

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

SONG OF SOLOMON 1-3

A pig farmer wanted to breed three sows with his neighbor's boar. He loaded the sows into the back of his pick-up truck and drove them to his friend's farm – where he put the sows in the pen with the male pig.

When he returned later that afternoon he asked his neighbor how he'd know if the mating had been successful. His friend explained... "In the morning look outside. If your pigs are rolling in the grass you'll know the mating took, but if they're rolling in the mud you'll know it didn't."

The next morning the farmer ran to the window to check on his sows. And there they were - all three girls were out rolling in the mud.

The farmer decided to try again. He loaded the pigs in his pick-up and drove back to the farm. Again he put them in the pen with the boar...

When he arrived to pick them up he asked, "Now how do I know if little piglets are on the way?" The neighbor repeated himself, "If they're rolling in the grass it took - if they're rolling in the mud you know it didn't."

As soon as he awoke the next morning he looked out the window and there were the pigs in the mud. Undaunted, he loaded up the sows for a third time into his pick-up truck and returned to his neighbor's farm.

At the end of the day, he asked his friend, "Now let me make sure I've got this straight... in the grass, good - in the mud,

bad!" "You got it!"

That night the farmer went out of town, but the next morning he called his wife, and asked her look out the window. "Are the sows in the grass or in the mud?" He waited and waited... Finally, she returned to the phone.

He asked, "Honey, are the pigs rolling in the grass, or in the mud?"

She responded, "Neither, two are in the back of your truck, and one is in the cab honking the horn!" Evidently, his friend's male pig was *no bore!*

The point of the story is that God created sex not just for *breeding* but for *blessing*. He designed sex not just for *procreation*, but for *pleasure*.

If all God cared about was repopulating the planet, then cloning or cell division would've done the job, but sex brings a husband and wife together in a manner that maximizes intimacy and enhances enjoyment. Sex fuses together two lives and solidifies their commitment and closeness.

When God created sex, like everything else He created, He said that it was GOOD! The Song of Solomon describes just how lavish a source of intimacy and ecstasy sex can be between a husband and a wife.

Since sex is so often abused and misused we can get the impression that it's evil, but not so! That's certainly not God's take on the subject.

Proverbs 5:18-19 declares, "Rejoice with the wife of your youth... Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; always be enraptured with her love."

Hey, *God is no prude*. In fact, the Song of Solomon is so graphic - the language so erotic and sensual - the Jewish rabbis prohibited their young men from even reading this book until they had reached the age of thirty.

The Song of Solomon will steam your glasses. It'll race your pulse, and cause your face to blush - but remember, *God isn't blushing!*

God wrote the book on sex, and like the rest of the Bible, God wants this Song of Songs read, understood, and modeled in our marriages.

It's true the Song of Solomon is an Oriental love song. Its immediate subject is eroticism and marital love-making. *But that's not all it is...*

The Song of Solomon also has a deeper, more spiritual meaning.

The Jews sensed the book's spiritual significance and gave it a special reverence. In the Jewish Mishnah, Rabbi Aquiba, is quoted, *"In the entire world there is nothing equal to the day on which the Song of Solomon was given to Israel. All writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is most holy."*

In the Old Testament, God illustrated His relationship with the Hebrews as a marriage. He was the husband and Israel was the bride. Of course, in the New Testament, Jesus is our Bridegroom and the Church is His bride.

Solomon's Song allegorizes the intimacy God desires with His people.

The Song reminds us Jesus is not only the *Lord of my life* – but wants to be the *Lover of my soul!* The Song of Solomon stretches us spiritually.

One commentator writes, “No book furnishes a better test than does this song of the depth of a man’s Christianity. If his religion is only in his head as dry doctrine he’ll see nothing here to attract him. But if it has a hold of his heart, this will become a favorite portion of his Bible.”

I like to treat this Song as God intended – a celebration of marital love. I don’t over-allegorize, but when a parallel is helpful I’ll try to point it out.

Verse 1 introduces the book, “The song of songs, which is Solomon’s.”

Dolly Parton has written 600 songs. 1 Kings 4:32 says Solomon wrote 1,005. Three have survived - Psalm 72 and Psalm 127 were hits, but the *Song of Songs* went platinum. It reached # 1 on the Hebrew top 40.

