

Chapters 1-8 - Solomon's Song of Songs celebrating God's design for marriage

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

The Song of Solomon, or your Bible may list it as the Song of Songs, and so tonight we're actually going to make our way through the entirety of The Song of Solomon, eight chapters. I figured we got nothing else going on tonight, right? So we're just going to go through this whole book. And it begins this way in verse one.

If you look with me it says, *¹The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.*

Stop there for just a moment as we just get started. You know, over the course of his lifetime, we happen to know that Solomon wrote over 1,000 songs and I'm not talking about Proverbs. He wrote over 1,000 songs, but this one is considered to be his Song of Songs.

In other words, this is his best, his greatest hit of all time. But you know, The Song of Solomon is very unique in the Bible. In fact, this book is so unique in the Bible that there's a great many people who wonder if it actually even belongs in the Bible and in the canon of scripture. But one thing we know for sure, people, however they view this book, a lot of people struggle with it.

And essentially there are different ways that people approach The Song of Solomon. One is just to ignore it. A lot of people just ignore it. They just, they've never, ever read through, never studied through The Song of Solomon. In fact, one of the early church fathers, a man by the name of Origen of Alexandria, who was born in the late second century, and he is widely regarded as one of the most important Christian theologians of all time said this about The Song of Solomon. Check this out. He said,

"I advise and counsel everyone who is not yet rid of vexations of the flesh and blood, and has not ceased to feel the passions of this bodily nature, to refrain from reading the book and the things that will be said about it."

-Origen (c.185-c.254)

Isn't that interesting? Well, and that's been the way that a lot of people have frankly dealt with The Song of Solomon over the years.

Others tend to look at it from a spiritual standpoint. And what I mean by that is they spiritualize the book of The Song of Solomon, and they see it as an allegory spiritually speaking of an allegorical relationship between God and His people. And frankly, this is what the early Jews did. The Jews believed that The Song of Solomon was an allegory speaking of God's love relationship with Israel.

Well, then when the church came into being, the Christians kind of took over that whole idea of The Song of Solomon being an allegorical picture, but this time they applied it to Christ and His church.

Another common approach to The Song of Solomon is for people just to see it really as a more of a simple drama, a poetic narrative on the topic of love.

Well, I don't feel the need personally or not the need I should say, that's really not the right word. I don't have the freedom, let's say, as a teacher of the Bible to ignore The Song of Solomon as we teach from Genesis to Revelation. We come smack dab to The Song of Solomon and like it or not, we got to go through this book.

I also don't necessarily feel the freedom to approach this book as an allegory. I don't think we necessarily have the justification for approaching it as an allegory. So for the purpose of our study tonight, we're going to be looking at The Song of Solomon as a literal and very powerful picture of romantic and sensual love between a man and a woman kind of journeying with them throughout their period of courtship and marriage, and we're going to look at it that way.

Now, obviously, whenever we talk about love is a very complex subject and incredibly popular among human beings. I mean, can you even imagine how many books and poems and movie scripts and TV shows over the years have been dedicated to the simple topic of love? I mean, it's just good grief. The Hallmark channel is literally founded on the subject of love. Its entire existence is owed to love.

And yet some of the most profound words ever uttered about this thing called love were given to us by Huey Lewis and the News in the mid 1980s when they sang, *the power of love is a curious thing. Make a one man weep. Make another*

man sing. Change a hawk to a little white dove. More than a feeling. That's the power of love.

I don't think you can probably say it any better than that. I mean, right? Well, here's the deal. Most everyone when we begin to talk about love has some kind of an idea or expectation of what true love ought to look like, what it ought to be like.

In fact, even kids have their own expectations to the question, how do you decide who to marry? Alan, who's age 10, said, well, you got to find someone who likes the same stuff you like. Well, I mean, if you like sports, she should like sports. And she should keep the chips and dip coming. I like that. The man after my own heart.

And Kristen, age 10, said, no person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all before, and you get to find out who you're stuck with, right?

When asked the question, how can a stranger tell if two people are actually married? Derek, who's eight years old, said, married people usually look happy to talk to other people.

Eddie responded by saying, well, you might have to guess based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.

And then, when asked, why do people go out on a date? Lynette, age 7, said, well dates are for having fun and people should use them to get to know each other. And then she said, even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. I think that's probably true.

And then responding to the same question, or the question, how do you make a marriage work? A seven-year-old boy, wise beyond his years I might add, said, tell your wife she looks pretty, even if she doesn't. I like that. That is great advice.

