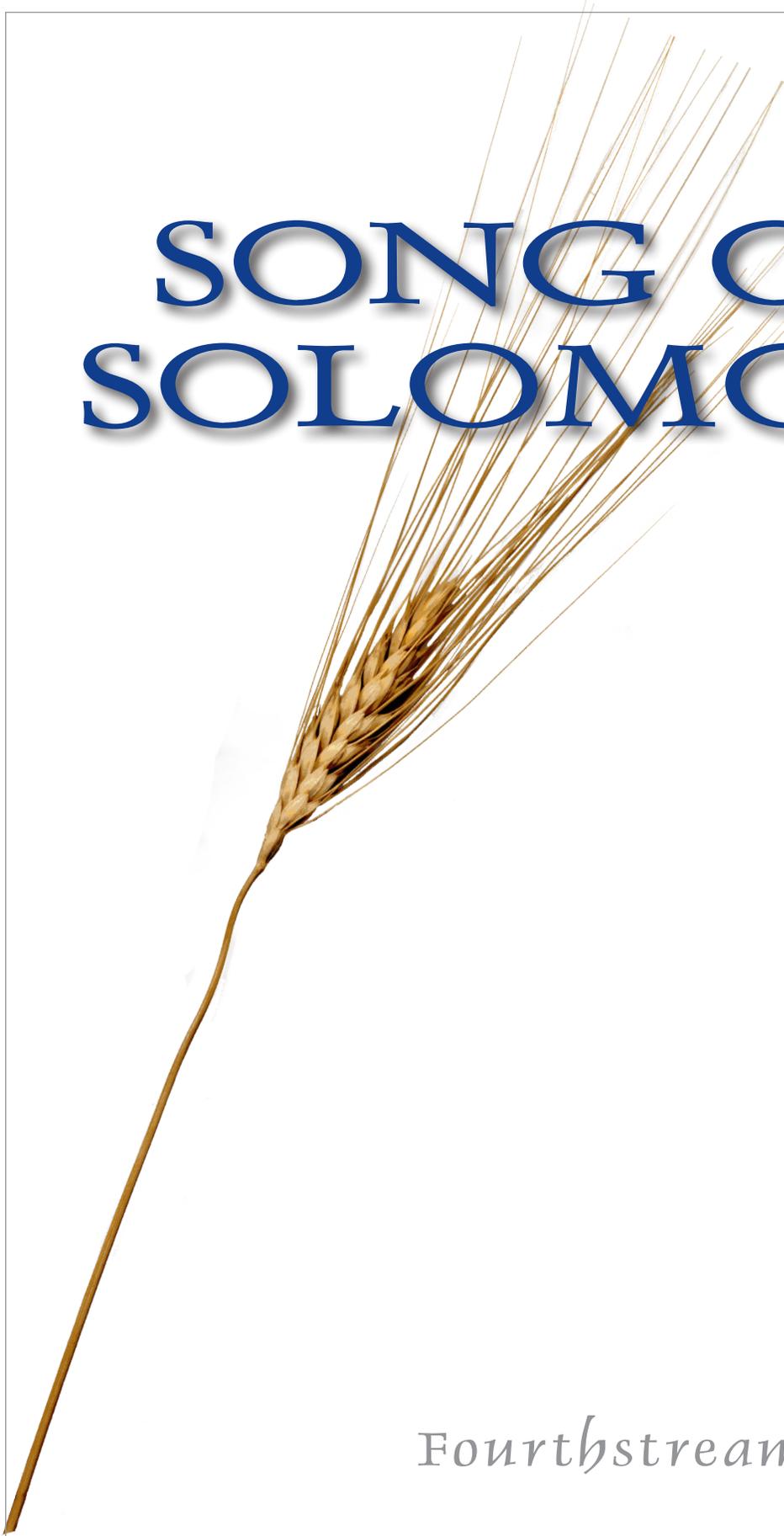


SONG OF SOLOMON



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Welcome to the book of Song of Solomon!

To begin your study of Song of Solomon, meditate upon the content of the book reflected in the overview chart below. As you consider each section and title we have chosen, decide how each one relates to the theme of godly intimacy in a godly relationship. The book of Song of Solomon gives us very practical principles for maintaining proper interest in and care for that partner that God has provided. The key verse (8:6) reflects the depths to which committed, intimate love may attain.

SONG OF SOLOMON Intimate Love

Godly human love...

COURTSHIP 1:7; 2:10-14	WEDDING NIGHT 3:6-11; 5:8	MARRIAGE 5:10-16; 7:10
1-3	3-5	5-8

"Put me like a seal over your heart." 8:6

Also note the Scriptures listed within the overview chart above. Take this opportunity to investigate each one, looking for the relationship between the section titles and key verses. Use these passages as "guideposts" to unlock the message of the book. What have you learned thus far of Song of Solomon?

We mentioned in previous teachings the possibility that Solomon had written Song of Solomon reflecting upon the wife of his youth. As you study the beautiful poetry and imagery of the book, meditate long and deeply upon the principles of innocent love that may be gleaned. The infatuated intimacy of Song of Solomon is something that the writer himself would have done well to maintain and cultivate with the wife of his youth. Read Proverbs 5:15-23 which is significant here.

Open your heart as you read!

