

Song of Songs Chapters 1-8

The title Song of Songs means the best of all songs. This book also called the Song of Solomon. This book contains many poems but arranged in an unusual way. Due to its contents and arrangement, it is difficult to fully interpret the true story. Many people believe the bridegroom is King Solomon and the bride is a Shulammite country girl (Song. 6:13), and likely the event occurred in Solomon's earlier life when he was a king. This book contains three characters: the bride, groom and the chorus (or friends) that cheered for them. God was not mentioned in the book. The main theme is very clear which is about committed love. Certain sections or passages in the Bible can be read at different levels of understanding or revelation. This book can be read in three levels: 1) physical Intimacy in a committed love, 2) process to a committed love and the emotional aspects of the relationship, 3) an analogy of love between God and His bride (people).

1.) Physical intimacy in Committed Love

God has stated His plan in Gen. 2:20-25 that man and woman shall be united and become one flesh. Exodus 20:14 stated one shall not commit adultery. Physical intimacy is intended only for a man and a woman with committed love in a marriage. Song of Songs have many phases or sentences describing intimate love affection and sexual desires using expressions or analogies from the nature like flower, fruit, animal, structure (e.g. fountain, wall, towers), etc. This is the type of union (marriage) where physical intimacy glory God. However, it is the quality of love that makes physical intimacy good. The following section expands on that.

2) Process to a committed love and the emotional aspects of the relationship

This Bible book describes the general process of a couple falling in love and finally committed in marriage. The chapters in this book can be divided into three main sections.

a. Fall in love and prepare for the wedding

Chapters 1 to 3 described the two falling in love and were ready for the wedding. During the fall-in-love process, there are often ups and downs on emotions. For example, after the future groom left the country side, the Shulammite country girl had fear of losing him and had dreams as stated in the first half of Chapter 3. Having good communication, be truthful and have trust are very important in a marriage but it is also essential during the get-to-know each other period before marriage. An analogy can be made on the period before one accepts Jesus as

his/her savior that is the importance of prayer, truthful about one self (sinful in God's sight and needs God) and trust God that He loves you and have the best for you.

b. Express love and desire towards each other

Chapters 4 and 5 described the love expression from the man towards the woman and vice versa. Good quality love involves appreciation of each other.

c. Bride and groom are united as a committed couple

Chapters 6 to 8 are mainly about the two persons had committed to be bride and groom, and ready for the God intended two-becomes-one union (Song 6:3). Song 8:6 described a true committed love is filled with passion and zeal, has strength, and it is so precious that nothing can be bought or be exchanged for.

3) An analogy of love between God and His bride (people)

Song of Songs uses physical marriage to foretaste the union between Christ and His people. Since that union is not physical like our marriage, the committed love relationship in our marriage can be an analogy.

a. Committed Love Relationship

Similar to 2 c. above on commitment as in Song 8:6, the relation between God and His bride (people) is a committed love relationship. (Read 2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:27, Rev. 19:7, Eph. 1:4-6, 1 Peter 2:9) Rom. 8:38-39 talked about nothing can separate us from the love of God (strength and commitment in the relationship). Exo. 34:14 stated "You must worship no other gods, for the LORD, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you." Exo. 20:3 stated "You shall have no other gods besides me". The word jealous means God is zealous to protect what is precious to Him, and demands exclusive devotion from His lover (God's people). This shows the passion and zeal in the one-to-one relationship. Jesus died for our sins has demonstrated how precious is the relationship. All the above are elements of a committed love.

b. Personal Relationship

This committed love relationship is a personal relationship. John 10:14 stated "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me". God used shepherd and sheep to describe the close relationship between Him and each of His loved one (each of His people/children). Similar to the bride and groom in Song of Songs, each of us should share one's own life including feelings and needs with God through prayers and praise. The relationship status shall also be

announced in public. One shall announce Jesus is his/her savior in public just like the couple made public on their relationship in Song of Songs.

c. Agape love relationship

Agape love is an unconditional love. Song of Songs emphasized the romance aspect of a committed love, but a true committed love is an agape love. Jesus loves each of us unconditionally. John 10:15 stated “even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.” Similar verses are John 15:13, Romans 5:8, Eph. 5:21 and I John 3:16. God loves us even we are sinners. God also commended each of His children to love Him back with all his/her heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). This requires us to love Him regardless of the condition of our lives. We need to love Him when we are blessed as well as time of trouble and trial.