



STUDY 5 || SONG OF SONGS 8:5-14

# LOVE FOUND

Throughout the Song of Songs we've seen the repeated refrain: 'Do not arouse or awaken love, until it so desires' (2:7, 3:5, 8:4). It's a warning that says 'love is an overwhelming power, both for good and ill, so be careful with it. Have the wisdom and willpower to wait for the right time'. In the last section of this book we come to the climax of the Song and find the appropriate context for love, passion and desire to be let loose.

How do your friends/work colleagues/hollywood define love?

Where do your friends look for examples of 'successful' loving relationships?

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## THE HAPPY COUPLE

**Read Song of Songs 8:5-14.**

1. This final section of the Song has a very similar opening scene to previous sections (2:8-13, 3:6-10). How has the situation changed from previous opening scenes (note the people and their body language)? (v5a)
  
2. What's significant about the place the man has taken his bride (v5b)? What does this suggest about the nature of their relationship now? (cf. v6a)

As we come to the end of the Song we get one final interjection by the friends (v8-9). Seeing the joy and faithfulness of the happily married couple, they ask how they can help *their* younger sisters avoid 'awakening love' before the appropriate context. How to protect their sisters from being an 'open door' (sexual promiscuity) and encourage them to be like a 'wall' (impenetrable to any sexual advances).

3. How can we be helping each other and our 'younger siblings' to keep love and sex in the boundaries the Bible insists on? (Be sensitive to those who may have stumbled in this area - how can you encourage each other?)
  
4. What does the bride boast she has been (v10)? What benefit does this bring to her marriage and her husband?
  
5. Remembering the language of 'vineyard' is a metaphor for a person's body (1:6) and for a place where love can be enjoyed (7:12), what's the woman trying to say by comparing Solomon's vineyard with her own? (v10-12)

6. Reflecting on this final section, and the rest of the Song, why does this book advocate for love and sexual intimacy within the appropriate context? What are the benefits (cf 8:10b)?

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## I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LOVE IS...

As we come to the end of the Song, the erotic language and images we've become accustomed to disappear and are replaced by the language and images of an exclusive relationship. Unlike modern expectations of romance ending in the bedroom, here we see love climaxing not in sex but in an ongoing and faithful relationship. It's a very different view of love from what the world is used to, because it's a love imitated from a very different source.

7. At the climax of the Song we're given a description of love itself (v6-7). What features are emphasised?

From your memory of previous weeks, why would these things be emphasised?

8. The language used in these verses reflects the language the rest of the Old Testament uses to describe the relationship and love God has for his people (note the footnote in the NIV which translates verse 6 as "...it burns like a flaming fire, like the very flame of the LORD"). **Read the Old Testament passages in the sidebar.** How is God's love described in these verses?

How were the Israelites to respond to God's love?

How is the love story seen in Song of Songs a reflection of the love story between God and Israel?

### ***A Love Story: Exodus 20:5-6***

<sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to [any idol] or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> but showing *love* to a thousand generations of those who *love* me and keep my commandments.

### ***Deuteronomy 4:23-24***

<sup>23</sup> Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. <sup>24</sup> For the Lord your God is a consuming *fire*, a *jealous* God.

### ***Deuteronomy 6:5-6***

<sup>5</sup> *Love* the Lord your God with all your *heart* and with all your soul and with all your *strength*. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your *hearts*.

**God's Love Song - Hosea 2:14-23**

<sup>14</sup> “Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. <sup>15</sup> There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. <sup>16</sup> “In that day,” declares the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’... <sup>19</sup> I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. <sup>20</sup> I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord... <sup>23</sup> I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’”

**Promise of Love:  
Romans 5:8**

<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Romans 8:35-39**

<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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## AN ENDURING LOVE STORY

The exclusive and faithful love displayed in Song of Songs is just a taste of the love God has for his people in the Old Testament. It's a love that was meant to be reciprocated by the nation of Israel in their exclusive covenant relationship. But that doesn't turn out too well. The people of Israel are unfaithful and forget their first love (cf. Jer 2; Ezk 16). But God remains faithful. Despite their unfaithfulness God seeks to woo back his wife into a renewed covenant (**See Hosea 2 in the Sidebar**).

This renewed covenant and marriage is ultimately seen in Jesus. As we've already seen, the human marriage relationship is a visible, concrete metaphor for Christ's love for the church (Eph 5:32). In Jesus we have a greater and more enduring intimacy than can be found in sex, relationships and marriage. In Jesus we find complete fidelity, respect and love. In Jesus, love is stronger than death, it's jealousy more enduring than the grave. It burns like a blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love, rivers cannot wash it away.

**Read Romans 5:8 & 8:35-39.**

9. As Christians we have entered into an exclusive covenant relationship with Jesus. What guarantee do we have that Jesus will always love us?

How does this faithful, enduring and guaranteed love in Jesus encourage your heart?

10. In what ways can we be faithful to him?

What are some things in your life that might be 'luring' you away from Jesus? What are some practical steps you can put in place to remove those temptations?