

OUTLINE OF ROMANTIC LOVERS by David and Carole Hocking

Introduction: The beauty of Romance

The Song of Solomon is: romantic love for married couples...a manual on sex that surpasses all secular viewpoints...God's view on marriage as He has intended it to be.

1. WHY STUDY THIS BOOKS?

This book has been neglected because of the problems of interpretation: Allegorical or literal? God's Love, historical account, or both? Very erotic and sensual.

INTRIGUING FACTS:

1. Not quoted NT
2. No mention of name of God
3. 117 verses, 470 Hebrew words, 47 used only here, 96 used 10 times or less elsewhere
4. No theological words, refs, ceremonies
5. One of 1005 songs written by Solomon- best and most important. 1 Kings 4:32
6. Solomon had 700 wives/princesses 300 concubines who took heart from Lord (1 kings 11:1-4)

CAN WE TRUST WHAT SOLOMON SAYS?

Song of Solomon emphasizes what marital love should really be like, and that God's standard is one man and one woman totally in love with each other. Solomon's lifestyle intensifies rather than disqualifies what He has to say. We don't know when in His life it was written.

WHICH INTERPRETATION?

Two basic interpretations:

- a. Symbolic: pictures God's love for Israel and/or Christ's love for church. (cf Eph5:22-33)
- b. historical or literal: a lover (either Solomon or a shepherd)

The Bride?

1. One of Solomon's
2. Pharaoh's daughter (1 kg 3:1; 9:16; Song of Solomon 1:9)
3. Abishag (1 kg 1:1-4; 2:13-25)

ABISHAG:

A beautiful woman, from Shunam, worked in vineyards, chosen to care for David. Solomon had Adonijah killed when he sought her for a wife.

SYMBOLIC OR SYMBOLICAL?

It is proper to seek the beauty of the great Bridegroom in the Song of Solomon. Solomon a historical type of Jesus Christ. however this book focuses on the literal interpretation of the book as a romantic love song, describing the historical relationship of Solomon and Abishag

Romantic Lovers help us in struggling marriages: encourage to love again, motivation to romance as God intends, blush with biblical sensuality.

Chapter 1: How to know if you have fallen in love: SoS 1:1-4

"Couples who fall in love with each other speak of the intensity of their emotional responses toward each other. They long for each other's presence and affection. When they are apart, they experience pain, loneliness, and emptiness."

People fall out of love as easily as they fall in. It is possible to fall back in love again. Marriage is based on commitment, not romance - but God intended marriages to be filled with romantic love. Romantic feeling by itself is never an adequate guideline for human behavior. We can easily be deceived by it. Marriage must be based on much more. SoS teaches how "falling in love" should happen when God's love is controlling and when His principles determine your feelings.

When tempted by romantic feelings for someone other than our spouse: 1. Immediately renew our minds with teaching of God's word about marital fidelity and commitment to our families no matter what.
2 Realize the danger of our feelings and possibility of sin.

"The Song of Songs which is Solomon's" 1:1

Romantic love done in God's way is filled with music- the music of love...Saturated with romantic poetry and beautiful vocabulary- how couples in love communicate with each other. One song with 117 vs. Should be read as a whole and captured in our heart as though every line were essential to its impact and importance. Sexual communication today ugly - aggressive, violent, obscene. Our words should be best and most beautiful.

Solomon calls Abishag "my love" (Hebr raah): primary emphasis is on friendship - "to guard, care for, tend" NIV "My darling" deep concern for her protection and well-being.

Abishag calls Solomon "My beloved" (Hebr dodi) 27 times Another form (dodim) 4 times refers to lovemaking, usually translated "love"

The man is portrayed as the lover: the romantic one, tender in his approach, lavish in his praise, sensitive to his partner's needs. It is not flowers or gifts, but communication: the way we respond to each other and describe the assets and attractiveness of each other.

Vss 2-4: commentary : Three ways to know we have fallen in love:

1. When his caresses are more desirable than any celebration vs. 2:

1. sexual love is initiated by the man

He is a representative of the Love of Jesus Christ...

2. sexual love is to be enjoyed Hebr 13:4 Greek coitus="bed" God invented sex, not Playboy

2. When his character is more desirable than his cologne "name" refers to character of Eccl 7:1

3. When his companionship more desirable than the company of others. You just love to be alone together. "let's run away together" 1:3 - treasures privacy -You need to spend time alone together!

Chapter 2 - What makes a woman beautiful? SoS 1:5-11

A husband's words of praise and encouragement are what makes a wife beautiful. She sees herself through his eyes. When he thinks she is special, she starts believing it herself. When he is critical and judgmental of her attitudes, actions or appearance, her self-esteem drops and she loses a sense of her beauty that he must provide.

