

Come Away, My Love • A Study in the Song of Solomon – Part 3

INTRODUCTION

This is the 3rd & final study in The Song of Solomon.

It's been a good study & if you weren't here I suggest you get the CD's of the previous studies.

This has been a good prequel for the Marriage series e start next Wednesday.

The Song is an **explicit if poetic** description of marital intimacy; specifically between King Solomon & the wife of his youth, called the Shulamite.

We never hear her name, just where she's from – Shulem.

Because of the obvious erotic nature of so much of the Book, throughout history, commentators have tended to spiritualize the text instead of dealing with it in a straight-forward manner.

There certain is a spiritual parallel to the book but like 2 railroad tracks, you can't look at only 1 rail.

The primary meaning of the text is the relationship between a husband & wife.

The description of their intimacy is poetic, as befits real lovers. But it ought to be understood mainly as descriptive of their physical union.

Considering how pre-occupied with sex our culture is, the Song provides the people of God a wonderful view of how **God** sees the physical relationship of a husband & wife.

And AGAIN – I want to emphasize that what we're looking at here is for **married** couples.

Singles can certainly LEARN what God says about these things from The Song, but it's not to be **put into practice** UNTIL marriage!

Then → It **IS** to be practiced; because practice makes perfect.

The Song is a **difficult** book to interpret for 3 reasons.

1) It uses several ancient & **obscure words** the translators aren't sure of.

We'll see a big example of that tonight.

2) The Song **isn't chronological**; it doesn't tell a straight narrative.

It bounces back & forth between different parts of the romance between Solomon & his bride.

3) It records the speech of **3 speakers**, who aren't identified by labels or markers.

We have to determine who's speaking by the **pronouns** they use.

Whether it's Solomon, the Shulamite, or a chorus of women who are the Shulamite's friends.

The **back story** is this ...

Before Solomon became king, when he was still a prince & being groomed for the throne, he dressed in the garments of a shepherd and went out to see what life was like for the common people of the kingdom.

In the region of Shulem he owned a vineyard he'd leased out to tenant farmers and decided to go check on how they were taking care of his property.

Tending the vineyard was a lovely young woman he struck up a conversation with.

Since he spent a couple days there, they spent enough time chatting that they fell in love.

He told her that he wanted to marry her & that though he had to return his flock to his home, he would come again to get her.

He left, without every telling her who he was.

She then spent the next days & weeks longing for & dreaming of him.

When he returned, it was at t head of a royal procession – she was surprised as her family & the rest of village that her shepherd-boy was in fact Prince Solomon.

Of course here family consented to the marriage and he whisked her off to the palace, their wedding & honeymoon.

After that, they settled into daily life, & she realizes as a member of the royal court, her husband had a lot of responsibility & she wasn't able to be with him as much as she wanted.

This upsets her.

She's away from **her** family & friends, & knows no one but Solomon.

Time drags as she waits for him to come home at night so they can be together.

Ch. 5 where we ended last time tells of their first "fight."

He came home late one night & she was upset, feeling neglected & decided to teach him a lesson.

Though he knocked at their locked door, she came up w/the lamest excuse that she didn't want to put her slippers on.

So, Solomon left.

He didn't yell at her to get up. He didn't break down the door.

He left; because he knew a husband never wins a fight w/his wife.

When she realized he'd left, she got up, rushed to the door & panicked!

"Where is he? What have I done? Oh no!"

Then she went running around trying to find him; to no avail.

Her friends ask her what happened and why they had a fight.

Instead of telling them what happened & her lame excuse for failing to let him in, she talked about what a hunk & stud he is.

V. 1 of Ch. 6 is her friends' reply.

Chapter 6

¹ Where has your beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your beloved turned aside, That we may seek him with you?

They say, "We'll help you look for him."

It's so important to have friends who will be a **blessing** to your marriage, not add distress or trouble to it.

Men – Do the guys you hang out with love their wives, or do they make fun of them?

Do they flirt with other women, go to strip clubs, look at other women?

Do they treat marriage as if it was a joke?

Or do they honor marriage, & love their wives & treat them w/respect?

Ladies – Do the women you hang out w/love their husbands & honor them verbally?

