

Song of Songs

Introduction

What do you know about the Song of Songs? Many people have not studied the book nor have they heard the book taught publicly at church. Some try to read the Song of Songs on their own and find the material very confusing. Who is talking? What are they talking about? Who are they talking to? Most translations try to help this out by including "he" and "she" notations throughout the book. But these are not original to the manuscripts but an attempt to clarify to the reader who seems to be the speaker. This is an inspired book that is in our Bibles and must not be ignored. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The book begins by calling itself, "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." "Song of Songs" is a Hebrew idiom to describe this song as the very best song. Think about the tabernacle and how the inner sanctuary was called the "Holy of Holies." This meant that it was the most holy place, the highest of holiness. So this is what we are told about this song: it is the greatest of all songs. There are some unusual features to this song. The most notable feature is that the woman is the main character and main speaker in the book. I consider that just as the book of Proverbs was written primarily to instruct the young man how to live in life that the Song of Songs was written primarily to young women to know God's teaching concerning love. Both genders have much to learn from both of these wisdom books. But it seems women are given particular attention in this Song.

Method of Interpretation

Unfortunately, it seems there are hundreds of interpretations for the Song of Songs. As I prepared to teach this material I was shocked to learn how varied the interpretations were. Perhaps the most popular interpretation has been the allegorical approach. This view declares that the Song of Songs is not teaching about human love at all, but depicts either Christ and his love for the church or God and his love for Israel. People have gravitated to this interpretation because of the highly suggestive language of love and romance that is found in the book.

But there are significant problems with an allegorical interpretation. First, where does this Song ever suggest that it is not to be read at face value but should be understood as an allegory? There is no indication in the text to clue the reader into thinking that this song is speaking about anything other than the love between a man and a woman. It is totally unnatural to read this book as God loving Israel or Christ loving the church. Second, how could this book be about Christ and the church when it was written in the days of the reign of Solomon? No one reading would have a concept of the church to be able to read this book in that way. Third, the love that is described in this book is explicit. It is not only unnatural, but uncomfortable, to use this kind of romantic, sexual language in reference to Christ and the church. While the scriptures paint God's love for Israel and Christ's love for the church as a marriage, these relationships are never described in terms of sexual relations. Fourth, the allegorical approach leads to some extremely ridiculous interpretations. For example, notice 1:13.

"My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh that lies between my breasts."

The allegorical interpretation teaches that this is a reference to Christ between two testaments (the old and new covenants). One can see that this is a complete reach and an unnatural explanation. Finally, we must reject the allegorical approach because it is an improper way to study any book of the scriptures. We cannot begin with what we think the book says and then force the book to read that way. The only time we can know if something is an allegory is when the scriptures tell us it is an allegory, like in Galatians 4:24. We must let the book speak for itself and base our interpretation from what it says, not impose our interpretation over the

text. We cannot start with an interpretation, like this book is about Christ and the church, and force the text to match what we think.

Further, the sexual language in the book should not bother us just because it is in the scriptures. First, God is the creator of romance and sex. He is the one who created these desires. He further commands his creation to engage in sexual relations in marriage and calls it sin if sex is avoided in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:1-6). Further, there are many places where we see this kind of language in the scriptures outside of the Song of Songs. Listen to the Proverbs:

15 Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. 16 Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. 20 Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? (Proverbs 5:15–20 ESV)

Sex is not to be our god, which is where our society is at today. But in overreaction, some well-meaning Christians teach their children that sex is gross or sinful. I believe it is a terrible mistake to teach our children that sex is something that is gross, dirty, nasty, vile, evil, and wrong that should be saved for the one you love. I have had to counsel too many young married women who were having issues in the bedroom because they were taught all their childhood that sex is wrong and sinful. Now they are married and can't get past that idea. We must teach that sex is a gift of God which is a blessing and joy of marriage. Sex is only sinful when it is outside of the context of marriage. In fact, God commands sexual relations and condemns marriages where sex does not exist (1 Corinthians 7:2-4). This is what we should proclaim.

We should not be surprised that topic is in the scriptures. God created sex, romance, and love. Should not the creator of these things also instruct his creation about what is right and good about them? This is the nature of the wisdom books in the scriptures. The wisdom books deal with practical matters that are not directly or overtly God-glorifying (like the Proverbs describing a nagging wife is like a dripping faucet and warning not praise your neighbor early in the morning or he will consider it a curse). The location of the Song of Songs is in the wisdom books. So what we are going to read are to be practical teachings for life. Our interpretation should be to read the book looking for how this information will help us to have a good life now being pleasing to God.

Understanding Poetry

The Song of Songs begins by telling us that it is a song. It is poetry. Songs are a beautiful way to communicate God's word. Just read the emotions of the Psalms and we quickly can see this beauty. Songs and poems have a way communicating to our minds and emotions in a greater way than plain information can. Consider the following difference:

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies. (Lord Byron)

or:

A woman in a black dress with shiny beads looked pretty when she walked by.

We could certainly say the second thing about a pretty woman in a dress. But we recognize the beauty of the poetry which awakens our senses beyond imparting information. We should consider that this is a beautiful way for the Lord to speak about human love and romance.

There are differences in speaking about love and sex using clinical language, crude language, and poetic language. God could speak like a doctor would speak to you, talking about increased heart rates and perspiration. But this would miss the beauty of love. We also see that God does not use locker room language about love. The language is not crude or crass. The Song of Songs speaks about love and romance that heightens the senses. Consider that we do the same thing even in our day when we speak about romance. We do not speak about perspiration and heart rates when we speak about love but you make my heart "go pitter patter." Why do we use pet names, like "honey" or "dear" or whatever you use? This is how we talk about romantic love. We use language like "the birds and bees" when speaking about sex. We should read these words as beautiful, romantic language and not turn this into a crass, pornographic poem.

The Disney movie, Bambi, can help us understand the Song. The mating time is in the spring. Thumper says they all got "twitter-pated." Spring is the season for love. Setting a season in beautiful language and imagery. There is a setting for love and romance. Consider that a red rose symbolizes love and romance, more so than any other flower. We use nature as a means to speak in a careful, yet romantic way about love. Movies today do this with fine dining, wine, red roses, fire in the fireplace, etc.

Therefore our challenge is to know the meaning of these images in the original context of ancient near eastern love poetry. When the Song speaks about deer and gardens, it is up to us to consider what those images meant to the readers at that time, just as cultures in the future will have to learn what a red rose meant to us in our culture. While the sexual and romantic language of the book perhaps is shocking to us, the language is remarkably similar to ancient near eastern love poetry. The Song uses the same kind of love imagery that is found in Egyptian poetry and other ancient near eastern poetry. It is not unique in its images. What is unusual about the Song of Songs is that it has no cultic reference (no love/sex with pagan sacrifices) and it glorifies marital love rather than fornication. Proper romance and purity of the relationship is glorified rather than sexual immorality.

How To Read Song of Songs

Read the following poem and think about how one is to understand the writing.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference

Robert Frost

Is there really a physical road? No. The reader of the poem is not to wonder where the author was when he wrote this. The point is not to try to find these two paths at some geographical location. These paths are metaphors. They are not to be taken literally. Each path represents something else. One path is the way everyone goes, making the same life decisions as everyone else. But there is another path that is rarely traveled and that is the better life path. We need to see that we are called upon to stop and reflect on the message of the poem. We are to see the level of symbolism and interpretive license that is allowed to the reader.

Therefore we need to have this kind of thinking in mind when we read the Song. This Song is poetry. The Song of Songs in no way implies that some historical event is being preserved. It is poetry. It is a song. We need to think of it as a song. Think of it being sung. Think of the artistry. Think of the beautiful imagery. The Song has highly figurative language. By the author telling us it is a song allows us to interpret the book metaphorically and poetically. Poetry is the art of being highly expressive in a minimal amount of word usage, using words that invokes the senses of the mind and heart. Even the songs we sing in our songbooks use highly figurative and metaphorical language (e.g. Streets paved with gold, mansion over the hilltop, kneel at the cross, I'll fly away, and many more). We understand the meaning of these metaphors from the song. We must do the same thing as we study the Song of Songs.

Further, there does not have to be a story in poetry, necessarily. There can be just a singular point, like Frost's poem. So we do not need to read this Song as if we are reading about two actual individuals. Just as Frost's poem is not about an actual event, the Song gives no indication that these are real people or that these events actually happened (we will address the use of Solomon's name in the Song later in our study).

Preparing For Study

The Song of Songs is needed now more than ever. Marriages are crumbling. People are looking for love in the wrong ways. Sexual immorality is on the rise. Love and sex have been ripped away from marriage. People often do not know what to look for in love and marriage. Rather than fearing this book and being uncomfortable with the subject matter, this book needs to be taught and shared in our society.

As we proceed in this study, I am going to take the most naturally sounding picture of the poetry as the means of interpretation. There are so many interpretations that we can get lost in explaining every option. I will proceed as I did when we studied through the book of Revelation. We will read the text and take the most natural picture presented, considering what the image meant in that day and time.