I. The beauty of the Bride (1:5-11)

A. Her evaluation (1:5-7):

Abishag is insecure and obviously not comfortable around the courtyards of Solomon's palace...she comes from the fields. She had a sense of self-esteem and self-acceptance- she knew who she was and wanted her lover to understand that fact.

We need open honest relationships- built on truth and complete acceptance. Self-acceptance is important. We must learn to recognize who we are before God - that we are special to him and unique among all people. We don't have to impress the one we love by deceitful actions and words.

Abishag:

She insisted she was beautiful even if she didn't exactly like everyone else. She illustrated her beauty in persuasive ways. "Dark, but lovely"

She responded to opinions of other people with honesty and integrity: Tanned, work in sun, no time for cosmetics: a natural beauty. She resisted all appearances of evil and immorality. (1:7)

Note the verbs: Vs. 2- "kiss me", Vs. 4- "draw me", Vs. 7- "tell me"- expressions of her need of reassurance.

He is quick to bring his encouragement: 1:8-11:

Quick to relieve her concerns:

1. described her place in his heart.
2. where and how to meet.

And to restore her confidence:

1. Compares her to prize horse

Hebr: a mare loose among the royal stallions, causing intense excitement! Whether she thinks so or not- she's noticed.

2. "my love (raah)": defender

The ornamentation enhances her natural beauty. The added jewelry is to enhance her position as his bride.

C. Application

1. Understand Lord's love for us and that we are beautiful in His sight, and that's all that matters 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 5:25-27; Rev 21:1ff
2. We are His bride, going to His wedding Rev 19:7-9

Chapter 3: Say it with love! SoS 1:12-2:3

She is so encouraged and stimulated by his romantic words and loving concern for how she feels that she can't wait to stir his heart by telling him how much she longs for his love and sweetness.

(Table talk) 1:12 The wedding feast? Engagement banquet? Remembering the wedding night?

How much he means to her: a. She wants to please him: vs. 12 Spikenard =exotic and expensive fragrance.

b. Pictures him as an intimate lover and friend. vs. 13

Bundle of myrrh between her breasts. (Close to heart, sweet to nostrils)

Any wife who wants her husband to respond lovingly to her should communicate the romance which is demonstrated

in this passage. Men are attracted by such romantic talk. Say it with love!

c. She wants to praise him: vs. 14 twice calls him "beloved" "best of them all" [Henna blos; vineyard EnGedi]

He declares how beautiful she is {"fair" 2} [doves eyes] Dove is symbol of faithfulness, peace, purity. "my love special place in heart. Her commitment to him above all else allured his romantic heart to express her beauty. He's attracted to her loyalty.

She directs his attention to their surroundings: Special bedroom? What makes the bedroom is not the furniture, wallpaper, pictures or plants - it is the beauty of romantic love between those who share that sacred place.

(bed = canopy = cover: quality and beauty) special places: Husbands and wives should relish their times there and look forward to relaxing and loving in that environment

Calls him handsome (cf 1:15) not just to his appearance, but to his attitudes- a delight to be with - real attractiveness is found in heart - attitudes of man towards his wife.

Refers to her self humbly as Rose of Sharon i.e. a wildflower - He reassures her -you are the best!- the rest like "thorns" in comparison. vs. 2:2

2. Comforts her with his words ("my love") She assures him of her love for him: Apple tree -erotic symbol- describes him as a romantic lover unequalled and so very desirable:

- a. His shade: not protection, but relief, refreshment, relaxation
- b. His sweetness: "taste" (palate, lip, teeth, whole mouth) (This may indicate he has instructed her in the ways of love)

Wives, do you think of your husband with such erotic symbols and imagery? Have you told them so?

Note: the woman speaks in 55 of 117 vs, possibly 19 more - it is the responsibility of the wife as well as the husband to be romantic and say it with love! Husbands and wives both need to be romantic in the way they communicate

Chapter 4: The need for apples and cakes of raisins. SoS 2:4-7

Face to face he communicates his love for her by what he says and how he looks at her. His loving patience and desire to arouse his wife as well as himself is evident in this expression. This is a tender and compassionate lover who wants his wife to enjoy the experience as well.

SoS 2:4-7 is a brief summary of wedding night desire from the wife's point of view: her desire to make love to him. The reference to apples and cakes of raisins is to the sweetness of their lovemaking.

Three reasons she is motivated to make love:

1. His loving protection: Vs. 4 She senses security and protection because of his love and has no fears or inhibitions because love is controlling his desire, he is tender and gentle and with restraint and concern for her feelings and needs. He is Committed to Biblical standards.

2. His strong passion: vs. 5 Her passion is taking over - She's "lovesick" - needs his "sustainment and refreshment". Wives are not aroused as quickly - need patience and love - but when they do it is wonderful! Each spouse is responsible before God to meet the sexual needs of the other. (1 Cor 7:3)

3. His sexual practices: vs. 6 ("embrace" = "to fondle, stimulate sexually) He is a tender and compassionate lover who wants his wife to enjoy the experience as well.