Are they man-eaters? Men-hating feminists who think all the problems in the world are a man's fault?

Or do they love their husbands & honor marriage as a sacred covenant God blesses?

You want to be careful about who you allow to influence your heart & mind regarding your marriage.

For your friends, you want people who are walking with God and have a tested & approved life that demonstrates His grace & truth.

And this goes for your **electro-friends** as well; the people you hang out with at night in the TV.

Yeah – they're people that over a month you spend many hours with.

Realize that what they say has a powerful influence on shaping your ideas & the way you see things.

When someone says something contrary to God's will, don't just sit there passively accepting it; mark it as wrong, speak it out loud. Say, "Nope!"

They're bold enough to put it on the air for millions to hear.

That's YOUR HOME – so take a stand & resist it. Don't allow error to go unchallenged, unanswered.
Plus – you're training your children to be discerning & to not be passive in regard to evil.

The Shulamite's friends ask, "Any idea where he went?"

² My beloved has gone to his garden, To the beds of spices, To feed his flock in the gardens, And to gather lilies. ³ I am my beloved's, And my beloved is mine. He feeds his flock among the lilies.

Word has reached her he's in the garden.

This was his place to go when he wanted to think & pray.

An enclosed garden was something every oriental palace had.

Since they didn't have air conditioning & being indoors was both stuffy & dark, they spent a lot of time during the day outside.

A garden was a shady, cool fragrant place to hang out.

That's where Solomon had gone when she shut him out.

She goes to him with her apology; telling him as before when all was good that she belongs to him and he to her.

Note that she goes to him with an apology. She was in the wrong & acknowledged it.

Her seeking him out was the demonstration of her **repentance**.

Remember, this all started when **she shunned him**.

Instead of being a jerk about it, he backed up & held off, leaving it to her to tell him when she wanted to be close again.

So, he was working late and got home late. That bugged her, so she punished him.

He left & stayed away till she went to find him & apologize.

What will **HE** do now; will he punish her? That's what a lot of guys would do, right?

He says,

⁴ O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah,

The old Canaanite capital – a gorgeous & regal city.

Lovely as Jerusalem, Awesome as an army with banners!

When he looks at her, he's in awe & actually feels **weak**.

⁵ Turn your eyes away from me, For they have overcome me.

He melts when she looks him in the eyes.

Now he describes her beauty using the same terms we saw last time.

And though it's repetitious, it makes an important point: These words of praise of her beauty tell her that just because they've been married for a while now and there's been this tension between them, he still feels the same way about her.

She's still gorgeous to him!

Your hair is like a flock of goats Going down from Gilead.

It's long, shiny, healthy, gorgeous!

⁶ Your teeth are like a flock of sheep Which have come up from the washing; Every one bears twins, And none is barren among them.

You have all your teeth & they're even & white! She has a dazzling smile.

⁷ Like a piece of pomegranate Are your temples behind your veil.

You're complexion is rosy & healthy.

⁸ There are 60 queens And 80 concubines, And virgins without number. ⁹ My dove, my perfect one, Is the only one, The only one of her mother, The favorite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her And called her blessed, The queens and the concubines, And they praised her.

Let's assume Solomon is the king at this point.

He's saying that there were a LOT of women he *could* have chosen; they were standing in line to marry him.

There were *queens* of other lands who'd bring big, fat dowries & expand Solomon's power significantly.

There were *concubines* = *courtesans* who'd made a *profession* out of sex.

Then there was a long line of younger & probably prettier women who dreamed of being Solomon's wife.

He was the richest, smartest & most powerful man alive.

You tell me, were there a lot of women lining up for a shot at him? Of course.

So Solomon says, "*Babe*, I know who I am & all my options. But I chose *YOU!*"

It might be good for you also to remember who I am.

Not a good idea to lock me out, *Sweetie.*"

"I want to be with YOU. Don't reject me."

¹⁰ Who is she who looks forth as the morning, Fair as the moon, Clear as the sun, Awesome as *an army with banners?*

These are amazing words from a man who's just been wrongly rebuffed by his wife.

He doesn't punish her. He returns to & renews the praise of her beauty.

But he does issue her a much needed caution.

Solomon's reaction here is a great lesson to married couples about *how to fight*.

