

### Session 1 – Introduction and Overview

#### A. WHY STUDY THE SONG OF SOLOMON?

1. **Greatest Need of the Church:** One of the greatest needs for all of us in the Church today is to understand Jesus' love more fully and more deeply than we did before. We need this not because we want more ministry or leadership skills although they would be great, but rather we need to experience the heart of God in a deeper way because this progressive experience that draws us nearer to God, focuses and transforms our hearts and minds.
2. **Historical Encouragement:** Leaders throughout church history have encouraged people to read the Song. There is great testimony of some of the most prominent leaders through church history and some of the great revivalists who have emphasised the value of the Song of Solomon. There are a number of quotes later on in these notes.
3. **To Soften Our Hearts And Empower Our Lives:** The Song of Solomon is an eight-chapter love song. Within it there are two prominent themes – God's emotions and living out the first commandment. This two fold message is radically life changing for us once we delve in and receive the Holy Spirits revelation on how God delights, desires and enjoys us individually as well as collectively. We learn that even when we are weak and broken, He still enjoys and desires our company.
  - a) **God's emotions:** The Song emphasises the emotional side of God's personality and His relationship with His people. By seeing and experiencing God's emotions, we are empowered to love God with all of our heart which in turn creates more hunger for God within us. To become more passionate for Jesus, we need to experience and understand how passionate He is for us!

*<sup>19</sup> "We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19)*
  - b) **First commandment:** This is the second theme. God's first priority for His people is that they love Him with all of their heart and that we live out of this reality. Studying the Song positions us to receive a greater impartation of the Father's love for Jesus
4. **To discover key principles to grow in love and partnership with Jesus:** The Song gives us insight into how God's people are to grow in passion for Jesus. It sets forth in a poetic way some key principles that we need to understand and equip us for what God is doing in the different seasons of our lives.

This pattern or model illustrates the progression of holy passion. As we read this song, we understand that the different seasons of relationship bring different challenges and different dimensions to them. It is helpful to locate ourselves and those we pray for in the particular seasons that God captures through this poetic language.

The poetic language has such a different feel to prose. The truths are the truths but it feels different. Somehow there is so much intensity about poetry, and since He feels intensely for us, this may be why He inspired Solomon to write it this way.

Jesus doesn't simply want us to just love Him from a distance. He wants us to engage with Him and do all the things of the kingdom together with Him. He wants us to learn about how He feels about what is happening.

He wants to share with us how He feels when we are in the midst of challenges, when our finances are in a mess, when there is conflict in our lives, when we are in the routine and the mundane. When we are being

faithful day in and day out, even in the mundane – He wants to share with us how He feels about that. This is what partnership is really about and it's a very powerful dimension.

The idea of love that stands at a distance and projects and receives warm feelings is not enough. Not for you, not for Jesus. Love is so much more than that! This Song, when we understand it, draws us into partnership and helps us to locate the season we are in. It wouldn't be unusual to find ourselves sometimes in two places at the same time!

5. **To equip the end-time church:** The generation, in which the Lord returns will be the most emotionally broken and the most sexually wounded generation in human history. The end-time church must be equipped with the revelation of God's love and beauty to walk in victory in the midst of this.

As we look at the signs of the times, and the speed with which things are unfolding and escalating it is possible that we are in the early days of that generation. We may not see Jesus's return during our lifetime, but it is not too early to begin to get ready and prepare spiritually.

The spiritual preparation we need will help prevent us becoming offended, seduced, deceived, or angry at God, and we need to make this preparation now.

The knowledge of how God feels about us heals our wounds; it fascinates us and when our hearts are fascinated, the seductions of society have far less power over us. With the emotional and sexual brokenness that is escalating so rapidly, we can understand why the Lord is saying, "I want My Church to know how I feel. It is not enough to keep them busy; they have to know what I feel about them and how I see them. I want to touch their emotions, not just use their hands in deeds."

