

Song of Songs Introduction and Chapter 1a -- John Karmelich

1. Let me start by saying, of all the books in the Bible, this one is for adults only.
 - a) A Jewish tradition, picked up by the early Christian writers is that the book, Song of Songs should not even be studied until one is thirty years old.
 - b) It is very sexual in its overtones and its description.
 - c) It is about romance, love making and the love between a bride and a groom.
2. Now that I've gotten your attention, welcome to my study of Song of Songs. ☺
 - a) If you would like to have a better relationship with your spouse, read on.
 - b) If you are single, and want some good marital advice, read on.
 - c) If you want to comprehend God's love, and its comparison to a strong, healthy marriage, read on.
 - d) On the surface, it is a wonderful, literal story of King Solomon and his love for his bride. Much of the text is from the perspective of the bride and her love for Solomon.
 - i) It reads like a musical play. The writing style is that of Hebrew Poetry.
 - ii) There is an interesting comment about Solomon's life in 1st Kings:
 - a) "He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five." (1st Kings 4:32, NIV)
 - b) We know Solomon wrote a lot of proverbs as most of the Book of Proverbs is written by Solomon. The Book of Ecclesiastes is also written by Solomon and there are many proverbs in that book.
 - c) Yet the number of proverbs in those two books is roughly estimated at 400 to 500. In 1st Kings it says Solomon wrote over 3,000!
 - d) That verse in 1st Kings also said Solomon write over 1,005 songs.
 - e) Yet only one song is saved throughout history.
 - (1) Only one song is considered inspired by God.
 - (2) It is so great, it is well translated "Song of Songs".
 - (3) The title is taken from the first verse of Chapter 1:
 - (a) "Solomon's Song of Songs" (NIV)
 - iii) "Song" in Hebrew, is a different concept than the American idea of song.
 - a) "Song of Songs" is not a catchy little ditty one can sing in the shower. ☺
 - b) We don't even know the original musical score that goes with it.
 - c) Hebrew poetry doesn't have rhymes or commonly repeated phrases like American songs and poetry.
 - d) It is about joining thoughts together or combining ideas together.
 - (1) It is different concepts, joined by a common connecting theme.
 3. About a year ago, I came up with the bright idea of teaching at least one book of the Bible from each of the different writing styles. Thus, I am now tackling Song of Songs.
 - a) Books of the Bible can be divided into
 - i) 1) Narrative style of writing; "narrative" style is a story with a start and an end.
 - ii) 2) Prophetic; The primary purpose of this type of book is to foretell future events.
 - iii) 3) Instructional; The primary purpose is a set of instructions to follow.
 - iv) 4) Poetic; There is no story per se, but the style is in Hebrew poetry.
 - b) Well, I'm now tackling a poetic book, because I haven't done one yet. ☺
 - c) God laid it on my heart to teach Song of Songs.
 - d) In many ways, this is my greatest challenge as a teacher.
 - i) Being your typical male, writing about emotional love does not come easy. ☺