When I taught Song of Songs before, I taught it as a three person view. This means that I saw that there was a story of a woman who was deciding between Solomon and a shepherd. The Song then shows her struggle to

decide who she loves and true love is compared with false love. However, I have changed my mind away from this interpretation for a number of reasons. The first major reason is that scholars tell us that ancient near eastern poetry did not write about love triangles. There is no poetry that shows a woman deciding between two men. These are dramas that came along later with Greek plays (some 600 years later). The second major objection to the three person interpretation is that no one until the 1800s suggested that there are three main characters. All Jewish literature and interpretations always saw only two characters in the story, not three. Finally, I reject the third person view because it is not the most natural way to read the Song. The three person view requires the reader to impose an interpretation over the Song, the very thing we condemned the allegorical approach for doing. The three person view requires us to assume that she is thinking or dreaming about a third person and is not speaking to the person who is talking to her. The view makes too many assumptions and is not a natural understanding of the Song. Therefore, I will present a two person view because this seems to be the most natural way to read the Song.

Finally, we must address one other question: How could Solomon teach on a book of love when he was a polygamist and fell away? There are a number of options for an answer. First, "Which is Solomon's" does not necessarily mean he wrote the Song but that the Song is about him. I personally do not think this is the case. I believe he wrote the Song, but it is worth noting that some take this option. Second, the third person view is popular because it makes Solomon to be the villain of the story. But is this the only way to deal with Solomon as the author of a love song? I submit to you that there are many more options. Consider that Solomon wrote Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Should those books be rejected because Solomon turned from the Lord at the end of his life? Should his counsel about love in the Proverbs be rejected because he had so many wives? I do not think so. Further, it is possible that he wrote this Song early in his reign. It is just as possible that he is writing later in his reign, drawing from his own experiences after learning from his own errors. Can we not instruct others based on the mistakes we make in our own lives? I do not believe that Solomon is discredited for writing about love. He was given the greatest wisdom ever by God and has every ability to express those godly truths by the Holy Spirit even though his life did not meet God's standards.

So read the Song of Songs. See the beauty of God's words as he pictures the beauty of human love.

Directions For Study

This handout is not intended to replace your own study of the Song of Songs but to assist it. Some of the metaphors in the Song are difficult to understand. Read the Song of Songs and use this handout to help understand some of the metaphors that you may find difficult. Further, this handout considers a variety of applications from the message of the Song. God is teaching women and men how to have proper love and marriage relationships.

The book of Proverbs is wisdom literature primarily written to men (1:8). This does not mean that there are not applications to both genders. But one must be mindful who is the primary audience. In the same way, it appears that Song of Songs is wisdom literature primarily written to women. The woman is the main character of the story, speaking from her vantage point on how a woman is to behave in love and marriage. Men can learn much from this book but the student must keep in mind that women are the primary audience.

Song of Songs

Chapter 1

In Song of Songs 3:11 we see a description that it is the wedding day and what follows are images of a wedding ceremony. This sets the stage for how we should look at the poetry we are reading. The first three chapters show courting and dating. We are reading love poetry about a relationship between a man and a woman that is moving toward marriage. So as we read the first few chapters I believe we should look at this in the context of the dating relationship.

She Desires Him (1:2-4)

The song begins with her desiring intimacy with this man. She desires to kiss him. His love is intoxicating to her. His love is a joy and great delight to her. Further, she is attracted to his character as well as his looks. He acts well and smells good. His cologne and his name excites her. He is a person that other women also desire. There is something wrong if this man has absolutely no hope of finding a spouse. He is not someone that all the women say, "Ewww! That guy!" The other women also think he is a catch. If nobody likes this man, that is supposed to be a warning. If your parents do not like him and your friends do not like him, you need to be greatly concerned. How often a girl will say of a man she is dating, "I am the only one who understands him" or "No one sees in him what I see in him." You are fooling yourself. This is a warning. The reason you are the only one who sees something is because you are hoping to see something that is not there. You think you are going to fix him or make him a better person or change him. This is not the situation this woman is in. Other girls enjoy his company also and are not confused as to why you are spending time with him.

In verse 4 she expresses the desire to spend intimate alone time together. We are going to see throughout this Song that there is a fight to spend private time together. They are continually looking for alone time together. A couple translations suggest that this is the bedroom. "Chambers" can refer to a bedroom in scriptures but the word merely means "the innermost part of the house." There was a need for privacy for kissing, especially in that day. "Romantic kissing was assumed but kept away from the public gaze" (Hess, 49; cf. 8:1). There is still somewhat of a stigma today for kissing in public, though it does not at all seem to be to the degree that we are reading about in that time. But it is not hard to see that there was a need for privacy when kissing and that is what they are longing for and find privacy for. The point is not that they are starting a sexual relationship before marriage. The point is that they want to spend time together, to the exclusion of others. They want time alone, away from distractions. This is natural. You start ignoring your friends and spending more time with the person you are dating. When you spend time together, you spend the time without distraction, doing things together.

How sad when a couple does not want to spend time together but look for time to be apart to unwind and relax. We need to fight for time together. We spend so much time together when dating, but that time is easily lost when married. Children completely destroy together time. So we have to be creative in making time together. You may not be able to go out on dates like you did before. But you can send the children to bed and have a date night at home. Spend time together talking, playing games, and interacting together. Fight for time together.

Further, there's something wrong if we are not desiring one another physically. It is good to desire each other. Sexual desire is not evil. It has a proper place. God gave us these desires. The desire is not the problem but what we do with the desire (fornication, lust, porn, etc).

Notice also that she calls him "the king." Scholar and commentator Tremper Longman writes, "It is best to take the reference neither historically nor ritually, but rather as a poetic device. It is love language. She refers to him as king, but this must not be taken literally. In her eyes, he is a king, the best and most powerful male in

her life, worthy of the highest honor. Elsewhere, she calls him a shepherd (1:7), but that is not literal either. These are terms of endearment. The Song is best understood as creating a poetic world, not as describing actual events" (Longman, 92). We use the same kind of language today in love and poetry. He should be your "Prince Charming." Women speak of certain men as their "knight in shining armor." Is he really a knight? Is he really a prince? Ladies, if one of you said to the other that the prince took you on vacation, you would not think that she was having an affair with a prince. You would understand that the prince is the husband. It seems best to do the same here, remember that this is a song with strong poetic metaphors in use.

Her Self-Image (1:5-7)

She describes herself as your average woman. She does not look like the models. She is lovely, but she is not amazingly hot. She is a woman that all women can relate to. She has average good looks. She is dark from working outside. Pale skin was "in" back then because it meant you had wealth and did not have to work. Today tan is "in" and pale is "out." This shows how styles are always changing. But the point is that she is someone for all the women to relate to. She is not a perfect 10.

Further, she is painfully aware that her appearance does not measure up to the conventional definition of feminine beauty in her culture (1:6). She says that because she works in the vineyard that does not have the time or ability to "doll herself up" like the other women. She is a busy woman working in the vineyard and she is aware that she does not and cannot look like others. Does any woman love their appearance? It is interesting that even the woman in the story feels like she has to justify her appearance and is not satisfied with her looks. But she is beautiful to her man, as we will see as the poem progresses. This is all that matters.

Men, your wife is the standard of beauty and not what you see on tv or in movies. She will be insecure about her looks because the world always seems to have a moving target for what is beautiful. She is beautiful. If she had makeup artists, clothing consultants, special lighting, airbrushing, and Photoshop, she would look smashing also. But the one you are married to or the one you are dating works, takes care of the children, goes to the grocery store, does household chores, cooks meals, manages the house and so forth. She cannot look like what you see on television and in magazines, men. She can't be in the beauty parlor for four hours everyday. So it is unreasonable to hold your woman up to a false standard of beauty that no one is able to maintain.

All that matters is that he thinks she is beautiful. Men, she is your standard of beauty. She is beautiful to you. It does not matter what the world defines as beautiful. Men must communicate that to the woman. We are going to see the man in this relationship do that later in this chapter. Further, this is part of the plague of internet pornography. The images you are seeing are not real and cause you to be dissatisfied with your spouse's or girlfriend's looks. If you married a short woman, then you like short. If you married a tall woman, then you like tall. If you married a "high-maintenance" woman, then you like "high-maintenance." If you married a "low-maintenance" woman, then you like "low-maintenance." If you married a skinny woman, then you like skinny. If you married a not so skinny woman, then you like no so skinny. What if they do not look the way they did when you married them? Neither do you. Now you like the way she looks now. As we have noticed with this woman in the Song, she is keenly aware of her looks and how it does not match the standard of the world. You do not need to reinforce that to her. Instead, you need to reinforce your pleasure in her.

In verse 7 we see that she wants to know where he will be so that she can find time to spend with him. She does not want to blend in with "the friends crowd." She wants to be alone with him. Couples should be looking for ways to make time together. She says that she wants to meet him at work to spend time with him. This was one of the nice things my wife did for me when we were dating. I was working at a gas station/convenience store in college and I worked the third shift. There were times she came and visited me, even

though it was late at night. We need to think about one another and do things for each other that would be enjoyed and appreciated.

Textual note: Kedar was a territory southeast of Damascus where the Bedouin roamed. Their tents were made of the skins of black goats.