6. **To Walk in Confidence of Love:** We need to learn how to walk steadfastly, confident in Jesus's love for us. We can't do this unless we understand Jesus's passion for us and we partner with Him to bring about deep relationship and His purposes. Song 8:6 says "Let Jesus seal my heart with the seal of His love." This and the next verse speak of walking out the first commandment in our life.

## B. HOW? - INTERPRETING THE SONG OF SOLOMON

1. **Natural interpretation:** This view depicts a real love story between King Solomon and his bride, a Shulamite maiden. She is called the Shulamite because she came from the city of Shunem. It is a very valuable interpretation as it sets forth principles that honor the beauty of love within marriage. It's a wonderful theme, and it is a real story. Solomon wrote the song about the journey he went on with a young woman that became his wife
2. **Spiritual interpretation:** This typological view employs a symbolic interpretation of the Song to emphasise the Lord's relationship with His people as the Bridegroom King. He is not just a Bridegroom, or just a King. He is a **King with power**, AND He is a **Bridegroom with desire**. This approach to the Song recognises the OT historical events in Solomon's life and marriage, while celebrating Jesus' love for His Bride, the Church, in the NT. This enables us to grow in understanding of the relationship between Jesus and the individual believer. This has been the most common interpretation of the Song for the last 3,000 years.
3. **All Scripture is to Magnify Jesus:** 2 Tim 3:16 tells us that all scripture was given by the inspiration of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit's role is to exalt Jesus in all that He does, and He is fiercely loyal to fill people with love for Jesus. It therefore seems inconceivable that the Spirit would inspire a book in the Bible that would not ultimately magnify Jesus.

***John 16:14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."***

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The Word is Jesus and we will be in the Word for eternity. There is no book in the Bible that does not last forever. Since **Matt 22:30** tell us that marriage does not exist in the resurrection age, a book that was merely intended to be helpful in relationships in the natural would not need to be included in the bible. It has meaning in natural marriage, but the song has its fullest meaning in Jesus.

On the Emmaus road, Jesus spoke of Himself to the disciples from **all** the scriptures. He didn't select particular books, but used all 39 books available at that time, which would include the Song.

***<sup>27</sup>He expounded...in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27)***

### C. FIVE DISTINCTIVES IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON

1. The Song of Solomon emphasizes God's emotions. It gives us insight into *why* Jesus created and redeemed us. Many scriptures tell us *what* Jesus did in creation and redemption going to the cross.
2. **God's emotions:** His emotions include love, affection, delight, and enjoyment in relating to His people. Seeing how God sees and feels about His people empowers us to love Him (1 Jn. 4:19).
3. **God's beauty:** especially seen as our Bridegroom King (Ps. 27:4; 45:2; Isa. 4:2; 28:5; 33:17). Encountering God's majestic beauty is foundational to enjoying Him and experiencing the spiritual pleasure that comes by being fascinated with Him.

***<sup>17</sup>"Your eyes will see the King in His beauty." (Isa. 33:17)***

4. **Our beauty in God's eyes:** The beauty that Jesus possesses is the very beauty that He imparts to His people in redemption.

***<sup>1</sup>"The LORD has anointed Me...<sup>3</sup>to give them beauty for ashes." (Isa. 61:1-3)***

***<sup>17</sup>And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us. (Ps. 90:17)***

5. **First commandment:** God created His people to love Him wholeheartedly—with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mk. 12:30). One purpose in studying the Song is to receive a greater understanding and impartation of Jesus' love for His Bride (Jn. 15:9).

6. **Partnership:** The Song sets forth key principles that equip us to grow in partnership with Jesus.

***<sup>24</sup>"Father, I desire that they...may be with Me where I am." (Jn. 17:24)***

***<sup>4</sup>"They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years...<sup>6</sup>they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:4-6)***

7. Love longs for partnership that works with another—Jesus with His people, and we with Him. Jesus identified love as God's *first* priority and the way to *greatness* (Mt. 22:38). Paul wrote of it as the more *excellent way* and as that which *compels* us to give our all (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:13; 2 Cor. 5:14).
8. When we see and feel about ourselves and others what God sees and feels about us, we are empowered to love.

