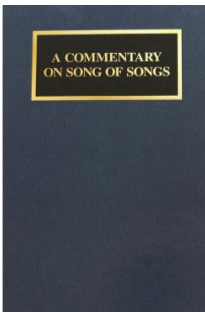
**Chapter 7** <sup>1</sup>Why would you look at the Shulammitte. as at the dance of Mahanaim?

**Multiple Choice #22:** The woman is called the Shulammitte because...

- A. She is from the village called Shulam, the same village in the Jezreel Valley which is also called Shunem.
- B. It is the feminine form of the name Solomon, and she is his equal.
- C. The root of the Hebrew word means "the peaceful one" or "the perfect one."

Write down your reason for your answer.

### **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Mahanaim**



The word "mahanaim" means "two camps" and is also the name of a city east of the Jordan. The most likely explanation is that this expression refers to a dance named after the city or to a dance in which the participants lined up in two rows opposite each other. This dance may well have been an occasion when young men admired young women, but there is no need to conclude that there was anything indecent about this dance, as many commentators do. The young lady is simply expressing surprise that others are so eager to admire her beauty.

### *The Friends or The Man*

<sup>2</sup>How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! Your hips are curved like a necklace, the work of the hands of a craftsman. <sup>3</sup>Your navel is a round mixing bowl. It never lacks blended wine. Your belly is a mound of wheat, encircled by lilies. <sup>4</sup>Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.

<sup>5</sup>Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are the pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bat Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, overlooking Damascus. <sup>6</sup>Your head rises above you like Mount Carmel. The flowing hair of your head is like purple. The king is captivated by its curls.

**Multiple Choice #23:** The woman is called the "prince's daughter" because...

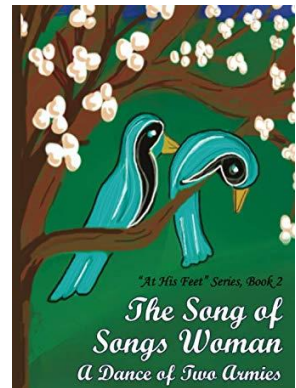
- A. This is yet another "pet" name of the lover to his beloved.
- B. She is the daughter of a king.
- C. This is another name for the Church, someone who belongs to the Prince of Peace.

Write down your reason for your answer.

**Multiple Choice #24:** Verses 2-6 describe...

- A. How beautiful is the person who brings the Gospel to others.
- B. An exotic dance leading to sexual intercourse.
- C. The husband enjoying the beauty of his wife as she dances the Mahanaim.

Write down your reason for your answer.



*Song of Songs*, like all sections of the Bible, must be understood in the context of Scripture. Why is this an important point to remember, especially in a section like this?

The man calls his wife "the work of the hands of a craftsman." How does this also apply to us as believers? (See **Psalm 139:14** & **Ephesians 2:10**.)

### *The Man*

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful you are and how pleasing, O loved one, daughter of delights! <sup>8</sup>Your height is like that of the date palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit. <sup>9</sup>I said, "I will climb the date palm. I will take hold of its bunches of fruit." May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, <sup>10a</sup>and your mouth like the best wine—

In **Hebrews 13:4**, God tells us that "marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure." Apply this to this section of the Song.

### *The Woman*

<sup>10b</sup>—flowing to my lover, gliding smoothly over lips and teeth. <sup>11</sup>I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me.

<sup>12</sup>Come, my lover, let us go to the fields. Let us spend the night in the villages. <sup>13</sup>Let us go early to the vineyards. We will see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, if the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give my love to you. The mandrakes send out their fragrance.

At our door is every delicacy, new as well as old, that I have stored up for you, my lover.

The beloved invites her lover, "Let us go to the fields. Let us spend the night in the villages." Why is this excellent advice for a married couple? How can this also be applied to a single person?

### BRUG'S COMMENTARY: Mandrakes

The plant name מנדקאים is similar to the word for lovemaking which occurs throughout the Song. It could be translated "love-apples." The plant is commonly identified with the mandrake or mandragora, which was used as a love potion or fertility drug (**Genesis 30:14–16**). Since the mandrake known in modern Europe is a narcotic rather than a stimulant, perhaps some other plant is meant. Here it is clear that it is the aphrodisiac qualities of the plant which are of interest.