Listen, both bear a little of the wrong & fault in this.

He came home way later than she was expecting.

He could have sent her a message & told her he'd be late.

When he did get home, expecting her to open & what would happen when she did, she refused to let him in, frustrating him.

He asked her, she lamely begged off.

He jiggled the handle to see if that would move her. It didn't. / So he left.

She awoke later & realized her error & went in search of him.

When she finally finds him, she apologizes.

He's already forgiven her, so her apology effects immediate reconciliation.

But - & here's the important part; Solomon sees in all that's happened an opportunity for them to grow by this.

While walking in his garden, he's put the time to good use & decided there's some relational work to be done between them.

She needs to remember he's a king w/a lot of responsibility & sometimes that means he'll work late.

If a messenger doesn't bring her news of when he'll be home, it's not because he's uncaring; he'd love nothing more than to be home with her.

No message means he's swamped w/pressing matters - Pray for him!

She needs to know that as a wealthy, rich & powerful man, he had options.

But he'd exercised that option *once & for all* in choosing *her*.

That choice forfeited all others - gladly!

Couples – you’re going to fight. There are going to be rough spots. / Have a plan!

Install forgiveness **ahead of time** so that **reconciliation** can occur more quickly.

Then, take the time to talk thru what the difficulty has revealed in a profitable way.

That review doesn’t have to be a “piling on” – an opp for one of you to tighten the screws of guilt.

Talk thru what happened and how to grow from. / Turn it into something good.

With v. 11 we have a major scene change. This is a whole different phase of their marriage now.

And it’s super-charged w/intimacy./ She says ...

¹¹ I went down to the garden of nuts to see the verdure [lushness, luxuriance] of the valley, To see whether the vine had budded And the pomegranates had bloomed.

It’s Springtime. Things are growing, budding, blossoming.

Life is springing up everywhere. / There’s the fragrance of flowers in the air.

Pomegranates were thought to be a mild aphrodisiac.

This is a poetic way to say she was having stirrings of sexual desire.

¹² Before I was even aware, My soul had made me As the chariots of my noble people.

The desire grew to the point where like a chariot going all out, she decided to act on it.

But there was a problem; she was supposed to spend the day with her friends.

When she tells them she’s gotta’ go, they say -

¹³ Return, return, O Shulamite; Return, return, that we may look upon you!

“Hey, stay with us. **WE** want to see you; hang out with you.”

Now, she **wants** to be seen – but not by **them**. She wants to be **fully seen by her husband**.

That’s her idea; the plan – what she was thinking about & why she had to go home & be with him.

So he says to her friends as he shuts the door -

What would you see in the Shulamite— As it were, the dance of the two camps?

In some Bible’s that’s translated “the dance of Mahanaim;” they leave the Hebrew word **untranslated** because they can’t see what ‘2 camps’ has to do with a dance.

They think it was the **name** of a dance in that day, like the Twist, Mambo, or Salsa.

That’s what it is – but it’s a little more because it’s a dance she’s going to **just for him**.

This isn’t done on a ballroom dance floor. / This isn’t “Dancing with the Stars.”

It’s a private performance for her husband. / We know that because of what he says next.

For the 3rd time, he’s going to describe her – & he’s seeing **everything**.

Her dance was a generous unveiling to & for him; that’s what she’d been thinking about & went home to make it happen.

Before we read his description of the beauty she shows him, I need to say this because it underlies this entire section.

It’s the point this passage is meant to communicate to married couples; **Men are visual**.

That’s no major revelation & I’m confident there isn’t a woman here who doesn’t already know that quite well.

What often **isn’t** understood is that God made **men visual** and made the **woman beautiful** so that a husband & wife would be attracted to one another.

That’s the idea in this passage; He likes to look – she likes to show.

Think of a little girl; one of her favorite things is to dress up, then do spins before her daddy.

What does she long to hear him say? "You're beautiful!"

Deep in the heart of a woman is the desire to be lovely, beautiful, enchanting – captivating. Men are visual, & they love looking at the beauty of the feminine form.

In studies it's been discovered that while all men are highly visually oriented, only about 25% of women are.