His Praise For Her (1:8-11)

In verses 8-10 we see the man make two declarations to her. First, though busy and working (1:7), she still is the priority of his life. She needs to be his priority and she is. She needs to know that he wants to be around her. He does not say, "Don't bother me at work. I'll see you when I am done tending the flocks." She wants to spend time with him and he is encouraging her to do so. Also, there is an important message of trust declared here. There is a knowledge of where each other will be. It is not a surprise as if he has gone somewhere that she had no idea. There is nothing hidden from each other in this relationship. They know where each other are. If you are dating and you think you need more privacy, then you have the wrong person. If you are trying to hide yourself from the other person, then this tells you that you do not enjoy spending time together. If you are married, then this secrecy is a big problem. It is often an indication of an affair, or at least a heart that has shut down to you and may be opening up for another. This problem must be immediately addressed.

Second, he is willing to praise her beauty. He listened to her concerns and addressed what she needed. She has asked to not be looked down upon because of her looks. She is lovely but she does not meet the culture's standard of beauty. He only has eyes for her. Among all the women, she is the most beautiful. He says that she stands apart from all the other women. You catch the attention of all the men. Notice that he confirms her beauty to alleviate her fears that she is expressed in verses 5-6. Also notice the specificity of his compliments to her and she will respond in kind. Don't just say "you look good." He gives her specific compliments. Tell her what looks good. Tell her what you like and be specific about your compliments. He speaks about how beautiful her jewelry sits on her. Women like to hear these kinds of words, men. Further, the language he uses also speaks to her nobility and her value to him.

Verse 11 is another chorus of women singing how beautiful the jewelry sits on her.

King or shepherd? — The discussion has been of flocks, herds, shepherds, and vineyards. But the rest of chapter 1 speaks of a table, expensive and exotic perfumes, and spices from far away places. At the beginning of the chapter he was called a king but now he is called a shepherd. This may be confusing to us because we do not usually associate shepherds and kings. This confusion has led some to suggest that there are two men, one who is a king and one who is a shepherd. However, the confusion simply indicates how far our world is from the world of David's day. In the ancient Near East in the second and first millenniums B.C., kings from Greece to Egypt to Persia were called shepherds. Notice that the Lord calls Cyrus of Persia "my shepherd" (Isa 44:28). In Jeremiah 2:4-13 four classes of leaders are castigated: the priests, the legal authorities, the rulers, and the prophets. The Hebrew term for the rulers is *ro'im* (lit., "shepherds"). She is still calling him by pet names. Whether he is truly a king or truly a shepherd or neither is not relevant to the poet. To her, he is her king. To her, he is her shepherd. (cf. Expositor's Bible Commentary).

His Importance To Her (1:12-14)

She is wearing perfume and he is sitting on the couch. In keeping with the first couple verses of this chapter, they have gone into the innermost part of the house to have time together privately. She is wearing pouch of myrrh around her neck that hangs between her breasts. This is one of the ways a woman would perfume herself in ancient times. Nard (NIV, "perfume"; ASV, KJV, NKJV, "spikenard") was an ointment derived from a plant that grew in northern and eastern India. It was considered very fragrant and quite expensive. It was used as a love charm in the ancient Near East, as were other aromatic oils (cf. Luke 7:36-50) (Expositors' Bible

Commentary). So what she is saying about him is that he causes everything to be better for her and she does the same for him. She is like perfume to him and he is a beautiful fragrance to her. This is what she means to say that he is like "a cluster of henna blossoms." Henna was a Palestinian shrub. Its leaves were used to produce a bright orange-red cosmetic dye. It has been used in the Near East to color the hair, hands, and feet. We still know it as a hair dye. Its blossoms, however, were quite fragrant. He is a wonderful fragrance to her. He is not the stench in her life. His presence is pleasant, comfortable, and enjoyable.

His impact on her is encompassing and inescapable. Her consciousness of him sweetens her life the way the aroma of a sachet of perfume placed between the breasts makes a girl move in a cloud of fragrance. The thought or sight of him is as pleasant as the aroma wafted from a field of henna blossoms. Love has its own hallowing touch on all of life. The point is that the person you are with is better than anyone else. You are not settling for someone. Rather, your lover is like flowers among the desert wilderness. Notice how both are speaking complimentary back and forth to each other. We do these kinds of things in dating but they must continue into marriage. For some reason these things often stop once marriage begins and we take one another for granted.

Engedi was an oasis on the western shore of the Dead Sea. It stands in stark contrast in the middle of the desert region. It was an extraordinarily fertile place and archaeology indicates a significant perfume business was there. To her, he is an oasis, a respite from life. He is the place where she goes for comfort, relaxation, and relief, not agitation and distress. We need to be an oasis to one another in our relationship. When we are dating, we put aside a terrible day and put on our best face because we are with the person we love. We must continue this in marriage.

Building Life Together (1:15-17)

In verse 15 he responds to her gestures by declaring her beauty. Notice it is not just her beauty, but he speaks to her softness. He says that her eyes are like doves. There is a kindness and tenderness about her. She is beautiful and tender.

She also responds that he is handsome also. It is important that this is communicated to the man. Just as we see the man validating the beauty of this woman in this song, we see that she reciprocates the feeling. Yes, she finds him attractive also.

Now she praises him for the home they are going to be building together. We have built the home that we will enjoy together. This seems to be more than a literal, "I like the green couch we have." This metaphor speaks more to the relationship that they have built together that is strong and beautiful. A lasting, wonderful relationship is being built by these two people.

Conclusion

We should read this first chapter and note how these two speak to each other and how they perceive each other. We must look to replicate this atmosphere in our relationships. They are working for private time together to build their relationship. They physically desire each other. They are building each other up with their words. They are a strength, a wonderful fragrance, and an oasis for each other. They are delighted in being with each other and others are able to see the joy and love in the relationship. They have built a strong, beautiful relationship together because they have focused on the needs, desires, and wants of the other person.

Song of Songs

Chapters 2-3

The second chapter of the Song of Songs continues where the first chapter left off. She has been describing the beauty of her beloved and the strength of the relationship that they are building together. The first verse of chapter 2 is the woman describing herself. She says, "I'm just an ordinary flower." "Rose" is not a proper translation, but KJV translators didn't know what flower it was referring to. But the translation stuck. "Rose" does not fit because she is not glorifying herself. Rather she is speaking to how common and ordinary she is. According to the NET Notes, the location of this flower in Sharon suggests that a common wild flower would be more consonant than a rose. The term appears elsewhere only in Isaiah 35:1 where it refers to some kind of desert flower — erroneously translated "rose" (KJV, NJPS) but probably "crocus" (NASB, NIV, NJPS margin). Appropriately, the rustic maiden who grew up in the simplicity of rural life compares herself to a simple, common flower of the field.

However, he disagrees with her self-assessment. He says that she is a flower among thorns. You are not like anyone else, according to him. Spouses need to let each other know this. We may feel ordinary in our relationships. But we need to express that love we have for the other. I do not want anyone else because you are distinct, unique, and special to me. You are a flower that stands out in the middle of thorns.

The Banner of Love (2:3-7)

She now exclaims her love for him and praises him. He is distinguished among the others. Everything about him shows me love and protection. This is his banner over her. He provides her safety, someone she feels safe to be with. He puts her safety above his. He shows protection. Notice the context really includes emotional protection, not merely physical protection. He cares for her and provides what she needs emotionally. This has caused her to be "love sick" (2:6).

The declaration is made to "not stir up or awaken love until it pleases" (3:7). This is a repeated instruction in this book. The NASB for some reason and without warrant adds "my," changing the meaning to "Do not stir up or awaken my love until he pleases." But "my" is not in the text. It is better to keep the reading that is in the manuscripts. Even in love, desire must be kept under control (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). The NET Notes summarizes the possibilities of what it means to "not stir up or awaken love until it pleases." "There are three major views: (1) to force a love relationship to develop prematurely rather than to allow it to develop naturally; (2) to interfere with the experience of passionate love; or (3) to stir up sexual passion, that is, to become sexually active. As noted above, "love" probably denotes "sexual passion" and "awaken...arouse" probably denotes "to stir up, excite." Likewise, the verb "awake" is used in Song 4:16 and Hosea 7:4 in reference to stirring up sexual passion to excitement."

I believe that a combination of these three is the meaning. The beloved is being carried away by her passions. She relishes the joy. Yet she knows that love should have its own rhythm and its proper progression. Too fast and too soon would spoil it all. So she adjures the women of Jerusalem not to encourage love beyond its right and proper pace (v.7). This is important for dating. Relationships hit a certain point where they cannot progress further until marriage. Therefore, speeding those milestones up only increases sexual temptation. Physical actions must be accepted slowly (e.g. Holding hands, hugging, kissing). Starting these actions too quickly leaves the relationship with no where else to go. When the relationship is not ready for marriage, then the crushing weight of physical desire hampers the relationship or leads to sin.

