

# WISDOM LITERATURE: SONG OF SOLOMON

## INTRODUCTION

Song of Songs, also called *Song of Solomon*, is a collection of love poems between a man and a woman. Either written by or inspired by King Solomon, this book celebrates the beauty of romantic love within marriage. It's full of rich, poetic language that paints a picture of desire, commitment, and delight between two people who truly love one another.

But this book isn't just about human romance—it points us to something greater. Throughout Scripture, God often uses the image of marriage to describe His relationship with His people. Just as a bride and groom deeply desire one another, God loves His people with passionate, personal devotion. In later Jewish tradition, this book was read during Passover as a reminder of God's faithful love for Israel. For Christians, it also echoes the way Christ loves His bride, the Church.

*Song of Songs* reminds us that physical love, when expressed inside a God-honoring marriage, is not shameful—it's sacred. It affirms that God created our bodies, emotions, and desires, and that He delights in love expressed His way. This book invites us to see love not as something casual or selfish, but as something holy, powerful, and deeply connected to the love story God is writing with His people.

## MAJOR THEMES

### The Value of Purity Before Marriage

In a world that often makes light of sexual sin, *Song of Songs* reminds us that there is beauty and dignity in waiting. The woman in the story is described as a "garden locked" (4:12)—a picture of someone who has guarded her body and heart until the right time. She tells others not to "awaken love until it pleases" (8:4), meaning love and physical intimacy are meant to happen in the right place—inside the safety of a marriage covenant.

### The Beauty of Genuine, Committed Love

This book paints a powerful picture of love that is much deeper than feelings or attraction. It shows love that is strong, loyal, and full of integrity. Real love is faithful, even when things are hard. It's not selfish or shallow. One of the most powerful lines says that love is "as strong as death" (8:6)—it doesn't give up easily, and it can't be shaken. This kind of love reflects the way Jesus loves His people—the Church. Just like in Ephesians 5:22–33, the love between a husband and wife is a picture of Christ's love: sacrificial, strong, and committed.

### The Goodness of Physical Intimacy in Marriage

God created our bodies and desires, and in *Song of Songs*, we see that physical intimacy in marriage is not shameful—it's something to be celebrated. The poems are filled with admiration and desire, but always within the boundaries of covenant love. In chapter 7, the man praises his bride with deep affection and honor, showing how physical closeness can be an act of faithfulness and joy when it's grounded in love and commitment. This is especially important in today's world, where physical intimacy is often treated as casual or disposable. *Song of Songs* reminds us that God's design for love and sex is not only good—it's holy.

## BOOK ORGANIZATION

### SONG OF SOLOMON: Love

Beginning of Love Relationship: Courtship & Wedding (Chapters 1:1-5:1)

Maturing of Love Relationship: Honeymoon & Marriage (Chapters 5:2-8:14)

## JESUS IN SONG OF SOLOMON

Though *Song of Solomon* is a book of romantic poetry between a man and a woman, many throughout history have seen it as more than just a celebration of human love. Like the book of *Hosea*, which uses a real-life marriage to show God's love for Israel, *Song of Solomon* can also be read as a reflection of God's deep and faithful love for His people.

In the Old Testament, God often described His relationship with Israel like a marriage. Even when Israel was unfaithful, God remained loyal and loving—always longing to draw His people back to Himself. That same kind of faithful, pursuing love is seen in the way the lovers in *Song of Solomon* seek, cherish, and rejoice in one another.

For followers of Jesus, this book also gives us a beautiful glimpse of Christ's love for the Church. Just like a bride and groom are made for each other, Jesus and His people are united in a forever covenant. Ephesians 5:22–33 says that marriage is actually a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Revelation 21:2 describes the Church as a bride, beautifully prepared for her husband, Jesus.

This spousal image is more than just symbolic. It points to the future day when Jesus will return, and His people will live with Him forever. Until then, He continues to pursue, protect, and prepare His bride. Like a good and faithful spouse, Jesus loves us deeply, speaks tenderly to us through His Word, and longs for closeness with us. *Song of Solomon* may not name Jesus directly, but it prepares our hearts to understand the kind of passionate, personal, and covenantal love He has for His people—a love that will one day lead to perfect union in eternity.