The phrase “King of kings” refers to the king above all kings. Thus, “song of songs” is the song above all songs. This was “the first, or best, or most excellent of all Solomon’s songs.” The Song of Solomon was actually more a cantata, or an opera. It’s a song that tells a story...

Three speakers convey the story... **King Solomon, his Shulamite bride**, and **the daughters of Jerusalem** – or her girlfriends. Every guy knows if you want to marry a girl you’ve got to impress her girlfriends.

The one problem with the Song of Solomon is you’re not always sure who’s talking... The NKJV inserts headings that

identify the speaker.

Their headings aren't perfect, but they're certainly helpful.

Chapter 1 introduces the young bride Solomon brings to his palace in Jerusalem. In the song she's called "*the Shulamite.*" She was from the town of Shunem. Solomon met her traveling through the mountains of Lebanon. He was mesmerized by her rustic beauty and country charm.

The Shulamite was a hillbilly, an Ellie Mae Clampett or Daisy Duke – *beautiful but backwoods*. Here was the original *Hee-Haw Honey*.

But this was why Solomon fell in love... His palace was packed with cover girls - *pampered pin-ups with store-bought beauty*. The Shulamite was different. Hers was a natural beauty. She was a woman of virtue - neither her beauty nor character had been defiled by the big city.

The Shulamite worked as a shepherdess, tending her brother's flocks.

When Solomon saw her it was probably love at first sight. But he hid his royal identity. He had to make sure her love for him was genuine. He didn't reveal he was king until he returned to Lebanon to take her to Jerusalem.

Here's an overview of the Song...

Chapters 1-2 are the early days of their marriage. They enjoy their new found love. But like all newlyweds, the couple had adjustments to make. The last half of chapter 3 into chapter 5 flashes back to the honeymoon.

Solomon came in his royal couch to transport the bride to

his palace. From Lebanon to Jerusalem they celebrate with lavish love-making.

By the middle of chapter 5 the honeymoon is over. The Shulamite has a dream in which God alerts her to a coldness that's crept into her marriage.

In chapters 6-8 Shula learns some lessons. She revives the intimacy in her marriage with a new [attitude](#), a new [aggressiveness](#), and a new [atmosphere](#) - they return to the country where their romance began.

The book closes with the couple on a second honeymoon.

The dialogue begins in verse 2. Shula sets a tone for the book, **"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth - for your love is better than wine."**

What's a kiss? Here's the discovery a college student shared with his girlfriend, ["Before I heard my professor tell, the facts about a kiss, I had considered kissing you the closest thing to bliss. But now I know biology - and sit, and sigh, and moan. Six thousand small bacteria, and I thought we were alone."](#) Apparently, a kiss is a form of germ warfare.

Biologically speaking, a kiss doesn't sound very appealing – *the exchange of bacteria* - yet romantically it sparks and fuels passion.

A kiss is an expression of intimacy. It ignites the flames of desire.

And notice who initiates this kiss? Not Solomon - it's the Shulamite.

The wife is the aggressor. In many marriages it's just

assumed that the wife plays defense and the husband plays offence. But that's not biblical.

Here it's the woman who tells her husband what she wants from him.

God's idea of sex is for both spouses to be on offense. Nobody plays defense. There're no off-sides, or holding penalties, or illegal use of hands, or pass interference - all passes need to be enjoyed.

As single Christians we're told sex outside marriage is sinful, *and it is* – we see it abused by the world around us – and as a result many Christian women carry a negative view of sex into their marriage. They treat sex as if it's dirty and shameful. It's an activity to be *endured* rather than *enjoyed*.

Yet from the outset the Shulamite feels free to express herself sexually.

It reminds me of the guy who whispered to his wife, “Honey, kisses are the language of love.” She replied, “Well, you better speak up!”

The Shulamite is in love, and she longs for Solomon's kisses.

And notice too, she says “*your love is better than wine.*”

Wine has a four-fold effect on a person... It's **sweet** to the taste. It **quenches your thirst**. It's **intoxicating** and causes you to lose your inhibitions. And finally, it's **addictive**. You keep going back for more.

