

Song of Solomon 1 - Physical Pleasure in Marriage; Accept the Realities of Marriage; The Power of Praising Your Spouse

I. Introduction (Song 1:1)

(1) Title: superlative (1:1a)

(2) Author: Solomon (1:1b)

II. Courtship (Song 1:2—3:5)

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(2) Expression of love between the King and his bride (Song 1:9—2:7)

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Song of Solomon 1

I. Introduction (Song 1:1)

(1) Title: superlative (1:1a)

(2) Author: Solomon (1:1b)

1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

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1 The Most Beautiful Song by Solomon.

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- "The" - the Hebrew construction makes this a superlative, so it reads "THE" Song of Songs, meaning this is the one song that surpassed all of Solomon's other songs. It is the choicest of his songs.
- "...Song of Songs" - Solomon wrote 1005 songs (Cf. 1 Kings 4:32)
- 1 Kings 4:29-31 says that God blessed Solomon with wisdom that exceeded all of his contemporaries
- In this book (song), Solomon considers the issue of marriage and romance
- "...Solomon's" - if any other man composed this song, it would still be important for us to incline our ear and understand what is written here. It is even more so considering this was Solomon's choicest song, and Solomon was the wisest person who ever lived.
- On top of that, Solomon was inspired by the Holy Spirit while he wrote this song. So the wisest man who ever lived, inspired by the omniscient Holy Spirit, gives us one of the most beautiful books on love ever written.

II. Courtship (1:2—3:5)

(1) Bride expresses her adoration for her royal suitor (1:2-8)

(A) Bride exalts in her courting King (1:2-4a)

Desire the Physical Pleasures of Marriage

2 "May he **kiss** me with the kisses of his mouth! **For your love is sweeter than wine.**

2 "May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.

2 Let him kiss me over and over again! Your love is better than wine.

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.

- Marriage is the context in which physical passion and pleasure is set free

- "...kiss" - the universal expression of desire and affection

— The woman here (called a Shulammitte in 6:13) expresses her desire for her lover (husband) to kiss her, deeply and repeatedly

- "...For your love is sweeter than wine" - as her senses of touch and taste come together, the resulting passion is more than she can handle. She is telling her lover/husband that she finds his kiss sweet, powerful and intoxicating. He is sweeping her off her feet.

— Passionate kissing (1 minute or longer) is a telltale sign of a healthy romantic relationship, even more than sex. It is often the first thing to go when spouses are not getting along.

— "love" - *dodim*, erotic or sexual love (equivalent to the Greek *eros*)

- Sexual love is initiated by the man. It is the husband's leadership.

— Christ initiates His love toward us (Rom 5:8); our capacity to love is based on His love for us (1 John 4:19)

3 "Your oils have **a pleasing fragrance, Your name is *like* purified oil; Therefore the young women love you.**

3 "Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, Your name is *like* purified oil; Therefore the maidens love you.

3 The fragrance of your perfumed oil is wonderful. Your name is perfume poured out. Therefore the young women love you.

3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

- "Love" - occurs repeatedly in v2-7. A careful examination reveals love's connection to the mind, will, and emotions. Not only does love connect our intellects and desires, it also keeps them in proper balance.

— Love is supposed to be a delightful experience that expresses itself in many ways. It has a physical dimension, but it has others as well.

- "...a pleasing fragrance" - the thought of physical caresses calls to mind the intoxication of wine (v2), but also the sweet smell of his cologne. He tastes good and he smells good. Essentially, he brushed his teeth and used mouth wash; he showered, with soap, shaved, and applied some cologne.

— In Song of Solomon, we often see the senses of taste, touch and smell come together in the pursuit of romance and love

— Here, the man is sensitive to the things that she finds attractive, and she is appreciative and responds in kind

- "...Your name is *like* purified oil" - his reputation is unquestioned; his "name" refers to his reputation and character

— She is turned on by who he is, his integrity, his character, and his work ethic

— A person is more than just their physical appearance. When dating, we form an opinion of our mate, but we also listen to what other people say about them. Love can be blind, so we're wise to listen to what others have to say about a prospective mate.

— At this point, after marriage, all the good things she knows about him and heard about him from others, turns her on. She was not only physically attracted to him, she could also respect and admire him for who he is.

- "...the young women love you" - her man was a catch! The woman does not wonder why everyone loves her husband, but takes pride in it.

