

Solomon on Sex - Give Me a Kiss
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Good morning Faith family. My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. We are in our second week studying the Song of Solomon. Last week we set the stage by looking at how our culture twists sex. We learned a twisted understanding of our sexuality is not just a cultural problem, but it is also something the church has done. This morning, I will introduce the Song of Solomon, then we will put our finger in the text and start studying it. We will finish up by Cindy joining me on stage to answer two more of the questions you submitted on the Solomononsex.com website.

Why are we studying this book?

One of the questions people ask me is, “Why we are studying the Song of Solomon?” The reason is simple. Much of the counseling we do in the church office pertains to the issues of sex, love and marriage. They are huge issues in our culture. The Song of Solomon is an entire book devoted to these issues. With the issues we deal with everyday, it seems foolish to ignore this book of the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16 says all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable, that includes the Song of Solomon. It is in the Bible. God inspired it. God put it in the Bible because we need to study it. Unfortunately, many good Bible teachers won't touch it because some parts make them feel uncomfortable. That is unfortunate. Fortunately, it will not keep us from studying it. Here are some additional reasons we are studying it.

- 1) **The culture desperately needs to hear the truth about sex, love and marriage.** Everybody is teaching about sex and love *but* the church. Most people think Dr. Ruth knows more about sex, love and marriage than God does. The church has been silent on this issue too long.
- 2) **Silence on sex is sinful.** To leave you ignorant on this would be sinful on my part. Let me be candid. As a young man, my pastor never preached on this stuff. I wish he had. If he did, I wouldn't have made as many mistakes in this area as I did. I believe silence in this area is sinful. It is information we need to have to honor God. That is why I am teaching on it.
- 3) **To not study this book, because it doesn't feel spiritual enough, is to say some parts of the Bible are more important than others.** It is creating a canon within the canon. We need to hear all of the Bible, not just the parts we like best. To ignore an extremely practical book like Song of Solomon is to play favorite with Bible books. All of the books of the Bible are profitable and needed for spiritual health.

How is this book put together?

In church history, to make this book more comfortable for church life and take some of the passion out of it, some Bible teachers developed a way of teaching it called the *allegorical method*. They said the Song of Solomon was just an allegory to teach us about the relationship of Christ and his church. They said the book had nothing to do with sex, love, and marriage but it was all about spiritual issues.

Are they wrong? There are some elements of the Song of Solomon that teach us about the relationship between Christ and the church, but that is not the *primary* purpose. That is the *secondary* purpose. Primarily this book talks about a man and his wife. It paints a picture of what a satisfying God-honoring marriage should look like. We will come back to this allegorical stuff later in the series for some laughs. At this point, I just want you to be aware of it.

Since this book is poetry, there is a little mystery in how it is put together, what is happening when, and the specific identity of the main characters. Some of you, who are more scholarly, can study up on the ways scholars believe the book might be structured. I see it as a series of love songs between a man and his wife. They are great song writers. They are singing to one another. They are writing poetry to one another, and they use metaphors and images to keep the song safe for children, but with a little adult imagination, you can see the fuller meaning.

While some of you are nervous that we are studying this book as a church, just so you know, the Jews read this every year at Passover. They would get together at the pub and sing these love songs. If it was good enough for them every year, it should be good enough for us once in a lifetime.

In the book, we find three main characters. There is the man, which I believe is King Solomon. He is mentioned six times. There is a woman, who is his wife. We don't know her name. She is from the region of Shulam. Many scholars speculate about who she is. If I had to choose somebody, I would choose Abishag. We first meet Abishag when she was brought in to be the 24-

hour-care nurse for David, Solomon's father, as he was dying. She was poor. She was from the region the woman in the Song of Solomon came from, the region of Shulam. We don't know for sure it is Abishag. We do know this woman was also poor and came from the same region she did.

The third group in this story are the backup singers. They come on the scene and sing a line or two. That may sound weird but every woman has a group of lady friends, and the Shulamite bride was no different. She has her girlfriends who talk about the new man in her life and talk about her relationship. That is the way it works today and that is the way it worked back then. Guys, a woman always comes with her friends.

The title of this book is helpful. Sometimes this book is called the Song of Solomon. In the first line it is called "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." This means the song was his best song. In the Bible we have the king of kings, the holy of holies, and the Lord of lords. This is the song of songs. The Bible tells us Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. This song is the one that went platinum. It is the one that topped the charts.

