

**1 Turn in your Bible to the Song of Solomon or the Song of Songs** *Read Song of Solomon 1:1-2:17*

*Illustration: In measuring an uneven wall: problem is not level but wall ... Once while: broken level is the problem*  
*Marriage=wall: Level=love-making: Level is off: usually problem w/relationship Sex: measures health of relat.*  
*OK: Breathe easily: I will speak of the ideas found in SOS appropriately & tastefully.*

**2 1. What is the Song of Solomon all about?**

It is also called the Song of Songs... a compilation of songs/poems between two people:

King Solomon and a young woman who is identified in **6:13** as being a Shulammitte woman.

*Through these songs & poems you learn what two people are thinking, feeling and have to do as they progress from courting to marriage to reconciling conflicts to developing a deepening love that endures through time.*

**There are four main thoughts or sections of this book?**

- 1) Romantic Love Cultivated *Courtship—How to develop a possible marriage relationship?*
- 2) Romantic Love Consummated *Sexual intimacy is pure—How to avoid prudishness & perversion?*
- 3) Romantic Love Threatened *Reconciling when broken—How to stay on the same team?*
- 4) Romantic Love Blossoms *Developing intimacy in marriage—How to date your spouse?*

**3 2. What can we learn about romance, love, sex and marriage from King Solomon?**

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

The Bible says that King Solomon, David's son by Bathsheba, was a man full of great wisdom,

YET his heart was turned away from God because of his compromise to marry pagan women (**1 Ki. 11:1-5**).

**S.of S. 6:8** says when Solomon wrote compiled these songs, he had 140 wives (60 queens, 80 concubines).

**1 Kings 11:1-5** says Solomon had 700 wives/princesses & 300 concubines... who turned his heart from God.

As we ponder that we ask: 'So how can Solomon teach me anything about marriage?'

Consider this... King Solomon also wrote Ecclesiastes, which gives wisdom as to the purpose & essence of life...

YET when you read Ecclesiastes, you learn he tried all kinds of sin to find life's purpose & happiness.

Solomon's conclusion (12:13) is true & helpful: all is meaningless except to fear God—enjoy & obey Him!

It is amazing we get Holy Spirit inspired truth about the true purpose of life from a man who did it all wrong.

Song of Solomon must be understood in a similar light.

The fact that Solomon really *botched the essence of faithfulness in marriage to one spouse* does not mean that he didn't understand what God's view on love in marriage is all about.

It is amazing the Holy Spirit chose Solomon to teach us about courting, sex, marriage & romance. But He did.

We can trust this book as God's truth on courting, sex, marriage & romance, though given by an imperfect man.

**4 3. Are there some HELPFUL TIPS to understand and apply this book to MY life today?**

1. As you read, identify who is speaking: 1) Solomon, 2) Shulammitte 3) an unnamed group of others.
2. The imagery of the songs is graphic & was culturally meaningful & 'self-evident', though it is not to us today.  
Thus we must find today's equivalent words & ideas that communicate the same meaning that it did then.
3. The message of this book speaks about: 1) God's design for romantic or marriage love, AND  
2) A more important love story—God's love for people—Jesus' passionate love for His church/bride.
4. Their marriage is consummated in 4:10-16. God's approval is stated in 5:1.

**5 Main Idea: Romantic love is cultivated during Courting (NOT 'Playing the Field')**

*There are **nine songs** in chapters 1-2: **nine pictures** of a couple-developing in their love & moving towards marriage.*

*Courting: intentional friendship to determine if marriage is God's plan; has romance, boundaries/accountability & prayer.*

**6 #1 1:2-4 His Character: Shulammitte responds to Solomon's 'Courting'.**

*1:2-4a: Shulammitte reveals what she was thinking after she had observed Solomon from a distance.*

*Notice that she didn't go & share her feelings with him, but patiently waited to see what he would do.*

**1:2** *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine;*

**1:3** *your anointing oils are fragrant; your name is oil poured out; therefore virgins love you.*

**1:4a** *Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers.*

**1:2** Kiss me: She adored him and had romantic feelings toward him—'romantic' kiss not a customary 'greeting' kiss.

Your love better than wine: Wine was a delicacy, it was pure, tasty, & delightful. She wanted him to love her.