4. In preparation for this study, I have read introductory chapters to many commentaries on the Song of Songs. Here is the one statement they almost all have in common.
 - a) "It is a difficult book to understand."
 - i) And I kept thinking, "Gee, that will make my job easy!" ☺
 - ii) There are many unique words found in Song of Songs that are difficult to translate. About 10% of the Hebrew words in Song of Songs are not found anywhere else in the Bible as a cross-reference.
 - iii) Good scholars disagree on some of the finer interpretations in the text.
 - iv) The first time you read through Song of Songs, you can't help but wonder "Why is this book included in the Bible anyway?"
 - a) There is no mention of God whatsoever.
 - b) There is no mention of prayer, salvation, redemption, or any of the other common topics one finds in a book of the Bible.
 - c) There is no quotation from Song of Songs anywhere in the New Testament.
 - (1) Yet, some of the word-pictures "painted" in the Song of Songs is similar to those found throughout the Bible.
 - d) Yet it is one of the most loved books by many of the great Christian writers of the past few centuries. I have heard (second hand) that Dwight Moody and Charles Spurgeon both consider it their favorite book in the Bible.
 - b) The Book "Song of Songs", also nicknamed "Song of Solomon" and often abbreviated "Songs" in different Bibles, is a musical drama between a man and a woman.
 - i) It is a love story with sexual overtones.
 - ii) The characters in this "short musical" are usually considered the bride and groom, the girl's family and the "daughters of Jerusalem".
 - a) Most of your study Bibles will insert who is speaking before each section.
 - (1) For example, if the bride is speaking, the New King James Study Bible® will insert "The Shulamite". That is her title.
 - (2) The Living Bible® will insert "The Girl".
 - (3) In the original text, those titles are not there.
 - (4) The writers of those study bibles put them there for our reference.
 - (a) In fact, not all of your study Bibles agree upon who is speaking on any one given point.
 - (b) Those Bible writers look at the grammar, and make assumptions about who is speaking.
 - (c) All you should remember is in the original text those names above the text are not there.
5. Let's start with what we know for sure about the Song of Songs:
 - a) It was written by Solomon. The same Solomon who was king of Israel after David.
 - i) Verse 1 of Chapter 1 says, "Solomon's Song of Songs" (Songs 1:1, NIV)
 - ii) His name is mentioned seven times in the book.
 - b) This woman is called, "The Shulamite"
 - i) Here is the reference:, "Return, return, O Shulamite; (Songs 6:13, NKJV)
 - ii) The word is spelled with 2 "m's" (Shulammite) in the NASB and the NIV.:
 - a) One Messianic Jewish commentator pointed out that in the Hebrew, the root word for the Shulamite is very similar to the word for "Solomon". An acceptable paraphrase of this title could be "Mrs. Solomon". (Source: Arnold Fruchtenbaum)
 - b) The similarity is often compared in the love they have for each other. The similarity of the Hebrew names of Solomon and "Mrs. Solomon" (i.e., the Shulamite). It is as if they are becoming "one in name".

- c) The only other characters in this play is a female chorus. Most study Bibles call them “The Daughters of Jerusalem. We’ll talk more about these girls later.
 - i) There are a few verses that some commentators believe are friends of Solomon, but at this point, we are getting trivial.
 - d) To summarize, the whole play is a dialogue between Solomon and his bride, with a handful of verses given to a choir, usually labeled as “The Daughters of Jerusalem”.
6. Let’s talk a little bit about Solomon himself and this bride.
- a) We do know that this woman is the only woman Solomon loved.
 - i) Solomon made a lot of mistakes in his life. One of them was having hundreds of wives. Most, if not all, were politically arranged marriages with princesses of other countries so to arrange peace with that country.
 - b) It appears that this woman in Song of Songs is the only woman that Solomon truly loved.
 - i) Notice what Moses told the children of Israel about multiple wives:
 - a) Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. (Deut. 17:17 NIV)
 - ii) Now notice what Solomon did, hundreds of years later:
 - a) And he (Solomon) had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; (1st Kings 11:3-4a, NKJV).
 - (1) Speaking as a married man, one wife is difficult enough to please, I can’t imagine seven hundred! ☺
 - (2) Anniversary dinners must have really been tough. ☺
 - b) Yet, despite all of these women, listen to what Solomon said about this girl in the Song of Songs:
 - (1) “There are sixty queens
And eighty concubines,
And virgins without number.
My dove, my perfect one,
Is the only one, (Songs 6:8-9a, NKJV)
 - (2) Throughout the book, Solomon refers to this true love as “his dove”. We’ll discuss that reference when we get there.
 - (a) To give you a hint, doves-as-a-bird, mate for life!
 - (3) When Song of Songs was written, Solomon had “only” 60 wives.
 - (a) 1st Kings said he added others after this true love.
 - (b) This could warrant a discussion on the topic of “long term love vs. living in the emotional moment.”
 - c) The commentaries are full of theories on who this woman is.
 - i) Many of those theories are interesting, but none are provable.
 - ii) None of those theories have any good application to our lives, so I’ll move on.
7. When you hear sermons or read commentaries on Song of Songs, there are multiple levels on which you can read this.
- a) Most of them are either literal interpretations or allegorical (figurative) interpretations.
 - b) Let’s start with the literal interpretations.
 - i) One can not ignore the reality of the sexual literalness of Song of Songs.
 - ii) A common misconception is the Bible is “anti-sex” for the purpose of pleasure. There is no mention in any of this love making that the intended purpose of the interlude is to make babies. It is about the love this couple has for each other and expressing it physically.
 - iii) God designed marriage to glorify that pleasure He designed for us.