Well, what's interesting about love and our understanding of what love is is actually made a little more difficult in our American spoken language and written for that matter. Because you see here in America, I say to my wife, I love you, but I use the exact same word to describe how I feel about pizza.

And I don't use a different word. I use the same exact word, and that kind of muddies the waters a little bit because my wife, I suppose, could probably say I

wonder if he loves me as much as he loves pizza or more because the word is exactly the same.

What's interesting is that other languages such as the New Testament of the Greek actually, believe it or not, has four different words that are used to define love in its various shades. I want to go through these a little bit with you.

For example, first of all, there is the Greek word *phileo*, or *philia*, which refers to friendship, speaks of deep loyalty.

GREEK WORDS FOR LOVE

phileo or philia

Let me show you an example from John chapter 11. It says,

John 11:1,3 (ESV)

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. So the sisters sent to [Jesus] saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

And that is the word *phileo*, right? So, that's how that word is used. It's a different shade of the word love.

Then the next one we have in the Greek is *agape*, or *agapa*, or *agapao*, and it is unconditional love.

GREEK WORDS FOR LOVE

phileo or philia

agape or agapao

An example would be Matthew chapter five, verse 44. Jesus speaking here,

Matthew 5:44 (ESV)

"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..."

That's to be an unconditional love. But see, there's actually two other shades of love in New Testament Greek, and they are the words *storge* and *eros*.

GREEK WORDS FOR LOVE

phileo or philia

agape or agapao

storge

eros

But I can't show you examples of these because they're actually not given in the New Testament. They're in Greek, but they're not in the New Testament. Storge is a family love, the love that we might feel in a family unit for one another.

And eros is passionate love, often with sensual desire and longing. It's a romantic love. And although it doesn't have to be sexual in nature, it often is. And this word eros in the Greek is where we get our English word erotic.

And the reason I've gone through these different shades of the meaning of love is I wanted to let you know that The Song of Solomon is all about erotic love. It's not the kind of love you have for pizza. It's the kind of love a man has for his wife and a wife has for her husband. It is The Song of Solomon, a powerful depiction of romantic and sensual love.

But as we go through this book, I want you to understand that it's best not to expect a story here in the traditional sense of the word. In other words, like you would watch a Hallmark movie that begins at the beginning and ends at the end. You can't really do that with The Song of Solomon because what we're given here are really kind of a series of snapshots of this couple through their journey of love. But make no mistake about it, this book is steamy.

I was joking earlier with the people up on our sound booth that this is kind of rated PG 13, you know, just to read through the book of The Song of Solomon. Which is interesting because I think the world looks at the church and God in general as, or people who follow God, as kind of being uptight about these kind of subjects. You know, it's like, well, if you're a Christian, you can't talk about sex. You can't talk about these sorts of things because those are out of bounds, you know, and then Christians are seen as kind of out of touch on the subject.

But you know, as we get into The Song of Solomon, it's important to realize here, and you're going to see this, God wrote the book on love. And what that

means is, and this is very important that you hear what I'm saying here, God created every form of lovemaking, including what we call erotic, physical love.

And as the creator of those things, God knows how they are best to be expressed and in what form they are to be expressed. And, you know, really that's just, that's the main difference between believers who are walking in a biblical worldview of life and love and the world because you see, the world is trying to make love into something that God never intended it to be.

And that's really important that we see that. Sometimes you'll get an argument from people and they'll say, well, is it really wrong if two people love each other, doesn't matter if they're the same sex or whatever, what's so wrong about it if they really love each other? But see what they're doing is they're taking God's creation of love, and they're applying it to something that He never intended it to be applied to.

And physical love outside of marriage, that's another area that God designed. And so, you know, we have people who say, well, we're in love. We may not be married, but we're in love so we're going to, you know, have sex. What's wrong with that? We love each other. Well, once again, they're taking God's definition of love.

Love was not created by man. It was created by God. He made it for His own purpose, and He knows how best it should function. And so when we take His creation and we apply our own definitions, and those definitions are beyond God's intentions for love and so forth, what we're doing is we're redefining love from God's perspective, we're redefining what He created when He didn't give us the freedom to redefine it.

He never told us we could redefine love. He gave us the definition of love and He created it. And He has the right to maintain that definition. And so what we end up with many times in the world is something that isn't love at all. It isn't love. And so when people say, well, but we love each other, even though we're not doing it God's way, our response is no, you've redefined. You've taken something that God gave and you've redefined it.