- 1:3 **Anointing oils:** She noticed he was well kept, having put on some attractive fragrances: women appreciate that. **Your name is oil poured out:** he had a high reputation & great respect. Everyone noticed him! All wanted him!
- 1:4 **Draw me after you:** she wants to be loved by him, is not interested in a one night stand, but waits to be woo'd. She waits for him to take the initiative. **Let us run:** Her hope is that they can experience life together. Sex is not her direct objective nor is romance. First and foremost, her delight is in the person of Solomon. Romantic feelings are part of the relationship but her first desire is to be with him because he is a delight to her.
- 1:4b **King has brought me into his chambers:** he approaches her & invites her into the palace. He is interested in her. He makes his intentions clear: he is not manipulating her or playing with her emotions. He has invited her into his chambers (household not bedroom) because he wants to get to know this woman.
- 1:4c **"We will exult in you and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine."**  
*While she is with Solomon in his house, she hears an unnamed group of people praise Solomon by saying...*
- 1:4d **'Rightly do they love you.'**  
*The last phrase of 1:4 tells us her feelings: she agrees with what she has heard and expresses her love. She possesses a similar feeling to those in Solomon's household that he is a great source of joy and love. She thinks it makes perfect sense that those in his household love him. He is simply to be admired and adored. People get married for many reasons--truly adoring one another & being attracted in every way.*
1. She wants to be wanted by him--He is desirable. 2. He is praised by others: reputation, character...

**\*Recognize what attracts you to him (or to her).**

- 7 **Song #2 1:5-7 Her Character: Shulammitte shares her doubts & confidently asks.**  
*1:5-6: Shulammitte shares with other women in Jerusalem without Solomon being present.  
 1:7: Shulammitte clearly states her response to Solomon's courting her.*
- 1:5 ***I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.***
- 1:6 ***Do not stare at me because I am swarthy, For the sun has burned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me caretaker of the vineyards, But I have not taken care of my own vineyard.***
- 1:6 She is concerned about her appearance. It is normal and OK for a woman to concern herself about her looks. Though it is evident that Solomon is interested in her, still she is self-conscious. She admits that she is lovely to look at but her skin has been burned and darkened by the sun. Its color is like the tents of Kedar and the curtains of Solomon, which evidently were a darker color. She doesn't want people, especially Solomon, to stare at her defects but to enjoy her pleasant aspects. She wasn't a '10' physically in her own eyes, yet she was very beautiful in Solomon's eyes. Her brothers made her work outdoors in the vineyards doing hard labor, which is why her skin is scorched. Therefore she feels that she hasn't taken care of her own appearance, which makes her very self-conscious.
- 1:7 ***Tell me O you whom my soul loves, where do you pasture your flock, where do you make it lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who veils herself beside the flocks of your companions?"***
- 1:7 Yet, evidently reassured of herself, in verse 7 she humbly and confidently inquires where Solomon works. She wants to know where he goes during the day with his flock, and she wishes to be invited to visit him. She doesn't want to play the seductress. She doesn't want to manipulate him. She wants true romance. In other words, she makes it clear that she would like him to continue pursuing her. She doesn't lead him on, nor is she intentionally vague about her feelings toward him. It is evident that she wants to go forward with the relationship, telling him she loves him at a deep soul level. The outward physical attraction is there, but she also appreciates his character, personality, & heart. She is not wanting to just 'date around' but courting--where marriage is hoped to be the outcome by both.

**\*Develop humble acceptance & Christ-confidence.**

- 8 **Song #3 1:8-11 His Affirmation: Solomon shares his heart—gives words that affirm.**  
*1:8-11 King Solomon's answer to her question and open sharing of his heart of love for her.*
- 1:8 ***If you yourself do not know, most beautiful among women, go forth on the trail of the flock and pasture your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.***
- 1:8 Solomon responds by inviting her to come and visit him while he is working. He probably thought she already knew where he shepherded his flock. He perhaps even wondered why she didn't come and visit if she adored him so much. He tells her where to go so she can take her own goats and visit the tents of the shepherds. Solomon responds to her interest by taking a step forward in the relationship by spending more time together. He makes it clear to her as well how he feels very early in this relationship. He thinks that she is the most beautiful among women. They are very open about what they think of one another early on in the relationship.