- c) Next comes the allegorical (figurative) interpretations.
 - i) Jewish commentators, naturally, compare Solomon and his bride with God's love for the Jewish people.
 - ii) Christian commentators, naturally, compare Solomon and his bride with God's love for the Christian church.
 - a) Since I happen to believe Jesus is God, I'll talk about this one throughout the study. ☺ It is natural and I believe Scriptural to give this interpretation.
 - b) Since Song of Songs was written long before Jesus came the first time, one can respect the Jewish arguments for their interpretation.
 - iii) What is important to see, is that our love for our husband or our wife stems from God love. Like all the other gifts God gives us, we can draw upon God's strength and God's love to have the ability to love our spouses, physically, emotionally, and the giving of our time and our ourselves.
 - a) I've often heard the perfect marriage is where two people spend their lives trying to "outdo each other" in pleasing each other.
 - b) That type of love stems from the type of love God has for his people.
 - c) That source and strength can be drawn upon to have a healthy and happy martial relationship.
 - (1) By the way, I'm speaking of the ideal here. Like all other humans, I have my faults and my shortcomings.
 - (2) I would love to have a better marriage. As a couple, my wife and I have our problems like all other couples.
 - (3) What I have found is, is the times I have drawn upon God's strength through prayer, that my marriage shines the best. The happiest and greatest times in my marriage have come from when I sought God first for a better marriage.
 - d) That is why so many commentators compare the verses of Song of Songs to our relationship with God.
 - (1) Is Song of Songs about physical love between a man and a woman? Yes, of course.
 - (2) The reason Song of Songs is "biblical", despite its lack of any good Godly terms like "prayer" and "salvation" is that this book is about the love relationship God desires of all of his children. A ideal bond between a man and his wife is what God desires as a relationship between God and you (and me!)
 - (3) That doesn't mean God wants to physically make love with you. Physical lovemaking is just a way of expressing our deep desire to be with another person. It is a way of saying how much I want to make the other person happy.
 - (a) God loves us with an eternal perfect love. God wants great things for you and wants us to be happy, through the good and bad times of life. That happiness stems from having a relationship with God.
 - (b) The Song of Songs is just an example of how to show some of God's love through our marriage.
8. It may interest you to know, that in Hebrew, there is no word for "bachelor".
- a) Through most of history, through most cultures, marriages were arranged by the parents. This included the religious Jewish culture.
 - i) Therefore, many parents, figuring that they are smarter than their children, took it upon themselves to arrange for a husband or a wife for their children.

- ii) Yet one of the privileges of being a king was to choose one's bride.
- b) It does not mean that everyone should be married or that divorce is a sin.
 - i) Divorce is never listed in the Bible as a sin.
 - a) I would say divorce is frowned upon, but never included in any of the "sin lists" found throughout the New Testament.
 - ii) What you can find in the story of Adam and Eve and in the 10 commandments ("honor your mother and father") is that God desires marriage.
 - iii) Paul himself taught in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 7 (to paraphrase) that marriage is not for everyone. He recommends in that same chapter that if your heart is to marry someone, to go do so.
 - a) In Paul's first letter to Timothy, Paul even counsels young widows to re-marry. (See 1st Timothy 5:14).
 - b) Paul's theme in 1st Corinthians Chapter 7 is that we are "all" married to Christ. Yet some can also express that love through marriage, and others who are single dedicate themselves more fully to serving Christ.
 - iv) The reason God instituted marriage is that it gives us:
 - a) A model for how God wants to have a relationship with us.
 - b) Through God's love we can have a healthy relationship.
 - v) On a related topic, as of the date of this writing, I have a young daughter.
 - a) Every night my wife & I pray for my daughter's future husband. I specifically pray that God will give her "a man after His own heart". Further, I pray that God will give all us (me, wife, daughter) discernment to recognize who that man will eventually be.
 - (1) My counsel to my daughter will be to find a man who loves God more than he loves her. That way, he can draw on God's strength to love her as God desires.