And so what we end up with many times is a manmade perversion of God's original intent and purpose for love. And I probably don't need to remind you that whenever we take something that God made, and we change it to suit our own selfish desires, it never turns out good, and that is certainly the case with erotic love.

So just one more quick thing I want to address. There's a difference of opinion as to how this story in The Song of Solomon kind of goes and just how many characters are involved. We know that Solomon is a character in this book. We know that there is a Shulammitte maiden that is a main character in the book. There's a difference of opinion as to who the simple shepherd is. Some believe it is also Solomon. We are going to proceed on that idea.

And the last thing I'll I guess I'll point out is that if you're looking at The Song of Solomon in your Bible or whether it's electronic or in book form, you're going to notice that there are speaker identifications in front of each section. For example, I've only read the very beginning of verse one here, and if you look before verse two in the ESV, which is what I'm reading from, it says she, which tells you that's who's speaking. Those designations of who is speaking are not in the original Hebrew. They're put there by the translators based on the gender of the language to kind of help you understand the flow of conversation that is being given here in the book.

So let's go on and go through this. Verse two, this is the woman speaking, and this is the Shulammitte maiden. She says,

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

Wine, of course, in the Bible is always a picture of something that brings delight. And she is saying that his love exceeds that, and she says,

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

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

And so this is a picture of marriage. When the king brings a woman into his chambers, she would become his. And so we can see that right from the get go these two are married.

And then it says, others are speaking here. If you have a new King James Bible, your speaker designation is the Daughters of Jerusalem. But again, that is added by the translators. It says,

*We will exult and rejoice in you;
we will extol your love more than wine;
rightly do they love you.*

Then she speaks again, saying,

⁵ *I am very dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
like the tents of Kedar,
like the curtains of Solomon.*

⁶ *Do not gaze at me because I am dark,
because the sun has looked upon me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
they made me keeper of the vineyards,
but my own vineyard I have not kept!*

So it almost kind of sounds like she is self conscious about the fact that her skin is darker because she has spent more time out of doors. And we have to kind of look into these verses and say, I wonder what's going on here? It's possible that her one of her parents like her father passed away, her mother remarried, had other children, and those sons of her mother were angry with her and made her be the keeper of the vineyards.

And so she spent a great deal of time outside. And so now she is dark of skin and she says, so don't look at me even though I am very dark and so forth. And then in verse seven she appears to be recalling the first time that she and Solomon met. She says there,

⁷ *Tell me, you whom my soul loves,
where you pasture your flock,
where you make it lie down at noon;
for why should I be like one who veils herself
beside the flocks of your companions?*

And he responds to her saying,

⁸ *If you do not know,
O most beautiful among women,
follow in the tracks of the flock,
and pasture your young goats
beside the shepherds' tents.*

So she speaks in these verses to him, first of all, and says, why should I be like those who must veil themselves? A woman would veil herself to another man. Why must I be that way? I want to open myself up to you and he says, come and be by me. And he tells her then where they can meet there. And he says, come and bring your flock and follow in the tracks of the flocks. And there you'll find the shepherd's tents, there you'll find me. And he says,

*⁹ I compare you, my love,
to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots.*

I got to say, I probably wouldn't say that to my wife, just saying. I think the New King James says you are like a philly among the chariots of Pharaoh, but it appears to be a real compliment. So we're just going to assume that this was the case. He goes on in verse 10 to say.

*¹⁰ Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,
your neck with strings of jewels.*

So she is lovely with all of her royal jewelry and he's drawn to her beauty. The others speak up and say,

*¹¹ We will make for you ornaments of gold,
studded with silver.*

And then the Shulammitte speaks saying,

*¹² While the king was on his couch,
my nard gave forth its fragrance.*

*¹³ My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh
that lies between my breasts.*

And it was common for women in those days to wear a necklace that gave off a fragrance. And in this case, the fragrance being a kind of aphrodisiac in the matter of love. She goes on.

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

So there were many things in the ancient world that they used to kind of invite and excite lovemaking as she talks about this necklace and her lover being like this cluster of henna blossoms.

You know, there's actually a passage in the book of Proverbs that talks about this as well. Let me show you this from Proverbs chapter seven. It says,

Proverbs 7:16-18 (ESV)

I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love.