So, if you're a married woman & **not** visually oriented it may be a little difficult for you to understand your husband when it comes to this aspect of his being a man.

I want to help you here.

While men are visually oriented, it varies in degree from high to low.

The **only** men who aren't visually oriented are **dead** men, okay?

To one degree or another this is true of all men –

They **notice** a beautiful woman.

That doesn't mean he **prefers** her to his wife.

He just sees them & says inwardly, "She's pretty."

In a restaurant; "Table, fork, fajitas, pretty woman."

Men take mental pictures which get filed away in their memory.

And this memory goes all the way back to when they were in Jr. High.

Without any warning, one of those mental pictures can come flying back to his memory.

The world **barrages** men w/images of beautiful women.

Here's why – marketers have discovered if they can get a guy's desire stirred, their chances of selling him something go up.

So, show him a beautiful woman, desire rises, then switch her out for a can of beer.

He can't have her, he knows that, so, the beer is a **replacement** – consolation prize.

The point is, guys don't have to work hard to collect visual images.

They go to the store & pass by a rack of **magazines** & a life-size cardboard **cutout** of a model in a bikini.

Driving home there are **billboards**.

Walking the street is an immodestly dressed woman.

Watching football on TV – cheerleaders. UFC, the ring girl.

It's a constant bombardment of images aimed at encouraging lust.

So, what's a guy to do? Should we retreat to the desert & live in caves?

No. The answer is to realize there's a difference between temptation & sin.

Temptation isn't sin – it's an opportunity to sin.

Temptation turns to sin when you **pursue** it.

Ladies - Men who love God & their wife are in a fight every moment of every day.

Don't be angry with your husband because he's visual.

Don't be angry because he's **tempted** to look.

Many women are **disgusted** not that their husband **sinned**, but that he is even **tempted**.

"Why does he have to be like that?"

As though he could change. As though by flipping a switch or just making a decision he could turn it off.

But ladies think about it – if your husband wasn't visually oriented, think about what an incredible power & bonding mechanism **you** just gave up with him.

Because men ARE visual & the woman IS beautiful – **God's plan** is for the husband & wife to share with each other **generously** in this area.

And as they do, it strengthens them **both** to resist temptation; him visually & her emotionally.

Here in The Song, she's visually generous & he's verbally generous.

Listen – she gives him what he wants & needs & he gives here what she wants & needs.

They're going into this thin as servants; each seeking to **bless** the other.

So, again - she's **visually** generous & he's **verbally** generous.

Chapter 7

¹ How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! [Princess!] The curves of your thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a skillful workman.

You're a work of art!

² Your navel is a rounded goblet; It lacks no blended beverage.

He's not taking body shots; he means she's intoxicating just to look at.

Your waist is a heap of wheat Set about with lilies. ³ Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle.

He said that on their wedding night.

⁴ Your neck is like an ivory tower, Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon Which looks toward Damascus.

He's not saying she has a massive honking schnoz that's bent east.

He means her features are perfectly proportioned.

⁵ Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, And the hair of your head is like purple; A king is held captive by your tresses. ⁶ How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!

He's described her from foot to head; suggesting that's how she'd revealed herself to him.

Now he goes back to some of his favorite parts.

⁷ This stature of yours is like a palm tree, And your breasts like its clusters. ⁸ I said, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches." Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, The fragrance of your breath like apples, ⁹ And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

Looking has led to touching, embracing, fondling, kissing & the passionate embrace of love.

V. 9 isn't **French** kissing – this is long before France. This is **Bible kissing**.

She echoes his description of their passionate kissing ...

The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, Moving gently the lips of sleepers.

A better translation is, “slipping over lips & teeth.” / Then she says ...

¹⁰ **I am my beloved's, And his desire is toward me.**

She's been visually generous & he's been verbally generous & told her how utterly captivated by her he is.

The result is that she's **emotionally** nurtured just as he's been **visually** nurtured.

The word “desire” here is used only 3 times in the Bible & it speaks of the most intense kind of longing.

Quick review; here's what happened.

She's out with her friends when something happens to set her thinking about her husband.

This is probably the middle of the day.

She starts thinking about how fun it would be to dress up, then take it off for him.

So she tells her friends she's gotta' go & takes off against their protest.