**Homework for Couples:** The beloved offers to share both old and new with her husband. What are some old things and some new things that couples share today that can foster a strong and growing relationship?

What are some old things and some new things that God shares with us that foster a strong and growing relationship between us and him? (See **Psalms 25:6; Lamentations 3:22-23; & Matthew 13:52.**)

### *The Woman*

**Chapter 8** <sup>1</sup>I wish that you were like a brother to me, who was nursed at my mother's breasts. Then if I would meet you in public, I could kiss you, and no one would despise me. <sup>2</sup>I would lead you. I would bring you to my mother's house where she used to teach me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the juice of my pomegranates. <sup>3</sup>His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me.

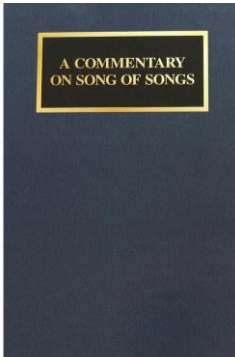
**Multiple Choice #25:** The woman wishes that her love was like her brother because...

- A. It was culturally unacceptable to give public displays of affection.
- B. She represents the church and wants to be united with Christ, as every believer does.
- C. She wants to spend more time with her lover but they are not married and don't have their own home yet.
- D. He's a cool dude.

Write down your reason for your answer.

<sup>4</sup>Daughters of Jerusalem, you must swear that you will not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

### **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: The Repeated Oath**



The oath in **8:4** is a variant of **2:7** and **3:5**... In each case the woman has done something to arouse and waken love just before she turns to her friends and tells them not to be too quick to rouse or waken love. This oath, therefore, seems to be a device to break off a scene in which their love is becoming more intense. It allows the Song to revert back to an early stage of their love and start over again... The fact that this device occurs throughout the Song strengthens the impression that the Song does not have a chronological plot which goes in a straight line from beginning to end. It also shows that the Song has a conscious literary arrangement.

What lesson can engagement teach us about this time while we are awaiting our Lord Jesus' return?

### *The Friends*

<sup>5a</sup>Who is this woman coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her lover?

**Multiple Choice #26:** The "wilderness" here refers to...

- A. Past days of depression and sorrow.
- B. The country she loved.
- C. Their weekend getaway.

Write down your reason for your answer.

## The Woman

<sup>5b</sup>Under the apple tree I roused you. There your mother conceived you. There she who gave birth to you was in labor.

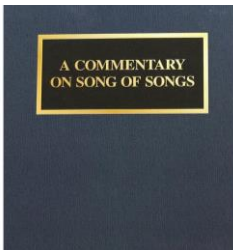
**Multiple Choice #27:** The rendezvous under the apple tree is...

- A. Christ's loving the Church from her birth.
- B. Akin to a well-known make out spot like "Lover's Lane."
- C. An invitation to start a family.

Write down your reason for your answer.

<sup>6</sup>Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm, because love is as strong as death. Its passion is as relentless as the grave. Its flames are flames of fire, a mighty blaze. <sup>7</sup>Many waters cannot quench such love. Rivers cannot wash it away. If a man were to offer all the wealth of his house for love, he would be utterly scorned.

### BRUG'S COMMENTARY: A Seal Over Your Heart



In **verse 6** the woman continues to celebrate her love for the man and his love for her. A man usually wore his personal seal on a cord around his neck or on a ring on his hand. It was his most intimate object since it bore his personal identifying mark. She asks him to "wear her" as close to him as his seal. In our culture such closeness is often symbolized in a similar way, by exchanging rings or by wearing a lover's ring or a charm on a chain around the neck.

**Multiple Choice #28:** "Love is as strong as death" means that...

- A. Your life is over when you get married.
- B. True love pursues you as relentlessly and inevitably as death does for every person.
- C. Love is as mindless and seemingly random as how and why people die.
- D. Love is like a bear hug that never lets go.

Write down your reason for your answer.

How does the woman describe her husband's love? What kind of love is she describing? Is it the same kind of love expressed in other parts of the Song? (Consider **1 Corinthians 13**.)

Where does love like this come from? See **1 John 4:10,19**.

What does this tell us about their relationship at this point?