Warnings concerning sex outside of Marriage: SoS 2:7, 3:5, 8:4 all contain a defense of marital love and warnings against pre- or extra-marital sex: "Do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases." This is clearly consistent with the teaching of the rest of Scripture concerning sex. (Exo 20:14; Lev 18:6-23, 20:10-21; Prov 5:15-23, 6:24-35; Rom 1:24-32, 13:13; 1 Cor 5:1-13, 6:9,10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-5; Col 3:5,6; Rev 21:8; 22:15; etc.)

The reference to the "gazelles and does" is a reference to their watchfulness and quickness in reacting to noise.

We are to be watchful and quick to react to temptation and flee immorality.

Hebr 13:4 makes it clear that God honors sex within marriage, but condemns all kinds of involvement outside of marriage.

"do not stir up or awaken love" - refers to the kinds of touching, petting, arousing - foreplay - that precede intercourse. Once aroused sexual passion becomes intense and hard to control.

"until it pleases" - refers to sexual love not the male lover, the right time is in marriage.

Examining these warnings in their contexts reveal several reasons why it is so dangerous to arouse your sexual passion outside the instruction and approval of God:

1. Sex outside of marriage cannot guarantee sexual celebration. (2:4) Ones' emotions will not be rewarded. It produces guilt and frustration, true sexual pleasure hinges on secure love, commitment and trust. People often feel empty, lonely, unfulfilled and used.

2. Sex outside of marriage cannot guarantee personal commitment. (3:5) Personal commitment in the heart must be settled before sexual involvement takes place. Otherwise premarital sex hinders objectivity towards the future development of the relationship. Sexual involvement tends to squeeze out growth in other areas crucial to a strong marriage, in particular trust and heart commitment. (Romantic Lovers p. 82f)

3. It affects your ability to be romantic with your marital partner and to make the necessary sexual adjustments in marriage. (8:4) The problems produced by the first two reasons carry over into marriage. Doctors, pastors and counselors can often trace the cause of broken marriages to the guilt, anger, pain, lack of trust and emotional turmoil produced by pre- and extra-marital sexual involvements.

Sex is not something to be tried out ahead of time - outside of the commitment and security of marriage it always destroys the very things it is trying to have. While there may be

pleasure - the heart is not fulfilled nor the mind satisfied. (Romantic Lovers p. 171f)

Each passage is in a context emphasizing the power and intensity of sexual desire. It is dangerous to let sexual

desires be stirred up or awoke, they are more powerful than we think (1 Cor 7:5). Not just before marriage, but when marriage, impulses and desire for sexual partners other than our mates must be immediately dealt with and firmly resisted.

Chapter 5: Where are the Gazelles? SoS 2:8-17

Commitment is the most important ingredient cementing two people in marriage. It is quality that can be observed even before the marriage takes place. It involves two things: protection of the relationship and loyalty to the relationship.

Abishag reviews in the passage their courtship days as Solomon came to her home to win her heart. There are many experiences that must come before marriage.

The gazelle, a graceful and swift antelope is used 7 times, in reference to Solomon as the "young stag" full grown in prime of life and strength; in reference to Abishag's breasts to "two fawns. twins of a gazelle" soft desirable and desirable to caress. The gazelle apparently is a complementary term symbolizing sexual virility. For these lovers, at least, they are love names for each other.

In her words we find the enthusiasm of the first date, with someone special and with whom you have already fallen in love. Solomon has come far to the north to a farming village. That he came for her, rather than sent for her says much!

Her enthusiasm comes from two things: the words he speaks and the way he comes. He comes with excitement and enthusiasm, full of smooth and loving words.

The purpose of dating:

1. a time to know each other well without sexual involvement. To learn all you can about a person's habits, friends, goals, family, character, etc. This takes time.

2. a time to evaluate your compatibility and sense of responsibility. How much do you care for him or her, are you ready to make the sacrifices that a marriage demands.

3. a time to understand the depth of your love and commitment to each other. Time reveals the depth of your love and commitment - and it is the logs of commitment and communication, not the kindling of romance that sustains the fire of marriage. (Illustration from Magnificent Marriage, Gordon MacDonald)

Notice how Solomon handles his "date": He extended the invitation. (vs. 10,13b) He explains the timing:(vs. 11-13a) it is spring for them and love is blossoming. (Figs and grapes are erotic symbols picturing the blossoming of love) He expresses his desires: vs.10,14 He too is attracted to her countenance and voice. His ways and words are sweet and romantic. He persuades rather than demands.

Commitment is the most important ingredient cementing two people in marriage and can be observed even before the marriage takes place. During the days of courtship, as commitment is growing it manifests itself in two things: protection of the relationship and loyalty to the relationship.