9. Well, enough introduction ☺, let's take on Verse 1: Solomon's Song of Songs.

- a) The title is in the Hebrew.
 - b) It states the author, and among the 1,005 songs Solomon wrote (again, see 1st Kings 4:32), this is the Song of Songs.
10. Verse 2: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth--for your love is more delightful than wine.
- a) Now the dialogue is started.
 - b) We can logically assume in the first few verses that this is the "bride" speaking.
 - i) We know this because it says "Let *him*" kiss me."
 - c) Let's get back to the speaker, who is the bride. Again, most of your study bibles will have titles above the verses. Those are not in the original text, so it is the writers of that study bible making assumptions about the speaker.
 - d) The Book opens with the desire of the girl to be kissed by Solomon.
 - i) Reading the verse in context of the rest of the chapter, it appears the physical lovemaking has not begun yet.
 - ii) The bride's love for Solomon desires the kiss of Solomon.
 - iii) Throughout history, kissing is a sign of affection between a husband and wife.
 - iv) There is a principal here about letting the guy lead.
 - a) You may think I'm making too much out of that, but I believe most women, romantically, want men to lead.

- v) It is also a word picture of our relationship with God. It starts with God choosing us, and never the other way around.
 - a) But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. (2nd Thessalonians 2:13, NIV)
 - e) Next, the verse says “for your love is more delightful than wine”.
 - i) We will discover in a few verses that this girl works in a vineyard.
 - a) That means grape growing and winemaking are her life.
 - b) Yet, she is saying “I love you more than my work, more than my occupation (listening guys? ☺).
 - ii) Wine is biblically associated with joy. It is usually mentioned in joyous occasions in the Bible. Jesus at the wedding feast in Cana turned the water into wine (Gospel of John, Chapter 2). The chapter describes this as a feast and celebration. The “best man” of the wedding commended the wine that Jesus changed from water. Again, the point is simply that wine is associated with joy.
 - a) Here, the bride says your love is more delightful than wine.
 - f) Throughout this study, I’m going to go back and forth comparing these verses to God’s desire in our martial relationship and with our relationship with God himself.
 - i) In both cases, God desires our love for our spouse and our love for him to be greater than the joy from wine, to be greater than our occupational calling.
 - a) It should be the greatest desire of our heart.
 - ii) I should also talk here about my view on Christians and drinking.
 - a) Christians have debated for centuries over the appropriateness of alcohol.
 - b) The Bible strongly condemns being drunk. Paul says in 1st Corinthians 6:10 that drunkards will not be admitted into heaven.
 - (1) The question is whether “drinking” is permitted.
 - c) So where does one draw the line?
 - (1) Personally, I would rather err on the safe side. ☺
 - (2) I believe Christians should drink as much wine as they want.
 - (3) The question then becomes, “how much wine *do* you want?”
 - (4) If you have the joy of the Lord, the answer should be little to none.
 - (a) A common theme of the Bible is the joy of our relationship with God, the joy brought by love is much greater than anything alcohol or any other pleasure in life can give us.
 - d) That leads us back to this verse in Song of Songs, “for your love is more delightful than wine”.
 - (1) That means we shouldn’t be drunk because Christians are not supposed to be drinking. That is doing it for the wrong motivation. Our motivation should be out of the love for God and the desire of love in our martial relationship the love of anything else should be an very inferior comparison.
 - (2) To paraphrase, “why would I want wine when I have your love?”
11. Verse 3: Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you!
- a) The sense of smell can be one of the most powerful sensations one can have.
 - b) Let me put this into an illustration that men can relate to.
 - i) To a man, there is few scents as wonderful as a steak cooking on a barbeque.
 - a) Or the smell of bacon cooking, or popcorn cooking.