Our value system for human love may be polluted by any of a number of sources. Do you have God's view on love and sex? Are you practicing joy and purity when it comes to considering the interests of your partner in the area of intimate love?

AUTHOR

King Solomon of Israel. The ideal love of this poem which reflects the love of loves (Jesus Christ for His Bride: the Church) comes from the pen of a man with an imperfect view of love. The 300 wives and 700 concubines of Solomon testify to the unrestrained polygamy of the King of Israel. How then, can a man with such a notorious harem write a poem extolling true love?

One possibility is that the poem is designed to show the joy of monogamy against the backdrop of polygamy. In 6:8, Solomon is said to have only 60 wives and 80 concubines. The mention of these is an obvious reflection that the love of the Shulamite in this song is a special love which stands out amidst the many women in the harem. Though surrounded by a large retinue of women, the Shulamite is the sole possessor of his heart. If Solomon wrote this back while practicing polygamy, it would be a powerful argument against the emptiness of having many wives. It would be a poem emphasizing the beauty of ideal love written by one who had experienced the opposite.

DATE

10th Century B.C....early in Solomon's reign.

OTHER BACKGROUND

King Solomon, Israel's wisest and richest king, owns land all over the nation. One particular piece of real estate he owns is a vineyard close to Baalhamon in the northernmost part of Galilee, near the foothills of the Lebanon mountains. While on a visit to his vineyard, Solomon meets a farm girl called Shulamite and it's almost love at first sight. For some time, he pursues her and makes periodic visits to see her at her country home. He finally "pops" the question but Shulamite is unsure of her answer at first. Can she be happy in another country, with his rich and powerful friends, away from her family? She finally says "yes" and Solomon sends his "limousine" to pick her up for their wedding day in Jerusalem's palace.

The book opens as she is getting ready for the wedding banquet and wedding night or honeymoon. This, the beginning of love, is recounted in chapters 1-5:1. The second half of the book deals with the joys and problems of their married life. Such marital tensions as not having enough time together, homesickness, communication breakdown, and sexual difficulties are sensitively but realistically dealt with in this section of the book describes as "the development of oneness" found in chapters 5:2-8:14.

Why study the Song of Solomon?

For husbands with a busy schedule, Solomon, who undoubtedly had an even busier schedule, serves as an example to follow in giving our wives a high priority when it comes to our time.

This book pictures love as a "garden" which needs continual cultivating. There are many practical suggestions given in this book on ways to cultivate your own love garden. See if you can pick them out, then do them with your spouse.



Song of Solomon Chapter Chart

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Chapter	Title	Verse
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Finding true love

Before the Marriage

Read 1:7,8; 2:8-17

Here we see an excited infatuation in the first meeting of 1:7-8 and then the breath-taking romance of 2:8-17! Twice we see the beckoning call of Solomon, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along". (2:10, 13) Here is the common experience of love, the anticipation of first meeting and those romantic first visits.

What about today?

Think about your own courtship. What first attracted you to your mate? In what ways have you "outgrown" courtship infatuation? In what ways does your marriage still need these delights?

Before the Marriage

Read 3:6-11; 1:2-6

Read 3:6-22 and 1:2-6. Here is the glorious wedding day and the Shulamite is experiencing anxious waiting. Notice her view of her husband to be. She sees him as magnificent! We all must see our mates as "Solomons" and "Shulamites". When we are in love we entertain high thoughts of our partner.

What about today?

Too often after marriage, we lose our high view of our partner. In what ways has this diminished in your marriage? How has it increased? Why is it important to hold our mate in high esteem?

During the Wedding

Read 6:4-7,10; 1:9-17; 2:1-7

Here we see mutual love and admiration for each other that is apparently displayed publicly.

What about today?

These two held each other in high regard. This characterized their speech when they spoke to others. Do you support and praise your mate before others? Do others see him or her as in high regard to you or do they picture your mate in a slanted light deduced from your comments (or lack of them)?

Wedding Night

Read 4:1-7

Review the background section as you study this lesson in admiration!

What about today?

Do you compliment your spouse? (About his or her work, care, concerns, love; etc.) Do you know his/her language of love?

Wedding Night

Read 4:8-5:1

Here we have a breathtaking account of lovemaking romance. In 5:1, we hear the voice of another observer. It is either the wind that is blowing or God, who is observing this pleasing union.

What about today?

Lovemaking is not dirty! Indeed, if the God of heaven created man in His image, even our love relationships somehow reflect His glory! Do you have any hang-ups about love and sex? Where do they come from, how do they affect you, and what does God say about them in Song of Solomon?

Separated Lovers

Read 3:1-5; 5:2-6:3

In 3:1-5, the bride dreams a fearful dream of separation from her lover. In 5:2 - 6:3, this actually happens. For some unknown reason, Solomon is gone and the Shulamite goes in search of him.

What about today?

True love demands true commitment! How great is your need for your spouse? Are there any things that you have put in your life in place of this intense commitment to your mate?

Homesick Bride

Read 7:11 - 8:4-14

Here we see the two lovers returning to the bride's home. Solomon is sensitive to the needs of his wife, and as they return to the scene of their courtship, they review their initial vow of love (8:6).

What about today?

We must accurately assess and adequately meet the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of our mate. How often do you consider whether your marriage is doing so? Why not make it a point to get alone with your mate to discuss your feelings about your marriage?