The reference to "catching the foxes that would ruin the vineyards" is a reference to the need to deal with matters that can hurt the marriage now before they get married.

Their love is like "tender grapes", there is a need for sensitivity and concern for love is at times most fragile and damaged easily by critical words, false suspicions, selfishness, flirtations, etc.

When a couple are "engaged" they must give up all other potential lovers and remain loyal to each other. (cf vs. 16)

Chapter 6: Searching for Love. SoS 3:1-5

Love is so vital to any relationship if it is to be lasting and capable of enduring difficult situations and struggles that inevitably come. True love is willing to make a lifelong commitment.

Engagement is a time for serious evaluation and planning. It is the private commitment that precedes the public ceremony. In biblical times engagement were nearly as binding upon the couple as marriage.

The early verses in Chapter 3 are interpreted by some as an actual event, but seem to be actually just a dream

emphasizing the importance of her commitment and her resolve to go through with the wedding.

Vs. 1 "night" actually plural - a recurring dream. The main emphasis of it is the fear and insecurity of losing her lover.

1. The need for careful evaluation. Are we in love? Is there commitment? Do I really want to love and live with this person the rest of my life?

"the one my heart loves" 4 times

"I sought him!" 4 times. Her strong desire for him. She loved him and would search the world for him. Engaged couples are happiest when together, miss each other greatly when apart, and when separated their minds dwell much on each other.

2. Her decision requires love and loyalty.

"I found...I held...I would not let go...until..." cf Gen 2:24

"To be joined" to your wife is often expressed "to cleave" - glued together. A strong hug, bathed in a desire to make love and be one.

3. Her desires must be controlled. Sexual desire to be fulfilled in marriage alone.

She dreams of bringing him into the marriage bedchamber (her mother's). here follows the second warning about "awakening love" - sex isn't enough to cement a relationship. Personal commitment must be settled first. Otherwise objectivity is lost. Not many couples survive heavy sexual involvement before marriage. Saying "no" before marriage builds strength into a marriage.

There must be genuine trust and commitment before sexual lovemaking can produce the "one-flesh" union of two persons.

Leland Wood in How Love Grows in Marriage suggests that during the period of engagement a couple must move from physical attraction and social activities together, past sharing aesthetic interests and mental harmony toward a common center in the cores of their individual personalities: it's ideals, meanings and values.

"the most important question is not the rate of development but the quality of fellowship and the degree to which the two come to like each other, trust each other, and share parts of their lives together. As they do this, their thoughts and activities and plans center increasingly in each other. While they are attracted to each other, have pleasant times together, and experience a measure of harmony in their minds, they still must find out whether their deepest convictions, their ideals, and their philosophies of life might draw them together or pull them apart." (pp. 30,31)

Chapter 7: Let's get married! SoS 3:6-11

Weddings are wonderful, but as we know so well, they are only the beginning. After the wedding comes the marriage.

The private commitment resulting in engagement is complemented by the public commitment of the wedding. This is the "leaving" aspect of Gen 2:24.

Looking at the Song of Solomon's description of the wedding in 3:6-11, we see significant emphasis on bridegroom (cf. Matt 25:6, Eph 5:22-33, Rev 19:7-9.) as well as the bride.

The engagement usually takes place in the bridegroom's home. And the wedding procession (usually a year later) starts at the bride's home and ends at the couple's new residence.

The Bride's procession: 3:6-8:

"Who is this coming out of the wilderness?" refers to Abishag (fem "who")

Solomon had provided her finery and exotic fragrances - a caravan of supplies to prepare his beautiful bride for the wedding procession.

He provided protection in the 60 armed warriors, expressive of his concern for her safety and security.

He provided a couch (carriage) for her to ride upon in the long journey.

It had his markings upon it. He honored his bride. (cf 1 Peter 3:7)

The Groom's procession: 3:9-11:

The throne. beautifully and symbolically carved. Used the finest of wood. Strong with pillars of silver. Gold and purple representing his royalty and majesty. (cf Rev 22:3, 2:2,3)

According to what we learn from ancient customs, this throne was probably paved, lined or carved with scenes of lovemaking. The great lover, emphasizing the role of the husband in the love relationship.

The "crown" given to Solomon by his mother was a symbolic act of approval and blessing. His wedding: "the day of the gladness of his heart" Eccl 9:9 God intends our marriages to bring us much happiness. (Prov 5:18, 12:4, 18:22)

Weddings can deceive us. We can't always have the same scene and situation that we experienced on our wedding day, but the joy and excitement we felt on that day can continue and even increase. It can truly get better!

How would you evaluate your marriage? Do we still have that original joy? Still excited about lovemaking? Are we thankful for our marriages?

Chapter 4 and following give intimate details about how husbands and wives live joyfully together. Sexual matters play a crucial role in a good marriage and clearly the Bible teaches that God intends a husband and wife to enjoy each other in the full intimacy of "one-flesh" relationships.