- ii) That aroma attracts us, and makes us hungry for that item.
- c) Women feel the same way about a man's smell.
 - i) Most men don't use cologne. A few use too much. ☺
 - ii) I would suspect most single men use it far more than married men do.
 - iii) Married men figure, "why should I use this stuff, I have already got a wife?" ☺
 - a) Let me start by saying, "wrong attitude".
- d) One of the points I drive home is that couples should want to do things to please their partner. Not because they have to, but because they want to.
 - i) That should be the same idea with our relationship with God. We shouldn't be obedient to God because we have to, but because we want to. We are so grateful for God, that out of the desire of our heart we want to please Him.
 - ii) The same is for our marriage. Men, we need to express our love to our spouse.
 - iii) I remember a survey that was completed some years back where they asked divorced women, "what do you want in your next husband". The overwhelming answer was something to the effect of, "someone who will listen to me".
 - iv) The biggest mistake married men make (myself included) is taking your wife for granted.
 - a) We can make that same mistake with God.
 - (1) We often take his salvation, his redemption, his love for us for granted and not give any time for God in our lives.
- e) Which leads us of course, back to Verse 3: "Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you!"
 - i) The woman compares the smell of a sweet fragrance to the name of Solomon.
 - a) The name refers to his reputation.
 - b) Biblically, a person's name is also associated with their reputation.
 - c) Remember that this women is in the wine business. Smell is important!
 - ii) She goes on in this verse to say "No wonder the maidens love you".
 - a) My personal view is that this is an assumption on her part; the view that other maidens also love Solomon.
 - b) Whether or not other maidens love Solomon is irrelevant to my point.
 - (1) I believe the point is that this girl is so in love with Solomon, she assumes that all other people feel the same way about him.
 - c) To paraphrase, "he is so handsome, so wonderful, every girl must feel that way about him."
 - d) There should be a natural tendency in all our martial relationships to feel that way about our partner. "My husband or wife is so wonderful, I can't see how anybody would not love that person.
 - (1) Those who have been married awhile can't help but chuckle here. We all have that "puppy love" prior to marriage where we see our partner as perfect. Then reality sets in. ☺
 - (2) A good marriage is often described so "one should go in with their eyes wide open, and then after marriage, keep their eyes half-shut".
 - (3) In order to keep our marriage strong, one needs to "rekindle the flame" every now and then.
 - (4) We "kindle the flame" with God by spending time with Him.
 - (5) The same goes for our marriage. Personally, I love my wife far more now than when I first got married. That comes from spending time together.
 - (a) Like most men, my failure comes from letting the emotion fade. I get more emotional over other things than I do over her, and that is a fault that most married men need to fix.

12. OK, I've wandered off topic. Sorry about that. ☺ Verse 4: Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you, Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!
- a) In this verse, it jumps back in forth between the bride talking and “we” doing the talking.
 - b) The first and last part of Verse 4 uses the word “we”, so it is no longer the bride talking.
 - c) I gave the statement earlier that these set of verses are leading up to the wedding night. They are talking about anticipation.
 - d) The first part of the verse says, “Take me away with you – let us hurry!” Let the king (that is Solomon) bring me into his chambers.
 - i) You can see the sense of urgency in this verse. It is the bride crying out in love for her husband. It is almost as if she is saying “forget the wedding ceremony, let’s get on to the wedding night!”
 - ii) By the way, the word for “love” in these verses is sexual in its meaning.
 - iii) The application for you and I should be to keep that same sense of desire alive in us, both for our spouse and for our relationship with God.
 - iv) We need to “keep the flames hot” via the Holy Spirit in our desire for God and for our spouse.
13. Verse 4, Part 2: We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!
- a) This verse uses “we”. For example, The New King James Study Bible® will insert “The Daughters Of Jerusalem” as a title above this half of the verse.
 - b) In preparation for this study, I spent some time just reading all the verses in Song of Songs that were spoken of other than by the bride and groom. Most of them fell in the category of “The Daughters Of Jerusalem”.
 - i) They are 1:4, 1:11, 2:15 (maybe); 5:9, 6:1, 6:13, 8:5 (maybe); and 8:8-9.
 - ii) The interesting thing is that you can read them as a group and usually see a good word-picture of the purpose and function of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) Other commentators see the Daughters of Jerusalem as a “meddlesome” group into the love between Solomon and his bride.
 - b) A function of the Holy Spirit is to guide us in our walk with God.
 - c) Romans Chapter 8 mentions the Holy Spirit 14 times. Most of them discuss His function between us and God the Father. Here is an example:
 - (1) “In the same way, the (Holy) Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”.
(Romans 8:16, NIV)
 - d) My point is that one can read the verses in Song of Songs that are not spoken by either the bride or Solomon and see a “type” of the Holy Spirit working in the background.
 - iii) Which leads us of course, back to the text of Verse 4;
 - a) “We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!”
 - b) In the literal view, this view is other maidens congratulating and praising the maiden prior to the wedding night.
 - c) If the desire of our heart is to worship God, it is the Holy Spirit working in us to lead us in that worship. One can read Verse 4 from the viewpoint of the Holy Spirit here.
 - (1) One can see the similarity of the bride saying she loves her man more than wine, and here is this “group” saying we will praise you more than wine.