Invitation To Marriage (2:8-17)

Verse 8 appears to be a natural break and the beginning of new action. We see the couple separated but longing for each other. By "leaping" and "bounding" we see him approach her with eagerness. He wants

to spend time with her. He does not avoid her or reluctantly spend time with her. His love motivates and empowers him to do whatever is necessary to be with her. He is willing to overcome all obstacles to be together. Many of us have driven long distances to spend time with the person we were dating. When I was dating April, she was at Florida College and I was at Western Kentucky University. I drove through Hurricane Opal as it moved through the panhandle of Florida and into Georgia, just to be able to visit her for a weekend. In Song of Solomon, we see this man committed and determined to be with her. Verse 9 reveals how much he wants to see her. He is eager to see her. In dating there should be a time of the man wooing the woman to be with him. The effort to win her heart. He does not barge in uninvited or as if by right. He remains outside, waiting to see if the one he loves will come out to him.

In verses 10-13 he calls for her to come away with him. It is spring. Spring represents love and fertility. Think about Bambi. It's spring time and love is in the air. It is spring and it is the right time for love. The spring holds the hope and optimism for the future of this relationship. Let's go spend time together. He calls to her in a tender appeal, not of force or demand. He woos her for a greater, deeper relationship. There is a time where a relationship moves from friends, to dating, to exclusively together, to fiancé. Let's be together, just you and me, is his call. It is spring. Let us move forward in our relationship. I believe this is his proposal of marriage to her. Let's take the next step in our relationship.

In verse 14 we see the man continuing to call out to her. It seems that she is responding with some shyness and hesitation to his proposal. She is at the very least a little reserved and he is calling for her to come out. She is to be pursued. She is not the pursuer. We need to teach our girls this. You are not to pursue but to be pursued. You are to decide who you want to be with and you determine the speed at which this relationship moves. Women must not fail to understand that they control these keys to the relationship. Love does not run roughshod over the feelings of others. One must be considerate of these fears and hesitations. She is pictured as living in the clefts of the rock. She is being reserved and is not quickly receiving his invitation to marriage.

There seem to be some issues or problems that still need to be ironed out in the relationship. The call in verse 15 is to catch the foxes. Foxes ruin vineyards. Foxes are threats to the relationship. The appeal is made here to outsiders to prevent "the foxes," those forces that could destroy the purity of their love, from defiling their vineyards, which are blossoming. In 1:6 the maiden uses "vineyard" as a metaphor for her own person (see Carr, p. 79; Murphy, p. 60). So they plead for protection for the love that blossoms between them that nothing will spoil it. What are the forces that ruin marital love? Name some threats to your relationship. There are so many things that mess up a happy marital love life. Address those issues. Catch those foxes. You have to overcome these problems, not give up. Today too many have a Cinderella picture of marriage, living happily ever after with no problems. But there are foxes that will try to harm and ruin the relationship. Identify those foxes and overcome those issues before the marriage relationship deteriorates.

The chapter concludes with her thinking about the security she has with this man in the relationship. The lovers may accept restraint on the pace of love's development, but there is no denying that they belong to each other. In 5:13 his lips are called "lilies" so this may be a reference him kissing her lips. She certainly desires him but has been hesitate to go forward in the relationship.

The Dream (3:1-5)

The third chapter of the Song opens with a new scene. She is on her bed at night. Therefore it seems like that this is a dream. She says she is in her bed but she is running through the streets worried. So a dream seems to be the most likely picture. She is worried about something concerning their romance and upcoming marriage. She is concerned about losing him. Perhaps her hesitation to his marriage proposal has made her nervous about losing him. Sometimes space is useful for relationships. It helps both parties determine if they truly want to be together. Sometimes the constant presence of the other can cause one to take the other for granted or

remain in infatuation, unable to see if they are willing to make a true, godly commitment to love the other person. Her separation has caused her to realize that this man is truly the one she wants to marry. The dream sequence continues. She is moving through the streets in her dream trying to find her beloved. But she cannot find him. She even asks the watchmen if they have seen him. The point is that she is recognizing that he truly is the one she wants to be with.

In verse 4 she is finally able to find him and she realizes that she never wants to let him go. She is not going to hesitate about this proposal any longer. She seems to bring him home to meet the parents in some respect to use language that we understand today. She is indicating her desire for him to become part of the family. But more to the point, she does not want to let him go and is ready to be with him in marriage. She cautions the daughters of Jerusalem again to not speed up love. It is not yet time for physical intimacy. Do not stir up or awaken love until it is time.

The Wedding Song (3:6-11)

Verse 6 begins the wedding parade and festival (see 3:11). Many scholars note that while this is Solomon's litter/royal travel couch, it is not him riding in it but the woman. An escort party was sent to pick up the bride and bring her to him in ancient near eastern culture (see also Isaac and Rebekah in Genesis 24). But this is something writers argue over whether the woman or the man is riding on the litter. Either way, this is a royal wedding procession. The rest of the chapter describes the beauty and majesty of this processional as the two are joined in marriage.

Song of Songs

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter appears to move the scene to the wedding night. The third chapter concluded with arrival of the wedding carriage. Song 3:11 reveals that this is the day of his wedding. Though nothing specifically says that chapter 4 is the wedding night, what we read in this chapter compels the reader to this conclusion. Remember that this is a song of love as these two long to be together. They are now married and continue to use love imagery to describe their coming together. We must appreciate this chapter because the wedding night is not described crassly or crudely. Nor is this described clinically with medical terms. Just as a red rose, twilight, and fire in the fireplace conjure up romance and lovemaking in our culture, these images conjure the same romance and lovemaking in ancient near eastern culture. Allow your mind to embrace this love language.

Describing The Bride (4:1-7)

These first seven verses provide an opportunity for the man to affirm his lover in her beauty. You will notice that there are seven descriptions: eyes, hair, teeth, lips, cheeks, neck, and breasts. Scholars have observed this behavior in the Middle East. They have seen weddings where the groom and the bride would describe one another's physical beauty as a prelude to lovemaking (Longman, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, 140). Notice that she is wearing a veil (4:1) which is common for brides in the scriptures (Genesis 24:65; 29:23-25; 38:14). While these images may seem humorous to us, these were statements that would make a woman melt. I believe cultures thousands of years from now would find our imagery of beauty to be humorous also. But know that he is praising her physical beauty.

We must consider the impact of what he is doing for her. His words of praise and adoration set aside any feelings of insecurity and uncertainty she might have. This is a common characteristic in women that men must understand. Most women are insecure about their beauty. I personally think our culture has played a significant role in this problem. The standard of beauty in our society is set so high that none can attain it, even the models themselves. Perhaps you have seen more actresses come out against the magazine that are airbrushing everything about their photos. I hope there will be a continued response against the false definition of beauty that is set before our eyes. It is important for women to reject it and for men to reject it. What you see on television, magazines, and movies is false. We noted in our first lesson on this book that your standard of beauty is what you married. We see the man affirm her beauty. She needs to know that you find her attractive. Think about how he identifies seven traits of beauty for her. Consider that this implies that, to him, she is perfect. She suits his desires perfectly. I think women should understand this about men. If a man dated you and married you, I guarantee you that man thinks you are beautiful. Men must praise their wives for their beauty, as he see the man in this Song doing. He is going to praise her beauty three times (4:1-7; 6:4-6; 7:2-8) which tells us that this is important for a man to do for his wife.

Verses 6-7 describe his desire to be with her sexually through this night. There is nothing for her to fear. He desires her and they will enjoy this night together. It is not hard to see that verse 6 is sexual imagery. Song 1:13 already placed myrrh as a necklace between her breasts. He says that he is going to go to the mountain of myrrh all night. The imagery is clearly sexual.

The Garden of Love (4:8-5:1)

Verse 8 describes his commitment to her. He is going to protect her and take care of her. This is the offer of marriage, men. You are saying to her that she can trust you, come away with you, and you will provide. Men must consider what women are doing when they obey the command to submission. Guys, women are trusting you to provide and protect. Submitting to your leadership and your decisions to be your life long partner is to entrust their heart and body to you. You have a responsibility to care for her now with understanding. This is what the apostle Peter is teaching in 1 Peter 3:7. You are to live with her in an understanding way, showing

deference to her. She has entrusted your life to you. You do not lead with fear or intimidation. You are to be the place of safety. So the man in verse 8 is telling her that you can come with me. Whatever her worries are, the man will take care of them.

Please notice that the text emphasizes that these two are married for he calls her "my bride." Four times from verses 9-12 he calls her his bride. You will also notice that he calls her his sister. This was a term of endearment in ancient near eastern times. It is a similar term of affection that a man may use of his wife, calling her "honey," "darling," or "baby" or something like that. One day people will read our writings and wonder why men kept calling women "baby." Again, these are terms of endearment and "sister" was such a term in the Near East.

The language that we read from verses 10-15 is not entirely different from songs today. He is saying that when he looks at her, it drives him crazy. She is so beautiful that every move you make causes excitement. Our songs today make the same analogies, often more crassly unfortunately. But we are able to understand the idea easily enough.

