

Song of Songs – an overview

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The language of love! Marvin Gaye (video)

Famous love poems and songs.

- *“But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.”*
Shakespeare – Romeo and Juliet
- *“If thou must love me, let it be for nought Except for love's sake only.”* Elizabeth Browning – Sonnet XIV
- *“No one has ever loved but you and I.”* William Yeats – the Ragged Wood
- *“Oh oh, babe, My darling I, can't get enough of your love babe”* Barry White – Can't get enough of your love baby

There are a lot of great love poems and love songs. But Song of Songs is “THE Song of Songs”. It's sexier than Shakespeare, bolder than Browning, more yielding than Yeats, bigger than Barry White, and greater than Marvin Gaye. Song of Songs is “THE Song of Songs” – the most beautiful, honest and meaningful love poem – but how do we interpret it?

First of all, Song of Songs is called “wisdom literature” in the Bible. It's a book of wisdom about love – a book to help us understand how to be wise about love. It's really, quite simply, a love song about true love between a man and a woman. But does it have **anything** to do with God?

Yes! Song of Songs teaches us how to enjoy the God made goodness of love and sexuality as humans.

God has made us as complete people. God doesn't make a spiritual part of us and a physical or sexual part of us. He makes a complete person. So our spirituality and sexuality are intertwined – you cannot separate the two! Simply put, our sex life affects our spiritual life. If we can be wise about our sexuality, we can be more spiritually healthy.

So let's look at the book.

Song of Songs is a song about love. There is the lover, Solomon, and the beloved, the woman. Today we're going to look at 2 of the **themes** of the book.

So here goes...

• **Physical Attraction and erotic arousal**

Song of Songs is full of beautiful metaphors used by the lover and the beloved as they appreciate each other's beauty. And this appreciation is part of the way they build their relationship. They also make great one liners for us.

“Honey, do you like these shoes?”

- 7:1 – “How beautiful your sandaled feet, O prince's daughter.”

“Darling, do I look fat in these jeans?”

- 7:2 – “Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies”

“Do these glasses suit my face?”

- 7:4 – “Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon”

In chapter 7, the lover looks at his beloved and appreciates every part of her – starting at her feet.

Working up to her beautiful well shaped legs. Then her navel, like a rounded goblet. [A little note here: He's not taking about her “navel” - a better translation is actually referring to something more “private”]

This is so intimate! He sees every part of her and loves it all! Her rounded waist, breasts like two fawns, beautiful and symmetrical, a smooth ivory coloured neck, a beautiful prominent nose, her hair, her head, her stature, her breath and even the taste of her mouth. He loves this woman. He appreciates every part of her. He is physically aroused by her beauty and he's not afraid of telling her.

- The beloved responds –

7:10 – “I belong to my lover and his desire is for me.” She feels loved and together with her lover.

8:3 – “His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me.” They are intimate. They don't just share common interests. They appreciate their physical appearance and caress each other.

Today, love is easily corrupted by pornography and lust and fornication. But in Song of Songs, it's beautiful and “very good”, just as God intended. Physical arousal and sexuality is meant to be embraced between one man and one woman. Which brings us to...

2. Marriage and sex (in that order!)

This is a song about two lovers waiting to be married, waiting to be together and express their love freely. It's a love that's worth the wait. It's full of passion and desire. Physical attraction and erotic arousal. But there's also the feeling of anticipation of their union as one flesh as they wait for one another. An expectation as they wait. Waiting for marriage. Waiting to be together as one flesh. Waiting to enjoy one another like the fruit of a beautiful garden:

- 7:12 – *“Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded.”*
- 2:3 – *“I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.”*
- 7:8 – *“I will climb the palm tree and take hold of its fruit. May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine.”*

There are a lot of garden metaphors in Song of Songs.

These images remind us of the Garden of Eden. A perfect place with perfect, real relationships. A place for sharing real love. 8:7 says:

- *“Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.”*

You cannot buy or sell real love. You cannot trade it without destroying it.

