

and work for myself, and myself alone! And now, I find myself dependent on this little woman in my life. Brethren, that weakness is a blessing. For **true love brings dependency on your love**. Suddenly, the idea of spending the night apart it a tragedy. And a night in separate beds is a guarantee of a fitful sleep. That may sound terrible to those who haven't experienced true help-meet love. But oh, the reunion!

SS 3.4-5 ~ *Scarcely had I passed them when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her who conceived me. ⁵I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.*

EX: Following her nightmare, she's determined to find him—and at last, she does. And once she does, she won't let him go. She takes him into the inner room of her mother's tent (the same practice followed by Isaac with Rebekah in **GN 24.67**)—she will not let another day pass without him. She is committed to a life forever beside her **Groom**.

AP: True love is not a contract made between two partners, choosing to walk together for a time so long as they're heading in the same direction. It's a union—a dependency. From the moment love begins, through marriage, until death parts us, we are joined together firmly and indivisibly. *He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."* (**MT 19.4-6**)

EH 5.22-33 ~ *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

CONCLUSION

MUSIC/Love Songs/Top 50 Billboard Hits – Top 10

Perhaps one of these songs was “your song” with your beloved. Or perhaps you have or had another. But its not uncommon to have great love sung about in great song. But the greatest such song was written by the wisest of men: the **Song of Songs**.

SS 8.13-14 ~ *O you who dwell in the gardens, with companions listening for your voice; let me hear it. ¹⁴Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.*

The **Bride** and the **Groom** stand as an example of what true love ought to be: **a banquet**—a joyous feast both feel blessed and humbled to have the opportunity to partake in; **an adventure**—where the two boldly face the world together, bringing one another out against the **“little foxes”** that would go against them, completing one another; **a dependency**—where two individuals melt into one: needing and strengthening one another: loving and respecting each other.

SONG OF SOLOMON/Jewish Views/Marriage to Jehovah

INVITATION

#696 [Exp-OTW]

01/26/2026

The Song of Songs

PC Pchd _____

SS 1.1-3.5

QUESTION: What is real love like?

TRN TO SS 1

INTRODUCTION (SS 1.1)

ILL—Greatest Hits Albums (one of my favorite things to get back in the 90s; couldn't afford to buy all the albums: especially when half the songs were “skippable”) I still vividly remember the **“Greatest Hits”** albums I had for *Alabama*, *Aerosmith*, and *The Eagles*—each track a certified **“bop”**. But they all had one that was my favorite.

1KN 4.29-34 ~ *And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, ³⁰so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. ³²He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. ³³He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. ³⁴And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.*

3,000 proverbs and **1005 songs**—which was the greatest? We might argue about the greatest of his proverbs, but among Jewish tradition, there was no argument of the greatest of his songs: *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.* (**SS 1.1**)

BACKGROUND

SONG OF SOLOMON/Jewish Views/The Holy of Holies of Scripture

Many different interpretations have arisen about the book over the years. To some, it's an allegory of the love of Christ for His church (in fact, many of our favorite hymns are inspired by this interpretation). To others, it's nothing more than a poem (oddly graphic at times) about a husband and his bride. In truth, both touch on the truth while both falling short of it. For ultimately, the message of the book is informed by its subject matter, while still reaching higher. This **Song of Songs** envisions and describes **true love**—in all of its majesty.

We often speak of communal love—the love of a brother and sister towards one another in Christ, or the love of the disciple for God, or most commonly, the love of God towards all of us. But there is another love that the Bible speaks of often, and yet, we often neglect: almost as though we think it is inappropriate or unworthy of discussion in our services: the love of a man for a woman, and a woman for a man—true love.

Yesterday was Valentines Day—a holiday often associated with chocolates and roses. Ideally, it celebrates love: true love. And yet, to those not in a relationship, it can be a holiday that feels empty and hollow.

HOLIDAYS/Galentines Day/Origin

Ultimately, these **“secondary holidays”** tend to have, at their center, a distaste for Valentines Day, itself. I understand that instinct: during my youth, I spent many a year single on February 14th—and it can be easy to just want to ignore the holiday and the romance that is often found at its center. It can be easy to think of the holiday, and the romance it centers, as nothing more than a game or a scam.

But I can appreciate the beauty of a song even if I'm incapable of singing it—the majesty of a painting, even if I am unable to paint it. And we ought to be able to appreciate the gift of love described in **the Song of Songs** whether we are directly experiencing it or not. For, in truth, love is an amazing gift from the Father. **Why else would He have provided us a book all about the topic?**

The poetic book is split between a dialogue between many people: the Bride—the Shulamite woman, her Groom—Solomon, the brothers of the bride, and “the daughters of

Jerusalem". But contrary to our expectations, the majority of the language does not come from the Groom—Solomon, himself—but from the Bride.