The images in verses 12-15 were used in the ancient Near East as well as in the Bible as very sexual images (cf. Proverbs 5:15-20). He praises her for her purity and virginity. This shows that this book is not praising sex before marriage. She is praised for keeping herself for marriage. She is not a fountain open to everyone who passes by. Our society needs to hear this and women today really need to hear this. This is the picture of you in the scriptures. You are to keep your garden locked and your fountain sealed. Sexual activity is not for anyone else but the one you marry. This is a beautiful gift for your husband. He praises this gift. "Sexual pleasure is diluted when it is given prematurely to others, but it is concentrated when it is saved for one's marriage partner, and then given to that one person with a full and open heart" (Estes, *Apollo's OT Commentary*, 363). Since she has remained sexually pure, verse 8 may also include his call to her that they are married and there is no need for her to be guarded. They can experience any aspect of each other's bodies that they want.

In verse 16 she invites him to enjoy what she has saved for him. In marriage, husbands and wives are to enjoy each other's bodies. The writer of the Proverbs says you are to be intoxicated by the physical love and enjoyment of marriage (Proverbs 5:15-20). Within the boundaries of marriage, sexual intimacy is free to be enjoyed fully and completely. One of the great things about keep oneself pure until marriage is that there is no comparison. Magazines today have titles about having great sex and how to make sex better. There is talk about "sexual compatibility." If you have not been with anyone else, then you do not know any better. You are instantly compatible because there is no other point of reference. Any sex becomes great sex. God protects us from this nonsense in the world by commanding physical purity. Paul commanded full sexual enjoyment in marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:2-4.

But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. 3 The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. 4 The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:2-4 NLT)

Her invitation is that her body, which was kept pure from other men, is now given to him to enjoy. Carefully notice the words she uses. She says that her garden is now "his garden." She has the right attitude about how she understand her body in the marriage relationship. As Paul declared to the Corinthians, his body is now her's and her body now belongs to him. In chapter 5 and the first verse he partakes of this gift. The first verse of chapter 5 concludes with a chorus singing that this is right. This is what is to happen. We are to enjoy each other's love physically. This completely defeats the religious argument that sex is only for procreation. What these two are doing in lovemaking is praised as good by God. This is the picture of a healthy marriage that God created for a husband and wife.

Song of Songs

Chapter 5

The first verse of chapter 5 belongs with the fourth chapter of the Song of Songs as we see the husband and wife come together for lovemaking. God is picturing the beauty of intimacy in marriage. Not only is intimacy in marriage commanded by God (Genesis 2:23; 1 Corinthians 7:2-4) but intimacy is the fruit of a good marriage. The first verse of chapter 5 concludes with the chorus telling to the couple to enjoy the love of one another.

Marriage Problems (5:2-8)

The next movement of this song shows that something has gone wrong in the marriage. There are now some problems in the marriage. This should not be surprising to us. Every marriage goes through problems and difficulties. Especially early on in the marriage there are problems that have to be worked through as two sinful humans try to obey Christ toward one another. As an individual, we are used to doing whatever we want. Now we are to yield our lives to another person. There can be many problems that arise as these two lives try to merge into one. I believe one of the reasons why so many divorces occur is the unwillingness to try to work through these problems. Too many people enter marriage with a Cinderella concept of living happily ever after. But that can only happen when there is a commitment to work through problems that will certainly come to the marriage.

The scene pictures the husband coming home and her unwillingness to open the door for him. She makes three excuses why she is unwilling to get up and open the door. First, she is lying in bed and nearly asleep or drifting off into sleep (5:2). Second, she has already taken off her clothes. She is in bed and does not want to have to put on clothes to open the door (5:3). Third, her feet are clean. She does not want to have to walk across the dirt floor to open the door because she will have to clean her feet again before she can get back in bed (5:3). In verse 2 you will notice that he makes overtures to her to open the door. "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one." He wants to be with her and for whatever reason (we have seen three terrible excuses) she is unwilling to let him in. Something has happened in the marriage. He is making calls to her. So it is not that he is ignoring her. But she has become cold to him so that she will not let him come in. Some amount of time passes and she decides to open the door for him, but it is too late (5:5-6). She has driven him away and she is full of regret. She cannot find him (5:6). She goes about the city looking for him but cannot find him. She is even suffering mistreatment by the guards trying to find him because she so desperately wants to find him but cannot (5:7). So she tells the chorus if they find her husband, tell him that she is sick with love (5:8). Tell him I am sorry and I want him.

Let's start with some surface conclusions. It is important to recognize how strongly women set the tone in the marriage. Men without a doubt bear responsibility in the marriage. I am not saying that men do not bear an equal responsibility to the marriage as the women. But we see in this song that she has driven him away. She is upset about something and has taken it out on him in such a way that she has driven him away. The husband responds to the tone that is set by the wife. Our culture even understands this with the true cliché: "Happy wife, happy life." Husbands understand that if the wife is unhappy, then life is unhappy. In marriage it does not take long for a husband to understand the need to keep the wife happy because they control the tone of the marriage. Men typically want the path of least resistance. They will do what is needed to keep peace in the home so they can have peace and relax. The point is this: both husbands and wives bear responsibility for problems that occur in marriage. Wives, however, are more frequently the ones who will turn the issue into a fight. This is what we see in this fifth chapter. We do not know what has happened. We do not know if he has done something. We do not know if she has done something. All we know is he is trying to draw close to her (5:2) but she refuses to welcome him back, which causes him to leave. She is creating the fight in this chapter by not allowing him to come close to her. A fight is not the way to accomplish what we want in our spouse. We are not to try to hurt each other to try to cause change. We are not in the business of trying to change each

other or force each other to do things. Too often we try to use distance and coldness to try to communicate our displeasure and punish our spouse rather than expressing the problem and trying to solve it. We cannot try to hurt the other person just because we have been hurt. We need to talk through issues that arise, not push each other away.

Now, there is another level in this song that needs to be explored. It is likely that this is a sexual rebuff. We have noticed how this song has repeatedly used romantic, yet careful language to speak of highly sexual activities (see chapter 4). We noted in 4:12 the garden was not simply a garden but was speaking of her sexual area and the mountains and hills are poetic way to speak of her breasts. Notice in verse 4, "My beloved put his hand to the latch" (ESV). Other translations that he put his hand "through the opening" (NASB, HCSB, NRSV). The Hebrew word just means a "hole." So this could easily mean that he is trying to reach his hand through the hole in the door for the key that would have been kept on the inside so that he can unlock the door. However, her response in verses 4-5 indicate a sexual rebuff. The scene has a poetic picture of him wanting to be with her sexually. He is trying to approach her sexually and she is excited about the prospect of a sexual encounter with her husband, but rebuffs his advances. So she is making excuses for not making love with him. She is already asleep. She is already changed. She is already in bed. She does not want to get dirty and have to clean up again before bed. She is saying no and her refusal has pushed him away.

One of the most important love languages for husbands is sex. To refuse sex is perhaps one of the most hurtful ways to attack a husband. This is why the apostle Paul gave the command in 1 Corinthians 7:2-4 for there not to be time apart sexually because it will tempt him to sexual immorality. Again, a wife sets the tone for the intimacy of the marriage. Refusal to be together damages the marriage in severe ways that perhaps women do not fully understand. The parallel pain would perhaps be if a husband was unwilling to buy flowers or do something special for Valentine's Day or your anniversary. It shows that he does not care. The refusal of intimacy shows him that she does not care. So we see the husband leaving in this song. She has driven him away from her and now regrets doing so. She has caused this distance to occur between them. Intimacy is not to be a tool of punishment against each other. Too often this happens when there are issues or disagreements. We try to use intimacy as a tool to try to make the other person change. This is condemned by God and must not be done. We are destroying the marriage and only hurting ourselves when we use these kinds of tactics.

Resolving Marriage Problems (5:9-16)

So what is the answer to resolve marital conflicts? The chorus helps her come to the solution. In verse 9 they ask her what makes her beloved better than others. So they want her to explain why he is so important to her. What makes him so special? How does he stand out from others?

This is an important practice in marriage especially when there are difficulties: focus on the positive, not the negative. No human is perfect. You are not perfect and your spouse is not perfect. Rather than ruining the marriage by focusing on all the things you do not like, focus on all the wonderful attributes that caused you to love your spouse. Marriages are ruined when we focus on each other's failures. Consider that when we focus on each other's failure we are not practicing a Christ-centered marriage. Focusing on each other's mistakes is not what Paul commands of marriage in Ephesians 5. Christ does not focus on our failures but made a way for our sinfulness to be overcome by his love. We must replicate this model in our marriages. Do not focus on the failures but focus on loving your spouse in a way that overcomes those failures. We know how to do this because we did it when we were dating and we did it early in our marriage. We overlooked the negatives and focused on the positives. We must continue to do this in marriage. Marriages are not solved by focusing on the negatives. By the way, do you want your spouse to focus on all your deficiencies, weaknesses, and failures? Then why are you focusing on your spouse's deficiencies, weaknesses, and failures? So the chorus brings her around to the proper way of thinking. What do you love about him? What makes him special? Why do you want to be with him? Focus on those things. Express those attributes. Part of solving marital problems is to be

grateful for the person you have that has chosen you rather than being ungrateful because he or she is not perfect.