And true love is expressed in the consummation of their love in 4:16-5:1. These are actually the very middle verses of the whole book. And the climax of the book.

Beloved: “let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits...”

Lover: “I have come into my garden... I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey...”

They find sexual fulfillment as one flesh. They completely complement one another. And it's innocent and good and there is no shame. Just like the Garden of Eden. Just complete satisfaction and real love.

And that's the book in a nutshell – real love expressed between a man and a woman. The big question now is: How do we apply this book to our lives? Let me suggest 3 ways: First, let's apply it to ALL of us, then to those dating or intending to marry, and then to those who are married.

- **First, for ALL of us.**

Rejoice that you are a physical and sexual being. Treat sex as valuable and beautiful and part of the way you were created. We are sexual beings. It's part of who we are. It affects who we are. It's part of our spirituality. And letting our sexuality be denigrated by the world is unhelpful for our faith and our life as humans.

Here's my first application then: Song of Songs encourages us to do away with the world's rubbish. Don't watch it. Don't engage in it. Don't entertain it. Don't let it ruin a godly perception of sexuality. Switch off

the movies and TV and internet stuff that encourages you or others to treat sex in an ungodly way. Turn away from it. Don't bring it into your lives or into your children's lives.

III – I remember being so shocked when friends of mine I used to work with as a teacher, would openly share pornographic movies between each other, and even organise nights to watch them together as couples. Have nothing to do with that. Don't cut those friends off – they need a Christian influence in their lives. But have nothing to do with that way of treating sex.

- **Second to those intending to marry – (if your single or dating)**

If you find someone to share the rest of your life with, pursue them and enjoy the anticipation of seeing each other, like the couple in Song of Songs. Song of Songs encourages lovers to prepare for each other. Appreciate their physical attraction but wait. Wait until the right time. Wait to be in a committed marriage relationship before coming together as one flesh. So much of the joy of our sexuality is in **waiting** for that moment. "Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." (8:4, etc.) **Wait** and you will not be disappointed. In the Song, this couple find great fulfillment because they anticipate that moment of coming together as one flesh. That's where they really build their relationship and respect for one another.

[Please note: This book doesn't really deal with those who may **remain** single. But let me direct you to passages such as 1 Corinthians 7 – the principal is to enjoy your relationship with God. After all, that is still the most important relationship of all. I don't have time to talk about that today, but that passage is a good place to start.]

- **Finally, for those married.**

For those who are married, this book has huge implications. Love each other passionately. Engage in love making that appreciates and satisfies each another. Do nothing that debases the other person. Seek to serve each other in your sex life. Arouse one another and encourage one another to be intimate in your love making. Appreciate each other's physical attributes. This sort of depth in a relationship can take years of course. And if your partner has faced abuse of any kind, it can take even longer.

Take time for your sexual life together. Plan it/. Take time for it. Nurture it. And if things aren't working well, TALK to each other. If things are still difficult, get help. If it's a medical problem, see a doctor. If it's something else, try to talk to a Christian friend, or see a Christian counselor. But get advice that is **godly** and not **worldly**.

Our sexuality is an important part of our relationship in marriage. If it's not working right, we need to work on it!

- Finally, let me finish by talking about the role of Jesus in all of this.

It's possible that you may need to repent of things of a sexual or loving nature. Lust, pornography, adultery, or other ways you have sexually sinned in your life – past or present. Or you may need help overcoming wrongs that people have done to **you** in the past. Jesus offers forgiveness and reconciliation with God for **all** of your sin, including sexual sin. And we have the help of the Holy Spirit in our lives to be healed from past hurts. Don't overlook this. Confess your sin. Share your hurts. Ask for healing. If you can't do it on your own, talk to a trusted Christian friend or a trusted minister to help you.

Because above all, we want to understand that our sexuality affects our spirituality. Song of Songs shows us that God has given us something very beautiful in the sexual love a man and woman can experience. It is a part of who we are as humans. We can't separate it or switch it off. It affects us personally. It affects us spiritually. Read Song of Songs and enjoy it as a beautiful example of godly and passionate love.