— The esteem for her husband coming from other women enhances her love and admiration for him (Cf. v4c)

(B) Daughters of Jerusalem extol her love (1:4b)

4 "**Draw me after you and let's run together! The king has brought me into his chambers.**" "We will rejoice in you and be joyful; We will praise your **love** more than wine. Rightly do they **love** you."

4 "Draw me after you *and* let us run *together!* The king has brought me into his chambers."
"We will rejoice in you and be glad; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you."

4 Take me with you! Let's run away! Let the king bring me into his private chambers. The daughters of Jerusalem will rejoice and be happy for you. We will value your love more than wine. They love you appropriately.

4 Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

- "Draw me after you *and* let's run *together!*" - while potential rivals are lurking, this woman is so secure in her relationship with her man that she can allow and rejoice in the admiration showered on him by others

— She knows when she can ask him to "take me with you" and he will. He is her king and she is his queen.

— On one level she can share him publicly, but on another level she possesses him as her own and there are private things that only the two of them share

— Intimacy requires commitment as its prelude. Sexual love (*dodim* or *eros*) is only to be practiced within the concept of *ahav* or *agape*, commitment love. Otherwise, it is merely lust.

- "...The king has brought me into his chambers" - he brings her, and only her, into his private chambers

- "...love" (1st mention) - *dodim*, equivalent to the Greek *eros* (erotic or sexual love)

- "...love" (2nd mention) - *'ahav*, equivalent to the Greek *agapē* (sacrificial love; the highest form of love)

Three Words for Love

(1) *dodim* (6x in the Song), refers to sexual love; equivalent to the Greek *eros* (Song 1:2; 1:4; 4:10 (2x); 5:1; 7:13; Cf. Prov 7:18; Ezek 16:8; 23:17)

— The root word means to carouse, swing, rock, fondle, love, and to move by thrusts and pushes. From both the usage and the root, sexual love is clearly in view.

(2) *'ahav*, equivalent to the Greek *agapē*, a commitment of the will

(3) *ra'eya*, equivalent to the Greek *phileo*, a love of the emotions in response to attraction, friendship, etc.

— The root means to guard, to care for, to tend, to delight in someone particularly, to take pleasure in

(C) Bride bemoans her darkened appearance (1:5-6)

5 "I am **black** and beautiful, You daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.

5 "I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.

5 The daughters of Jerusalem, I'm dark and lovely like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.

5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

- Marriage has its romance and rewards, but it also has its rough spots

— Hopefully marriage as some marvelous time in the bedroom and other locations, couples spend the vast majority of their time outside of these events, and need to face the realities that come their way as they build their marriage

- The woman knew she possessed natural beauty; she was pretty and attractive. She understood that men are creatures of sight and are moved by what they see. She was confident her husband would like what he saw when he looked at her.

- "...black" - but women are creatures of change; sometimes they are defensive or less comfortable with their appearance

— In this case, it appears that the woman's skin was sun tanned due to her work out in the field, which wasn't good in Solomon's day. Women with fair skin were prized, more of an "inside look" was in (Cf. v6a).

6 "Do not stare at me because I am dark, For the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me caretaker of the vineyards, *But* I have not taken care of **my own vineyard**.

6 "Do not stare at me because I am swarthy, For the sun has burned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me caretaker of the vineyards, *But* I have not taken care of my own vineyard.

6 Don't stare at me because I'm dark; the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me. They made me the caretaker of the vineyards, but I didn't take care of my own vineyard.

6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

- She appears to be a working girl, who was looked upon negatively by the sun and her brothers (v6c), who forced her into labor in the vineyards

- "...my own vineyard" - her own feminine beauty and charms. She worked hard to tend the vineyards, but as a result failed to maintain her appearance. She was unable to give the time, effort and care she would have liked to her physical appearance that she would have liked.

— Her vineyard represents everything that conveys her essential femininity: her looks, her complexion, her dress, her status, her sexuality—all the things that would make her attractive to a man.

— She looked in the mirror and was struck by the fact that she had let herself go

— A woman's appearance is an important area in her life, which requires great sensitivity and understanding from a man.

(D) Bride desires to be near where her lover shepherds his flock (1:7)

7 "Tell me, you whom my soul loves, **Where do you pasture your flock, Where do you have it lie down at noon?** For why should I be like one who veils herself Beside the flocks of your companions?"