Considering Solomon's track record, what irony do you see in his words, "If a man were to offer all the wealth of his house for love, he would be utterly scorned." (**verse 7**)

### *The Brothers*

<sup>8</sup>We have a little sister. She has no breasts. What shall we make for our sister on the day she is spoken for?

<sup>9</sup>If she is a wall, we will build towers of silver on her. If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar.

**Multiple Choice #29:** Who is speaking here?

- A. The woman talking about a younger sister that she has.
- B. The refrain of friends who have been peppered throughout the Song expressing their hope for a love for their sister to be like the love of the beloved and lover.
- C. Israelite believers talking about their hope for the Gentiles to become new believers in the relationship between Christ and the Church.
- D. The brothers of the beloved - who have since reconciled with her - want their younger sister to experience the same love that their older sister - the beloved - has.

Write down your reason for your answer.



**Multiple Choice #30:** When the brothers refer to the beloved as a "wall" and a "door," they are speaking about...

- A. Whether or not she is open to sexual advances.
- B. Whether or not she is a good worker.
- C. Her physical appearance.

Write down your reason for your answer.

Earlier in the Song the beloved alluded to the harsh treatment she received from her brothers. Why might they have kept her busy in the vineyard?

How can we as parents and adults help the younger generation be "walls" rather than "doors"?

Read **Psalm 25:7; Isaiah 1:18; & Psalm 51**. What hope is there for those who have been "doors" rather than "walls"?

## *The Woman*

<sup>10</sup>I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. Thus I have become in his eyes like one who delivers contentment.

**Multiple Choice #31:** How should we understand verse 10?

- A. The younger sister is declaring that she will remain a virgin until marriage.
- B. The older sister - the beloved from the majority of the Song - is touting the fact that she remained a virgin until she was married.
- C. It is a picture of how we have been built on the Rock, Christ, as members of his Church.
- D. The sister rejects the brothers' claim and is stating that she is well endowed in her outward features.

Write down your reason for your answer.

<sup>11</sup>Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon. He leased his vineyard to tenants. Each was to bring for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver.

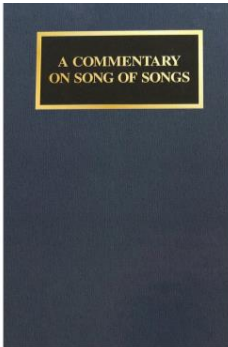
<sup>12</sup>But my own vineyard is before me. The thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, and two hundred are for those who tend its fruit.

**Multiple Choice #32:** The reference to Solomon's vineyard is...

- A. Regarding the lover's body while the other vineyard mentioned is referring to the beloved's body.
- B. The lover's statement that he prefers his monogamous relationship with his beloved rather than what Solomon has with his polygamous relationships.
- C. Used to compare to the beloved's literal vineyard.
- D. A reference to an actual vineyard that Solomon owned and then the vineyard in verse 12 is a reference to the beloved's body.

Write down your reason for your answer.

## **BRUG'S COMMENTARY: What are these Vineyards?**



Solomon's vineyard seems to be distinct from the woman's. He has a great vineyard (his harem), but her vineyard (her body) is her own (compare **1:6**), and she is proud and happy to keep it for her lover alone. "Baal hamon" means "lord or husband of a crowd." This too may be a satiric reference to Solomon's harem. Solomon must hire keepers for his vineyard, but the woman tends hers alone. Solomon's vineyard is a business transaction of give and take, make the best deal. As far as the woman is concerned, Solomon can keep his wealth. She won't compete for a place in the royal harem as Esther did. No amount of money can buy her love (compare **8:7**). Other interpreters see these verse as the words of the man, saying that he would rather have his own vineyard (the woman) than Solomon's great harem. This approach harmonizes well with the earlier sections of the Song in which the man calls the woman his vineyard, but "giving the vineyard" seems to be more appropriate to the woman. A third interpretation identifies Solomon as the woman's lover and as a type of Christ. Christ rents his vineyard to tenants who must care for it so that it produces fruit for him. The formerly negligent tenants will now do a good job and will receive their reward (compare **1:6**).