***<sup>17</sup>...that you...<sup>18</sup>may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height...<sup>19</sup>to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. (Eph. 3:17-19)***

*Width:* His love includes all nations. *Length:* it reaches far (covering all sin) and lasts forever. *Depth:* it was costly for Jesus to descend so low. *Height:* it exalts us.

9. The Spirit enables us to comprehend that God sees our value, destiny, and beauty and feels delight over us and others. We are empowered to love deeper and more consistently as we see ourselves and others as God does, rather than seeing ourselves through the lens of our sin and brokenness and viewing others through the lens of their sin and brokenness.

#### D. THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE SONG

1. ***King Solomon:*** The King is a picture of the triumphant Christ as the Bridegroom King who possesses all power, yet is filled with affection for His people.
2. ***Shulamite maiden:*** The Shulamite is a picture of the Bride of Christ - the church. She is introduced as a maiden who grows up to become the Bride who enjoys mature partnership with Jesus. The Bride in a "betrothed" position and is not a wife until the marriage supper of the lamb which is yet to come.
3. ***Daughters of Jerusalem:*** these speak of sincere yet spiritually immature believers. They look to the Shulamite for answers on how to grow close to the King. They are not an actual group that we can identify in history. They typify immature believers.
4. ***The watchmen:*** represent spiritual leadership. The watchmen were the keepers of the walls, who guarded the walls of the city to protect the people. Initially, the Bride seeks their help (3:3), but eventually they strike and wound her (5:7).

#### E. THE STORYLINE

1. The Song of Solomon has two primary sections: Chapters 1-4 and 5-8.
  - a) The first four chapters of the Song focus on the ***Bride's inheritance in Christ***. These chapters emphasise what we receive from Him. This inheritance from Him includes how He feels about us, how He loves us and woos us; how He views and desires us and what we seek in Him.
  - b) The last four chapters of the Song focus on ***Jesus' inheritance in the Bride*** – what He receives from us. These chapters emphasise what He seeks from His people. He wants us to love Him with all our heart and this should empower us to give ourselves fully back to Him. The focus of the book makes a dramatic shift in the middle (4:16-5:1).
2. Solomon was a prolific songwriter, writing 1005 songs (1 Kgs. 4:32). The Spirit inspired him to name this song using a superlative, the Song of Songs (like King of kings, Lord of lords, etc.,). The Song of Solomon is one of the greatest songs in redemptive history.

<sup>1</sup>***The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. (Song 1:1)***

## F. STUDYING THE SONG OF SONGS

1. To receive the full benefits of the Song, we must turn it into an ongoing dialogue with Jesus. Learning the truths of the Song is only our starting point; the truths transform us as they become part of our prayer life and conversation with God. No one goes to a famous restaurant to study its menu; the menu is there to help them obtain a good meal. Likewise, we are missing out if we are just “connoisseurs” of the Song of Solomon; it must get into our conversation with God.
2. There are two general categories of truth in relation to meditating on the Word. The first category is related to truths that exhort us to *believe something* about God and/or His promises. The second category is related to truths that exhort us to *obey* God’s Word.
3. With truths that exhort us to **believe** we firstly thank God for the particular truth set forth, by turning it into a dialogue that includes taking time to say, “Thank You, Jesus” in a specific way. For example, when reading, “You have ravished my heart,” we respond by thanking God for this truth by praying, “Thank you, Jesus, that I ravish Your heart, that you delight in Your people.”