Something else you should notice is the book is not necessarily in chronological order. It is called a *lyric idyll*. This is a kind of poetry where speeches and events are not necessarily in chronological order but they are put together like snapshots in a photo album. For example, one song will be a snapshot from when they were dating. Another song will be a snapshot from their honeymoon. Another song will be a snapshot from their vacation in the country. It is a book of lyrical snapshots from their relationship.

Why listen to Solomon on marriage?

A number of you wondered why we would study the Song of Solomon and listen to Solomon's advice on marriage. If anybody messed up in marriage, it was Solomon. 1 Kings 11:4 tells us he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Concubines are the ancient equivalent of girlfriends on the side. Solomon turned into an ancient version of a porn addict. He just couldn't get enough women into his life.

Let me give you my thoughts on this.

1. **I believe the Song of Solomon was written early in Solomon's reign before he fell into the sin of lust.** I believe Ecclesiastes was written late in his reign after he looked back on life and realized how foolishly he lived. In Ecclesiastes 9:9 Solomon tells us to enjoy the wife of our youth, not to follow him in marrying 1,000 wives who look like youths. Even though Solomon didn't finish well, that doesn't mean God cannot use him to speak to us on marriage. He was still the wisest man to ever live. That qualifies him for something.
2. **We need to remember that God can use us in spite of our weaknesses, not just because of our strengths.** Think about this with Solomon's father, David. He was a murderer and an adulterer, yet God still wrote many of the Psalms through him and used him in a mighty way. He was called a man after God's own heart. Like his father, God chose to use Solomon in spite of himself to give God's Word to us in the areas of marriage, love and sexuality.

3. **We need to remember God is the one who put this book in the Bible, not Solomon.** God gave it to us. He is the one who inspired it and put it in the Bible, not Solomon. God says we need to listen to it.

Guess who plays offense, not defense?

One last thing before we put our finger in the text. I want to ask the ladies a question. Who do you think speaks first in this book? Who do you think speaks last? Who do you think speaks most often? Who do you think is the sexual aggressor? Who is the one with the desires? Is it the man or the woman?

Most Christian women think guys play offense and their job is to play defense. They think the guy's job is to initiate everything and the wife's job is to tell him she has a headache. In the Song of Solomon, the woman is the one who is on the offense. Christian wives, you are totally welcome to play offense in this area with your husband. This is biblical precedence. (Husbands, if you try to play defense, I will personally put you under church discipline.)

In this book, she speaks first. She speaks last. She speaks most. Some of you women think this makes her dirty. No, in the bonds of marriage, this makes her godly. Ladies, having desires doesn't make you dirty, having passionate desires for your husband makes you a godly woman. What I am trying to tell you ladies is you have permission to be on the offense in this area. Let me say this again, in the bonds of marriage, a wife should have and express passions for her husband.

That finishes the on ramp for the book. Let's put our finger in the text.

She wants a kiss.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! Song of Solomon 1:2a (ESV)

She says to him, if you want to kiss me, you could. You could kiss me right now. Most guys are liking this book already. Since we don't just want to read the Bible but put it into practice, if you are married, lean over and give your spouse a little kiss. Don't try to make children. Just be biblical and give a little kiss. If you see someone who is not married trying to give their date a kiss, you have my permission to smack them in the head. This is for married people.

Here are a few things that would be helpful to know about kissing. Kissing is an indicator of a healthy marriage. When you are fighting, you are not kissing. When you are kissing you are not fighting. More kissing equals less fighting. It is also good for kids to see mom and dad kissing. They need to see passion, joy and connection between their mom and dad. That should be their first introduction to the topic of sexuality. Too many kids think they are adopted because they never see mom and dad showing affection. That is just wrong. Cindy and I do a lot of kissing. The kids even give us a hard time when we kiss. They try to squeeze between us because they want to get kissed. Affection in the home doesn't warp a kid but it makes them feel safe and shows them what a healthy relationship should look like.

Kissing is also great in the winter. The swapping of saliva that happens when a couple kisses builds the immune system. A lot of kissing between mom and dad will help them stay healthy for the winter. I know many of you have a hard time remembering to finish the bottle of antibiotics but kissing you will

remember to do. Kissing burns two calories. Kiss more and lose weight. The best part of kissing is that it produces the possibility of burning more than two calories. For a married couple, that is also fun.

