

## SAVORING GOD'S BEST

### “AN OVERVIEW OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON”

Sex is about God. It is His idea. Intimacy only makes sense therefore, to a Christian. Apart from a relationship with God, sex is a perversion. In fact, all deviations from God's design are a direct result of failing to relate to God aright. **Romans 1** says of those who, “**knew God, [but] did not honor Him as God or give thanks....God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them**” (v. 21-24). In other words, the reason men and women are sexually impure is because they are not rightly related to the Maker of marriage and sex.

Furthermore, the New Testament tells us that marriage itself was originally designed with Christ and His church in mind (**Ephesians 5:31-32**), so that the relationship between a man and woman is a living, breathing portrait of the Gospel. Thus, marriage (and everything in it) is not primarily made for the enjoyment of man, but the glory of God – that is where the enjoyment is found. Sex is never more satisfying then, than when God's glory is the focus. But the reverse is also true – nothing is more empty and worthless than when a married couple is enflamed in selfish passion apart from or towards one another.

Though we are never encouraged in the Bible to speak to God erotically, we were equipped by God with certain capacities in order to relate to our spouses in a passionate demonstration of love and pleasure that celebrates God and our union with Him. Therefore, to the Christian, a deep and meaningful marriage is the best defense against immorality. Consider the chart below.

God has made us as creatures who relate to one another in four areas: *intellectually, physically, spiritually, and emotionally*. Given those dimensions, fill in this pyramid chart with the most important of these four at the bottom, and organize them according to priority:

1. *Intellectually* – what we think
2. *Physically* – what we act
3. *Spiritually* – what we believe
4. *Emotionally* – what we feel



The best way to safeguard you're the purity of your marriage is to see from God's Word how Biblical sex is the natural, God-given, thrilling overflow of a right spiritual, intellectual, and emotional relationship with your spouse, and a deep and passionate relationship with Christ. If you are already satisfied with God's best for you, the alluring of every impurity will not appeal to you when it comes – what it promises cannot compete with the pleasure you already experience.

- What does this say to the single man who is hoping to be married?
- What does this say to the newly married man? To the veteran?
- What does this say to the single man who has given up hope on marriage?

One entire book in the Bible is devoted to this theme of love, romance, marriage, and sex – the Song of Solomon. It describes everything that the world knows nothing of in terms of God's best for a healthy marriage in all respects. Our study of this masterpiece will follow the outline that God gave when He performed the first wedding ceremony in **Genesis 2:24**, "***For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.***" *More specifically, in this study we will see 3 phases of Biblical relationships between a man and woman, so that we can savor and satisfy God's perfect design for marriage.*

**A NOTE ON INTERPRETATION:** Some have interpreted the Song of Solomon itself to speak of Christ's relationship with His Bride the church. While we would acknowledge that marriage does illustrate this reality, according to **Ephesians 5:31-32**, Song of Solomon is not written as an allegory of such, but of divinely bestowed romantic love.

Each of these phases are necessarily in this order and provide strength and support for the following phases. In other words, right patterns of thinking and acting are essential at every point if the health and maturity of the relationship is to continue (e.g. a healthy dating relationship with pave the way for a healthy marriage relationship).

### 1. LEAVING – *Dating* (1:1-3:5)

- How does the song open in v. 2?
- What is the reason for her strong attraction to Solomon, according to v. 2-3?
- What is so significant about oil? What about purified oil?

