

The King's Love Song



SABBATH—MAY 4

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 2:7; Song of Solomon 1:2, 13; 1 Corinthians 7:3–5; Song of Solomon 4:8–5:1.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Hold me close to your heart where your royal seal [sign of the king's power] is worn. Keep me as close to yourself as the bracelet on your arm. My love for you is so strong it won't [will not] let you go. Love is as powerful as death. Love's jealousy is as strong as the grave. Love is like [the same as] a blazing [hot and bright] fire. Love burns like a mighty flame' ” (Song of Solomon 8:6, NlrV).

MARRIAGE is one of the biggest changes in life. It comes with its own problems and blessings. One blessing is the gift of sex. Sex is a wonderful way to show love. But sex must happen at the right place and time: in marriage. Many people today think the Bible is against sex. Not true! God is **not** against sex. He made sex. But God wants you to enjoy this gift only with the person you marry.

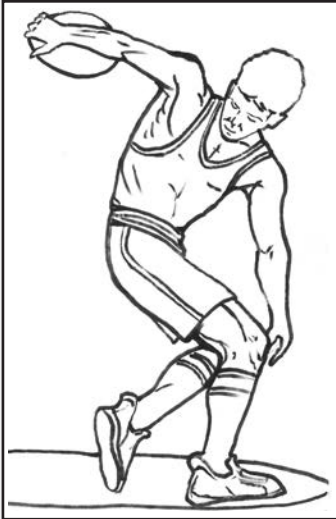
The Song of Solomon shows us that love and sex in marriage can be wonderful. Yes, the Song of Solomon is one of the smallest books of the Bible. But it tells us many important things about love. It is the story of a young bride. Many people believe her husband was King Solomon. Most people think that the Song of Solomon is a very long word picture. They believe the book is a symbol of God's love for His church. But we must remember that the Song of Solomon is a love poem first. It is about the very real love of a man and a woman. This week we will look at marriage in the Song of Solomon.



Sex must happen at the right place and right time: in marriage.

THE GIFTS OF LIFE AND SEX (Genesis 2:7)

What does the Bible teach us about the human body? Read Genesis 2:7; Psalm 63:1; Psalm 84:2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23 for the answer.



The Song of Solomon teaches us that the human body is very beautiful.

Some religions believe that the human body is evil. They say that only the “spirit” inside the body is good. But the Bible does not say that. The Bible teaches that every person has a body and a spirit (read Genesis 2:7). God made us this way. That is why the writer of Psalm 63:1 and Psalm 84:2 worships God with his body and spirit. He worships God with his whole self.

What does the Song of Solomon teach us about the human body and sex? To find the answers, read Song of Solomon 1:2, 13; Song of Solomon 2:6; Song of Solomon 5:10–16; and Song of Solomon 7:1–9. How do these verses show us that the Bible teaches that the human body and sex are gifts from God?

The Song of Solomon shows us that the human body is very beautiful. It also teaches that we should not feel ashamed or guilty about having sex with our husband or wife. Sex between two married people who love each other is not bad or “dirty.”

In some religions and countries, people are not allowed to talk about sex. So, it can be very hard for some married people to talk about sex at all. The Bible talks about sex. So, we should feel better about talking about sex with our husbands or wives too. The Bible teaches us to respect the gift of sex. It is one of our most precious gifts from God.

Some religions and people believe that sex is very dirty and wrong. Other religions and people believe that we should not talk about sex at all. How does the Bible show us that both of these ideas are wrong?

LOVE IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON

(Song of Solomon 1:2, 13)

The Song of Solomon shows us different pictures of love. What are they? For the answer, read Song of Solomon 1:2, 13; Song of Solomon 2:10–13, 16; Song of Solomon 3:11; Song of Solomon 4:1–7; Song of Solomon 5:16; Song of Solomon 6:6; Song of Solomon 7:1–9; and Song of Solomon 8:6, 7.

The Song of Solomon shows us that friends spend time together. Friends also communicate with each other. Friends care about each other too. In the Song of Solomon, two good friends get married to each other. The wife says her husband is “my friend” (Song of Solomon 5:16, NKJV). A person who marries his or her best friend is very happy.

In the Song of Solomon, the married couple show their love in many ways. They praise each other. They say many nice things about each other. The way they behave also shows that they love each other very much. God gave married couples the gift of sex to help them grow very close. But husbands and wives must let God’s love into their hearts first. God’s love will change their hearts. Then their human love will be made “very beautiful and holy.”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, page 99, adapted.

It is not natural for the human heart to love. We are sinners. Our hearts are selfish. True love is a gift from the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). This love joins a husband and wife together. Parents need to love their children with this same gift. This love is not selfish. It also joins believers together in the church. The Song of Solomon asks us to love our husbands and wives with this same love.