Chapter 8: You have ravished my heart! SoS 4:1-11

Wives, you have great ability to affect the heart of your husband. Don't ever forget that, but use it wisely and prayerfully.

While many specific sexual techniques are missing in this love poem, the principles and insights of sexual lovemaking presented can produce a wonderful marriage relationship and bring complete sexual satisfaction. Solomon is the speaker in this whole section, suggesting that the responsibility of lovemaking rests primarily upon the husband. Husbands need patience, tenderness, gentleness, and loving concern for their wives, not just on the wedding night but all through the marriage.

Two things are dealt with:

1. Solomon's description of his wife's beauty (4:1-7)
2. Solomon's desire for his wife's affection (4:8-11).

Solomon is attracted to the beauty of his wife. "fair" = "beautiful" root "shine"; "my love" (DOD) her intimate and sexual friendship (1:9, 15, 2:2,10,13; 4:1,7; 5:2; 6:4)

3 aspects of her beauty: 1. Physically (1-5) 2. Emotionally (6) 3. Spiritually (7) In God's perspective, a woman's body is extremely beautiful, not because it represents a sexual object, but because it has been created by Him as a house for that woman's personality with all its feeling, understanding and responses. Treating people as "things" damages their sense of dignity and self respect. Husbands shouldn't approach their wives as "sex objects"

Seven ways to describe a woman's body:

1. Eyes: purity "Dove's eyes"
Couples should be able to look directly at each other and communicate their love for each other. The eyes are doors into the soul
2. Hair: tranquility "goats"
"Gilead" herds of black goats being driven down - beautiful sight - flowing movement
3. Teeth: maturity "shorn sheep"
"glistening with moisture" - evenly matched pairs, full grown

4. Lips: loyalty "strand of scarlet"

Kiss a mark of loyalty : Husbands and wives should kiss each other frequently, and a day should not go by without a warm embrace and affectionate kiss on the lips.

5. Cheeks: modesty "behind veil...pomegranate"

red-&-white skin blushing/passion excitement. Even in describing her body, he is praising her inner qualities.

6. Neck: integrity "tower"

a symbol of strength and character. No doormat.

7. Breasts: desirability "twin fawns of gazelle"

He longs to touch them and sees the need for gentle and tender handling. Cf Prov 5:19,20

His emotional attachment to her: (4:6 cf. 2:17) What we believe Solomon is doing here is reassuring her that her desire to be alone with him is also his desire, and that it is sweet to him, like the smell of myrrh and frankincense. Her spiritual purity: no spot in you!

The husband's desire for love: "my spouse" or "my bride", four times

A husband's desire for the love of his wife involves 4 things: 1. Being alone with her (4:8)

It's healthy to want times alone. He is picturing faraway places and secluded spots. (note romantic cues) It is romance from beginning to end, and she does not miss the point or fail to feel his strong desire for her! The need for couples to get away and concentrate on their relationship and lovemaking without interruptions.

2. Being aroused by her (4:9)

Heartbeats! Dressing up!

3. Being attracted by her lovemaking (4:10)

Solomon describes how beautiful is her lovemaking, better than any earthly celebration. The very smell of her is better than any fragrance. He is greatly attracted by her responses to him, and such a response is irresistible!

4. Being affected by her sweetness and smell (4:11)

Refs to caressing and kissing - and her responses are having affect. Don't suppress them, a wife's sexual responses are vital to the relationship and her husbands attitudes toward her.

Chapter 9 Come to My Garden SoS 4:12-5:1

When two people love each other intensely and have committed their lives and marriage to the Lord Himself, relying upon His Holy Spirit to fill them and use them, there is no limit to the sexual pleasure and enjoyment they can experience.

Sexual Pleasure should be experienced in marriage! Invented by God, for purpose of human reproduction and sexual satisfaction. Here a picture of sexual passion, arousal, and intimate pleasure.

Four Pleasure Principles:

1. Sexual pleasure is based on the attraction of the husband to his wife.

The sexual delights of his wife are pictured as a garden. Plants, fruits, fragrances, etc. were all used as erotic symbols, picturing the sexual relationship and pleasures of marriage.

Attractive aspects of her sexuality:

1. Her fidelity (12) "locked up" ie virginity She has saved her delights for marriage (Cf Prov 5:15-20).

Note imagery of "fountain" and "streams"

The fountain is off limits to all but your marital partner. Your "fountain" will be blessed by God with sexual vitality and pleasure when its "streams" flow only toward your spouse.

2. Her fruits (13) There are many facets to her sexual desires and delights. Symbols of love emphasizing pleasure within marriage. The joy of tasting and eating - obvious erotic overtones.