- iv) The last phrase “How right they are to adore you!” is the bride peaking again.
 - a) It is the bride joining the choir of praise at Solomon saying in effect “They’re right Solomon, you are one great guy! ☺
- 14. Verse 5: Dark am I, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. ⁶Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun.
 - a) Almost all the commentators discuss the fact that in those days, “the tan look” was out for girls. Here in California, being tan is a positive statement. In that culture, “tan” meant you were part of the working class. The princess stayed in the palace and had fair skin.
 - b) Remember that the bride is a working girl out in the vineyards.
 - i) She is also well aware that Solomon had lots of wives, all from politically arranged marriages.
 - ii) The story here has a “Cinderella-like” them of a poor country girl competing for the prince against all the women of the royal court.
 - iii) The “tents of Kedar” was historically known for being black.
 - iv) The “tent curtains of Solomon” probably refer to the tabernacle that was still in use during the early years of Solomon. (Reference: 2nd Chronicles 1:6). The outside curtain was goat’s hair which was also black in color.
 - c) More importantly I see two word-pictures here to pick up on.
 - i) Like all people, this girl sees her faults as compared to other people.
 - a) Yet in a few verses, we will see Solomon compliment her beauty.
 - b) There is a good tip for all us guys out there. Don’t agree with your wives complaining about their faults, compliment how we only see the beauty in her and no one else.
 - d) Back to the application of seeing Song of Songs as a relationship between us and God.
 - i) The color “black” in the Bible, is a symbol of sin.
 - a) Just as white is a symbol of purity, black is the opposite of white.
 - b) When the Israelites built the tabernacle in Exodus the outer covering was black goat hair (Exodus 26:7). One can only see the gold and beautiful tapestry from inside the temple.
 - c) The word-picture I’m painting here is like the bride, we see our faults.
 - ii) God, like Solomon here, only sees our beauty. Isn’t that a neat word picture?
 - 15. The bride continues her woe’s in the rest of Verse 6: My mother's sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I have neglected.
 - a) Again, this sounds like a Cinderella story.
 - b) Notice she does not refer to her brothers as her brothers, but “my mother’s sons”.
 - i) Some believe they might be step brothers, but we don’t know.
 - c) This verse reveals that she has to work in a vineyard.
 - i) Even the vineyard that got assigned to her is neglected as her brothers force her to make their vineyards a priority.
 - a) Some commentators take this less literally. They simply see this as her brothers make her work hard to tend to the family business and she has no time to take care of herself.
 - ii) You can see the Cinderella like story of this poor girl who then moves on to become the true love of Solomon.
 - a) One can make analogies to our reward in heaven based on this suffering.
 - b) It reminds me of something Paul said in Romans, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18, NIV)