She goes on to explain what makes him her beloved and special to her (5:10-16). You will notice that she is physically attracted to him just as he is physically attracted to her. There is nothing wrong with this. We are to enjoy how each other look and we are to praise each other for that. But notice that it is not all physical. She ends with the most important attribute about him. He is her beloved and her friend (5:16). This is how the marriage relationship is supposed to work. Our spouse is our friend. It is natural to break away from our other friends and focus on the marriage relationship as our primary friendship. This does not mean that we do not have other friends. But our marriage is to be a friendship. We are not only to love each other but we are to like each other. Therefore, those who are preparing for marriage must ask the question if this is your friend. It is not enough to simply think you are love. Are you friends? Do you share your lives with each other? This gets more to the heart of marriage: the sharing of lives together. It is so sad to see so marriages turn into being roommates. The marriage partners do not want to spend time together, do not want to do things together, and do not want to talk with each other. There is something very wrong when that is the case. You should be able to say about each other that my spouse is my friend.

Conclusion

The message of chapter 5 is how to overcome problems in marriage. First, we should not make excuses to not be with our spouse and to not give our spouse the attention, time, or requests they need. When we fail to do this we are simply driving our spouse away. Second, never use these things as weapons against our spouse. We must never withhold attention, conversation, love, or intimacy from each other as a tool to hurt the other person. We have no right to do that. We are not given the right to punish the other person. Christ did not treat us this way. Christ dealt with our errors with an overflow of love, not punishment. Third, focus on the positive to rebuild the marriage and maintain the marriage. Focus on the good attributes in your spouse. Remember that you are not perfect and neither is your spouse. You do not want your spouse to focus on your weakness. So do not focus on theirs. Build your friendship with each other and grow your lives together.

Song of Songs

Chapter 6

Chapter 5 revealed problems in the marriage that needed to be overcome. As we studied that chapter we saw the strategies given by God to deal with our marital problems and bring harmony back to the relationship. Chapter 6 begins with a question by the chorus (the daughters of Jerusalem) if everything is fine. Notice verse 1 that they ask if she ever found her beloved. Remember that the fifth chapter showed him leaving. She had hurt him and there was a fracture in the relationship. She went out looking for him, desiring to be with him, and praising him for who he is. Rather than focusing on what he is not, she is focusing on what he is. Did it work?

Verses 2-3 tell us that this did work. She says that he has gone down to his garden. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." Remember in chapter 4 that we saw the garden as a sexual reference. So the picture is that they have reconciled and are back in each other's arms. She has called out to him and he has responded to her. He does not hold a grudge or is embittered. She finds him and they resolve their problem. The marriage appears to be back on track. What we will notice in chapter 6 is that the marriage is in harmony again because they are praising each other again. They want to be together and are communicating what they want and need to each other. So there is a happy marriage relationship as each is responding to the other's desires. But this requires that we want happy marriages. This sounds obvious but some do not recognize that they are happy being miserable. They like to have a bad marriage so that they can complain to others about their situation, receiving pity and attention. This must not be how a Christian behaves. God commands us to have Christ-like marriages (Ephesians 5:22-33). So we are not going to be happy by trying to keep things miserable in our marriages. We are going to give and sacrifice as Christ did so we can have relationships that he has commanded us to have.

Praising Her (6:4-10)

Notice that he is doing for her and saying to her the things that he did and said at the beginning of their relationship. Verses 5-7 contain the same words that he spoke in 4:1-3. One of the keys to marital harmony is to continue to show love for each other by doing the things you know your spouse likes. Do and say the things you did and said when you were dating and when you first got married. Too many marriages talk about when things were better in the marriage before. It was better when we first were married or it was better when we were dating. There is a simple answer to this problem. Do what you were doing before. Don't stop. Those words and actions do not have to be mere memories. Go back to those good times and continue to do them. Kindle the love for each other by doing what the other person loves. Do not take the love of each other for granted. Doing so is a critical mistake.

But he also adds new information too. Verses 8-10 give new words of love to her, as well as verse 4. Tizrah was a beautiful city in the northern part of Israel which would become the capital of the northern nation of Israel from the time of Jeroboam to Omri (cf. 1 Kings 15:33). His attitude toward her is that she is the best. This is what he says in verses 8-9. There are many queens and virgins, but he does not want any of them. He only wants her. Wives need to hear this from their husbands. This is especially true today in this over-sexualized world that places such a heavy emphasis on physical beauty. Husbands need to tell their wives that if they had it to do all over again, they would marry her again. He holds her up as a precious gem that he is grateful to have. I believe that this is what Peter means in 1 Peter 3:7 where he tells husbands to honor their wives as the weaker vessel. Too many get hung up on the "weaker vessel" language which completely misses the point of the instruction. Peter did not say she is a weaker vessel. Peter said to honor her like that. Do not treat her as common. Treat her as special. Treat her like the prize and value that she is to your life.

Her Song (6:11-13)

In verse 11 it appears that she is going to a valley to see if it is spring when the plants are blooming and budding. Spring is a metaphor for love. Is it still the time of love? Is the relationship still good? Another way to look at this is that she is seeing if their reconciliation has brought about a new spring. Scholars note the difficulty of the Hebrew in verses 12-13 and this explains the difference in translation in our English versions. At the very least she seems to be saying that she has been swept away in her desire for him as he has been putting her on a pedestal and elevating her by his words and actions. The others seem to cry out that they want to see her. However, he intervenes and says that it is not your business to look upon her. She belongs to him and him alone.

You will notice that for the first time she is given a title: Shulammitte. Shulammitte is an interesting name because it is the feminine form of the Hebrew word for Solomon. So this likely has a picture of these two belonging together. Both of them are finding peace with each other (the root word for both of their titles is shalom, meaning peace). As Richard Hess notes, "In a Song that repeatedly names Solomon (1:5; 3:9, 11; 8:11-12), it is appropriate that the female counterpart should have her name derived from the same root. Actually, hers is not a personal name. The definite article indicates that it should be understood more as a title. Perhaps it carries the sense of one who is altogether beautiful" (Hess, 208). "The same Shulammitte thus is an appropriate name for the female of the Song. It may also reflect its root meaning of peace or wholeness. She is one who brings peace to the one who loves her (8:10)" (Longman, 192). The NET Bible translates this title as "Perfect One." Neither Solomon nor the Shulammitte are actual individuals, but represent the ideal man and woman who belong together.

Conclusion

In this chapter we see what the husband is doing to maintain the marriage relationship. He continues to praise her and show her love as he did when they were dating and when they were first married. Further, he does new things for her, praising her in new ways, and not just doing what he has always done so that it become mundane and habitual. This has caused her to look for a time for love between them after reconciliation from their last marital problem. He has responded to her by sweeping her away so that they can be together.

Song of Songs

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 really begins in 6:13, setting the stage for what is being described. The group is calling for her not to go off with her husband but to return so they can look at her. He seems to intervene against this request. Who are they to be looking at her like the dance of Mahanaim ("two armies," ESV)? Scholars are uncertain on what this dance is. Most scholars point out that it was a dance that was done by the women after the nation won a military battle. This dancing was entertainment for the men who would watch the women as they moved. He steps in and says this dancing is not for others to see. She is not for everyone else to look at. But it is not that no one is to look at her. Rather, it is her husband that is able to enjoy looking on her body.

The question in 6:13 sets the stage for chapter 7. Women typically do not understand how visual men are and how men like to look at women. The warnings in scripture against lusting are very important to keep in mind. Men are not allowed to look at women like it sounds this crowd wants to look upon her. Jesus taught that lusting is committing adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:28). But the solution to lust is for fulfillment in marriage. This is what the apostle Paul taught in the first five verses of 1 Corinthians 7. Husbands need to know that wives want communication. Wives want to talk and know what is going on in the heart and mind of the husband. Therefore, husbands must be willing to give what their wives need with open and honest communication. In same way, wives need to know that husbands are visual. Communication is not what they need. Husbands want to look at their wives. We have seen this truth throughout the Song as he continues to praise her for her beauty. God made man to desire a woman physically. Therefore, wives must be willing to give what their husbands need by being willing to let him see her body. Notice the verbal affirmation and communication he gives her as she reveals herself to him. This sets the scene for what is happening the seventh chapter.

His Desire For Her (7:1-9a)

He begins by noting how beautiful her feet are in the sandals she wears. This description is unique from his other descriptions of her. Previously he started at her head and moved down her body as he praised her beauty. This time he reverses the order and starts with her feet and moves up her body. The reversal of order suggests that she is showing her body to him in this dance that is reserved for her husband alone. He then moves up to her thighs and hips, noting the curves of her body. He moves us to the center of her body. The navel is like a bowl with wine and the belly is like a heap of wheat encircled with lilies. He then moves to describing her breasts. From there he praises her neck, eyes, and nose. He concludes with her hair as it flows from her head. In verses 6-9 he makes his overture to her. She is appealing to all of his sense and he wants to show her his love in intimacy. The imagery is straightforward as he expresses his desire to be with her.