This is how the Shulamite views sexual love. *It's better than wine!*

Here's an appropriate spiritual application. Psalm 2:12 tells us, “**kiss the Son.**” We kiss Jesus – not literally, but relationally – when we express our desire to follow Him, and longing to know Him, and intention to walk with Him. A spiritual kiss is *a prayer... a song... a praise... a thank-you...*

In turn Jesus kisses us when we sense His warmth and approval. He kisses us when His Spirit reveals His presence, or power, or plan to our hearts. And as with any kiss, it excites, and sparks, and ignites a flame.

The kisses of Jesus are *better than wine*.

The Shulamite continues in verse 3, “**Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you. Draw me away!**” Recall, the queen is new to her surroundings.

During her *country courtship* it was just her and her shepherd - just the two of them, *Shlomo and Shula*. The days were free, the hours private, the duties light... Now she's in Jerusalem and she's the wife of the King. Now she has servants and responsibilities. Solomon is about *his daily duties*.

He's busy attending to affairs of state, and often late returning to the palace. Life has changed. She's not use to sharing her husband...

And worse, she's become painfully aware that in the palace there are other women who long for her husband – *she sees the looks...* They'd love to be with the king. Suddenly, she realizes she has competition...

And she wishes the king would take her away – back to the country.

In the next line the daughters of Jerusalem – the palace maidens - express their desire for Solomon, “We will run after you.”

The Shulamite counters by reminding them all that the king has chosen her. “The king has brought me into his chambers.” But that doesn’t quell the longing of these maidens. They say of Solomon, “We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine.” Shula can’t argue. She understands what they see in him. “Rightly do they love you.”

All this competition, and vying for Solomon’s affections, starts to breed in the Shulamite some insecurities. She doubts her own attractiveness...

Verse 5 “I am dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. Do not look upon me, because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept.” She mourns that her skin is *tough* and *tanned*.

She's comparing herself with the palace princesses. They're always indoors. They've had an unlimited Mary Kay budget. They're pampered with bubble baths and moisturizers. They all have *creamy complexions*.

But the Shulamite has been in the fields – exposed to the wind and under the hot sun - caring more about her brother's sheep than her own appearance. When she compares herself

with the maidens in the royal court she feels inferior, and wonders why Solomon would love her.

And this helps explain the spiritual experience of many Christians.

They too live under a cloud of doubt and insecurity. They're haunted by their flaws and blemishes. *"How could Jesus love the likes of me?"*

They feel so unworthy of His affections. And like the Shulamite their inferiority is heightened by the purity and holiness of other believers.

Verse 7 indicates just how deep the Shulamite's insecurities run. *"Tell me, O you whom I love, where you feed your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?"* She feels so inadequate. She wants to hide behind a veil.

And every husband in the room needs to listen up. For just like the Shulamite your wife also has some misgivings about her appearance.

A recent Harris Poll revealed that 99% of all women wish they could change something about their body. The popularity of breast implants, fanny tucks, and face lifts - testify to female insecurities.

Men, your wife won't give herself freely and uninhibitedly unless she's certain you're satisfied with what you're getting. That means you are an idiot if you're ever critical or condemning about your wife's appearance.

If you *want her* to *want you*... praise how she looks.

Tell her how much you love the special physical features which God created in her - *and even the features she's added over the years.*

The more assurance you bring - the more affirmation you send - the more trust she has in your acceptance and appreciation - the more she'll be able to *open up* and *loosen up* in her sexual expression.

This is exactly what Solomon does. He speaks to her concerns in verse 8, **"If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock, and feed your little goats beside the shepherds' tents."** Notice, she's not *fairer than most* – or *one of the fairest* - but **fairest of all!**

Solomon praises her beauty and assures the Shulamite that as far as he's concerned she has no competition. She has no rival in his heart.

For years, radical feminist Gloria Steinem use to say the reason she would never married was she **"could never mate in captivity."**

If Gloria wants to compare herself to a wild animal, that's up to her, but most women I talk to view marriage not as *captivity* - but as an opportunity for *creativity*. Only when she's sure of a husband's approval and devotion can she *release mentally, relax emotionally, and explode sexually.*

This means, if a husband wants a fun, vibrant sex life he should show *sensitivity* to his wife's *insecurity*. His acceptance can put her at ease.