SONG OF SOLOMON/THEME/Story Summary

In these opening chapters of the book, we see three truths about true love. It isn't a game—it isn't a scam. The gift of love given by God, sung by Solomon in the **Song of Songs**, true love is something else, entirely.

BD1: True Love is Like a Banquet (SS 1.2-2.7)

The Bride begins the book: *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!*

For your love is better than wine; ³ your anointing oils are fragrant; your name is oil poured out; therefore virgins love you. ⁴ Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers. (SS 1.2-4) She points to three things: the taste, the smell, and the sound of her love. She describes her love of him using the imagery of wine and oils—the symbols of wealth and luxury. And to her, the groom is greater than the greatest wine and the finest perfumes and oils. There is nothing—no sign of wealth or blessing—that stands up against her love. He is **like a banquet** for the senses—all of her longs for all of him.

But alongside of this, she can't help but wonder as she looks at herself. *I am very dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. ⁶ 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! ⁷ 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? (SS 1.5-7)* She didn't think very highly of herself. Today, we praise and work to have a good tan—but it hasn't always been that way. In the ancient east, to have a tan was a sign of being a worker—low class. She's looking at herself, and she doesn't think herself worthy of the wonder of her love. Instead, she appeals to him: *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? (SS 1.5-7)* "Where can I find you? For I can't wait to be with you again!"

Then enters the **Groom**: *If you do not know, O most beautiful among women, follow in the tracks of the flock, and pasture your young goats beside the shepherds' tents. ⁹ I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots. ¹⁰ Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels. (SS 1.8-10)* She might see herself as common/unintended: to the Groom, she is the most beautiful—the greatest of all Brides—a **feast for the eyes**.

The **Bride** speaks with joy, again reflecting on the **feast of her Groom**: *While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance. ¹³ My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh that lies between my breasts. ¹⁴ My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi. (SS 1.12-14)* The Bride accepts his view of her with joy: from others, it might seem empty—but from him, it's honest: true. She is the greatest—the most beautiful—to her husband. And he is the greatest—the most beautiful—to his bride.

To the Groom: *Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves. (SS 1.15)* **To the Bride:** *Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly delightful. Our couch is green; ¹⁷ the beams of our house are cedar; our rafters are pine. (SS 1.16-17)*

AP: In these words of this **Bride** and this **Groom**, we see what **true love** should do: it should result in the deepest satisfaction and appreciation of the other. We should look to our wife or our husband with humility and with infatuation: in viewing them as a banquet we are unworthy of partaking in. Sadly, as we spend time with our loves, we can allow that wonder and joy to remain unspoken—but we ought work to declare it: the appreciation of our love as **like a banquet**—one we're joyful at partaking in, and humble at our own unworthiness of.

To the Bride: *Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. (1PT 3.3-4)*

SS 1.2-3a ~ *As a lily among brambles, so is my love among the young women. ³ As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men.*

BD2: True Love is Like an Adventure (SS 2.8-17)

The banquet has come to an end—and as we turn to the next part of their time together, we see the **Bride** continue: *The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. ⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, there he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, looking through the lattice. ¹⁰ My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away, ¹¹ for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. ¹² The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. ¹³ The fig tree ripens its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. ¹⁴ O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. ¹⁵ Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom." (SS 2.8-15)*

EX: The imagery is of play—of experience. The imagery is of the **adventure** that their love and life is, together. And brethren, that's the truth of what true love is: it's **like an adventure**. You desire to experience and to see and to live the world, together. And everything you see is all the greater for seeing it, together. God shows the truth of the matter: that life is better when it is shared.

GN 2.18-24 ~ *Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

AP: It can be tempting as our love ages to separate again: to allow ourselves to be sheltered, alone. Notice that, in this passage, the **Bride** has to be called out to live and to experience the world and its wonders with her **Groom**. But even out on the adventure, there are the dangers: the "*little foxes that spoil the vineyards*"—that spoil the beauty and blessings of love. But in experiencing the **adventure of true love**, the **Bride** and **Groom** are able to grow together, and truly see and experience that which they cannot see alone.

SS 2.16-17 ~ *My beloved is mine, and I am his; he grazes among the lilies. ¹⁷ Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stag on cleft mountains.*

BD3: True Love Brings Dependency on Your Love (SS 3.1-5)

But then, the **Bride** goes to bed. And in her dream, she has a nightmare: *On my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not. ² I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. ³ The watchmen found me as they went about in the city. "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?" (SS 3.4-5)*

EX: I wish I could say I've never had these kinds of nightmares—a nightmare of a fight, of a disaster, of a tragedy. I spent years of my life becoming independent—being able to stand