

Song of Solomon is probably the most ignored book of the Bible. If you are married, the daily application will be easy. If you are unmarried, but hope to be one day, then the lessons will be of early benefit. And if you are unmarried and believe you probably always will be, there are still tremendous lessons on love you can encourage others with from this book.

Read Song of Solomon 1

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. Song 1:6

I remember a former pastor of mine who was preaching on meaningful relationships. His contention was that divorce and breakups happen in our country because so many people, even Christians, fail to develop deep relationships before their marriage. He gave the example of hearing women say, "I can't believe he's with her." In their eyes, the man was much better looking than his wife. This pastor said that if those women would sit with "her" for a few minutes, they would quickly see the tangible qualities that drew this man to her. To him she is beautiful inside and out because of the total woman she is.

Solomon picked up a character flaw from his father David, in taking numerous wives. However, there appears to have been one wife in particular who was of high value to him. This woman had lived a difficult youth, exposed to harsh conditions that damaged her skin. As a result, she was appeared to be a foreigner, which wasn't highly regarded in Israel. So while she heard the whispers and saw the stares, her husband made it clear that his love was not swayed by the thoughts and impressions of others. She accepted his love, and loved him back in return. **This is a good moment to reflect, whether you're married or would like to be one day. How do you love your spouse? Does he or she have moments of doubt because of your inability to consistently communicate that love? As Christians, we should love our spouses in such a way that God is honored and that our relationships are examples to a lost world. May they look at our marriages and households and see a difference.**

Read Song of Solomon 2

My beloved is mine, and I am his; he pastures *his flock* among the lilies. Song 2:16

While counseling a teenage guy, he indicated two possible plans for his life: one that included his current girlfriend and one that didn't. I asked him which plan he'd like to see happen in his life, and he indicated the one without his girlfriend. As a result of her very clingy personality, he felt an obligation to her even though they had made no long-term commitment to one another. I told him that the current state of their relationship was very simple: neither one of them belonged to the other. He was trying to make decisions as if he had already married someone he wasn't even sure he wanted to marry.

I see people in uncommitted relationships living as if they are married all the time. They haven't taken on any of the responsibilities of marriage, but they are seeking

and enjoying all the perks. Then I see marriages that are listless and lifeless. The effort made by each spouse before the marriage relationship has not translated into continued efforts to keep love, passion and excitement alive. Solomon correctly indicates that in a marriage relationship you do not belong to yourself. You belong to your husband or wife, and you no longer make decisions as if those decisions only affect you. **Do you make choices for your day apart from your spouse? Do you attempt to live in your marriage as a selfless person, and allow your spouse to have equal say on your time? Or do you choose to be selfish because your spouse is? Change never comes when both parties are choosing selfishness over improvement. Be willing to live as if you belong to your spouse, even if he or she does not repay you with similar efforts. Know that you are honoring God, and pray that the heart of your spouse will be changed.**

Read Song of Solomon 3

"Scarcely had I left them when I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go until I had brought him to my mother's house, and into the room of her who conceived me." Song 3:4

A church I once served gave financial assistance to a single mother in the church. She was saved and realized that she should not be living with her boyfriend, who was the father of her children. She went back and forth between living with him and living on her own, finally moving out because she felt the relationship had no future. My wife and I thought this was a good move, and we were totally surprised when she came to us saying she had accepted this man's proposal. We knew she wasn't really in love with him, and sure enough a few months after the marriage, she wanted out again.

People say love is a fickle thing, but I don't think that's true. So many people today settle for looks, a good time, or some other reason to be in a relationship. Look at Solomon's bride here. She knew what she was looking for in a husband, when she found him she wouldn't let him go. But how can you hold onto someone you love? I have seen people that are in "love" whose relationships break apart. **In nearly every experience where I've seen relationships and marriages in trouble, do you know that the big problem was? They didn't continue to develop their love for one another. If you have children, you need to teach them now to consider the standards they want in a future spouse. Don't allow them to wait until they are dating, because they will force their standards to fit a particular person instead of waiting for the right person to come along. They need to be the right date instead of trying to find the right date. If you're already in a marriage relationship, do you feel like the love is nearly lost? Then focus more attention on your spouse, and less upon yourself. Write down the things you love about him or her and then dwell on those things. Your lover is not perfect, just like you. That makes you perfect for each other.**

Read Song of Solomon 4

You are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you. Song 4:7

Busch Stadium, home of the St. Louis Cardinals, was always a beautiful place to

me as a boy. The grass was so green, the smells were so vivid, and the views of the field were great. So when they talked of building a new stadium, my nostalgia kicked in for what I had always known. I've never been to the new stadium, but my friends who have say there's no comparison. And then as I think about it, the seats weren't really that comfortable, which has been changed. The bathrooms were a little old and past their prime, and there was lots of ugly, exposed concrete everywhere. I now realize there were plenty of things wrong with that old ballpark, but I loved going there so much, I just overlooked them.

This verse gives an interesting statement on Solomon's part, because we know that his bride was blemished. She was forced to work in the sun by her family, and her skin had skipped tan and moved onto burnt. It was a definite blemish that she was keenly aware of and bothered by. But her husband doesn't mention it. When we love our husband or wife we have to be ready to ignore their blemishes. I'm not talking about sin, because my wife has led me to greater holiness as a result of her willingness to point out sin in my life. I'm talking about the personality or physical traits that are not perfect in your spouse. **When you dwell on the blemish, the situation will always seem worse than it is. When you dwell on the reasons that you love your spouse, the blemishes melt away in your mind. How do you make your spouse feel? Does he or she feel a constant need to be someone they're not? Are you quick to point out the blemishes of your partner, while ignoring your own? Solomon wasn't blind. He was in love, and his love caused Him to treat his wife as a valuable possession. That's exactly what your spouse is.**

Read Song of Solomon 5

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, as to what you will tell him: for I am lovesick. Song 5:8

When my wife would go on short trips early in our marriage, I always thought I would enjoy the alone time. This was my chance to live the bachelor life: watch movies, eat pizza and play video games non-stop. But usually by the second day, I grew tired of it. I have a hard time sleeping alone in the house since being married, not because I'm afraid of the dark, but I'm just used to her being around. The pizza didn't taste as good. The movies weren't as fun. Just everything seemed to lose its value when I was all alone without my wife.