She goes home & says she has a surprise for him & gives him that little twinkle that means something special.

He closes the door & she does her enticing dance.

He gives her lots of verbal affirmation & appreciation.

They're both so turned on they advance & consummate their intimacy with passionate embracing.

No doubt there will be someone who will critique this & say it's a gross **objectifying** of women.

That I'm encouraging a wife to make herself just something for her lecherous husband to **leer** at.

NO! I'm not objectifying women in the least.

That's what pornography does. It turns women into mere images to be used to satisfy a man's lust.

A man can't lust for his wife, not can a woman lust after her husband.

Because as The Song says at several points, “I am my beloved's & he is mine.”

As Paul says in 1 Cor. 7, our body belongs to our mate – to give **them** sexual satisfaction.

¹ ... **It is good for a man not to touch [romantically] a woman. [outside marriage]** ² **Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.** ³ **Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.** ⁴ **The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.** ⁵ **Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**

The Bible is saying that **precisely because** we have a sex-drive & live in a fallen world that will work overtime on that drive to bend it to sin, couples need to render affection to one another that will give a proper outlet to those desires.

The wife's body is a gift TO HER HUSBAND. His body is a GIFT TO HER.

You **can't** objectify your mate because sexual pleasure is part of the marriage covenant.

Now we have another scene change.

Her experiment with the Dance of the 2 Camps paid off pretty well so she becomes even **more** adventuresome.

¹¹ Come, my beloved, Let us go forth to the field; Let us lodge in the villages. ¹² Let us get up early to the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, *Whether* the grape blossoms are open, *And* the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. ¹³ The mandrakes give off a fragrance, And at our gates are pleasant fruits, All manner, new and old, Which I have laid up for you, my beloved.

She plans a little vacation for them – a romantic get-away.

She's packed **mandrakes**, which were thought to be a powerful aphrodisiac.

She's put together some special perfumes & scouted out a private place where they can be all alone.

Today this would be making reservations at a bed & breakfast in Los Olivos or Napa Valley, then packing your bag w/some lingerie, a boa & some fufu juice.

Then telling your husband you've made all the arrangements, let's go.

Can't afford this? Newly married, out of work, super tight budget?

Okay, stay home, but make it special.

Got kids? Know another couple with kids? Make arrangements to watch each other's so you can have a night to yourselves.

Chapter 8

In this chapter, there's a lot of bouncing around as the Shulamite recalls different moments from her past. The first one in vs. 1&2 reflects her yearning for him when they were first engaged & she thought he was just a shepherd.

She couldn't wait for their wedding & honeymoon -

¹ Oh, that you were like my brother, Who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised.

No, she didn't come from the back hills of Alabama.

We're clued in to her meaning in the 1st part of v. 1 - ***I would not be despised.***

PDA between men & women, even husband's & wives was heavily frowned on – just wasn't done.

The only place it was allowed was among little kids, brothers & sisters who held hands & kissed all the time.

The Shulamite says she's so in love w/him & so affectionate she wishes she could kiss & hold him in public.

² I would lead you *and* bring you Into the house of my mother, She *who* used to instruct me. I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, Of the juice of my pomegranate.

She didn't realize he was Solomon & when they wed she'd leave her home & village to travel to the palace at Jerusalem.

Being a wandering shepherd she assumed when they wed, he'd move to her village.

So, she can't wait till she can bring him home to her room & teach him the ways of love.

Her mother had taught her in preparation for the day when she'd be married.

This brings us back to something I mentioned in the introduction to the first study.

Because of the constant barrage of sexual message our culture faces, parents need to have "The Talk" with their children at an early age.

Don't assume that because your child hasn't asked or shows little interest that they aren't interested or haven't already been exposed to something.

They may seem uninterested because it's such an embarrassing subject for them and their seeming disinterest is nothing but camouflage.

Also, with the internet & smartphones that can take & send pics, kids are being exposed at younger & younger ages to sexually explicit material.

The average age to be exposed to pornography is 11, but some experts say that as kids have gotten savvier on with computers, that number is dropping to 9!

Who do you want your child to learn about sex from?

Their first foray into that realm will have a powerful impact on setting their moral compass.

So it ought to be from a prayed up & prepared Christian Mom & Dad.