<sup>9</sup>**You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse. (Song 4:9)**

4. Second, we ask for understanding of the truth as we seek to believe more. Ask God to release revelation that causes us to know and feel the power of specific truths (Eph. 1:17). For example, when reading, “You have ravished my heart, my bride,” ask Jesus for more insight by praying, “Show me how I ravish Your heart and fill you with delight.”
5. For truths that exhort us to **obey** we firstly commit to obey Jesus in the way described in a particular passage. We turn that specific truth into a simple dialogue with God that includes declaring our intention and commitment to obey Him according to the exhortation in that passage. For example, when He exhorted the Bride to “rise up and come away” to leave the comfort zone and follow Him, we commit to obey this truth by praying, “Jesus, I will rise from the comfort zone to meet You on the mountains of costly obedience (according to Song 4:6).”

<sup>10</sup>**My Beloved...said to me: “Rise up, my love...and come away.” (Song 2:10)**

6. Second, we ask for God’s help to obey a particular truth in a passage. Ask the Spirit for help to obey specific exhortations in a passage. For example, when the Lord exhorts the Bride to “arise and come away” and follow Him in obedience to the mountains, we ask the Spirit to help us obey by praying, “Jesus, empower me to obey You as I arise from the comfort zone to meet you in costly obedience.”
7. Take time to journal and write down your thoughts, prayers, and meditations as you pray-read through the Song. This will help you to capture the truths that the Lord puts on your heart. Be patient, speak slowly and softly, then journal your thoughts. You may be surprised how the Spirit will give you revelation, strengthen your obedience, and tenderize your heart as you do this.

## G. WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT THE SONG OF SOLOMON

1. **Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** *"Has He spoken to you? Has He said to you, 'As the lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters?'" Has He ever said to you, whispered to you, 'My beloved is Mine?'" Read the Song of Solomon and see how the Bridegroom expresses His feeling to his Bride, His love. How lightly we skip over these great statements so that we may argue about our pet ideas and theories! In one sense the whole object of being a Christian is that you may know the love of Jesus Christ, His personal love to you; that He may tell you in unmistakable language that He loves you, that He has given Himself for you, that He has loved you with 'an everlasting love'. He does this through the Holy Spirit... What do we know of these secret intimations? Read the lives of the saints throughout the centuries and you will find that they all know about this. They have known Him to come to them and speak to them, and love them, and tell them that He loves them. He embraces them and surrounds them, and lets them know, more certainly than they know anything else, that He loves them with all the intensity of His divine Being. It is because we are married to Him that He does this."* (An Exposition of Chapter 7.1-8.4; the Law, Its Functions and Limits. Banner of Truth, pp.60-61)
2. **C. H. Spurgeon** *"The true believer who has lived near to his Master will find this book to be a mass, not of gold merely, for all God's Word is this, but a mass of diamonds sparkling with brightness; and all things thou canst conceive are not to be compared with it for its matchless worth. If I must prefer one book above another, I would prefer some books of the Bible for doctrine, some for experience, some for example, some for teaching, but let me prefer this book above all others for fellowship and communion. When the Christian is nearest to heaven, this is the book he takes with him."* (The Most Holy Place. Christian Focus Publications)
3. **J. Hudson Taylor** *Few portions of the Word will help the devout student more in the pursuit of this all-important "knowledge of God" than the too-much neglected "Song of Solomon." Like other portions of the Word of God, this book has its difficulties. But so have all the works of God...In Solomon, the bridegroom king...we have a type of our LORD, the true Prince of peace, in His coming reign...Can a study of the book which helps us to understand these mysteries of grace and love be other than most profitable? (Union and Communion, Introduction)*
4. **George Whitefield** *...Solomon's Song contains a dialogue betwixt Christ and his Church. The church had been commending Christ, had been telling what a glorious and blessed Savior He was (Song 5:10-16); and after she has done this, she did glory in the character, and her heart is so full of love to Christ, of being so nearly related to him, that, with humbleness of mind, she is obliged to cry out "This is my Beloved"(Song 5:16). There is a peculiar emphasis to be put on this. Was there ever a friend like Him! She calls on all to admire Him. I hope 'tis from a sense of love on my own soul, that I recommend the Lord Jesus Christ to to be your Friend: For 'tis the Lord Jesus Christ that is here called a Friend! O happy men and women that can say, Christ is our Friend! I think I feel at present something of that which the Church felt when she cried out, "This is my Beloved."*(Christ Our Friend. [quintapress.macmate.me/PDF\\_Books/Christ\\_Our\\_Friend.pdf](http://quintapress.macmate.me/PDF_Books/Christ_Our_Friend.pdf))
5. **John Wesley** *The most excellent of all songs. And so this might well be called, whether you consider the author of it, who was a great prince, and the wisest of all mortal men; or the subject of it, which is not Solomon, but a greater than Solomon, even Christ, and His marriage with the church; or the matter of it, which is most lofty, containing in it the noblest of all the mysteries contained either in the Old or the New Testament; most pious and pathetic, breathing forth the hottest flames of love between Christ and His people, most sweet and comfortable, and useful to all that read it with serious and Christian eyes. (Notes on the Song of Solomon. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/notes-on-the-song-of-solomon/>)*