3. Her fragrances (14) Possibly perfumes, but more likely her fragrance in the midst of lovemaking.

4. Her fountain (15) Her sexual response to him was like the most delicious tasting water - nothing can compare with it. Possibly referring to her sexual release. Wives as well as husbands are to experience sexual pleasure (I Cor 7:3 teaches that sexual pleasure and satisfaction are a mutual responsibility)

2. Sexual pleasure is based on the attitude of the wife toward her husband's desire.

Now she says "awake" (16). Spoken at the height of their sexual love and passion:

1. She desires him greatly. (16) She wants him and in a sense has let her passion and desire run uncontrolled. (She is within the security of his love and their marriage) Restraint no longer needed.

2. She wants to give her sexuality to him: "that its spices may flow out". She wants to let go and give herself completely.

3. She wants him to enjoy himself. "eat" No resistance, she rejoices in sex and wants him to experience everything possible from her "fruits".

3. Sexual pleasure is based on the acceptance of sexual satisfaction and unity by both husband and wife. (5:1)

Both partners must agree with what takes place when they make love. Note how this verse blends things together. Both partners are enjoying their relationship and finding it satisfying.

There is no limitation of sexual acts and practices, except that they be mutually enjoyed and not demanded of the other. Marital partners should be in agreement about what takes place in the bedroom. Give and take and compromise, and Mutual submission (1 Cor 7:1-5) is the principle.

Two key questions:

1. Is there anything I am currently doing that is offensive to you or you would rather not do?

2. Is there something you would like to do that we are not currently doing?

4. Sexual pleasure is based on the approval of God. (5:1b)

Who speaks as our eavesdropping ends. Wedding guests, daughters of Jerusalem, angels? God himself! (Cf Hebrews 13:4)

"bed" = Gk "coitus" "drink deeply" be intoxicated with each other's sexual desire and passion. (Cf Prov 5:18-20) Your mind, emotions, and responses are carried away by the drawing power of sexual passion and desire.

Husband and wife, mutually giving to each other their respective desires and passion: no restraint...no reluctance...no inhibitions...no fears...no selfishness. Here is romantic love from God's point of view.

Chapter 10: Not Tonight! SOS 5:2-8

The Bible does not try to hide the fact of human weakness and selfishness. As most married couples know quite well, all is not perfect in the bedroom.

There are problems at times that strain our relationships and cause us to withdraw from the delights of sexual love.

Another bad dream (vs. 2): The problem - one partner not responsive to the other. No matter what the reason, it becomes something more than anticipated. Hurt feelings and anger easily result when sexual needs are deliberately not met, no matter how justified - resentment and tension gradually increases.

His Bad timing! (Wee hours of morning "dew"), however His appeal and loving approach is genuine.

Her Slow response: selfish reasons, already in bed, door latched - trivial reasons - responds too late. [He left myrrh on handles - sign of his love.]

It is never right to withhold sex from your partner. 1 Cor 7:5 - except by mutual consent for a short period.

Regardless of how you feel, you should always respond immediately to your spouse's sexual desires. Not passive, but ready and filled with passion, responsive, desirous of love.

Her guilt in the dream shown in meeting, beating by guards - lost her wifely rights and identity. Physical trauma. She's sorry (5:8 - "lovesick") Passive or disinterested sex is

rarely rewarding - often gives a sense of loss and rejection to partner.

Chapter 11 Altogether Lovely! (5:9-16)

Solomon was attractive to Abishag in many ways. Sweet communication and intimate friendship dominated her thoughts of him. No wonder she spoke of him as "altogether lovely"!

Physical and sensual descriptions of the male rare in ancient world. Here he's described in beautiful and encouraging words. In God's kind of marriage both husband and wife are involved. Each contributes to the other, and they work together as a team. Both know how to make love as well as communicate and build each other up. Many women had pressed to describe positive qualities of husbands. Here she concentrates on why she loves him.

5:9 - question put to her - why pursue him. "Why better than someone else?"

two effects: cause her to reflect on:

1. Her own beauty (cf 1:8) 2. Her desires for him.

1. He's the best - "white" radiant, dazzling. "ruddy" used often as variant of "man" - MANLY. Outstanding among 10,000. Best "material" - no one else compares. (Beware less a critical spirit should drive a husband to someone else more appreciative.)

2. She depends on his loving care and loyalty.

Locks, ravens (God's are and protection) doves' eyes. (He avoids temptations - faithful to her)

3. She desires his love and affection: refs to spices, herbs, lilies, myrrh (cf. 5:5) - sexual illusions.

4. She delights in his strength and appearance:

- Hands - gentle, pliable - touch (sym of work and love)
- His body - smooth - "carve" beauty of appearance
- Legs - pillars of strength and dignity - steady support
- Countenance - majestic cedars of Lebanon

5. Her true feelings for him:

- Communication sweet - The way he talks greatly affects her response. Complimentary, encouraging, words filled with love and tenderness
- Character attractive..... lovely in every way.
- Companionship exciting..... Calls him both "beloved" and "friend"

She can share anything and everything with him. Sweet communication and intimate friendship dominated her thoughts of him. Best friends as well as lovers.