How does marriage show us that God wants to be close to us? What things must happen in a healthy marriage? What about spending time together? Or being unselfish? Why are these things important if we want to be close to God?



God’s love will change hearts. Then human love will be made very beautiful and holy.

KNOWLEDGE THAT COMES FROM LOVE (1 Corinthians 7:3–5)

What was God’s first plan in the Garden of Eden for a husband and wife? God wanted them to “become one flesh [heart, mind, spirit, and body]” (Genesis 2:24, 25, NLV). Some people think that the Song of Solomon shows God’s wish to bring couples back to His first plan for marriage in Eden. That may be true. The poem uses many beautiful word pictures and symbols. They show us God’s plan for a husband and wife to become “one flesh.”

What does the Song of Solomon show us about love between a husband and his wife? Read Song of Solomon 4:7–5:1. How does 1 Corinthians 7:3–5 help us understand these verses in Song of Solomon better?

Solomon says to his bride: “ ‘Come with me’ ” (Song of Solomon 4:8, KJV). His bride answers. Later, she invites him to “come into his garden” to meet her (Song of Solomon 4:16, KJV). Solomon answers (Song of Solomon 5:1). What do these verses teach us about love? They teach us that love does not force anyone to do anything. Both Solomon and his bride love each other. Solomon does not force his bride to love him. She does not force him to love her either.

The names “Solomon” and the “Shulamite” come from the Hebrew word “shalom.” “Shalom” means “peace” or something that is “whole.” Both Solomon and the Shulamite feel peace because they share the same love for each other (Song of Solomon 4:1–5; Song of Solomon 5:10–16). The Shulamite says: “My love [Solomon] belongs to me, and I belong to him” (Song of Solomon 2:16, NIV). Her words are almost the same as Adam’s in Eden when God brings Eve to him: “ ‘Now, this is someone whose bones came from my bones. Her body came from my body. I will call [name] her “woman,” because she was taken [made] out of [from] man’ ” (Genesis 2:23, ICB).



Both Solomon and his bride feel peace because they share the same love for each other.

The Bible uses the word “knew” (Genesis 4:1, KJV) or the words “lay with” (Genesis 4:1, NLV) to explain the love and the sex shared between a man and woman in marriage. Look at other examples of how this word is written in the Bible: Genesis 4:25; 1 Samuel 1:19; Luke 1:34; John 17:3; and 1 Corinthians 8:3. How do these verses help us better understand God’s plan for love and sex in marriage?

LOVE AT THE RIGHT TIME (Song of Solomon 4:8–5:1)

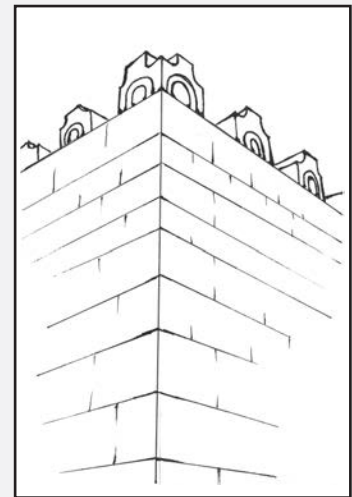
Read Song of Solomon 4:8–5:1.

Song of Solomon is a beautiful love poem. Song of Solomon 4:16 and Song of Solomon 5:1 are the very center of this poem. They show us what happens when Solomon and the Shulamite finally get married.

Read Song of Solomon 4:12, 16; Song of Solomon 5:1; and Song of Solomon 8:8–10. What is Solomon talking about in these verses?

Song of Solomon shows us God’s plan for sex. God does not want people to have sex before they are married. We see this truth in the story about the Shulamite when she is a little girl. Her brothers wonder if she will grow up to be a “wall.” Or will she grow up to be a “door” (Song of Solomon 8:8, 9)? A door is a word picture for a woman who has sex before she is married. But a wall is a word picture for a woman who does not have sex before she is married. Before she gets married, the Shulamite says, “I am a wall” (Song of Solomon 8:10, NIV). Her words are a hint that she has not had sex with anyone. On his wedding night, Solomon tells us that the Shulamite is “a garden” that is locked. The locked garden is a word picture. It shows us that the Shulamite did not have sex before she was married (Song of Solomon 4:12). That is why the Shulamite can tell her friends to follow her example. They need to think about marriage carefully. Three times the Shulamite talks to a group of women named the “daughters of Jerusalem.” The Shulamite warns them not to have sex until the right time (Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 3:5; Song of Solomon 8:4). When is that? When a woman is married. That is the only time sex is right and safe.