7 "Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture *your flock*, Where do you make *it* lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who veils herself Beside the flocks of your companions?"

7 Tell me, you whom I love, where do you graze your flock? Where do you make your flock lie down at noon? Why should I be considered a veiled woman beside the flocks of your companions?

7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

- Security is important in marriage. A man feels secure when a woman praises him; a woman feels secure when her man is present.

— A marriage will suffer if there are extended periods of unhealthy separation

- "...Where do you pasture *your flock*" - where can I find you at work?

— Solomon is gone, going about the normal duties of life. She misses him and longs for him.

— To speak so frankly exposes her heart, but it would also excite the heart of her lover

- "...Where do you have *it* lie down at noon?" - she knew that at noon, the sheep would be sleeping and the other shepherds would be resting, so she could get some alone time with him with no interruptions and no distractions. She wants time with him at any cost.

— She was creative in how she got time with him, obtained what she needed/wanted but still respected his schedule. Even as she is sorrowful about his absence, she strategizes how to make their time together valuable, intimate and memorable.

— You can't love someone that you are not with...

(E) Daughters of Jerusalem exhort the bride to go out shepherding so her lover will find her (1:8)

8 "If you yourself do not know, Most beautiful among women, **Go out** on the trail of the flock, And pasture your young goats By the tents of the shepherds.

8 "If you yourself do not know, Most beautiful among women, Go forth on the trail of the flock And pasture your young goats By the tents of the shepherds.

8 If you don't know, most beautiful of women, go out after the flock and graze your young goats beside the shepherd's tents.

8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

- Solomon now speaks, giving a playful rebuke to his wife...

— She is looking to "hook up" with her man. What does she need to do?

(1) Know where you can find them

- She is called the "most beautiful among women" yet she doesn't know where her man is
- If we really know our mate, we must know their needs, disposition, gifts, weaknesses, and inclinations. We must also know them and know where and how to find them when we want them.

(2) Go where you can find them

- Knowledge must be accompanied by action. The woman is told to follow the familiar trails that Solomon is known to walk; if she does that, she will find him

The Power of Praising Your Partner

There are five primary ways that we praise our partner:

(1) A meaningful touch - holding hands, kissing, all types of bodily contact that involve communicating love and affection

(2) A spoken word - words that communicate love and a sense of worth; repetition is crucial

(3) Expression of high value - affirming their intrinsic worth and value as a person; praising them as valuable

(4) Picturing a special future together - positive words of encouragement as to future possibilities

(5) An active commitment to see the blessing come to pass - to spend whatever time, resources, or energy are required to bless others

(2) Expression of love between the King and his bride (Song 1:9—2:7)

(A) King extols his bride's beauty (1:9-10)

9 "To me, **my darling**, you are like **My mare among the chariots of Pharaoh**.

9 "To me, my darling, you are like My mare among the chariots of Pharaoh.

9 My darling, I compare you to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots.

9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

- Be specific in praise of your mate; don't use general terms

— Solomon is aware of his spouse's insecurity regarding her appearance (v5-6); his spousal antenna is up and active, and it's picking up a signal that he needs to bless her, affirm her, to tell her she's the best. This is exactly what he does.

- "...my darling" - Solomon tells her she is special 9x (here; v15; 2:2,10,13; 4:1,7; 5:2; 6:4)

— Unlike her brothers who hurt her (v6), Solomon treats her with TLC

- "...My mare among the chariots of Pharaoh" - comparing your wife to a horse today would get you in hot water, but this was a supreme honor to her

— Pharaoh's chariots were pulled by stallions (males). A mare (female) among them would have caused quite a commotion. She is being likened to an only female in a world of males, indicating her incredible value. She is, in his estimation, priceless.

— She is desired not only by him, but also by others, yet he is the fortunate one who has captured her heart.

10 "Your cheeks are delightful with jewelry, Your neck with strings of beads."

10 "Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, Your neck with strings of beads."

10 Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels.

10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

- Solomon now focuses on one of the areas of her insecurity: her appearance

— Her adornments do not detract, but add to her beauty; there is nothing extravagant or excessive about her. She displays a simple beauty, and to Solomon, she has no equal and he tells her as such.

— Words we say to our spouse have a huge impact. Our words should be positive and uplifting, not negative and ridiculing.

— Being specific with praise will speak to your mate's heart and create an environment of romance, which is essential for building intimacy.