And you know, even though the context of this passage in Proverbs is a forbidden act of adultery, it should not be considered wrong or improper to encourage love with other things such as they used back in those days to encourage or to excite lovemaking. He goes on to speak now, verse 15,

*¹⁵ Behold, you are beautiful, my love;
behold, you are beautiful;
your eyes are doves.*

And I love the way he's responding to her now. And I think a man should do exactly what we're seeing here. I think men should often tell their wives that they're lovely to look at. And she responds saying,

*¹⁶ Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly delightful.
Our couch is green;*

*¹⁷ the beams of our house are cedar;
our rafters are pine.*

And by the way, where it says in verse 16 here when she responds to him saying you are beautiful, some translations use the word handsome instead of beautiful there since the Shulammitte is speaking to Solomon and they think, well, it's a little bit odd for her to be saying he's beautiful.

But actually it's the same word that he says to her in verse 15 when he says, behold, you are beautiful. Now, it is using the masculine gender in her usage of the word beautiful, but she not only calls him beautiful, you'll notice here, but she also speaks of their home. And that seems very strange for a couple who are kind of in the throes of passionate love, and these comments kind of seem almost out of place.

But she's addressing to him his thoughtfulness in preparing a home for them that has become for her a source of beauty and security. And, you know, I really think that if a man is attentive to his wife, he's going to seek to provide always a

place in which she feels comfortable that she's proud to live in and where she feels safe and secure.

Chapter two, the woman continues saying,

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

And he says,

² *As a lily among brambles,
so is my love among the young women.*

Notice that he says, you are completely unique. She says, I'm a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valley. He says, yes, a lily, but a lily among weeds and brambles and thorns. Notice what he's saying to her. He's reminding her that in his eyes, she is exquisite. And that among other women, he finds her completely unique and all these other women commonplace. So she says she responds to him by saying,

³ *As an apple tree among the trees of the forest,
so is my beloved among the young men.
With great delight I sat in his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

So she responds by likening him to be an apple tree among the trees of the forest, which by the way, would be very rare. First of all, you don't usually find apple trees in a forest, but second of all, it would be, since it's a fruit bearing tree, it would be something sweet and it could sustain her with its fruit.

She goes on.

⁴ *He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.*

Some of you are going to hear a song going through your head. But look what she says.

⁵ *Sustain me with raisins;
refresh me with apples,
for I am sick with love.*

She is absolutely delighted by his love. And she is also comforted and refreshed by his provision. And her desire is for him and him alone. And you know, these are words that even a man likes to hear from his wife from time to time. She goes on. She says,

*⁶ His left hand is under my head,
and his right hand embraces me!*

You're going to hear this statement repeated throughout this song. And so we see that with one hand he cradled her head, with the other he held and caressed her and she was delighted by his touch because he made her feel safe and loved. And by the way, I believe that a man should never do anything in the bedroom that ever makes his wife feel unsafe and certainly not unloved. But she goes on and says,

*⁷ I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or the does of the field,
that you not stir up or awaken love
until it pleases.*

And this is going to be another recurring theme that goes along with the previous verse. And it's a reminder that there is a proper time to awaken the idea of physical love within a God ordained plan for our lives, and that is within the bounds of marriage. You know, so many couples start dating, and they might even be thinking about the possibility of marriage down the road, but what happens is they begin to spend a lot of time together alone, and their alone time turns somewhat physical, they may not actually, you know, make love, but it becomes very physical and it can very easily awaken those very powerful impulses in a man and a woman.

And it's something that we need to understand that there's a time and a place to awaken those passions. And there's a time to keep them asleep because we want to maintain a safe relationship within the bounds of God's plan and his order for physical intimacy. And that order is within marriage.

As we begin now in verse eight, the scene shifts. We're going to go back kind of in time. And that happens occasionally here in The Song of Solomon. And we're going back to the country and the wedding of these two lovers. And you want to notice as we go through here, how many times she refers to him as my beloved. Today we might say my lover, but she says,

⁸ *The voice of my beloved!*
Behold, he comes,
leaping over the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

⁹ *My beloved is like a gazelle*
or a young stag.
Behold, there he stands
behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
looking through the lattice.

¹⁰ *My beloved speaks and says to me:*
“Arise, my love, my beautiful one,
and come away,

¹¹ *for behold, the winter is past;*
the rain is over and gone.

¹² *The flowers appear on the earth,*
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.

¹³ *The fig tree ripens its figs,*
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my beautiful one,
and come away.

There's the picture of him coming to sweep her off her feet and be married.

¹⁴ *O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,*
in the crannies of the cliff,
let me see your face,
let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.