Solomon continues, verse 9...**"I have compared you, my**

love, to my filly among Pharaoh's chariots." "Pharaoh's filly" might have been an Egyptian princess. Kings sealed treaties by giving a daughter in marriage to their ally. She may've joined Solomon's harem as a diplomatic maneuver.

Whatever the circumstances, the presence of this woman added to the Shulamite's insecurities. *What's a country girl compared to an Egyptian princess?* Solomon let's Shula know she was the only girl for him!

He adds in verse 10, "Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with chains of gold." Then the daughters chime in, "We will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver." Her jewelry is on order.

Soon, she too will enjoy the advantages of palace life.

It's interesting our King Jesus also clothes us with spiritual gifts. His grace not only chooses us and saves us - but it blesses and adorns.

From verse 12 through 2:7 the Shulamite recounts a night of intimacy with the king. This is the first of several romantic and erotic sections in the book. The evening began at a *state dinner* and ended with a *sexual feast*.

That evening the Shulamite wore a new perfume. It could've been *Hallel #5*. In the midst of the meal, the aroma waft across the room, and caught the king's attention. She says in verse 12, "While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance." The two exchanged knowing glances. Just the look in each other's eyes aroused their passions.

Notice, *little gestures, caring glances* led to a night of passion. Shlomo and Shula began their foreplay long before

they entered their bedroom.

A book was published several years ago entitled "[Sex Begins in the Kitchen.](#)" I never read the book, but I never forgot the title.

The implication is that little acts of kindness, and thoughtfulness, and tenderness by a husband *throughout the day* do more to arouse his wife sexually than does a sudden embrace at *the end of the day*.

Husbands need to understand the differences in the sexual impulses of men and women. Men are turned on by sight. Show a husband a little leg, and he goes wild. But women are aroused sloooowly - more gradually.

A stimulating night in bed begins with a kind word at breakfast – a phone call at noon - help with the dishes – putting the kids to bed... "[Women respond more to forethought than to simply foreplay.](#)"

In terms of sexual desire men are like dry leaves, easily combustible. It doesn't take much for them to ignite, but they burn out rather quickly.

But women are like charcoal. It takes longer, and more effort to ignite them. Lighting charcoal can be a delicate job. You *protect* it from the wind, *prime* it with lighter fluid, be *patient* - it may take several matches to kindle a flame. But once it begins to burn it lasts a lot longer than a pile of leaves.

Men, your wife has a deeper threshold for sexual enjoyment than you do, but in order for her to reach it she has to be gently *primed*, *protected*, and *shown patience*. The Song of Solomon teaches married couples that there is a big

difference between *having sex* and *making love*.

Solomon and the Shulamite's night of lovemaking began with the smell of perfume at dinner, but soon they retired to their bridal chambers.

She says in verse 13 **"A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts."** Oriental women often slept with a bag of perfume around their neck. The next day they carried a pleasant odor.

This is her way of saying her husband brought out the best in her. **"My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi."**

Verse 15 Solomon speaks, **"Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes."** A dove was the bird of purity, innocence.

The Shulamite speaks next, **"Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant!"** Both lovers are complimenting each other's appearance.

In verse 17 she mentions, **"Also our bed is green. The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir."** She's looking at the rafters. Obviously, she's lying on her back inviting her husband to bed.

Chapter 2, **"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."**

Some Bible teachers ascribe these words to Solomon, and by inference to Jesus. There are hymns that refer to Jesus as **"the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley."** But this speaks of the Shulamite - not Solomon...

Again she's struggling with her insecurities. In ancient Israel, roses and lilies were common. Rather than \$100 a dozen you picked them anywhere. The Shulamite is bringing her insecurities to bed. *She's just a lily.* Her self doubts would've spoiled the evening if not for Solomon's sensitivity...

I love how he answers her - verse 2, "**Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.**" *What a fantastic line.* She calls herself a lily, but Solomon says "**a lily among thorns.**" Solomon was sensitive to his wife's reservations and insecurities, and was quick to lay them to rest.

The Shulamite speaks of Solomon in verse 3, "**Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.**"

The phrase, "***I sat down in his shade***" – "***his fruit was sweet to my taste***" are sexual metaphors. She's under his limbs... tasting his fruit... use your imagination... Verse 4 "**He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me is love.**" Notice her enjoyment of sex. She's so satisfied with her husband's love she calls their bedroom the "***banqueting house.***"

Shula says in verse 5 "**Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.**" She's exhausted, yet she encourages him on.