Below are 33 things we should say to our spouse regularly:

1. Good job
2. You are wonderful
3. That was really great
4. You look gorgeous today
5. I don't feel complete without you
6. I appreciate all the things you have done for me over the years
7. You come first in my life
8. I'm glad I married you
9. You're the best friend I have
10. If I had to do it all over again, I'd marry you again

11. I wanted you today
12. I missed you today
13. I couldn't get you out of my mind today
14. It's nice to wake up next to you
15. I will always love you
16. I love to see your eyes sparkle when you smile
17. As always, you look good today
18. I trust you
19. I can always count on you
20. You make me feel good
21. I'm so proud to be married to you
22. I'm sorry
23. I was wrong
24. What would you like?
25. What's on your mind?
26. Let me just listen
27. You are so special
28. I can't imagine life without you
29. What can I do to help?
30. I'm praying for you
31. I prize every moment we spend together
32. Thank you for accepting me
33. You make every day brighter

(B) Daughters of Jerusalem promise to enhance the bride's beauty by creating jewelry for her (1:11)

11 "We will make for you jewelry of gold With beads of silver."

11 "We will make for you ornaments of gold With beads of silver."

11 We will make ornaments of gold for you, accented with silver.

11 We will make thee borders (braids) of gold with studs of silver.

- Solomon's praise of his wife inspired the praise of others

— What we publicly say about our spouse will influence what others think about them

- Solomon is presenting her with jewelry of gold, accented with silver

— Solomon is caring for his wife; he did not "get" a good wife, he "gained" a good wife by the way he cares for her

— Women love specific and creative ideas. A man who asks his wife on a date, then tells her it doesn't matter where they go, doesn't understand women. Love is specific; praise is specific.

- The gifts Solomon gives to her are genuine and from the heart. He is not trying to buy her or bribe her. His desire is to bless her and do it in a way that speaks to her heart. Solomon is learning to speak her "love language."

(C) Bride expresses her love for Solomon (1:12-14)

12 "While **the king was at his table**, My **perfume** gave forth its fragrance.

12 "While the king was at his table, My perfume gave forth its fragrance.

12 While the king was sitting at his table, my perfume sent forth its fragrance.

12 While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

- The woman is moved to respond to the loving overtures of Solomon; her insecurities have vanished and her anxieties have been put to rest by his words and actions of love. She now returns the favor.

— What is going on here is that the two of them are trying to out-do the other in the game of love. What a wonderful and fun contest to be engaged in! Let the games begin!

- The woman has strong desires for her man; they are personal, physical and sensual. But how does she make her desires and feelings known? By love.

— She tells Solomon that he is worthy of an expensive display

— She addresses him as "king" or royalty; he is reclining on his couch or "at his table" enjoying some much needed rest and relaxation

— The woman knows what her man needs, and she provides it. Her perfume appealed to his sense of smell, and she, who is already aroused, seeks to elicit the same reaction from her man. He is a king worthy of a sensual and expensive display of affection.

13 "My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh Which lies all night between my breasts.

13 "My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh Which lies all night between my breasts.

13 My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh that lies between my breasts all night.

13 A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

- She tells him he a fragrance close to her heart, in genuinely erotic terms

— She compares him to a sweet-smelling bundle that lies in her cleavage, close to her heart. Her thoughts of him are as fragrant and refreshing as the perfume that rises before her

— This speaks to the intimate bond of love, longing and loyalty that cannot be broken.

There is a connection, a commitment that transcends words.

— The strongest deterrent to divorce is commitment. Every marriage will be tested at some point, but the difference between those that survive and those that don't is often commitment.

14 "My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms In the vineyards of **Engedi**."

14 "My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms In the vineyards of Engedi."

14 My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En-gedi.

14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of copher in the vineyards of En Gedi.

- She tells him that he is as refreshing as an oasis in the desert

- "My beloved" - they have an exclusive love relationship

- "...henna blossoms" - these semi-tropical bushes grow to 10ft tall in the En-Gedi desert west of the Dead Sea and south of Jerusalem. The flowers are beautiful to see and sweet to smell.

— These bushes are a rare find in the arid climate of Israel's desert. The analogy here is obvious: Solomon is like an oasis in the desert, with its surprising pleasures and provisions. He is a rare find and thus of infinite value.