The Lord often uses the picture of a vineyard to teach spiritual truths. Read the following sections from Scripture and note how they are being used:

**Isaiah 5:1-7**

**Matthew 20:1-16**

**Matthew 21:33-45**

*The Man*

<sup>13</sup>You who dwell in the gardens with friends in attendance, let me hear your voice!

*The Woman*

<sup>14</sup>Run away, my love, and be like a gazelle, or like a young buck on the mountains of spices.

**Multiple Choice #33:** With this closing verse...

- A. The Song ends as mysteriously as it began.
- B. We see the lovers riding off into the sunset.
- C. The lovers live happily ever after.
- D. All of the above apply.

Write down your reason for your answer.

It's fitting that the last words are spoken by the woman. For in the Song, she speaks twice as many lines as the lover. The first line of the Song could either read "A Song by Solomon" or "A Song for Solomon." Why would the latter also be an appropriate heading?

Read **Revelation 22:16-21**. How does God's "song" of the whole Bible end on a similar note.



**In the End...**

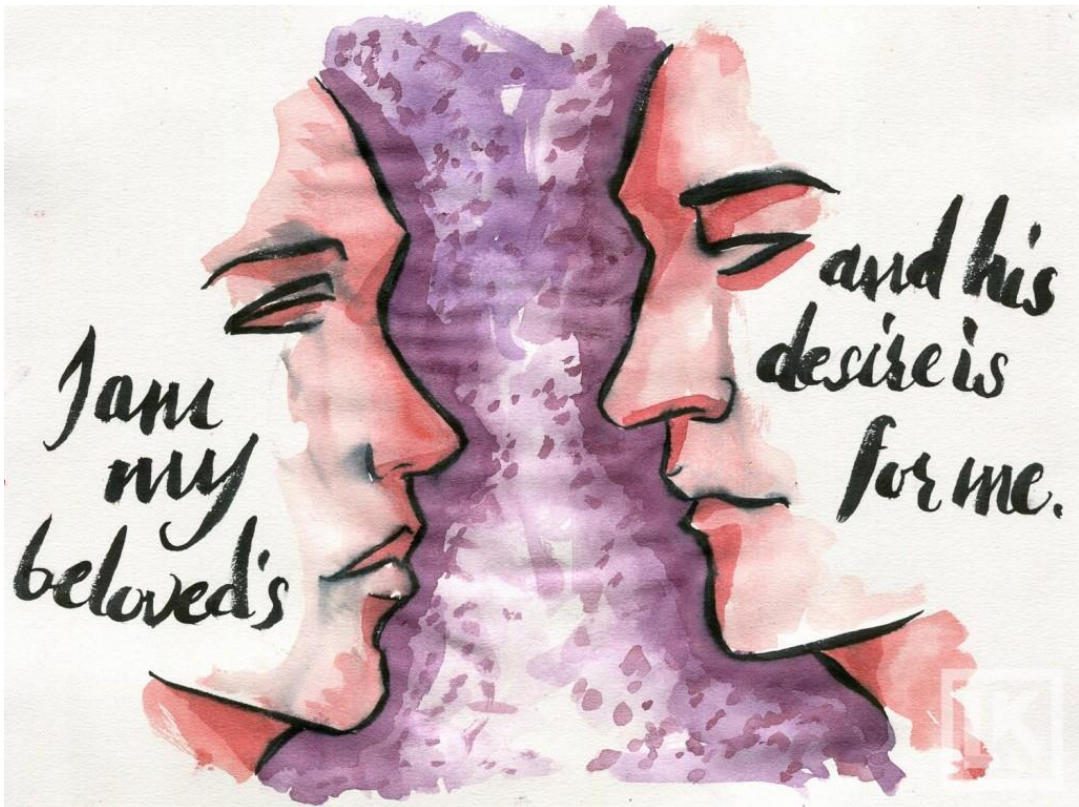
How would you summarize *Song of Songs* to a Christian? To an unbeliever? To a 5-year-old?