...For your love is better than wine; Song of Solomon 1:2 (ESV)

Now I don't drink, and drinking is not wrong. Drunkenness is wrong. For those who struggle with alcohol, drinking is wrong for them. Obviously this lady has tried some wine. Wine has an intoxicating quality to it. You really like it. It makes you feel good. You want more. She says that being with him is like wine. She feels intoxicated by his love.

So here is a great deal. When you are looking to be intoxicated by something, look to the love of your spouse, not the beer bottle. Get married, get intoxicated on marital love and enjoy yourself. Marriage is better than getting drunk or getting high. It is God-glorifying intoxication.

your anointing oils are fragrant; Song of Solomon 1:3 (ESV)

She is simply saying that he smells good. Guys, don't miss this. If you come home from work smelling like a Porta-Potty, take a shower. You need to bath and use soap. Deodorant is also a good idea. If you need to, shave before dinner so you don't look like a cactus.

This guy doesn't just not smell bad, but he smells good. In the ancient world, people didn't take a shower every day so they used anointing oils to cut down on body odor. This was the ancient version of cologne. So guys, this week take your wife with you to go buy some cologne she likes. I don't care if you like it or not, she needs to like it. Use it when you are around her.

This is about guys being presentable to their wives. Brush your teeth, comb your hair, wash your hands before dinner. Don't wear a T-shirt that looks like it was your dog's chew toy. Husbands, this is your job.

Here is your first homework assignment. Husbands, on your way home, ask your wife if there is anything you need to improve on which would help make you more attractive to her. Does she like one eyebrow or two? Does she find the hair in your ears attractive or distracting. Don't get mad at her. Listen to her and do something about it.

...your name is oil poured out; therefore virgins love you. Song of Solomon 1:3 (ESV)

Here she is talking about his character and integrity. Most of the problems in the bedroom are not created or solved in the bedroom. If you are a harsh husband, a lazy husband who just plays video games, a can't-keep-a-job husband, a bass-boat-and-golf-clubs husband, a motorcycles-off-by-himself husband, a foolish husband, a don't-read-the-bible-with-my-kids-or-wife husband then you need to understand that a godly woman will not be attracted to your character. A godly woman doesn't care about the car you drive, how much you make or how expensive of a diamond you can put on her finger. Godly women are attracted to character. They want to say, "That is my husband. He is a great guy. He loves Jesus. He loves me. He loves our kids. He pays the bills. He reads the Bible. He's great, and I love him."

Most women who struggle to be attracted to their husband in the bedroom have that struggle because of their husband's poor character. It is not technique issues gentleman, it is character issues.

Here is your second homework assignment. Gentlemen, on the way home, ask your wife this question: “Is there anything in my character that you find unattractive?” Don’t argue or fight with her. Just let her be honest and tell you the truth. Apologize and change.

Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers. Song of Solomon 1:4 (ESV)

There are only a few ways to make a relationship work. One is to push it and force it. That is using fear, intimidation and retaliation. It is raising your voice. It is cussing. It is threatening, scaring and abusing. That is disgusting. The other way to make a relationship work is carrying it. This is enabling like a co-dependent relationship. It is looking after somebody, carrying somebody. It is more like a parent to a child relationship. She is talking about a different kind of relationship. She says, “Draw me.” This is when Solomon says to her, “You are attractive. You are desirable. You are playful. You are fun to be with.” She wants him to capture her interest and draw her in. She wants to know he is thinking about her. He is looking forward to being with her. During the day she gets a text message letting her know he is excited to be with her. Guys, add some creativity to your life. Add some excitement. Draw your wife in. Text her during the day. Plan a surprise. Tease her in a good way so she is looking forward to it. Give her something to look forward to.

A word from the friends.

We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you. Song of Solomon 1:4 (ESV)

Now the friends kick in. Her girlfriends say that, “He’s a great guy. This is a great relationship. We are excited for both of you.” A whole community and family should be able to come around a couple and be excited for them and their relationship.

She doesn’t like the way she looks.

I am very dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has looked upon me. My mother’s sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept! Song of Solomon 1:5–6 (ESV)

Here comes the first marriage problem. She doesn’t like what she sees in the mirror. This lady’s father is never mentioned in the book. I think he died and she was raised by a single mom. She comes from a poor family. She had to go outside and work for a living.