16. Verse 7: Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends?
- a) This verse ends the section of the bride speaking. The next verse is Solomon's response.
 - b) To paraphrase, she is saying "I just want to be with you. Tell me the spot where you rest at midday so I can be next to you. I don't just want to be part of your harem".
 - i) Women want to be cherished. They don't want to be treated like someone special.
 - a) They don't want to be "#1 on a list of 12"
 - b) Jesus desires the same for us. He doesn't want to be "our number #1 "god" on a list of "lots of gods", he wants to be #1 on a list of 1!
 - ii) For both men and women, let's look at this verse in our relationship to God:
 - a) Sometimes I believe, like a loving father, God just wants us to talk to him. Sometimes it can be formal, sometimes it can be intimate and informal.
 - b) Have you every been around someone who made you feel special? Someone who had the ability to make everyone they talk to feel like for that moment, they are the most important person in the world?
 - (1) I believe Jesus had that ability.
 - (2) John, who wrote the Gospel of John, refers to himself as "the one Jesus loved" five times. I believe all the disciples felt that way. John is just the one who wrote it down.
 - (3) Here is the girl stating her desire to be treated as special. I think God desires that for us. Living our lives to express our love for him through our actions.
 - c) Let's get back to the verse. The bride compares Solomon to a shepherd when she says, "where (do) you graze your flock?"
 - i) There is no mention of any sheep and the historical records of Solomon never record him as being a shepherd.
 - ii) There is a minority opinion among the commentators that there is some sort of love-triangle here, and the shepherd is not Solomon. I don't share that view.
 - iii) In Middle Eastern tradition, a king often has the title of as a shepherd as "his people" represent the sheep. That is one possible explanation.
 - iv) If you read verses 7 & 8, the verse mentions 1) the shepherd (Solomon) and "the tracks of the sheep" but not the sheep themselves. I believe that is the key.
 - a) I take the view this is meant to be allegorical (non-literal).
 - (1) The bride, looked to Solomon as being her "shepherd" as well as her love.
 - (2) Men, take note of this. Women want men to lead. They want them to protect them. That is the model of the family that God desires.
 - b) Most of you by now, can also see where I'm going with this. ☺
 - (1) Jesus calls himself "The Good Shepherd".
 - (a) Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27, NIV).
 - (2) Jesus also calls on us to be shepherds, to lead others in Christ.
 - (a) When the resurrected Peter faces Jesus again, Jesus gave him 3 commands:
 - (i) "Feed My lambs" (John 21:15, NIV)
 - (ii) "Take care of My sheep" (John 21:16, NIV)
 - (iii) "Feed My sheep" (John 21:17, NIV)
 - (3) The point is that Jesus is our shepherd, and further God calls on all of us to "shepherd" others in Christ.
 - (a) With that thought let's look at Verse 8.

17. Verse 8: If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.
 - a) To finish the analogy of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, notice the command given “follow the tracks of the sheep...”
 - i) Many see this our marching orders to follow others who are Jesus’ “sheep”.
 - ii) The king (the shepherd) gives the command to the bride to graze her sheep “by the tents of the shepherds).
 - a) The king is giving his orders for protection of the young bride.
 - b) His fellow, or subordinate “shepherds” are to take care of her.
 - (1) Which leads us back to our word-picture for us Christians to further “shepherd” younger less-mature believers.
 - iii) For those of you who like this type of word-picture stuff, you can take the analogy further. The “young goats” the bride is in charge of could be a picture of leading others to Jesus. In the Old Testament, “goats” are associated, biblically with sin.
 - a) Not because they are bad animals, but whenever goats is mentioned in Genesis, it is used either as a sin offering or as part of a sin deception. (References: Genesis 15:9, 30:32-33, 37:31, 38:17-23).
 - b) So here is the bride leading her “sinful goats” to the “Good Shepherd”.
 - c) It’s a neat word picture. If you think I’m stretching the story too much, that’s ok. ☺
 - b) Let’s get back to Verse 8. Here is Solomon giving his response to the bride. He says, “If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.”
 - c) Notice he starts by saying “the most beautiful of woman”.
 - i) This is a king. A man who could have anything he wants.
 - a) He already had 60 wives as of this point.
 - ii) The bride didn’t think she was beautiful. She saw her dark sin as making her inferior to the other women. What was Solomon’s response?
 - a) “(You are) the most beautiful of woman.”
 - b) Take good notes guys, this stuff works. ☺
 - d) Remember that Verse 7 was a question by the bride. She asked, “Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends”
 - i) That question is an expression of her embarrassment of her skin color.
 - ii) Again, Solomon’s response is ““the most beautiful of woman”.
 - iii) That is also how God sees us. God does not focus on our faults. Jesus paid the price for all of those, past present and future. He sees us in our future state, “spotless and “beautiful” being prepared as a bride for Jesus.
 - a) Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him (God the Father) glory, for the marriage of the Lamb (Jesus) has come, and His wife (the church) has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Revelation 19:7-8, NKJV)
18. Ending on that positive note, I’m going to stop here and pick it up with the next lesson.
19. Let’s pray: Father we thank you so much for these wonderful lessons about our relationship with you, with Jesus and our spouses. May you be glorified in all these relationships. A study of Song of Songs is a difficult voyage with lots of possible interpretations and meanings. Help us to “rightly divide the Word of Truth¹” as we apply these principals to our lives. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

¹ 2nd Timothy 2:15, NKJV