





AUTHOR AND DATE:

Though authorship continues to be debated, it is widely accepted that King Solomon, the son of David, is the author. The time of authorship places the book between 960 B.C and 931 B.C.

THEMES AND CHARACTERS:

The key theme of Song of Solomon is the romance between a Shepherdess (the Shulamite, or She) and her Beloved (He). There is a group (Others) who interject thoughts and have dialogue with the Shepherdess. Though there are many interpretations of the book, there are two primary interpretations that will be examined in North.

The first is the practical interpretation of the godly romance that exists between the Beloved and the Shepherdess. The book follows their betrothal through singleness, trial, separation, and ultimately consummation of the wedding.

The second interpretation will be that of the love of God towards His people. This is not a mere sexual love, but rather the desire of the Ultimate Bridegroom and His pursuit of the Bride.

STORY OUTLINE:

Lovers are introduced and feel attraction	Song of Solomon 1:1-14
Lovers fall in love	Song of Solomon 1:15-2:7
Lovers anticipate marriage	Song of Solomon 2:8-3:5
Lovers marry and have sex	Song of Solomon 3:6-5:1
Lovers experience conflict	Song of Solomon 5:2-6:3
Lovers grow old	Song of Solomon 6:4-7:13
Lovers remember and reflect	Song of Solomon 8:1-14

OBJECTIVES:

1. God created romance, and romance is good. Though romance can be painful and hurtful because of the brokenness of sin, it can be redeemed by the grace of God into something beautiful.
2. Romance is the Divine Liturgy. A gift from creator to creation so that finite man may glimpse an infinite God.



LESSON 1: GOD'S GUIDE TO SINGLENESS

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:1-14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is going on in the story?
2. What is the definition of being single?
3. Woman is attracted to man and compares his name to fragrant oil in verse 3. Why should we be attracted to people with a good name?
4. How do we develop a good name?
5. Woman says in verse 6, "Do not gaze at me for I am dark." How can insecurity affect singleness and future romance?
6. In verse 7 she asks, "Why should I be like one who veils herself?" Should we compromise ourselves to gain a mate?
7. How do the lovers finally meet?

NOTES:

- En Gedi is an oasis in the dessert in Israel. She compares her lover to the vineyards of En Gedi.
- Focus on attributes of godly attraction.



LESSON 2: GOD'S GUIDE TO DATING

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:15-2:7

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is going on in the story?
2. She compares his eyes to a dove's eyes in verse 15. What do doves symbolize?
3. Verse 16 talks of couches being green. What is signified by couches being green?
4. The beams are cedar and rafters pine in verse 17. What do beams and rafters represent in a house?
5. In 2:2-3 their love is different than previous love they have experienced. Should marriage love be exclusive?
6. What is meant by "not awakening love until it pleases?"

NOTES:

- Dating should be for the exclusive purpose of finding a spouse.



LESSON 3: GOD'S GUIDE TO ENGAGEMENT

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:8- 3:5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is going on in the story?
2. What is the definition of the season of engagement?
3. Verses 10-13 are loaded with seasonal imagery representing time and timing. Why are timing and seasons important in engagement? (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)
4. In verse 15, what do “foxes” represent in engagement?
5. Read Chapter 3:1-4. Why is continual pursuit important in romance?
6. In verse 5, why are we given this charge directly after talking of the importance of pursuit?

NOTES:

- Emphasize “foxes” as removal of sin and insecurity.
- Seasons of life are vital to being ready for engagement and marriage.



LESSON 4: GOD'S GUIDE TO SEX

SONG OF SOLOMON 3:6- 5:1

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is going on in the story?
2. What is the definition of the season of marriage?
3. Notice symbolism in verses 6-11. What is the significance of these symbols?
4. Verses 4:1-5:1 is a sex scene. This is a very erotic chapter. But it is in the Bible. Should the concepts of spiritually and sexuality be as separated as they are?
5. Is sex good? What season of life is sex good?
6. Sexuality is compared to a garden, but the garden is locked and sealed; however, the people allowed into the garden are having a great time (please no giggles). What does this symbolize? (Hebrews 13:4)
7. In 4:1-11, the man talks mostly about the woman and very little about himself. What does this say about the Biblical view of sex?

NOTES:

- Focus on:
 - a. Exclusivity of sex within marriage.
 - b. Selflessness equals great sex.
- God created sex; it's His not Satan's.



LESSON 5: GOD'S GUIDE TO CONFLICT

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:2-6:3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is going on in the story?
2. What is the definition of relational conflict?
3. We don't know the nature of the conflict, but it seems to come out of a misunderstanding in communication. Why is communication so important in romance?
4. When the lovers are separated, what does the woman do?
5. Does this initially turn out well for the woman?
6. In verse 9 of chapter 5 the crowd challenges the marriage. She defends his character in verses 10-13. What is the significance of this?
7. In Chapter 6:2-3 they come together and are closer now than before. Is the result of conflict always bad?

NOTES:

- Conflict can be good and bad; it can bring you closer or further apart.



LESSON 6: GOD'S GUIDE TO GROWING OLD

SONG OF SOLOMON 6:4-7:13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is going on in the story?
2. In verse 4-10, notice how the man pursues his wife despite the fact that she is already his wife. Why is this so vital in marriage?
3. In verse 9 he refers to her as his only one. Why is that significant?
4. In verses 11 and 12 she is checking on her fruit. What is the role of cultivation in a marriage relationship?
5. There is a sex scene in chapter 7. As romance develops, does it become more of a choice rather than mere emotions? (He uses the word "will" in verse 8.)
6. They travel in verses 11 and 12. They are having experiences that are not just sexual but friendly. Why is friendship essential in the marriage relationship?
7. What is the sign of a healthy romance according to verse 13?

NOTES:

- Focus on love being an act of the will.



LESSON 7: GOD'S GUIDE TO LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:1-14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is going on in the story?
2. Verses 1-5 are an overview of romance. Why is remembrance important in cultivating love? What have we learned in this study?
3. In verse 6, the pace changes and a name is used for the 1st time in the book. What name is used?
4. Why is romance given to us?
5. Verse 8 contains a flashback. She is seen as unattractive, but He finds her attractive in verse 10. Why is this significant in our role with Jesus?
6. What are verses 8-14 a picture of?
7. In verse 14, He asks her to make haste. How is this call issued to us today?

NOTES:

- The answer to question 3 and 4 is that romance is given to us as a lens to see God through. The story of this pursuit teaches us about Biblical romance, but it also shows us the desire and love of Christ.
- The verse Romans 5:8 is a good proof text to question 5.
- Our value in the sight of God has nothing to do with us, but rather the value that He paid for us.