### BIBLE STUDY SPECIFIC – HOW TO STUDY SONG OF SOLOMON:

The Song of Solomon (also called Song of Songs) is one of the most uniquely poetic and emotionally charged books in the Bible. Over the centuries, people have read it in many different ways—some see it as a drama, others as an allegory, a teaching tool, or a literal love story. Because this book is both rich in feeling and layered with meaning, here's a guide to help you study it well.

*Observation: What do I notice in the passage?*

- Identify who is speaking and what's happening. This book includes the voices of the woman (the beloved), the man (the lover), and sometimes a group of others (the friends). Ask:
  - Who's speaking in this section?
  - What are they saying? What's their main point?
- Look at the heading or title notes in your Bible. These sometimes give important context or speaker labels that can help clarify what's going on.
- Notice the structure and poetic style. Song of Solomon includes many types of Hebrew poetry. Pay attention to the style:
  - Descriptions (4:1–7)
  - Self-descriptions (1:5; 2:1)
  - Songs of admiration (1:9–11; 4:9–11)
  - Songs of longing (1:2–4; 8:1–4)
  - Search or dream sequences (3:1–4; 5:2–7)

Look for contrasts, word pictures, or repeated ideas. What is being emphasized? What emotions are being expressed?

- Write down anything you don't understand. Don't just skip over it—mark it and come back later. That's often where the richest meaning can be found.

*Interpretation: What does it mean?*

- Look for deeper connections to God's story. Even though Jesus isn't mentioned by name, this book points forward to Him. Ask:
  - How does this book reflect God's design for love, covenant, and faithfulness?
  - How does this kind of love echo Christ's relationship with His people (Ephesians 5:22–33)?
  - What desires, longings, or hopes in the Song does Jesus fulfill?

- Explore the meaning of the images. Song of Solomon uses rich and sometimes unusual imagery (like comparing hair to goats or teeth to sheep). These were meaningful symbols in the ancient world, and they often carry deep emotional or cultural weight.
  - Ask: What might this image have meant back then?
  - Does it remind me of anything else in Scripture?
  - How does it stir my imagination to understand love, beauty, and belonging?
- Consider what the book looks back on and points forward to. Many of the themes—like garden imagery, longing for union, and commitment—connect to both *Genesis* and *Revelation*. Think about how this book fits into the whole story of the Bible.

*Application: How should I respond?*

- How do I relate to the emotions in the text? This book doesn't hide emotions—it shows joy, desire, fear, pain, hope, and longing. Ask:
  - When have I felt something like this?
  - What does this show me about being made in the image of an emotional, relational God?
- What does this passage teach me about love—human and divine? Ask:
  - What kind of love does God desire in relationships?
  - How does this challenge or confirm what I believe about marriage, dating, or singleness?
  - What can this teach me about how God loves me?
- How do I seek God's presence in seasons of joy and longing? Whether the couple in the Song is together or apart, their longing for connection reminds us of our longing for God—and His constant pursuit of us.
- How do I live out wisdom in my relationships? This book celebrates love that is committed, mutual, and honoring. It pushes against shallow, selfish versions of love the world often promotes.

*Prayer: How do I talk to God in light of this passage?*

- Invite God into your emotions—joy, sorrow, longing, or celebration.
  - *“Lord, thank You that You care about my heart, my desires, and my relationships. Help me bring all of my emotions to You.”*
- Thank God for designing us to love deeply and feel strongly.
  - *“Father, You created love, romance, and beauty. Help me honor Your design and reflect Your character in the way I love others.”*
- Ask God for wisdom in your relationships.
  - *“Lord, give me discernment to love others well—with purity, faithfulness, and selflessness.”*
- Stay anchored in truth—even when your feelings shift.
  - *“Jesus, remind me that feelings are a gift but not the guide. Help me trust Your Word and stay rooted in Your love.”*

## WHAT CHURCH HISTORY HAS SAID ABOUT SONG OF SOLOMON

*Augustine of Hippo (354-430)*

“This holy Song of Songs is a kind of wedding song for the bride and bridegroom; it is a spiritual marriage, you see, in which we have to live with great chastity, because Christ granted the Church in spirit what his mother had in the body, the grace of being both mother and virgin.”

*John Wesley (1703-1791)*

“The matter of [Song of Solomon], which is most lofty, containing in it the noblest of all the mysteries contained either in the Old or the New Testament; most pious and pathetical, breathing forth the hottest flames of love between Christ and his people, most sweet and comfortable, and useful to all that read it with serious and Christian eyes.”