Again, they are not playing games, but they are simply deeply attracted to one another, pursuing one another with the understanding that things could end up in marriage.

**1:9** *To me, my darling, you are like my mare among the chariots of Pharaoh.*

**1:10** *Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with strings of beads."*

**1:9** Here we get further insight into why Solomon is so caught up with this woman.

Certainly, her character matters, but Solomon is drawn to her outward appearance which he complements.

He doesn't say too much too fast, but he calls her his darling (companion-relationship headed toward marriage).

He compares her effect on him to the effect that a mare would have amongst the stallions of Pharaoh's chariots. The image is that of a group of stallions lined up and all going crazy as a beautiful mare would walk by.

This is the first of many word pictures that doesn't carry over today—

no woman would be complemented her if you told her that she reminds you of a mare.

**1:10** He complements her cheeks, something we wouldn't do today either, but it was a high compliment to her without getting too risqué and complimenting her about features he shouldn't be focusing on yet.

He does notice her other beautiful features, but they are not his focus as he is trying to get to know her heart.

**1:11** **OTHERS:** *'We will make for you ornaments of gold with beads of silver.'*

**1:11** The women in the court are influenced by Solomon's words of affirmation and love for Shulammitte.

They tell her that they will make jewelry for her.

Jewelry is not a forbidden in the Bible (Ezekiel 16:11-12), but a preoccupation can be (1 Peter 3:3-5).

**\*Give feedback...if 'yes', give appropriate praise.**

**9** **Song #4 1:12-14 Her Admiration: Shulammitte muses as she admires Solomon.**

**1:12** *While the king was at his table, my perfume gave forth its fragrance.*

**1:13** *My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh which lies all night between my breasts.*

**1:14** *My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi."*

**1:12** During a meal at the king's table, she was aware her perfume's fragrance was spreading throughout the room.

This was her intention, as men, too, appreciate pleasant fragrances.

**1:13** She viewed Solomon as the myrrh that was in a little case that hung from a necklace which rested on her chest.

**1:14** She viewed Solomon like beautiful henna blossoms in the middle of a desert—Engedi was an oasis in a desert.

**\*Learn to appropriately value your 'beloved'.**

**10** **Song #5 1:15-2:3 Intimate Conversation: Their mutual amazement about their mutual love.**

**1:15** **HE:** *How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! your eyes are like doves."*

**1:16** **SHE:** *How handsome you are, my beloved, and so pleasant! Indeed, our couch is luxuriant!*

**1:17** *The beams of our houses are cedars, our rafters, cypresses.*

**2:1** *I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys.*

**1:15** Solomon can't get over how beautiful she is. He says it twice, referring again to her as his darling.

He is enraptured with her beauty, both inward & outward, but certainly outward. He doesn't over spiritualize things, but he is simply drawn to this wonderful creation and gift of God, his perfect complement.

The exclamation points as he speaks of her beauty are not accidental. He can't contain himself-she is beautiful!

He compliments her eyes, again not something too sexual at this point but something women really appreciate because it shows that the man takes notice of the little things and likes what he sees.

**1:16** She responds to his enthusiasm for her by calling him handsome (analogous term for beautiful) & her beloved.

These are not casual daters but becoming connected at the deepest level, both hoping it will end in marriage.

This man, she says, is pleasant to be around. He doesn't annoy her or take her for granted.

He makes her feel as if she is the most precious and prized possession in all of the kingdom.

**1:17** Their relationship is anchored strong and is utterly wonderful and luxuriant.

They are living in luxury, savoring one another, both being confident in the other's words and motives.

**2:1** She thinks she is the most precious because Solomon has treated her so wonderfully & made her feel so special.

He has made her feel so confident and beautiful in herself, not worrying any longer about her darkened skin.

**2:2** **HE:** *Like a lily among the thorns, so is my darling among the maidens.*

**2:1** Solomon believes that, compared her beauty, all other woman are like thorns when compared to a lily.

He is so enraptured with this one woman, believing that he has the best and most beautiful among maidens.

This incredible physical attraction is healthy and normal in a romantic relationship.