Then Solomon invites his bride to come away with him (Song of Solomon 2:10; Song of Solomon 4:8). Before the wedding, the Shulamite cannot say yes. But after the wedding, she is the one who invites him to her garden (Song of Solomon 4:16). He says yes (Song of Solomon 5:1). Solomon does not love the Shulamite only for her beauty. He is deeply in love with her (Song of Solomon 4:10). He is happy and excited that she is his bride now and forever. She belongs to no one else but him (Song of Solomon 4:12). He is now married to the perfect woman. It is the same for Solomon as going to the Promised Land (Song of Solomon 4:11).



A wall is a word picture for a woman who does not have sex before she is married.

PROTECT GOD’S GIFT (1 Corinthians 6:15–20)

How do we win the war against sin? We never stop praying.

God made humans male and female for a special reason (Genesis 1:26–28). Both the male and the female show us God’s “image [a copy of something else; who God is]” and “likeness [something that is nearly the same as something else]” (Genesis 1:26, ICB). But when a man joins with a woman in marriage, they become “one flesh [heart, mind, spirit, and body]” (Genesis 2:24, NLV). Marriage shows us the way that God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are joined as One God. That was God’s plan for marriage. He wanted marriage to show us who He is. When a husband and wife have a baby, they show God’s power to make new life.

What does the Bible have to say about sex that is not part of God’s plan? To find the answer, read Leviticus 20:7–21; Romans 1:24–27; and 1 Corinthians 6:9–20.

The Bible shows us that all sex that breaks God’s law is wrong. It is a sin. Sex sins destroy God’s image in humans. God leads His people to sex that honors His law. God’s law shows us our sin.

What advice does the Bible give Christians about sex on an earth full of sin? For the answer, read Romans 8:1–14; 1 Corinthians 6:15–20; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:3–10; and 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

As Christians, we wait for Jesus to make us clean again. We will be free from sin when Jesus comes back. We wait in faith. We believe Jesus’ death on the cross makes us “dead” to sin. We are alive in Jesus because He woke up from the dead. How do we win the war against sin? We never stop praying. We watch ourselves for any sign that sin is trying to take control of our lives. The power of the Holy Spirit helps us win the war against sin. We believe our “old lives” are nailed to the cross. Our old selves are dead. We now obey Jesus in our thoughts. We agree that God owns our bodies. So, we must not do anything that goes against God’s plan.

God forgives us when we say we are sorry for sin and turn away from it. The Good News about Jesus gives us power over any sex sin. Sin has hurt us so much. So, we need God’s power to heal us and make our sex lives new.

How should we as a church feel about same-sex couples?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Jesus blessed marriage. So, we should believe that marriage is very holy. True religion does not work against the Lord’s plans. God’s plan was for man and woman to be together in holy marriage. He wanted them to raise families. These families are living word pictures for the family in heaven. When Jesus first started His work on earth, He blessed marriage. Just as He blessed marriage in Eden. In this way, Jesus showed us that He will be part of marriage. Marriage is one of the most wonderful blessings that God ever gave the human family. But marriage must be holy. It must be joined with truth and God’s love.”—Ellen G. White, *Daughters of God*, pages 180, 181, adapted.

The Song of Solomon shows that sex can be a wonderful experience in marriage. But a good marriage must be about more than beauty and sex. Our bodies get old, right? No amount of diet, exercise, or even a good surgeon can keep us looking young forever. Solomon and the Shulamite’s marriage is about more than things that change and pass away. Their love is lifelong. Three times they say that they belong to each other (Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 6:3; Song of Solomon 7:10). This love cannot be killed (Song of Solomon 8:7). It cannot be broken (Song of Solomon 8:6).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Solomon says that his wife is perfect (Song of Solomon 4:1–5; Song of Solomon 6:9; and Song of Solomon 7:1–9). Compare Solomon’s words to what Adam said when he first saw Eve (Genesis 2:23). How should husbands feel and think about their wives (Ephesians 5:28, 29)?
- ② Some believe that the Song of Solomon shows us the love between Jesus and His church. How does Solomon and the Shulamite’s love show us God’s love for us? Read Isaiah 54:4, 5; Jeremiah 3:14; and 2 Corinthians 11:2 to help you answer the question.
- ③ Read Proverbs 31:26; Song of Solomon 5:16; and Proverbs 25:11. These verses show us how important our words are. How can our words “tear down” or “build up” our husbands or wives? How can our words weaken our marriages or make them stronger? Also, read James 1:26 and James 3:5–11 to help you answer the questions.



Marriage is one of the most wonderful blessings that God ever gave humans in Eden.