¹⁵ *Catch the foxes for us,*
the little foxes

*that spoil the vineyards,
for our vineyards are in blossom.”*

So these two lovers seem to be, you know, making reference to their love relationship as a vineyard, you'll notice. And here the bride encourages her husband to be, to catch the foxes that would otherwise spoil the vineyard. That's an interesting word picture, isn't it?

And it seems to be speaking here of those things which are poised to ruin a relationship. And she's asking him to make sure that doesn't happen as far as their special day of getting married and their relationship at large. Don't let it get spoiled by the things that would otherwise come in. Now, in a larger sense, it speaks of the husband remaining attentive here about all the things that might come against his relationship to his wife.

You know, boy, I think about the challenges that married couples face today to have a strong marriage. I mean, the world is a literal minefield of potential explosive events that could happen in our lives. And a man needs to remain very vigilant concerning the things that could ruin or spoil his marriage relationship and his commitment to his wife.

Verse 16,

*¹⁶ My beloved is mine, and I am his;
he grazes among the lilies.*

*¹⁷ Until the day breathes
and the shadows flee,
turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle
or a young stag on cleft mountains.*

All right, chapter three. Now, some scholars believe that chapter three begins with a dream that is related by the Shulammite woman prior to her marriage to Solomon. At first, it seems kind of like a bad dream too. She says in verse one,

*¹ On my bed by night
I sought him whom my soul loves;
I sought him, but found him not.*

*² I will rise now and go about the city,
in the streets and in the squares;*

*I will seek him whom my soul loves.
I sought him, but found him not.*

³ *The watchmen found me
as they went about in the city.
“Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”*

⁴ *Scarcely had I passed them
when I found him whom my soul loves.
I held him, and would not let him go
until I had brought him into my mother's house,
and into the chamber of her who conceived me.*

So she desires in this dream, then, to take him home and there become his wife.
And so the refrain is then repeated.

⁵ *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or the does of the field,
that you not stir up or awaken love
until it pleases.*

Now, the second part of this chapter seems to then recall Solomon's wedding party now riding up from Jerusalem to wherever this woman lives out in the country prior to the ceremony. And there's much pomp and splendor as they come. And it says,

⁶ *What is that coming up from the wilderness
like columns of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
with all the fragrant powders of a merchant?*

⁷ *Behold, it is the litter of Solomon!
Around it are sixty mighty men,
some of the mighty men of Israel,*

⁸ *all of them wearing swords
and expert in war,
each with his sword at his thigh,
against terror by night.*

⁹ *King Solomon made himself a carriage
from the wood of Lebanon.*

*¹⁰ He made its posts of silver,
its back of gold, its seat of purple;
its interior was inlaid with love
by the daughters of Jerusalem.*

*¹¹ Go out, O daughters of Zion,
and look upon King Solomon,
with the crown with which his mother crowned him
on the day of his wedding,
on the day of the gladness of his heart.*

Chapter four. It begins with Solomon speaking.

*⁴ Behold, you are beautiful, my love,
behold, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are doves
behind your veil.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
leaping down the slopes of Gilead.*

Now, Solomon describes his bride and lover here, and he's using the language of similarity. And he's using things that you or I probably wouldn't use to describe the woman that we love. But, you know, in his day, these were word pictures of beauty and splendor. So he goes on, he says,

*² Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes
that have come up from the washing,
all of which bear twins,
and not one among them has lost its young.*

So we know that she never played hockey because she's got all of her teeth.
Verse three,

*³ Your lips are like a scarlet thread,
and your mouth is lovely.
Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate
behind your veil.*

*⁴ Your neck is like the tower of David,
built in rows of stone;
on it hang a thousand shields,
all of them shields of warriors.*

⁵ *Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle,
that graze among the lilies.*

⁶ *Until the day breathes
and the shadows flee,
I will go away to the mountain of myrrh
and the hill of frankincense.*

⁷ *You are altogether beautiful, my love;
there is no flaw in you.*

⁸ *Come with me from Lebanon, my bride;
come with me from Lebanon.
Depart from the peak of Amana,
from the peak of Senir and Hermon,
from the dens of lions,
from the mountains of leopards.*

⁹ *You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride;
you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your necklace.*

¹⁰ *How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is your love than wine,
and the fragrance of your oils than any spice!*

¹¹ *Your lips drip nectar, my bride;
honey and milk are under your tongue;
the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.*

¹² *A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
a spring locked, a fountain sealed.
So you can tell this is prior to their wedding.*