Literally, the word "***lovesick***" means "**exhausted from making love.**"

Verse 6 "**His left hand is under my head, and his right hand**

embraces me.” Solomon is acting unselfishly. He’s satisfying his wife. The pile of leaves burned out a long time ago, but the charcoal is still glowing.

And I hope you realize these are not Washington apples she’s talking about, but Solomon’s apples. I’ll bet some of you didn’t know that was in the Bible... As I said earlier, just remember, *God isn’t blushing!*

Let me make two points here... First, why the symbolism, all this talk of **“apples”** and **“raisin cakes?”** When God speaks of sexual expression He doesn’t use *slang terms* which are crass and crude - nor *medical terms* that sound unromantic and mechanical. God describes sexual activity with *poetic symbolism*. **“I sat down in his shade” – “his fruit was sweet to my taste.”** Use a little imagination and this is quite the turn-on!

Ladies, what’s more appealing, **“Hey, get over here and let me inspect the merchandise.”** or... **“Let me visit your garden and enjoy its fruit.”**

Let me suggest you and your spouse try using some poetic language in your love-making. It’ll engage your mind and activate your imagination. And the most vital sexual organ for husbands and wives is their brain.

If your sex life has become bland why not spice it up with some verbal stimulation. Don’t talk *dirty*, talk *descriptive*. Develop some clean, poetic - yet suggestive language that’ll help convey your desires... *I dare you!*

And here’s the second point... Throughout these verses the Shulamite is complementing her husband’s lovemaking

skills... *This is so smart.*

Ladies, if you want a manly husband treat him like a man. Nothing will reinforce his masculinity more than knowing he satisfies you sexually.

After this romantic encounter with her husband, the Shulamite warns her single friends in verse 7, “**I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.**” She’s saying wait until marriage to stir up sexual passions.

Here’s what the Shulamite would say if she were here tonight. Sex is hot *and* it’s holy. It’s sizzling *and* it’s spiritual. It’s giddy *and* it’s godly.

But it comes with a warning label. Sex is good, but it becomes harmful when it’s engaged in outside of a lifelong marital commitment.

Three times in the Song — 2:7, 3:5, 8:4 — the Shulamite tells her unmarried maidens not to incite sexual passion until after marriage.

Sex is like a nuclear explosion, once you've lost control it's awfully hard to stop the reaction. Beware of the power of sex. God didn't design our bodies to reach peak arousal – then suddenly, slam on the brakes.

This why heavy petting and sexual contact before marriage is harmful... You thought it was bad because it could lead to intercourse – and that's an immediate danger. But the real damage it does is to teach a person *how not to have intercourse* – how to get to the *brink*, and not *drink*.

It's like learning to drive with your foot on the brake.

Your body wasn't designed to engage to rev up the hormones - then kill the engine. When that's done over and over it teaches the body unnatural responses - dysfunctions that interfere with intimacy after you're married.

When God says no to premarital sexual intimacy He isn't being a killjoy He's trying to preserve for your marriage the highest and holiest joys.

In verse 8 Shula flashes back to their courtship, and the day Solomon proposed. **"The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."** She admired the way he walked.

"My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; he is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice." He surprised her with his visit. He called to her through her latticed window.

"My beloved spoke, and said to me: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." They're dating. He's courting her and trying to woo her love.

The Shulamite is reliving the initial love they shared with each other.

In Revelation 2:4-5 Jesus warns the church at Ephesus, **"I have this against you, that you have left your first love."** And this is a danger for believers today – we can lose the initial passion we had for the Lord.

The intensity of our love for Jesus can fade. Shula didn't want this to happen in her marriage. We can guard against it in our Christian life.

The Shulamite says in verse 11, "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!"

During the winter, travel was restricted. Solomon had been unable to visit. But with the spring thaw she expects her sweetheart's arrival.

Verse 14 "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely." During those long winter absences, the Shulamite had longed to see Solomon. She knew he'd come.

And I suppose today is our winter. At least physically we're separated from our King, but we too long for the day when He'll return for us. Let's be as confident and eager to see Jesus as Shula was to see Solomon.

