

July 2023

## **What's the Point....of Song of Songs/Solomon? Mark Garner**

*Song of Songs is a series of dialogues (songs) between a bride, her husband-to-be, and sometimes their friends. On this level, it can help us appreciate and strengthen particularly our marital relationships, and in some respects other human relationships. On a deeper level, the book tells us about our walk with God, who has made us "the bride of the Lamb."*

### ***Like A Lily Among Thorns (Overview Of Song Of Songs)***

As a couple prepares for their wedding, their songs to each other also parallel the search for unfailing love and our spirit's need to know God (1:1-3:5). As with the book of Esther, God's name is not mentioned in Song of Songs; yet the book shows God's love for us, the love we can have for our Heavenly Father, and the care we can have for one another.

When the young couple desires to be together, this is also a shadow of our inner need to be with our God. We also see the bride's anxiety that others may look down at her, for she has worked long hours outside, and has been neglected by her family. Instead of avoiding her fiancé, the bride just wants to be near him to be reassured.

Similarly, when we are anxious, or when we are taunted by the accuser, it is always good to talk with God and let him reassure us. Jesus is like a lily among thorns, a light in the darkness, a spring of water in the desert; God is an apple tree who brings us good fruit whether in or out of season, who gives us shade from the heat of the world's ways. We can also learn from the example of how this couple see the good points in one another.

Then, there are the "little foxes that ruin the vineyards" (2:15). Little foxes like envy and rivalry and malice can damage any human relationship; while the "foxes" like worldly thinking and misunderstanding and preconceptions can derail our walk with God. God can catch them, and he reassures us to be honest about the things that trouble us or confuse us, so that God can help us understand things more clearly.

Next we see the wedding procession (3:6-5:1). Many of the images here and elsewhere in Song of Songs are poetic descriptions; some of them are pleasant, some of them are somewhat awkward, while others are unintentionally comical due to the couple's eagerness to be together. The images of appreciation also reflect our inner desire for our Heavenly Father.

The rest of the book continues with the couple being together, and it is also a reminder of God walking at our side (5:2-8:14). Both in earthly relationships and in our relationship with God, initial expectations and enthusiasm must gradually give way to simple trust and letting our Father in heaven guide us each step. Human nature is inconstant, yet God will always be there for us.

God will always love us and will always be eager to be with us; yet from one moment to the next, our fleshly desires may change. Our souls will always long for God; our Heavenly Father is always near, he makes an everlasting covenant with us, and rivers cannot sweep his love away.

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## **What's the Point...of Song of Songs/Solomon? Caleb Dillinger**

Song of Songs, or Song of Solomon. Which is it? Why can't Bibles agree on a title? Well, many books of the Bible get their titles from either the author, the central character, or the opening line. The opening line of this book is "The song of songs, which is Solomon's." So...either title works! It's a love song attributed to King Solomon.

Quite truthfully, this is one of the most bizarre books to enter the Bible. It doesn't teach you about humanity's relationship to God, it doesn't teach you about holy living, and it doesn't even teach you the history of God's people. It's an honest question to ask, "What's the point of Song of Songs/Solomon?"

The first point is it is simply a demonstration of the beauty of words. Yes, that doesn't appeal to many intellectual readers of the Bible. But not every book of the Bible should be treated the same. This is written with beauty in mind. Beauty of humanity, beauty of creation, beauty of relationship, and beauty of love. If you want to be reminded that some people genuinely love each other and love life, this is a good book to peruse. It doesn't pretend to be allegory or parable, it is simply a love letter between a man and a woman (with notes from the crowd).

The second point of the book is devotion. Devotion to one another makes the marriage bond different from friendships or work relationships or communal relationships. The way a married couple interacts is SUPPOSED to be different from any other relationship, which is why this love poem is unlike any other book of the Bible. No other book is written from lover to lover.

Which brings to the last point I think this book offers and makes it worthwhile reading today: it provides a positive view of sex. Too many times the church has treated sex like a sin itself, like some dark twist of Satan that perverts humanity and something Christians should only use for procreation or contractual obligations within marriage. This letter says otherwise. Sex is supposed to be a gift from God between lovers, something that bonds them and brings them closer than any other relationship. There is joy and excitement and love in marital sex that surpasses any kind of pleasure you could otherwise experience. That's not by accident. God knew what he was doing when he designed this sort of special relationship. And if you're in that relationship, or ever considering it, it makes Song of Songs/Solomon well worth the read.