In this chapter we see Solomon's bride separated from him for a time and how it made her feel. She's completely distraught during their time apart. The separation for her feels unbearable. I don't think we have to stalk our spouse, but our thoughts should never be far from them even when they're far from us. If I'm getting ready to leave for a week to do something I enjoy, but it just won't be the same without her there to enjoy it with me. God is my first love, but I have been united by Him to my wife in a special and unique relationship. **How do you act when you are away from your spouse? Do you keep the focus of your affections on him or her even when they're not around? God has united a married couple in such a way that separation should be difficult. I hear of couples that live in separate cities for a time, and I think of how ridiculous that is.**

There are few financial or job situations that should ever cause a married couple to cease living under the same roof for long periods. Do you stay in close contact with your spouse even when he or she is out of town? Do you check to make sure they had a safe trip? Treat your spouse as a person of great importance whether they're right next to you, or halfway around the world.

Read Song of Solomon 6

But my dove, my perfect one, is unique: she is her mother's only daughter; she is the pure child of the one who bore her. The maidens saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines also, and they praised her... Song 6:9

I'll never forget my wedding day. There was still plenty of time before Nikki would be walking the aisle, and my future father-in-law called me outside with him. The man can fix anything, and I always thought he viewed me as some city slicker. So as we start walking around the parking lot of the church I was wondering, "What is he going to say? Am I about to get a warning about not screwing this up?" We just chatted and finally he told me he was proud his daughter was marrying me. That was kind of a shocker to me, and as I saw tears in his eyes I realized how important she was to him. I wasn't just marrying a woman; I was marrying someone's daughter, sister, and friend.

Our spouses are obviously important people in our lives. They listen when others won't, and they know us at our best and worst and still love us. It's important that we remember the uniqueness of our husband or wife. They had a childhood, probably a lost love or two along the way, and they have chosen to unite their life with yours. Don't forget all who have invested in your spouse before you. There are parents and friends and siblings who all care a great deal for him or her. There is truly no one else like our husband or wife. **Do you live reminded of the uniqueness of your spouse? There is no one exactly like him or her anywhere else. You both had a love for each other that drew you together. Loving someone is easy, but that person loving you back is always the dicey part. Thank God for the uniqueness of your spouse. Point out those things to him or her so that they know they aren't just married...they are loved!**

Read Song of Solomon 7

How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your hips are like jewels, the work of the hands of an artist. Song 7:1

A teacher was grading a science test at home that she had given to her elementary-school class and was reading some of the results. The subject was "The Human Body," and the first question was: "Name one of the major functions of the skin." One child wrote: "To keep people who look at you from throwing up."

One of the major sin issues for guys is looking at women who don't belong to them. However, God is an artist as Solomon says here. He created men to be attracted to the curves of a woman, and He created the woman with those curves. He left no room for same-sex attractions in His master plan. Women also experience physical attraction towards men, but it's often not as shallow. There is usually some basis for attraction based

on the personality and attitude of the man towards her. But in either case, physical attraction is an important part of any relationship. **Skin is for more than keeping us from throwing up! Do you tell your wife how beautiful she is? Do you tell your husband how attractive you find him? As Christians, the most important part of your relationship is your mutual faith in Jesus Christ. However, that doesn't mean that physical attraction is not important. Some pastors have condemned looking for a beautiful person over a godly person, and rightfully so. However, let us not make the mistake that we can't have both. Have you told your spouse how beautiful they are to you today? Have you shown them?**

Read Song of Solomon 8

"Many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, it would be utterly despised." Song 8:7

Captain Kemble was a sea captain from Boston. He left in 1653 and was gone for three years. Records show that on the day that Captain Kemble returned home, he was placed in the stocks for 2 hours! What could he possibly have done to ruin his homecoming and anger the good people of Boston? When Captain Kemble came off the boat, he saw his wife for the first time in three years. And even though it was against the law to kiss in public on a Sunday, Captain Kemble did it anyway. The punishment he would face to kiss his bride was worth it!

I've seen marriages drown. A marriage can have two people who love each other, and who start to doubt the reasons for their marriage. They allow family, career and financial pressures to turn them from a marital partnership to a business one. Solomon says that many waters cannot quench love. Water sustains life, but it can come with great pressure and force. When a marriage begins to go sour, it's not because love is quenched; it's because love has been forgotten. I can never imagine a time in the future that I would be unable to love my wife. Even in the direst of situations, my affections for her would never be changed. **Perhaps you feel the love in your marriage has been quenched. More likely, it's just been forgotten or re-prioritized down the list. Solomon says that if you were to give of your possessions to keep love, you would strike out. If I were to really upset my wife by my selfishness, a diamond necklace would be pretty, but it would not solve the problem that created the strife. Don't try to gift your way out of a drowning marriage. Don't accept the world's solution to simply find someone new. Remember that true love doesn't drown. Ask God to help you rediscover what may simply be missing in your relationships with your husband or wife. Ask Him to show you what it is that he or she misses from you, and be ready to hear it.**