¹³ *Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates
with all choicest fruits,
henna with nard,*

¹⁴ *nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
with all trees of frankincense,*

*myrrh and aloes,
with all choice spices—*

¹⁵ *a garden fountain, a well of living water,
and flowing streams from Lebanon.*

¹⁶ *Awake, O north wind,
and come, O south wind!
Blow upon my garden,
let its spices flow.*

And she responds by saying,

*Let my beloved come to his garden,
and eat its choicest fruits.*

And that's, you know, these are word pictures. And all of them, you know, may do nothing for your wife. Husbands, the fact is we need to come up with our own language, whatever it is, that expresses our love for our wife. And we need to communicate our love to our wives because women need to hear it. They need to know that their husband loves and desires them. I want to remind you of something that says in Ephesians chapter five, if we can put that up for you here. Ephesians chapter five, beginning in verse 25. It says,

Ephesians 5:25-28 (ESV)

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

So there's a strong exhortation given here to husbands to meet the needs of their wife by loving her, telling her that you love her, making sure she knows that you love her always.

Chapter five,

¹ *I came to my garden, my sister, my bride,
I gathered my myrrh with my spice,
I ate my honeycomb with my honey,
I drank my wine with my milk.*

And all these words seem to be statements depicting their marriage and the consummation of marriage and the lovemaking that goes along with it. And the others then encourage them saying,

*Eat, friends, drink,
and be drunk with love!*

Now in verse two, she, the Shulammitte begins to speak and in these following verses, we read what appears to be another bad dream by the bride who dreams of her husband, but he cannot be found. It's interesting that would happen twice, isn't it? But you know, dreams are often the things that we fear or desire, but probably more the things that we fear.

It says in verse two,

*² I slept, but my heart was awake.
A sound! My beloved is knocking.
“Open to me, my sister, my love,
my dove, my perfect one,
for my head is wet with dew,
my locks with the drops of the night.”*

*³ I had put off my garment;
how could I put it on?
I had bathed my feet;
how could I soil them?*

*⁴ My beloved put his hand to the latch,
and my heart was thrilled within me.*

*⁵ I arose to open to my beloved,
and my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with liquid myrrh,
on the handles of the bolt.*

*⁶ I opened to my beloved,
but my beloved had turned and gone.
My soul failed me when he spoke.
I sought him, but found him not;
I called him, but he gave no answer.*

⁷ *The watchmen found me
as they went about in the city;
they beat me, they bruised me,
they took away my veil,
those watchmen of the walls.*

⁸ *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved,
that you tell him
I am sick with love.*

And their response to her is,

⁹ *What is your beloved more than another beloved,
O most beautiful among women?
What is your beloved more than another beloved,
that you thus adjure us?*

In other words, they're saying, why is he so important that you would bother us to find him? And she says, and this is her chance, by the way, now to describe him in poetic and descriptive language.

¹⁰ *My beloved is radiant and ruddy,
distinguished among ten thousand.*

¹¹ *His head is the finest gold;
his locks are wavy,
black as a raven.*

¹² *His eyes are like doves
beside streams of water,
bathed in milk,
sitting beside a full pool.*

¹³ *His cheeks are like beds of spices,
mounds of sweet-smelling herbs.
His lips are lilies,
dripping liquid myrrh.*

¹⁴ *His arms are rods of gold,
set with jewels.*

*His body is polished ivory,
bedecked with sapphires.*

¹⁵ *His legs are alabaster columns,
set on bases of gold.
His appearance is like Lebanon,
choice as the cedars.*

¹⁶ *His mouth is most sweet,
and he is altogether desirable.
This is my beloved and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.*

So interesting that she kind of engages in a very similar kind of descriptive telling of what he is like and all this talk and all these descriptions that are given here by the husband and by the bride. It's probably important at this point to kind of remember that men and women are very different in when it comes to what they desire and how they approach physical affection, intimacy and lovemaking.

I think most everyone realizes that men are very visual. They're very much aroused by what they see, and you can get a man's motor running in a pretty short period of time. A woman, on the other hand, needs time to simmer and build up to a place of desire.

But we need to remember that lovemaking is a gift that God has given for marriage, and it ought to be something we protect. And frankly, it ought to be something we get better at over time. You know, a wise man will learn what his wife likes, and a wise woman will learn what her husband likes and adjust themselves accordingly.

Chapter six, the others begin speaking.