**2:3** **SHE:** *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. In his shade I took great delight and sat down, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

**2:3** She views Solomon as an apple tree, which stands out among the trees of the forest.

There are many men out there, but she believes that Solomon is the best.

She speaks of sitting down in the shade of his tree and tasting of his sweet fruit.

This fruit (nonsexual romantic touching and affection such as kissing and stroking) was sweet and delightful.

She is giving over her heart to him, feeling safe, cared for, and protected in his love (the shade of the tree).

**\*Learn to use romantic conversation as you court.**

**11 Song #6 2:4-7 Her Desire: Shulammitte delights in...& longs for...but controls.**

**2:4 To Herself: He has brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.**

She notes that Solomon has begun to make it clear to all that he delights in her—like putting a banner on a wall.

She notices that he is introducing her as his beloved, making the likely prospects of marriage clear to others.

**2:5 To Him: Sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, because I am lovesick.**

**2:6 To Herself: Let his left hand be under my head and his right hand embrace me.**

She is in love with this man and she desires their relationship to move forward: commitment & romance!

Because of this sense of moving forward, she begins to let her mind and heart run away on her.

She has given her heart to this man, & she begins to wish for being in his presence more often & more fully.

There is romantic love & an enrapturing with the closeness they do have. Yet she is getting ahead of herself.

She is probably wishing for sexual intimacy or an extreme intimacy which would awaken sexual desire.

In other words, she wants to be as close as humanly possible, embraced from top to bottom.

Her speaking of his left hand under her head and right hand embracing her, speaks of a very intimate position.

Yet this is not right until after marriage. She loves this man but needs to reign in her desires until they marry.

**2:7 To Others: I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, that you do not arouse or awaken my love until she pleases.**

At this point, she catches herself and states one of the major themes of this book:

**DON'T REPRESS NATURAL (GOOD/GODLY) DESIRES BUT SUPPRESS THEM: Admit but don't act!**

Sexual love must not be awakened at all costs until it pleases, which is only after marriage.

Sexual love completes the romantic bond—the climax between two people who commit themselves in marriage.

If sex occurs before the marriage commitment, it will produce confusion, mistrust & a loss of romantic love.

Prior to marriage, nothing should be done that stirs up or rouses the sexual desire.

Awakening love could mean having sex for the first time, at which point one is said to be sexually awakened.

Awakening love could also mean that nothing should be done physically to get the sexual desire flowing.

The command to not awaken love until it pleases probably encompasses both.

Certainly, sex before marriage is forbidden in Scripture (Matthew 15:19). But it is even more than that.

God does not want you to even stimulate sexual desire because it will only lead to temptation & possible sin.

General affection (stroking an arm, holding hands, a possible quick kiss goodnight) can be OK.

But anything beyond a small kiss will only arouse sexual desires that can't be fulfilled until after marriage.

It is imperative for courting couples to talk about this and to seek the Lord about the line He wants for you.

In addition to touching, other things can arouse sexual desire, such as words we say or write to one another.

Solomon has told her that she is beautiful, but he doesn't speak of her sexual features until after marriage.

\*The looks we give could be a nonverbal kind of sexual "talking."—the way we use our body, eyes, gestures, and facial expressions can arouse sexual excitement in others before we are married.

\*Certainly, any kind of pornography or vicarious living through a romance novel is also inappropriate.

\*Much dancing that is done today is highly sexual and intentionally so.

**Christians seeking to be married:** avoid any activity that gets the mind focused and preoccupied with sex.

Scripture is clear that anything that arouses or awakens sexual desire is wrong.

General affection & romantic speech is good/healthy, but anything that excites sexual desire must be avoided.

**\*Don't repress (deny) desires but suppress them—don't act on them. \*Consciously build LOVE boundaries.**

**12 Song #7 2:8-14 Her Delight: Shulammitte delights in Solomon & his love for her..**

**2:8 SHE: Listen! My beloved! Behold, he is coming, climbing on the mountains, leaping on the hills!**

**2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he is standing behind our wall,**

**He is looking through the windows, he is peering through the lattice.**

**2:8** She is now constantly thinking about her beloved and being with him. She imagines him coming to her.

**2:9** She sees him as a gazelle or stag...leaping and climbing and coming to her.

The second half of verse 9 he came to her dwelling place to find her and take her on a romantic date.