Now she thinks of her wedding night & repeats the scene she'd described earlier ...

³ His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me.

They're laying side by side.

⁴ I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, Do not stir up nor awaken love Until it pleases.

For the final time, she tells her friends not to invest in romantic desires or thoughts until there's a real & wise prospect of their fulfillment.

Our culture stokes the romantic urge thru music, books, movies, ads, & general social pressure.

The result is that people ignore the warning signs in a relationship & get married to human disasters!

There's an epidemic today of "adult-boys;" not MEN, *boys*.

They still live at home with their mamas.

They're perpetual students; 35 years old & still working on their BA.

They're great aspiration in life is to be a Level 80 in *World of Warcraft*.

What they'd like is to find a woman w/a good job & her own apartment so they could move in with her & finish their degree, then go for a Masters & after that a PhD.

Really, they're looking for a younger version of their mother.

Sadly, there aren't a few women who are willing to step in & play that role.

What that guy needs to do is get a job, move out of mama's house, get himself a place of his own, & *prove* he can take care of a wife & their children.

Ladies - don't sell yourself short. Don't settle!

I hear this lament - "Where ARE the good guys like that?"

"I feel like I have to settle because that's all I see."

Honestly - I say this with all tenderness & sincerity, better to stay single than settle & marry a disaster.

Now she reminisces about their *courtship* ...

⁵ Who is this coming up from the wilderness, Leaning upon her beloved?

When others had seen them talking they asked, "Who's that shepherd with the Shulamite? Oh → look at the way they're talking! They're in love."

She's reminisced, so he adds -

I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; There she *who* bore you brought you forth.

He probably hadn't *literally* awakened her from sleep but it was at the apple tree love had awoken & been born.

The apple tree near her house where she was born was their meeting place.

They'd talk, sharing their thoughts, dreams, plans.

And as they talked they fell in love.

She says ...

⁶ Set me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm;

A seal marked **ownership**. She's saying she needs to know his **heart** belongs **solely** to her.
And as a woman she needs **security**, so she asks that his arm is devote to **protect** her.
He must fight **for** her, not **with** her. / Guys, don't be harsh with your wife.
Don't ever be violent w/her, physically **or** verbally.

6b - For love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame. ⁷ Many waters cannot quench love, Nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love All the wealth of his house, It would be utterly despised.

She's expressing her hope their love will **never** fail, that like death, it's irrevocable.
Because if love should wane & his affection would turn to another, it would kill her.

Now the scene shifts to the Shulamite's brothers ...

⁸ We have a little sister, And she has no breasts.

She's a little girl at this point but they're looking ahead to the role they will have to play as her brothers.

What shall we do for our sister In the day when she is spoken for?

When she becomes a woman and is old enough to be married.

⁹ If she is a wall, We will build upon her A battlement of silver; And if she is a door, We will enclose her With boards of cedar.

They say, if our sister chooses to be a wall; chaste & pure, guarding her heart until she picks the man she wants to marry, then we will reinforce her in that & chase off any guys who bug her.
If however, she chooses to be like a door, swinging any old way, allowing anyone who wants in to have at her, we'll lock her up for her own good.

She tells us **her** choice -

¹⁰ I am a wall, And my breasts like towers;

When she matured, she chose to guard her heart, keeping herself for the one to whom she would be married.

She wasn't a boy-crazy teenager flirting with all the guys to see if she could drive them all crazy.
It was BECAUSE she chose the noble path that Solomon was attracted to her. →

Then I became in his eyes as one who found peace.

We finish ...

¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; He leased the vineyard to keepers; Everyone was to bring for its fruit A thousand silver coins. ¹² My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, And those who tend its fruit two hundred.

Solomon had a vineyard w/a thousand vines at Baal Hamon near Shulem where she lived.

He leased it out to 5 tenants each w/200 vines; her family was one of them and she was the primary keeper.

That's why she complained earlier about being dark-skinned; she was tanned from being out in the sun a lot tending the vines.

It was then that she met her shepherd boy who turned out to be Prince Solomon, then King of Israel and now her husband – making her a queen.

He says to her as she's walking with her friends in the palace gardens ...