- How is this significant in relationship to his name? What is a name?
- So what is her physical attraction to Solomon based on, given **v. 2-4**?
- How does this differ from how physical attraction is usually stimulated in the world?
- Why is this important, given the concern of the Shulamite in **v. 5-6**? What is concern?
- How does this concern affect another concern revealed in **v. 7**? (Hint: who is the woman who veils herself – cf. **Genesis 38**).
- How does Solomon reaffirm his love for her, which allays her concerns in **v. 8-10, and v. 15-16**?
- What is the difference between this loving affirmation of attraction and flattery?
- What is the effect on the Shulamite in **2:1-2**? Is this pride? Why or why not?
- What does the woman further tell us about the foundation of her romantic affections in **2:3-6**?
- What does this tell you about the role of the husband?
- How do you know that these affections are godly and appropriate, based on the safeguards of **2:7**?
- When a dating relationship is built on this kind of foundation, and the God-given affections are brimming, what is this saying about the next step the couple should take, based on **2:8-3:5**?
- What precautions do her brothers add in **2:15** that reinforce accountability?

**2. CLEAVING – Marriage (3:6-5:1)**

**A. The Procession of the Groom – 3:5-11**

- What does the pomp and splendor of the wedding ceremony itself say about marriage?
  
- Why is the affirmation of the parents mentioned in **v. 11**?
  
- Why is the attitude of Solomon mentioned in **v. 11**?

**B. The Marriage Ceremony – 4:1-7**

- Solomon's words are full of praise. However, when you study his praise, you learn that they are:

**P** \_\_\_\_\_  
**P** \_\_\_\_\_  
**P** \_\_\_\_\_  
**P** \_\_\_\_\_

- What is necessary if you are going to praise your wife according to this Biblical model?
  
- How does **4:7** affirm her? Evaluate his statement as to whether or not it is true.
  
- What happens when this kind of adoration is muted and discontent settles in?

**C. The Honeymoon Night – 4:8-5:1**

- What is the difference between the public words of Solomon in **v. 1-7** and his private words in **v. 8-16**?
  
- What do you learn when you read the only thing the wife says in **4:16**?

- Once the intercourse has culminated in **5:1**, who speaks in the end of **v. 1**, and how does this affirm sex as a gift from God?

### **3. WEAVING – Deepening (5:2-8:14)**

#### **A. Conflict – 5:2-6**

- Knowing that this section details a fight between Solomon and his bride, what does her sleeplessness in **5:2** indicate?
- Why is Solomon, the king, knocking on his own bedroom door in **v. 2**? Where does this tell you he has been? What else does **v. 2** tell you about where he has been?
- What is the Shulamite's response to his pleas to come in based on **v. 3**? What does this reveal about her attitude?
- What in **v. 4** overturned her stubbornness?
- What does the unfolding scenario of **v. 6** say about Solomon's attitude?

#### **B. Resolution – 5:7-8:14**

- Where does she go in **v. 7-8**?
- What does **v. 9** tell you about the kinds of friends the wife keeps and their wisdom in helping her resolve her conflict?
- How does the Shulamite respond in **5:10-16**? What is this love anchored in, given her statement at the end of **v. 16**?
- Where did the man go when he retreated from the conflict, according to **6:2**?
- What does the new bride's journey to the fields to find Solomon say about her efforts in reconciliation?

- Why does Solomon ask her to turn her eyes away from him as he reconciles? What kind of eyes are these? Why is this important in resolving conflict?
- What do his words remind you of, in **6:5-9**? What does this suggest is important to maintain throughout the marriage relationship?
- When the conflict itself is resolved, what does **8:3-4** say about where their reconciliation takes them?
- What picture does **8:5** convey about the certainty of their maturing love?
- Consider the Old Testament's best passage on Biblical love in **8:6-7**.
  - 1) What is a seal?
  - 2) Why does she want one on the heart and one on the arm?
  - 3) What is a right and Biblical jealousy in love?
  - 4) What is the strength of love?

#### TRUTH IN THE LIFE

- A. Begin a notebook on your spouse, in which you can daily and weekly plan to love, nurture, and romance your wife like this.
- B. Prayerfully seek God's timing on teaching this book to your family, so that they understand and wait upon God's best for them.
- C. Consider acquiring and reading the following wonderful books on marital intimacy – both of these are must reads:

*Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*, C. J. Mahaney

*Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, John Piper and Justin Taylor (CD's or book)