**2:10 My beloved responded and said to me,**

**2:10b HE: 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along.'**

**2:11 For behold, the winter is past, The rain is over and gone.**

**2:12 The flowers have already appeared in the land; The time has arrived for pruning the vines,**

*And the voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land.*

2:13 *The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines in blossom have given forth their fragrance.  
"Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along!"*

2:14 *O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret place of the steep pathway, let me see your form,  
Let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your form is lovely.*

2:10 From verse 10-14, we hear her speak of what Solomon said to her:

2:10b He invites her to come with him for a special outing.

2:11 Winter is over, the rainy season has ended... It is Spring!

2:12 The flowers are out... the growing season is in full swing. Spring has arrived. The turtle dove is singing!

2:13 The fig trees are ripening... He wants her to come with him and enjoy the beauty.

He wants to enjoy the beauty of creation with his darling, his beautiful one. "Darling" she is uniquely special. He is consumed and enraptured with her and no one else. Her beauty is the only beauty that he cares to notice. He loves her so much he continues to draw her after him, which is what she wished for in chapter one. Notice that he doesn't stop the drawing just because she is now caught up with him.

He keeps romancing her, building the climax even more and more, not that it was a strain to do so.

Yet they must be careful they don't break down and sin, given the strong desires they have for one another.

2:14 Before this point, their interaction had been predominantly if not totally in the presence of others.

But now they are alone. They find a beautiful place. He calls her his dove, a term of beauty & endearment.

They have found their own little special place amongst the clefts of the rocks that no one else knows about.

It is their secret place where they can be alone. This is healthy for romance but must be approached carefully, Solomon wants to sit back and enjoy her beauty, which can be perfectly healthy & natural. It was love not lust.

We should remember that their clothing was loose and flowing, not revealing and enticing like often today.

He is just appreciating his beloved. He even wants to hear her voice—sing a song or just share her heart.

**\*Men... woo your love using HER language.**

13 **Song #8 2:15 His Caution: Solomon leads them to stay pure—protect love.**

2:15 *Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom.*

2:15 Being in a place by themselves with no accountability, "little foxes" could tempt these lovers to do wrong.

Their vineyards are in blossom, meaning that their feelings toward one another are strong and intense.

Yet, just as a fox ruins a vineyard, sin could ruin what they have. They must guard their heart & bodies.

If they find they are finding it hard to control their passions, they must choose not to put themselves in danger.

But this verse is not teaching that a 'courting' couple can never be alone.

These were two young people who developed in their love and decided to put boundaries to their relationship.

**\*Do whatever it takes to protect 'developing' love. \*Law of Diminishing Returns**

14 **Song #9 2:16-17 Her Commitment: Shulammitte expresses her commitment (marriage).**

2:16 *My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures his flock among the lilies.*

2:17 *Until the cool of the day when the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved,  
and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of Bether."*

2:16 The Shulammitte again takes great joy in thought that they both see each other as belonging to each other!

2:17 She thinks about being with Solomon all day long. Being apart from him is downright difficult.

This is going to end in marriage, probably sooner rather than later.

Their feelings for one another cannot be bottled up. She wants him to run to her so they can be together.

**\*Marriage: both 'AGAPE' love & 'EROS' love.**

15 **Romantic love is best cultivated by courting.**

**Courting:** intentional friendship to determine if marriage is God's plan; involves: romance, boundaries & prayer.

*Courtship is a process by which love is decided upon, developed and patiently waited on.*

*God created...* 1. *Marriage to reveal His love: Jesus loves His bride.*

2. *Men to win a woman's heart with love & romance.*

3. *Women to respond to a man's love with passion.*

**Truths to Exalt in and Embrace from The Song of Solomon...**

1. God created marriage to be a picture of His desired intimacy for us with Jesus Christ. (Eph. 5:22-33)
2. God created men to win a woman's heart with his love for her & leadership with her. (1:9-10,15; 2:2,15)
3. God created women to respond to a man's loving leadership by giving herself to him. (1:2-4, 2:3-14-17)
4. Courtship is the process by which love is decided upon, developed & patiently waited on. (2:2-3,7,15, 3:1ff)