¹ *Where has your beloved gone,
O most beautiful among women?
Where has your beloved turned,
that we may seek him with you?*

She says,

² *My beloved has gone down to his garden
to the beds of spices,*

*to graze in the gardens
and to gather lilies.*

³ *I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;
he grazes among the lilies.*

And then Solomon speaks.

⁴ *You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love,
lovely as Jerusalem,
awesome as an army with banners.*

⁵ *Turn away your eyes from me,
for they overwhelm me—
Your hair is like a flock of goats
leaping down the slopes of Gilead.*

⁶ *Your teeth are like a flock of ewes (We've seen this before. He's repeating
now.)
that have come up from the washing;
all of them bear twins;
not one among them has lost its young.*

⁷ *Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate
behind your veil.*

⁸ *There are sixty queens and eighty concubines,
and virgins without number.*

⁹ *My dove, my perfect one, is the only one,
the only one of her mother,
pure to her who bore her.
The young women saw her and called her blessed;
the queens and concubines also, and they praised her.*

¹⁰ *“Who is this who looks down like the dawn,
beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun,
awesome as an army with banners?”*

Then she speaks,

*¹¹ I went down to the nut orchard
to look at the blossoms of the valley,
to see whether the vines had budded,
whether the pomegranates were in bloom.*

*¹² Before I was aware, my desire set me
among the chariots of my kinsman, a prince.*

And so the others now begin to speak saying,

*¹³ Return, return, O Shulammitte,
return, return, that we may look upon you.*

And he says,

*Why should you look upon the Shulammitte,
as upon a dance before two armies?*

Chapter seven. Now, as we get into this chapter, we're going to find the third and frankly, the most sensual description by Solomon and his bride. And the word pictures in this chapter of lovemaking should, I think, probably be apparent to most people. So we're just going to read through this. Solomon continues.

*¹ How beautiful are your feet in sandals,
O noble daughter!
Your rounded thighs are like jewels,
the work of a master hand.*

*² Your navel is a rounded bowl
that never lacks mixed wine.
Your belly is a heap of wheat,
encircled with lilies.*

*³ Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle.*

*⁴ Your neck is like an ivory tower.
Your eyes are pools in Heshbon,
by the gate of Bath-rabbim.
Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon,
which looks toward Damascus.*

⁵ *Your head crowns you like Carmel,
and your flowing locks are like purple;
a king is held captive in the tresses.*

⁶ *How beautiful and pleasant you are,
O loved one, with all your delights!*

⁷ *Your stature is like a palm tree,
and your breasts are like its clusters.*

⁸ *I say I will climb the palm tree
and lay hold of its fruit.
Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
and the scent of your breath like apples,*

⁹ *and your mouth like the best wine.*

And then she speaks in a way of encouraging him literally in a very sexual way.
She says,

*It goes down smoothly for my beloved,
gliding over lips and teeth.*

¹⁰ *I am my beloved's,
and his desire is for me.*

¹¹ *Come, my beloved,
let us go out into the fields
and lodge in the villages;*

¹² *let us go out early to the vineyards
and see whether the vines have budded,
whether the grape blossoms have opened
and the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.*

¹³ *The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
and beside our doors are all choice fruits,
new as well as old,
which I have laid up for you, O my beloved.*

Chapter eight is the final chapter in this book. It begins with the Shulammitte speaking, and she says,

*¹ Oh that you were like a brother to me
who nursed at my mother's breasts!
If I found you outside, I would kiss you,
and none would despise me.*

This is an interesting verse. And what the Shulammitte is saying here is that she says, I wish that you were my brother so that when I see you coming outdoors, I can just run up and I can grab you and I can throw my arms around you and smother you with kisses and nobody's going to say anything.

And the reason she says that is because in that culture, it was very inappropriate for a husband and wife to engage in any kind of a public display of affection. They were to do that behind closed doors. So you just, you know, it was fine for everybody else. Brother and sister, no problem. Brother and brother, father and brother, didn't matter. But a husband and wife, it was not to be seen publicly. So she's saying, I wish you were my brother so I could just smother you with kisses.

She says in verse two,

*² I would lead you and bring you
into the house of my mother—
she who used to teach me.*

And this seems to speak of the instruction of her mother about pleasing her husband once she was married.

*I would give you spiced wine to drink,
the juice of my pomegranate.*

*³ His left hand is under my head,
and his right hand embraces me!*

*⁴ I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
that you not stir up or awaken love
until it pleases.*

And we see once again that refrain following the same statement. And then the scene changes here a bit in verse five.