— It's as if she is saying, All I have seen is a desert of men until I found you. No man refreshed me until I met you.

Summary

In the first 14 verses we have seen a couple who:

- Deeply and genuinely respect each other
- Are sensitive to the needs of the other
- Are determined to bless the other
- Are learning to speak each other's love language

Application: Note the importance of verbalizing your appreciation of your mate. This can be physical beauty, behavior, little things...whatever. Do you tell your wife—each day—that you love her and what she means to you? Also, note the importance of addressing the physical aspects. Cleanliness and adornments have a critical purpose here.

How to Fan the Flames of Love (1:15—2:7)

Praise Your Partner

Over and over again we see praising your partner as a constant theme in the Song of Solomon. Praise is an essential ingredient for a healthy marriage. We constantly see the man praising his woman and the woman praising her man. Communication that consists of gracious and kind words is the currency that buys and builds a lasting love relationship.

Below are 27 things you should not say to your spouse:

1. I told you so
2. You're just like your mother
3. You're always in a bad mood
4. You just don't think
5. It's your fault
6. What's wrong with you?

7. All you ever do is complain
8. I can't do anything to please you
9. You get what you deserve
10. Why don't you ever listen to me?
11. Can't you be more responsible?
12. What were you thinking?
13. You're impossible!
14. I don't know why I put up with you
15. I can talk to you until I'm blue in the face and it doesn't do any good
16. I can do whatever I want
17. If you don't like it, you can just leave
18. Can't you do anything right?
19. That was stupid
20. All you ever do is think of yourself
21. If you really loved me, you would do this
22. You're such a baby
23. Turnabout is fair play
24. You deserve a dose of your own medicine
25. What's your problem?
26. I can never understand you
27. Do you always have to be right?

Solomon and the woman knew the importance of words, and both were interested in fanning the flames of love. Now they continue their contest to see who can out-praise and out-compliment the other. What can we learn from the particulars of their praise of each other?

(D) King praises his bride on account of her beauty (1:15)

15 "How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! **Your eyes are like doves.**"

15 "How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! Your eyes are *like* doves."

15 Look at you! You are beautiful, my darling. Look at you! You are so beautiful. Your eyes are doves.

15 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.

- This is not the first time Solomon has complimented her appearance, which shows that once is never enough when it comes to your woman's appearance. No woman/wife will ever tire of hearing the words "I love you" or "you are beautiful."

- "...Your eyes are *like* doves" - when Solomon looked in her eyes, he saw gentleness and tranquility, purity and simplicity. Her eyes were an eloquent witness to the radiant woman

she was on the inside.

— She not only smiled with her face, but she also smiled with her eyes

— Solomon was captivated by her attractiveness, by her beauty on the outside as well as her beauty on the inside. Our eyes are windows into our soul.

(E) Bride praises her handsome King (1:16—2:1)

16 "How **handsome** you are, my beloved, **And so delightful!** Indeed, **our bed is luxuriant!**

16 "How handsome you are, my beloved, *And* so pleasant! Indeed, our couch is luxuriant!

16 Look at you! You are handsome, my beloved, truly lovely. How lush is our couch.

16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.

- The woman now returns the favor and offers compliments to her man...

- "...handsome" - same word as "beautiful" in v15 except in the masculine gender. The word occurs 14x in Song of Solomon, but this is the only time it's used in the masculine form

- "...*And so delightful!*" - there is an intensity to her words of praise. He is "delightful" meaning he calms her spirit, he puts her at rest, he sets her heart at peace

— The words of Solomon in v15 were thoughtful, they met her at her point of need and they spoke to her heart. However, the man behind the words is most important. A woman is impressed by a man who understands and respects her personal and emotional needs.

- "...our bed is luxuriant!" - their bed was "flush with foliage" meaning that their home, and especially their bedroom, was alive, fresh and fruitful. It was a place of activity and growth, an environment conducive for passionate lovemaking.

— Solomon is not an insensitive man, and the woman appreciates and acknowledges his thoughtfulness in a way that will make him think it was well worth the effort.

17 "The beams of **our** house are cedars, **Our** rafters, junipers.

17 "The beams of our houses are cedars, Our rafters, cypresses.

17 The beams of our house are cedar, our rafters are pine.

17 The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

- "...our" - used 3x in v16-17

— His thoughtfulness in preparing a home for them is a source of security; no wonder her eyes speak tranquility and peace