Chapter 12: Why He's So Special! SoS 6:1-13

He had no hesitation; he loved her with all his heart and was not embarrassed to let everyone know that she was his bride and lover!

The daughters ask "where has he gone? why would he leave?" Why is he so special to her?

A husband needs praise and encouragement from his wife! He needs to know how much she loves him and how special he is to her heart.

RESTORING THE RELATIONSHIP: It is up to her to restore that which was strained through her reluctance to have sex with him.

Marriage can be tense for some of the dumbest reasons. Over-sensitive responses and mountains out of molehills.

REMEMBERING THE COMMITMENT: Two things involved in commitment vows: 1. responsibilities (Solomon has work to do as King) (vs.2) 2. committed to a strong relationship with each other. (vs.3) [cf. 2:16 - reversed order]

She needs to express her commitment to him at this point in their marriage, no matter what duties will take him away from her at times. This is her Apology.

Possible solution: devoting one day a week to each other; special times in addition: quality time for sharing, discussion, communication.

PRAISE INSTEAD OF CRITICISM: He praises her continually, even in this situation he doesn't criticize. (Prov 31 - importance of praising wife)

He praises her for:

- her ability to overwhelm his emotions 6:4 (Tirzah 1 kgs 16:8-23, Jerusalem Psa 48:1,2 Army=splendid to look upon) 6:5 Her eyes touched him emotionally.
 - when he looked at her 4
 - when she looks at him 5
- her appearance on their wedding night (cf earlier) 6:5B-7
- her attractiveness above all others 6:8,9
 - her prominence above all other women.
 - her place in her mother's heart.

3. the praise of other people. They praised her because he praised her- He made her special in their eyes.
4. the power of her attractiveness upon him. 6:10
He finds her irresistible!

ROMANTIC REFLECTIONS: 6:11-12 She reflects on his words: her anxiety about how he will respond to her.

Our relationships need reassurance from time to time.
Tensions cause insecurity.

She discovered the depth of Solomon's love and forgiveness.

She was honored, no hesitation on his part, no embarrassment.

Who speaks: 6:11-13? Differ interpretations!

LOVE AND DESIRE: 6:13 Her place in his heart
"Shulamite"=You belong to me, I'm incomplete without you.

"Dance of Double camp"? possibly she is asking whether he is still attracted to her as he was on her wedding night.
God's love can keep the romance there.

Chapter 13: A Sensuous Look! Song of Songs 7:1-10

The Bible approves of sexual pleasure and enjoyment, and describes physical intimacy between husband and wife with no reservation or inhibition.

The most explicit and erotic chapter. She is dancing sensuously in front of her lover and husband. It is special, romantic, intimate, private, needed moment.

Here he lists 10 qualities of his beautiful bride... a growth in familiarity and intimacy. More now than wedding night.

He starts at her feet and works his way up. (Cf Chapter 4 started at the top. stopped at breasts)

1. Her feet: graceful, alluring, (steps of dance?)
2. Her thighs: "movement circular motion as she dances"
Moving and displaying a woman's hips and legs in a sensuous manner can be very sexually motivating to a man. She's trying to please him and draw him to her in order to make love.
3. Her navel: (probably her genitals)
No part of our body is to be considered unattractive or off-limits within the bond of marriage. "Anything you both want to do; anything you both enjoy; anything not physically, mentally, nor psychologically harmful; Anything not forbidden in the Word is excellent in every way." (Shedd, Celebration in the Bedroom p. 22)
4. Her waist: (lower abdomen) beautiful, graceful, tender, soft - Belly dancing was a part of Neastern cultures.
5. Her breasts: (cf 4:5) He loved to tenderly hold them, feel them.
6. Her neck: necklaces, attraction. Importance of integrity.
7. Her eyes: peaceful gentle pools - a quite retreat
8. Her nose: symbol of beauty and dignity - protection to him.
9. Her head: like a crown!
10. Her hair: Captured his heart. (1 Cor 11:15 - glory)

God wants us to maintain sexual distinctions.

Solomon now becomes more direct - he is ready to make love with her. She will then respond and give him her love.

ENJOYING PHYSICAL AFFECTION: The role of the husband: to prepare his wife, she takes longer. (The process: He tells her what he is going to do, she anticipates and longs for it and responds.)

(Three stages of sexual intimacy: desire, excitement, orgasm.) See Wheat, Lovelife, pp.68,69)

Constant words of praise:

- a. He describes the enjoyment he saw in her 7:6
- b. the enticement he felt 7:7,8
He is increasing the sensuality of his communication and clearly telling her he is ready.
- c. The effect of her love - intoxicating! 7:8b

HER RESPONSE: Desiring true love: She sees it as:

- a. Celebration - no hesitancy, no reluctance to give all to him. She is ready and indicates the pleasure they will enjoy together will be totally satisfying to them both.
- b. Contentment - falling asleep with satisfaction
- c. Commitment - Commitment produces the greatest level of satisfaction and enjoyment. The environment in which sexual pleasure can be enjoyed without regret or hesitation.