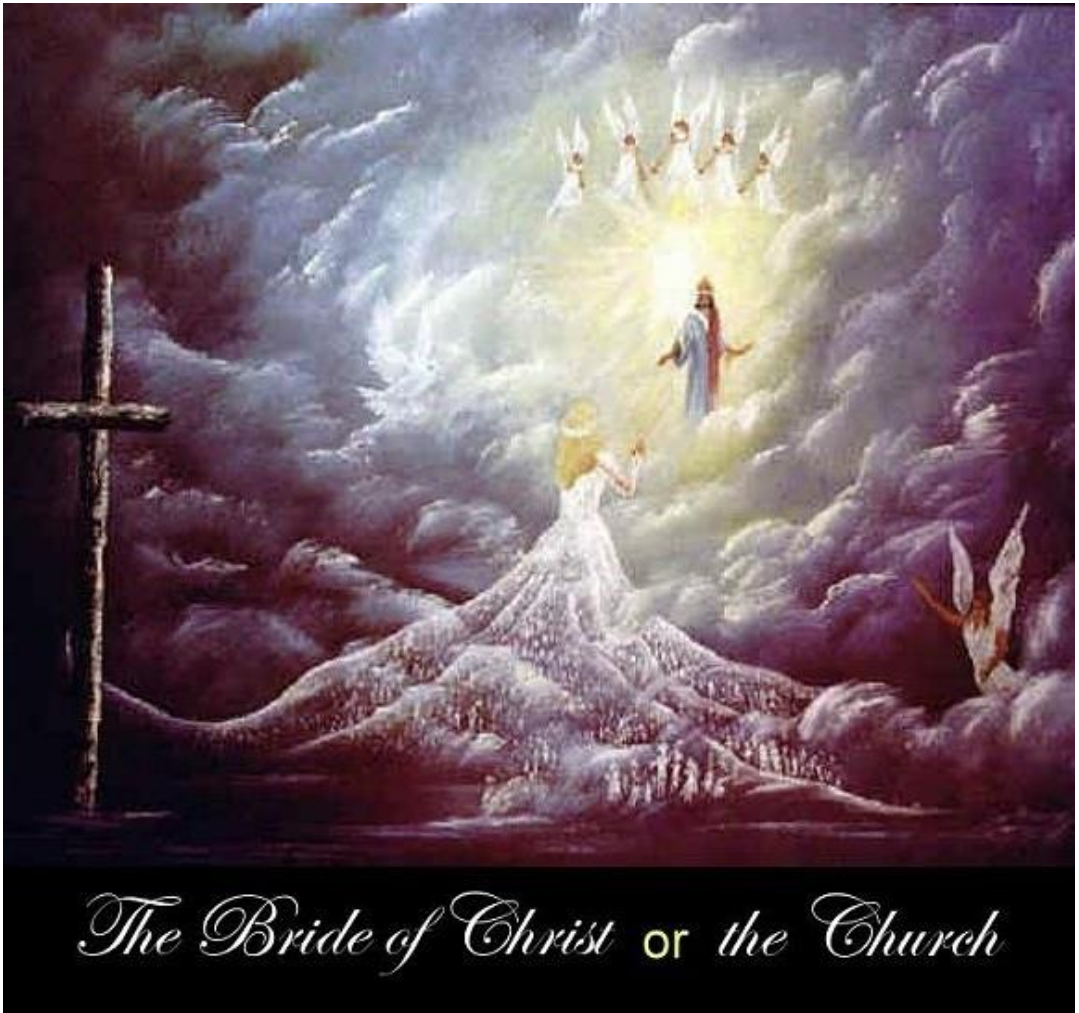
What will you take away from your study of *Song of Songs*?

Why do you think that *Song of Songs* is included in the Bible? Why do you think that the Jews read it annually during the Passover?

Our world is confused about marriage. The prevalence of divorce and modern attempts to redefine marriage stand in glaring contrast to Solomon's Song. Marriage, says the biblical poet, is to be celebrated, enjoyed, and revered. This book provides some practical guidelines for strengthening our marriages:

- 1) Give your spouse the attention he or she needs. Take the time to truly know your spouse.
- 2) Encouragement and praise, not criticism, are vital to a successful relationship.
- 3) Enjoy each other. Plan some getaways. Be creative, even playful, with each other. Delight in God's gift of married love.
- 4) Do whatever is necessary to reassure your commitment to your spouse. Renew your vows; work through problems and do not consider divorce as a solution. God intends for you both to live in a deeply peaceful, secure love.





*The Bride of Christ or the Church*



# LIGHT OF THE VALLEY

## —LUTHERAN CHURCH—

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