13 You who dwell in the gardens, The companions listen for your voice— Let me hear it!

So she calls out . . .

14 Make haste, my beloved, And be like a gazelle Or a young stag On the mountains of spices.

“Come to me, you stud!”

There are some great lessons for married couples in The Song.
But as we read it & see the intense emotions both the Shulamite & Solomon express toward each other, we can get bummed; because we know what happened, eventually.

Solomon wrote The Song when he was a young man & new to the throne.

The Book of Proverbs was something he wrote over the 4 decades of his reign.

Ecclesiastes was written last, when he was an old man nearing the end of his days.

He looks back over his life, realizing what a *mess* he'd made of it.

A good part of that was how far he drifted from the purity & passion expressed here in the Song.

In 1 Kings 11:1-10 we read Solomon ended up with 700 wives & 300 concubine-girlfriends.

What happened to Solomon that he could go from the place we saw at the outset tonight, from saying he knew his options but had narrowed them all down to one – passionate, exclusive devotion to the Shulamite → to a thousand women?

Listen – the Song makes it real clear → There wasn't a problem with her!

She was a babe & not shy about their physical relationship.

He couldn't complain about their sex life – that's for sure.

Solomon's problem was that he thought God's Word didn't apply to him.

He assumed he was exempt because he was David's son & special.

I mean, after all; God appeared to him – twice!

So when the Law of Moses said the king wasn't to amass gold, horses & wives, he said –

“Well obviously it didn't have ME in mind when that was written!” / So he did all 3.

In the ancient oriental world, a big harem was a sign of power & glory, as was having massive wealth & military might.

That's why he also accumulated women, gold & horses.

Solomon allowed the world's concept of success to edit the Word of God.

Once he had all those wives, he had to keep them happy.

Most of them were the daughters of foreign kings who brought their idols with them.

So after building the temple to God, Solomon set up altars all around it for the worship of idols.

And Israel began the long slow march toward ruin.

Solomon's problem is that he chose to disregard God's Word.

This is the way so many people live today.

They know what Scripture says but think they've got a pass, or that they can edit it to suit their desires & there'll be no consequences. / But there always are.

What we find here is the way it ought to have been & it could have stayed that way if Solomon had stayed true to the Lord.

Finally, for generations Bible students have seen in The Song a marvelous parallel to Christ & the Church.

In fact, because they were embarrassed by the erotic imagery in the book, they made its allegorical meaning its main meaning.

But if you do that, then you have to make every little aspect of the book symbolic of something between Christ & the church.

Then who does the chorus of her friends represent?

It just gets way too messy & weird.

No – The Song is a sensual love poem between a husband & wife.

But, in its broad stroke it does present an interesting portrait of Christ & the church.

The Shulamite represents the Church & Solomon stands in for Christ.

Like the Shulamite who begins the story as a beauty whose beauty is marred by being tanned.

She's the youngest of her family and made by her brothers to work the vineyard.

Then along comes Solomon, the prince – destined for the throne one day, but he comes incognito, as a what? Shepherd.

Though she sees herself as deficient because of her dark-skin, he sees her beauty & potential.

He woos her, and she falls in love with him.

They become betrothed. Then he leaves saying when he comes again it will be to take her to the wedding.

He departs and she pines for him.

When he returns, it's with his royal retinue, dressed in royal garments.

He sweeps her off her feet, carries her back to Jerusalem & the palace where they are wed the celebration commences.

The first time He came incognito; the Messiah-Prince, the One destined for the throne of the universe.

He came as a lowly shepherd.

He came to Israel his vineyard to see if it would bear fruit.

What he found was a bride. **We** are that dark-skinned beauty Jesus woos.

And now He's gone to prepare our new home.

When he comes again, it's in all the glory of the King of kings.

What we can take from the Song to enhance our relationship with Jesus is how free these 2 are in expressing their love & longing for one another.

She's very open & **creative** in the way she expresses her love to him.

We can be that way too in our love, service & worship of Jesus.

3 times he tells her how **beautiful** she is; she tells him once; there's only 1 time that she expresses her love that way – by describing his appearance.

The point is this – While we don't see Jesus, He does see us – and He loves us.

As we walk in the Spirit and yield to Him, He likes what he sees.