THREE STAGES OF COMMITMENT:

- 2:16 "My beloved is mine and I am his" A need for Security
- 6:3 "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" A need for Submission
- 7:10 "I am my beloved and his desire is toward me." A need for stability.

The greatest need of our marriages is commitment - a commitment involving security, submission and stability.

Chapter 14: I will give you my love Song 7:11-8:4

This is sex from God's point of view - explicit and intimate, filled with pleasure and enjoyment. There has never been a more beautiful description nor a more complete picture of marital love.

THE SECLUDED RESORT: In this passage Abishag does the talking and the inviting. She's ready to celebrate with him.

She is looking for a romantic and secluded spot to enjoy their lovemaking: reasons:

1. need for privacy and a change in environment.
2. the need for renewal and romance.

A change in environment can do wonders for a couple.

The refs to "the vine has budded," etc refers to their relationship. It's in full bloom.

PLANNING THE RELATIONSHIP: She has some special plans in mind and he is going to enjoy them immensely!

1. Her creativity - She has surprises in how she will respond to him. Different things to different people. Variety.
2. Her loyalty - for him and no one else
3. Her ability - eliminate doubts people may have
4. Her desirability - "You're going to enjoy it"

She is picturing her sexuality as juices and fruits for him to enjoy. She wants to give him her love, and says that he will

thoroughly enjoy it. That thought gives her great delight. Cf. Prov 5:18,19 as it does him. "enraptured"="intoxicated"

ANTICIPATING HIS RESPONSE: 8:3, cf 2:6

She literally invites Solomon to enjoy her sexuality and promises to respond creatively to all he desires and needs.

Note: Bible gives much room for the expression of our sexuality within marriage. Where and how not addressed - only that it be mutually pleasing and satisfying. But Bible clearly forbids all sexual relationships outside of marriage. (Adultery, fornication) Enjoyment, attitudes and romance are all affected by pre- or extra-marital sex. We are warned here about the power of sexual desire (2:7; 3:5; 8:4) It must be controlled.

How to respond to desires toward another other than your spouse: 7 responses:

1. Don't conclude the other person was meant for you simply because you feel desire.
2. Don't encourage your interest by flirtation or inappropriate contact.
3. Immediately pray about it.
4. Don't allow yourself to be alone with that person.
5. Concentrate on your spouse and direct your interests toward him or her.
6. Make love with your spouse as soon as possible.
7. Determine in your heart to remain loyal and committed

Chapter 15 Why love is so powerful SoS 8:5-14

God is love. His essential nature is that of love, even when there is not response. His greatest moment of expressing His love was when Christ died on the cross for our sins. Husbands are to love their wives as Jesus Christ loves the church. They are to love their wives as their own bodies or as they love themselves. We learn of the marvelous qualities of the love of God in 1 Cor 13.

The Closing verses of the Song reveal four things that show why the love God intends is so powerful between a husband and wife.

1. God's love is based upon sexual contentment. Vs 4 warns against awakening love and sexual passion outside of marriage. Verse 5 indicates Solomon had awakened the sexual love of Abishag. The picture of their passion is portrayed in terms of her parent's experience

2. God's love is based upon strong commitment.

Vss 6 and 7 describe 4 basic characteristics of that commitment: a. It is an intimate commitment - laying a closer claim to the heart than any other.

b. It is an intense commitment. "Love is as strong as death" indicates intensity - holding on for dear life.

c. It is an indestructible commitment. "Unquenchable - never giving up no matter what floods try to overwhelm it.

d. It is an invaluable commitment. Love cannot be bought, it can only be given.

3. God's love is based on personal character.

1. Her character was developed in her family background. As her brothers speak - vs. 8-9 - we get a sense of the moral purity they instilled in her when she was young. They protected her.

2. Her character was determined as well by her own choices: Vs. 10. Her purity was what attracted Solomon to her. The reference to her breasts "like towers" is not a reference to size (though it is to maturity), but to the strength and protection her character offered.

3. Her character was demonstrated in her response to Solomon Vss. 11-12 The rights of Solomon over his vineyard are compared with her rights over her "vineyard" - perhaps she is asking him to acknowledge the role her family had in making her character what it was.

4. God's love is based on intimate companionship. Vs 14 -

She invites them to celebrate their sexual and romantic love. Cf 2:17, 4:6. "mountains of spices"=her sexuality.

"Make Haste" reveals the importance of romance and love to marriage. We mustn't be indifferent or slow to respond to our partner's desires.