⁵ *Who is that coming up from the wilderness,
leaning on her beloved?*

And so the scene is now back to the woman's village, and the local people are now watching her return from Jerusalem where they, you know, with her husband now, King Solomon. And they're asking, who is this coming up from the wilderness who is leaning on her beloved? And as they ride along, they talk to themselves, and they talk and remember the places where they met and fell in love. They say,

*Under the apple tree I awakened you. (meaning I awakened love)
There your mother was in labor with you;
there she who bore you was in labor.*

Verse six. And then look at what she says to him now. This is very important. I would ask men to pay attention to this. She says,

⁶ *Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm,
for love is strong as death,
jealousy is fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
the very flame of the Lord.*

And this is very interesting language. And the Shulammitte is asking Solomon to set her as a seal upon his heart. Now, this is difficult for you and I to understand because we don't use seals so much today as they did back then, but a person's seal was a very personal thing. It was very important thing because it represented the person, it represented their character. It represented their value as an individual.

So she is asking him to place her and his seal upon his heart, right, as a seal upon his heart. In other words, saying, give me the utmost value. That's essentially what she's saying. She's saying, I want to be appreciated by you more than anything. I want to be desired by you more than anything. I want to be valued by you more than anything.

And a wise husband is going to see that she gets what she's asking for. I believe women want to be valued. I believe women want to be appreciated. And I believe husbands need to work at making sure they feel valued and appreciated more than anything. More than hunting, more than sports, more than work, more than your car, more than your friends. More than anything.

Verse seven,

*⁷ Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If a man offered for love
all the wealth of his house,
he would be utterly despised.*

Love is too great. And so the others chime in saying,

*⁸ We have a little sister,
and she has no breasts.
What shall we do for our sister
on the day when she is spoken for?*

*⁹ If she is a wall,
we will build on her a battlement of silver,
but if she is a door,
we will enclose her with boards of cedar.*

These are interesting couple of verses and they seem to be expressing some kind of a flashback to the Shulammitte's earlier years when she was under the protection of her family. And they are speaking now about her and saying that we need to protect her. And if she's a wall, in other words, if she's strong against the advances, the unwelcome or untimely advances of men, that'll be great. If she seems to be a door and it's open to those things, then we will enclose her. And we'll protect her.

And notice what she says now in verse 10. She speaks and says,

*¹⁰ I was a wall, (in other words, I kept myself pure, I waited until the right man came)
and my breasts were like towers; (in other words, unreachable)
then I was in his eyes
as one who finds peace.*

*¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon;
he let out the vineyard to keepers;
each one was to bring for its fruit a thousand pieces of silver.*

¹² *My vineyard, my very own, is before me;
you, O Solomon, may have the thousand,
and the keepers of the fruit two hundred.*

And so we seem to begin going kind of back in time here. She's telling about how she met Solomon, but at that time she was before he awakened love in her. She had a nearby vineyard to his, but she had her own vineyard and she basically was saying he can keep his wealth as far as she's concerned. But obviously eventually he won her heart.

And then we come to the end of The Song of Solomon and the Shulammitte and Solomon then speak here for the last time. He speaks first saying,

¹³ *O you who dwell in the gardens,
with companions listening for your voice;
let me hear it.*

Solomon asked the woman to call out for him and she responds by saying,

¹⁴ *Make haste, my beloved, (in other words, hurry up)
and be like a gazelle
or a young stag
on the mountains of spices.*

So she responds to him, inviting him to come away with her. And she tells him to hurry. And furthermore, the reference that she makes there of coming as a gazelle or a young stag is a reference to taking her and enjoying the delights of marriage and lovemaking and intimacy, which, of course, is God's plan for a married couple.

Let me just end by saying that marriage was created by God and meant by God to be full. It is meant to be full of love. It is meant to be full of passion. But it takes work to keep that passion flowing. Believe me, I know, I've been married for over 41 years. The Song of Solomon reminds us that lovemaking is meant to be a wonderland of pleasure within the context of marriage, and that's a very good thing.

So with that, we've made our way through The Song of Solomon, all in one evening. I hope you guys enjoyed that and got something out of that. I also hope that husbands and wives perhaps had a chance to watch this together. If you're married and your spouse wasn't able to be with you for this study, I would encourage you to go to [our website](#) or our [YouTube channel](#) and go back and

perhaps watch it with your spouse and talk about what it takes to awaken that love and passion, perhaps, in your marriage.