Her Desire For Him (7:9b-13)

As he is singing her praises and is longing to be with her in love physically, she interrupts him. She has been letting him look at her and he is enjoying looking at her body and giving her verbal affirmation of how beautiful she is to him. She is not put off by this nor should she be. This is what Paul was teaching the Christians in Corinth.

The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5 NLT)

We are to serve the needs and desires of each other in marriage. This is exactly what we are volunteering for when we get married. We want to make the other person happy. We want to do all we can to bring joy and satisfaction to each other in marriage. We are looking out for the desires of each other. A wonderful truth is being taught in this chapter. There is freedom in marriage. All that is forbidden before marriage is approved by God in marriage. God did not prevent sexual intimacy and pleasure but instructed us that marriage was to be the place for its fulfillment. So she joins in on this description at the end of verse 9. He says that her mouth and her body are like the best wine (7:2,9). She says that the wine goes down smoothly for him, flowing over his lips.

She goes further and tells him that all that she has is strictly for him. "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me" (7:10). This pictures again what Paul spoke about in 1 Corinthians 7. She says that her body is for him to enjoy. This is what Paul is teaching. Each of you are to enjoy each other's bodies. She does not refuse him. She does not recoil. She willingly and happily accepts what he is saying to. A wife should be excited that your husband's desire is for you. This is what she says. She is pleased and satisfied that his desire is for her. Why would a wife resent this? What do we think will happen if your husband's desire is not for you? He is going to be looking for another woman. This is exactly what the Proverbs are warning against. Be exciting to your husband. Let him desire you. Then you will have the confidence and security in the marriage beyond your vow that you took before God because you know he desires you. I have counseled so many marriages where affairs began because they stopped desiring each other. They stopped doing things to be attractive toward each other. They stopped paying attention to each other and trying to do what is pleasing for each other. So they found other people who would pay them attention and do what is pleasing to them. We must protect our marriages by understanding each other's needs and desires and meeting them. One of the strongest ways wives can protect and affair-proof their marriage is by knowing what your husband needs and being willing to meet those needs. You want your husband to desire you. If he does not desire you, there is a very big problem and your marriage is in danger. The New Testament picture is that a husband and wife give their bodies to one another and love one another as they would love their own bodies (Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Corinthians 7:2-4).

Not only this, but notice in verses 11-13 she is making it possible for his desires to be met. She says that we need to go somewhere and "there I will give you my love." So it is not him having to be a beggar to her for intimacy. Nor is she forced by him. He does not control her or force her. She willingly desires to give her love to him. She understands what he needs and willingly gives it to him. She makes a way for them to be able to be together. The location is poetic language to speak of a place where love is in the air and where it is romantic. She is making a way and a time for them to be able to be together. It is important for wives to make time for intimacy together. It is easy to say that there is so much to do and that there is no time. Between the kids and the house there is an easy built in excuse to avoid being with your husband. But this cannot happen. If there is a lot to do, ask your husband to help so that time can be made to be together. Also, if there are things to do, do those things later. It is more important to do what is good for the marriage ahead of making sure the clothes are ironed or the kitchen is cleaned.

Notice that she is going to enhance their time together. Mandrakes were prized for their aphrodisiac properties in ancient near eastern times (7:13). Notice that her words are encouraging their intimacy. She is not guarded. She is not repulsed. She is not shy. She does not look at being with her husband sexually as "a necessary evil" or a commanded duty. She is going to facilitate their coming together. Her response is that her body and her love is all for him. She invites him to be with him and they will enjoy new as well as old fruits of intimacy together. Duane Garrett states, "The woman speaks of 'new and old' treasures she has for the man. This would imply that as they grow in love they will both repeat familiar pleasures and find new ones as well" (New American Commentary, 424). Both husband and wife should be looking for ways to bring joy, pleasure, and satisfaction to one another, both new and old ways.

Conclusion

In chapter 6 we talked about how marriages need to continue doing what you both did for each other when you were dating and when you first were married. We noted that it is a common failure for husbands to stop praising their wives and stop showing them love and attention as was done when dating and first married. Chapter 7 shows us that wives cannot stop trying to be physically attractive to their husbands. Just as he is to continue putting forward effort to show love to her, she continues to put forward effort to show love to him. She is not trying to attract other men to her, but she wants to continue to attract her husband. Men are strongly visually attracted to women. We have seen this repeatedly in the Song of Songs. He wants to look at her and see her body. She understands that her body is reserved for her husband alone. She allows him to look at her and willingly initiates intimacy with her husband. Let these words be able to be confidently said in our marriages: "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me." Seek to fulfill the desires of one another in marriage.

Song of Songs

Chapter 8

The eighth chapter can be seen as a continuation of the events of chapter 7 or as a new scene that is separate from the seventh chapter. The Song continues to praise the joy of love and affection that they have toward one another in marriage.

Desiring Affection (8:1-4)

We see the wife continuing to express her desire for affection from her husband. We saw that she desired affection from him when they were dating/betrothed (1:2-4). But this is not supposed to change in marriage. She still wants to receive his affection. Notice that she wishes that she were like a brother to her. The reason for this is that it was acceptable to show affection to your family in public. But it was not acceptable to show affection to your spouse or betrothed. So her desire is that there was a way for her to receive affection from him at all times, even in public. She desires to be with him and wants to show him affection and receive affection as much as possible. Also remember that we saw that the "brother/sister" terms were used as terms of endearment in their time (Song 4:9-12; 5:1-2).

There is an interesting statement in verse 2. In speaking about her mother, she says, "She who used to teach me." It seems that her mother taught her about love, affection, and having a relationship with a man. I believe she is saying that her mother taught her how to behave in a relationship. We have seen in this Song her ability to know how to handle herself with this man that she loves. She has done things the right way. They had desires for each other but did not sin with lust or sexual contact. She gave the charge to "not stir up or awaken love until it pleases" (2:7; 3:5). Desires are to be held in marriage and these things should not be stirred up early. We mentioned previously in our studies how we must be careful to not accelerate the relationship because there is a limit of what a couple can do toward each other before marriage. Her mother taught her how to behave properly toward a man before marriage and how to behave when married. Our daughters need these instructions. They should not have to go blindly into marriage not knowing these principles that have been studied in this book. If a daughter is old enough to get married, then she is old enough for a mother to sit down and have a discussion about the marriage relationship. She says that her mother taught her about these things and this is right training according to God.

She also describes their love for each other as intoxicating. We have seen this theme throughout the Song as well (1:2; 5:1; 7:9). This is the same message that Solomon taught his son in the Proverbs:

Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. 16 Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. 20 Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? 21 For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths. (Proverbs 5:15–21 ESV)

Solomon tells his son to always be intoxicated by her love. Do not be intoxicated by another woman. Looking outside of marriage for this love is the path to destruction and ruin. So the man is told to look to his wife for this intoxicating love. The Song tells the woman that you need to allow your husband to be intoxicated by your love. You must be intoxicating to him. He must look to the wife and find satisfaction in marital love. She must be willing to show her love to him in the marriage relationship. In verse 2 she is expressing her desire to continue to show her love to him.

Verse 3 pictures the affection and intimacy they have for each other. The joy of the embrace of one another is praised. They want to be together. This is a good reminder to husbands that our wives want affection. They want us to show them that we care for them. There is a tenderness in the words we read in verse 3. We saw the same tender affection when they were dating in 2:6. This is another reminder to both husband and wife that we must continue to do for each other the things we did when we were dating and first married to keep the joy and love in the relationship going.

The fourth verse is a declaration to the daughters of Jerusalem what she has said in this Song in 2:7 and 3:5. Do not rush into love, marriage, and intimacy. These things have a proper place and a proper time. There is great joy and pleasure found in the marriage relationship that waits for the proper time to enjoy the fruit of the relationship. So now that she is married, she gives counsel to the other women of Jerusalem to wait for intimacy until it is the right person and the right time, which is the one to whom you are married. Intimacy before marriage ruins marriages and there is a loss of the fruit that is to be greatly enjoyed in the marriage covenant.

Set Me As A Seal (8:5-7)

As we come to the conclusion of the Song we see that the Song takes a step back and reflects on the nature of love. The chorus begins with a question: "Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?" Here is a picture of this couple that we have been reading about, walking side by side, arm in arm, with her leaning her head on him. They have found a special place under the apple tree where she awakened him. She awakened his love and excitement for her in the place where his mother awakened the love of her husband (his father). This is clearly a special family location that is given as the place to be together in love.

"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm" speaks to the exclusivity of the relationship. The seal here is indicating a metaphor of ownership and personal identification. They are taking ownership of each other. This is a glorious picture of love. They are willingly giving themselves to each other and to each other only. There is a picture of permanence for this relationship. Their hearts are sealed for each other. They possess each other's hearts. Therefore, there is love is strong and unbreakable.

Notice this language of their unbreakable love for one another in these verses. "For love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave." Consider that nothing can stop death. Death is an irresistible and inevitable force. She speaks of their love for each other with this kind of strength. They have a love for each other that tolerates no rivals. This is not describing a bad jealousy but a proper jealousy. We are sealed for one another and will not share you with another. God speaks of himself as a jealous God which carries the same idea. God will not share our hearts with another idol or another love. In the same way, we will not share our hearts with another person. This is why God declares sexual immorality as the only thing that severs the bond of marriage (Matthew 19:9). Jealousy is a proper emotion to any threat to the relationship.