If you were to see this woman on the job she has sweat on her brow and her hair in a ponytail. She has dirt under her finger nails and veins showing in her forearms. She is darkly tanned from being in the sun all day. She is saying, “I don’t meet the cultural standard of beauty that Solomon is accustomed to.” In that day, it was sexy *not* to have a tan. The real beauties of the day were of fair complexion. A fair complexion showed a lady was affluent. She didn’t have to work. The poor gals would have dark skin. That is the exact opposite of today. We spend money for a tan. They spent money not to have a tan. She says, “Solomon, I don’t look like all the women you see on the magazine covers at the

check-out line of Wal-Mart. I am not a fair-skinned lady. I do not have that stunning magazine-cover appearance.”

What does this tell us? Every woman is insecure about her appearance. In truth, she is beautiful enough to attract the attention of the king but when she looks in the mirror, all she sees is her flaws. She doesn't like her body image. She wishes she could change the shape of her nose, the color of her skin. In spite of what she sees, she is beautiful to her husband.

This is a good word to husbands. Your wife needs to be your standard of beauty, not the airbrushed lady on the magazine cover at the grocery store. That being said, let me take a moment to guard against the other extreme. Some people think that since they should be their spouse's standard of beauty, that means they shouldn't take care of themselves. They put a mudpack on their face and forget to take it off. They stick their tongue in an electrical socket to do their hair in the morning. They tell their husband that is his new standard of beauty. In the mean time, the husband looks at his wife and screens like he just saw an R-rated horror flick. Let me just give a few pointers for husbands and wives to look their best.

1. **Be a good steward of your body.** I am not talking about body shape or size.

I am talking about the body you have. Do you try to take care of it or destroy it?

2. **Eat the right stuff.** Ding Dongs, Ho-Ho's and Twinkies are not the healthiest.

Are you eating products where you can actually read the ingredients on the label?

3. **Get exercise.** Are you trying to keep yourself healthy? Taking good care of yourself is very attractive to your spouse.
4. **Make a sincere effort to be attractive to your spouse.** Let me tell you what this means in our house. It means I exercise. I eat my oatmeal and eggs for breakfast, take my vitamins and eat wheat bread for lunch. I get my hair cut to the length my wife likes. On my day off, I open my closet and ask Cindy what she would like me to wear. When we go clothes shopping, I ask Cindy if she likes the clothing I pick out, if not, it goes back on the shelf.

Some of you pride yourself on wearing an old shirt from a gas station that has somebody else's name embroidered on it. You pride yourself in saving money by patching the holes in your jeans with duct tape. Let me be honest with you - it won't produce the kind of reaction you want from your wife. You don't have to be on a magazine cover to be attractive but we need to work on this.

Here is another piece for homework. On the way home, ask one another, "What do you like me to dress in?" "What can't you stand in my wardrobe?" "What would you like me to wear when I am home around you?" I know that will be a fun topic of discussion. Don't fight. Just listen, learn and change.

So this women doesn't look like other women do, but the king is attracted to her. She tries to look her best for the king, not wishing she was somebody else.

Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who veils herself beside the flocks of your companions? Song of Solomon 1:7 (ESV)

She says, “You shepherd the nation of Israel. You are busy all day long. You are looking after lots of people and lots of things. Your schedule is packed.” She has a couple of options on how to handle the busy man who is working late and tied up in projects. She could whine. She could give him the cold shoulder when he comes home. She could be nasty to him with sarcastic comments. Thankfully, she has a more positive plan. She says, “I know you have a lunch break. Tell me where you are going to be so I can meet you there. If I get dressed pretty and start asking for you around the office because I don’t know where you are, people are going to think I am a prostitute. Let me know where you will be so I can meet you.”

This is completely applicable. Perhaps, you are a stay-at-home mom and your husband is working late hours under stress. You know he has a lunch break so you make plans to bring him lunch and be with him. You get dressed up so you look sharp and his eyes get big as saucers when he sees you. Trust me, it will be a huge encouragement to a stressed husband when his wife does that.

Here is your final homework. Ladies, text this to your husband, “I was reading the Song of Solomon. I want to apply what I learned. Can we meet over your lunch hour?” Then hit send. Trust me. Just getting that text message will make a lasting impression your husband won’t forget.

Questions and answers

It is time for us to get to the Q&A portion of the message so I am going to invite my wife up.

The outline and some of the data for this message were taken from a sermon delivered by Mark Driscoll on the same text. The sermon can be found in an ebook. (Driscoll, M. (2009). Mark Driscoll Sermon Archive 2005-2009. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.) Mark has reformatted this material and expanded upon it in a recent book, (Driscoll, M., & Driscoll, G. (2012). Real marriage: The truth about sex, friendship & life together. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.)



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