In verse 15 we have a guest appearance. The Shulamite's brothers chime in with a warning, "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Since the Shulamite's family owned a vineyard these brothers knew about the little foxes.

They slipped through cracks in the wall, or holes in the fence, and ate the grapes. Be warned... little foxes can devastate large vineyards.

This is also true in marriage. It's often the little stuff – the

sarcasm, and slights, and rudeness, and misunderstandings, and insensitivities – that eat at the marriage. Minor issues pile up. Major damage is done.

Couples need to watch out for the little foxes that spoil the vine!

In verse 16, the Shulamite responds, “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” She loves Solomon and he loves her. She wanted to marry him.

“He feeds his flock among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether.”

Apparently, Solomon proposed, and desired to return to Jerusalem, with an answer. But before she accepts she wants to sleep on her decision. *“Until the day breaks...”*

Yet it didn’t take that long. She says in chapter 3, “By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him. “I will rise now,” I said, “And go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love. “I sought him, but I did not find him. The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, “Have you seen the one I love?”

Rather than wait for daybreak, she struck out at night to find Solomon.

“Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me.” Here’s a beautiful picture of the commitment involved in marriage – *“I held him and would not let him go...”* True love never let’s go.

And this also depicts a Christian's devotion to Christ. I hope when you embraced Jesus you did so with the intention of never letting go.

Verse 5 "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases."

In ancient Israel when a groom paid the bridal price, he toasted his bride – then he left to prepare a place for him and his bride to live.

This is what Jesus did. At the last Supper He toasted the Church. He told His disciples, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Then Jesus returned to heaven, where today He's preparing a place for us. According to John 14, when it's ready, He'll return to take us home.

This is what Solomon did. He went to Jerusalem to prepare the palace for his new queen. Then he came back to Lebanon to retrieve his bride.

In verse 6 the Shulamite recalls her wedding night. She still sees her bridegroom coming down the road for her in his oriental limo... "Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders?"

Behold, it is Solomon's couch, with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night." Until now she had only known Solomon as a

shepherd, but here comes as a king!

This will be our reaction when Jesus returns. Our Lord appeared the first time as the Good Shepherd, but He'll come again as King of kings.

Verse 9 “Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin: he made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.”

Solomon’s “*couch*” was a “*palanquin*” – a covered bed carried on poles.

It was a mobile bedroom – an oriental version of a customized van - with stereo, opaque glass, and carpeted bed. This is the vehicle you would never, ever allow your unmarried daughter to step foot in.

The court ladies from Jerusalem had lined the bed with flower pedals and scented powders. Orientals believe the art of lovemaking should include the stimulation of all five senses. The environment mattered.

Solomon made sure the honeymoon environment was as exciting, and stimulating, and soothing as possible. His *couch* showed that he *cared*.

Husbands realize when it comes to your wife's arousal, environment matters. When men are aroused all that exists in the world are the two sheets and his wife. For the guy, sex is a time to "block out"... But for a wife, sex is a time to "*take in*"... Thus, she's aware of her surroundings.

Are the clothes picked up? Can the kids hear what we're doing? Are the lights just right? Are the dishes done? The

husband could care less about the dishes. I'd just as soon throw the dishes out and buy all new dishes.

A smart lover selects the right time... eliminates distractions... prepares a romantic environment... He doesn't fight his wife on these issues. He plays by her rules and makes the environment as enticing as possible.

This was the environment Solomon created. It was sensory overload.

Listen to this description of what you might find if you stepped into his honeymoon limo... "The wall would be lined with beautiful linen and satin curtains which were coated with scented powders to make the room smell erotic. The bed sheets were dusted with scented powders as was the clothing... Their bodies were anointed with scented lotions.

To top it all off, they probably burned incense, and thus the whole room was filled with smoke. In fact, we probably would've choked!"

Husbands, you could probably start with a scaled-down version.

Draw a warm bubble bath, and let your wife soak - while you do dishes and put the kids to bed. Prep the bedroom with soft lights, romantic music, a scented candle. Give your girl a massage with soothing lotion. Try this once a week for three months, and tell me if you like the results...

Solomon created just the right atmosphere for him and his bride.

Chapter 3 closes, "Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and see

King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart.”

Solomon’s palanquin departs for Jerusalem and the honeymooners head to bed... We eavesdrop in on their conversation in chapter 4...