6. **Matthew Henry** *“This book is a Divine allegory, which represents the love between Christ and His church of true believers, under figures taken from the relation and affection that subsist between a bridegroom and his espoused bride; an emblem often employed in Scripture, as describing the nearest, firmest, and most sure relation...”* (A Commentary upon the Holy Bible: Job to Salomon’s song, Volume 3, p. 499.)
7. **Charles Finney** *“...it seemed as if my soul was wedded to Christ, in a sense in which I had never had any thought or conception of before. The language of the Song of Solomon was as natural to me as my breath...I not only had all the freshness of my first love, but a vast accession to it. Indeed, the Lord lifted me so much above anything that I had ever experienced before.”* (They Found the Secret. Zondervan Publications)
8. **Gary Wiens** *God has placed something deep down inside each one of us, a knowledge that we ought to be loved supremely, that we ought to have significance now, that we ought to have a wonderful destiny, and that we ought to be enjoying the process of experiencing it all come to its fullness. When the Holy Spirit speaks to us from the Word of God, He touches our hearts with truth concerning God and truth concerning ourselves. We begin to realize that all these longings deep inside of us can be realized as we live in a close relationship with Jesus, listening to Him and obeying His voice. In that way we begin to understand who we are, why we are here, and what our destiny will be in His kingdom. The wonderful thing is that this understanding is not merely head knowledge. What I’m talking about is not just doctrinal truth, but the deep experience of God’s love that is greater than anything we can know apart from Him. The Holy Spirit has the ability to touch you deeply in such a way that every longing of your heart is met, and He loves to do it! When He touches your heart with the truth of God’s love for you, it is the greatest experience of joy we can know until we see Jesus face to face. John the Baptist, who was one of the most rugged men in the whole Bible, speaks in this way of his own experience: “The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.” (John 3:29) (The Journey To Intimate Authority A Meditation on the Song of Solomon)*
9. **Brian and Candice Simmons** *“Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the lyrics of this song are written to change and transform your very being. Jesus Christ will be revealed as the heavenly Bridegroom, the love of God made Man. You will see Jesus as the refiner and His love as the flame – making us into pure gold that reflects His glory and His passions.”* (The Sacred Journey: God’s Relentless Pursuit of Our Affection)

## H. OUR STUDY – PART 1

Week 1	<b>INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW</b>	
	Why study? How to interpret. Who’s who? The storyline.	
Week 2	<b>THE KISS AND HER LIFE VISION</b>	1:1-4
Week 3	<b>DARK BUT LOVELY</b>	1: 8-7
Week 4	<b>THE IDENTITY OF THE BELIEVER</b>	1:12- 2:7
Week 5	<b>SUMMONED TO HIGHER GROUND</b>	2:8 – 17
Week 6	<b>SEARCHING FOR THE BELOVED</b>	3:1 – 11
Week 7	<b>THE POWER OF SUFFERING LOVE</b>	4: 1-6
Week 8	<b>THE BRIDE’S RESPONSE TO HIS RAVISHED HEART</b>	4: 7- 16