Listen to the heat and passion of the relationship. "Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord." It is burning hot. The flame of the Lord is the hottest of all flames. Their marriage relationship, love, and intimacy is burning with intense passion. Even today we will describe love as the "flames of love." Love is a powerful thing. We must ask ourselves if our marriages have this passion and intensity. If not, we need to recognize that there is a problem. This is a warning because it is easy for our eyes and hearts to be caught by another when we do not maintain the passion in the marriage. Love is to be as strong as death and has intense and passionate as the hottest of flames. If this is missing, then the marriage needs our attention and we must do the things that this Song has taught us to do for the marriage. This also teaches us the power of this thing called love. This is how affairs happen. We underestimate the power of passion. We neglect our marriage failing to recognize that we are putting ourselves in great danger because when one's heart is captured by another, it is very powerful.

In verse 7 she continues to describe this love. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can flood drown it." A passionate love can endure anything. We see this idea captured in works like Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare. Nothing can stop love and, when aflame, nothing can quench it. Further, love is not able to be purchased. To even try to buy love only brings shame. Love is priceless. Therefore, we need to treat our relationships as priceless. Love is too important to neglect and too valuable to ignore. It is critical that we maintain our marriages because they are important and must never be taken for granted.

Preparing For Marriage (8:8-12)

In verse 8 we read a question from some brother. We do not know if they are her brothers or another audience who is asking the question. Either way, they want to know what they should do to prepare their young sister for the day of marriage ("on the day when she is spoken for"). She is clearly a young girl. So they are asking what they should follow in order to prepare her for her future marriage. It is not a last minute idea. It is preparing young girls for this time. I think this is so important for us to consider what the Song is teaching. We do not let our daughters or sisters go into dating and marriage blindly. Further, we do not wait until they are already dating. The Song pictures that at an age when they are starting to become a young woman like the junior high age, we will train and teach our girls about these things. So what are the instructions to prepare her for the day of her wedding?

The answer is given in verse 9. Her behavior will dictate how we will go about helping her be ready for marriage and stay pure. "If she is a wall" then she is choosing to protect her sexuality. She is a virgin. She understands why this is important. She has been taught to keep herself pure and is prepared to do so. If she is a wall, then we will honor her for that decision. We will build her up and praise her so that she will continue to be a wall as God wants her to do. However, "if she is a door" pictures that she is inclined to yield to a man's advances. If she is a door, then they will be protective of her. They will enclose her with boards of cedar. They will increase the security around her to keep her from doing this. One can assume that if she is a door, then there will be less independence. She is not going to be available for men to get to know her until she matures to the point that she is a wall. These conversations start early, teaching the girl the necessity of being a wall, not a door.

In verse 10 we see the main character speak again. She says that she was a wall. The Song is praising her decision. This is how to live. Maintain your purity and look at how blessed she is. She has found a wonderful man and they have a passionate love and marriage. You do not have to be a door to find a man. In fact, the Song is teaching against being a door and the damage that is cause to you and to your relationship when you are a door. Be a wall. She was a wall and her body was off limits until they were married ("my breasts were like towers"). She protected her body and she was not accessible physically. By being this, "Then I was in his eyes as one who finds peace" (8:10). She is what a good, godly man is looking for and brings peace to him. Her decision to be a wall brings fulfillment, satisfaction, and contentment to him.

Verses 11-12 continues this important message. Some quickly see the term "vineyard" and suppose that the Song is saying that Solomon has been with hundreds of women but she has kept herself pure. But the imagery falls apart upon closer examination of verse 11. Solomon has a vineyard that he lets out to the keepers. The keepers tend the vineyard and bring from the vineyard its fruit which is very valuable ("a thousand pieces of silver"). The keepers pay one thousand pieces of silver for the fruit from this vineyard. One can see that the imagery does not work sexually. The imagery does not fit Solomon having a harem because there is no explanation for the keepers and money they pay for the fruit from his vineyard.

What we need to see is the Song is moving from the literal to the figurative. The picture is that Solomon has a luxurious vineyard. The proceeds of the fruit brings him 1000 pieces of silver. The owner of the vineyard gets

his share of the vineyard because it belongs to him. He receives the benefits of that vineyard because it is his. Now she uses this analogy for herself in verse 12. Verse 11 is the set up using a literal image that was common in that day and time for what she is going to talk about concerning herself. Her "vineyard" (which she is speaking about her body) is at her disposal. Now notice: who gets to reap the profit from her vineyard? Solomon does. "You, O Solomon, may have the thousand." It is all is going to him. He reaps the benefits of her vineyard. She also gets something in return ("and the keepers of the fruit two hundred"). But it is not about her. Yes, she enjoys this and yes, there is benefit to her. But the point is that the fruit of the vineyard belongs to her husband. What she gives is for him. What she does is for him. Marriage is not a pursuit of selfishness. Marriage is not a pursuit of what I get out the relationship. Marriage is giving yourself completely and fully to your spouse. She wants to give him the fruit of her body. Daniel Estes summed this well, "Intimacy is not reluctant or calculating, but freely and willingly gives itself without reserve. It gives heart, soul, and body to the one it loves. Anything less is unworthy to be called true love" (Apollos Commentary, 415). Your purity before marriage is an investment you are making for marriage, the fruit of which will be enjoyed then. She was a wall and protected her vineyard. Then she gave her vineyard to her husband to enjoy the full benefits.

Epilogue (8:13-14)

The Song then ends with them calling for each other and going off together, joined in marriage (8:13-14). He wants to hear her voice and be in her company. She wants him to come to her and enjoy being with her. She encourages him to be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains. She invites him to be joined with her in love and intimacy. When both husband and wife give themselves completely to one another, the marriage becomes what God wanted it to be. Both are enthralled and enjoy the benefits of marriage. Marriage becomes beautiful and fulfilling, rather than what the world portrays marriage, as if it is some antiquated concept. Marriage is the pinnacle of love that carries the couple to new joys and heights.

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES CONCERNING LOVE AND MARRIAGE FROM THE SONG

1. A couple should want to be together and must fight for time to spend with each other (1:2-4). Too often we allow other things to crowd out the necessary time we need to maintain the marriage and cause it to flourish.
2. Women, all that matters is that your husband sees your beauty (1:5-7). You do not need to compare yourself to the definition that the world gives for beauty, which is typically unreasonable and unrealistic. Men, your standard of beauty is not what the world defines as beautiful but the one you married (1:8-10,15; 2:1-2). To compare her to others is not only unfair, but damaging to her own self-image. The one you chose is beautiful. You must praise her. She is your standard of beauty and no one else.
3. Chapters 1 and 2 show both man and woman praising and complimenting each other for the attributes they love. We did this when we were dating. We must not stop doing this simply because we are married. Communicate with each other how much you mean to each other and what you love about each other. Through this they begin to build their lives together.
4. Always "catch the foxes" in the relationship before the relationship is destroyed (2:15). Identify issues and potential problems in the relationship and deal with them openly, honestly, and kindly. Ignoring issues will only cause future arguments and problems. Learn to deal with an issue before it becomes a point of contention.
5. Marriage is the place for sexual intimacy (4:1-5:1). We are to be intoxicated with the love and intimacy of the other in marriage (Proverbs 5:15-20). The apostle Paul commands spouses not to withhold sexual relations from each other because it leads to sexual temptation (1 Corinthians 7:2-4). We must desire to give ourselves to each other. Marriage is the proper place for sexual intimacy and pleasure.
6. How we handle marital conflicts is critically important to maintaining a good marriage (5:2-16). We have no right to vent anger, bitterness, or resentment toward our spouse, no matter what he or she has done. We are only destroying our marriage when we handle conflicts in this way. No one is perfect. Both make mistakes in the marriage. Rather than always focusing on what the other person does wrong, focus on the things you love about your spouse. Focus on those positives and praise your spouse for the right things he or she does. Help each other overcome deficiencies rather than hurting each other for the failures.
7. Seek reconciliation when there is conflict (5:6-8; 6:1-12). We do not have to win arguments and fights. Be willingly to overlook flaws and always seek reconciliation. Going through difficulties with a kind heart that desires the best in the other person will only strengthen the marriage. Seek the good of the other person rather than looking out only for your own interests (cf. Philippians 2:4; Ephesians 5:22-33). Desire reconciliation.
8. We must want to fulfill each other's desires of love, affection, and sexuality (7:1-13). Husbands desire to be with their wives in sexual intimacy. Wives must be happy that his desire is for her (7:10) and willingly desire to make opportunities for each other to be together. Both want to fulfill each other needs. They communicate with each other what they want and desire to fulfill each other's requests.
9. When we do the above things, we will build a strong marriage that can withstand any difficulty (8:6-7).
10. We must teach our daughters at an early age about sexual purity and prepare them for being a godly wife in marriage (8:2, 8-10). Keep yourself pure for marriage and enjoy the fruit in marriage only (8:11-14).

SONG OF SONGS



God's Instructions For Love and Marriage

by: Brent Kercheville