

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2019: *Family Seasons*

Lesson 6 “The Royal Love Song”

Read for this week’s study

Song of Solomon; Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 7:3–5; John 17:3; 1 John 1:9; Romans 1:24–27; Galatians 5:24.

Memory Text

“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame” (Song of Solomon 8:6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Indivisible Life
- III. The Loves of the Love Song
- IV. A Loving Knowledge
- V. Love at the Right Time
- VI. Safeguarding the Creator’s Gift
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Song of Solomon 8:6. In what ways are love and jealousy opposites? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Based on the following passages, how does the Bible view the human body (Genesis 2:7; Psalm 63:1; 84:2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)? How does Song of Solomon reveal a positive view of the human body (1:2, 13; 2:6; 5:10-16; 7:1-9)? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. How are different expressions of love described in Song of Solomon (1:2, 13; 2:10-13, 16; 3:11; 4:1-7; 5:16; 6:6; 7:1-9; 8:6-7)? How does this kind of intimacy relate to the kind of intimacy we can have with God? What does the very existence of human sexuality tell us about God? (Monday’s lesson)
4. How does the Song of Solomon present the idea of mutuality in the intimate life of a married couple (4:7 – 5:1)? How is Paul’s instruction in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 similar? How does the description of human sexuality as “knowing” enrich our understanding

- of our relationship with God (Genesis 4:1, 25; 1 Samuel 1:19; Luke 1:34; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:3)? Based on 1 John 4:20, is it possible to have a closer relationship with God than you are capable of having with other people? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. What is Song of Solomon referring to in the following passages (4:12, 16; 5:1; 8:8-10)? Is the biblical prohibition on pre-marital sex just an ancient taboo or does such activity have serious real-life consequences? What are some of those consequences? What encouragement does the Bible offer to those who have compromised their sexuality earlier in life (John 1:9; Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 55:7; John 8:11)? (Wednesday's lesson)
 6. What attitude does Scripture take toward sexual practices not in keeping with the Creator's plan (Leviticus 20:7-21; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20)? What do we do with such texts today? Why do you think God gave them? How should these texts be read by victims of abuse? How should Christians relate to their sexuality and to that of others in a fallen world (Romans 8:1-14; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:3-10; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8)? How should the church relate to gay, lesbian and transgender people? (Thursday's lesson)
 7. What are the building blocks of lifelong relationships? How does Solomon's description of his wife as perfect provide a model for us today (4:1-5; 6:8; 7:1-9)? What does Paul add in Ephesians 5:28-29? (Friday's lesson)
 8. How important are our words in building up or tearing down a marriage relationship? See James 1:26 and 3:5-11. (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The traditional Jewish view of this book is that Solomon represented God, the woman represented God's people, the experience was the Exodus from Egypt, which Jews look back on as the greatest evidence of God's love for them. And they were accustomed to reading the Song of Solomon on the eighth day of Passover. Now that's significant, as far back as tradition goes. On the eighth day of Passover when the Jews were remembering how much God loved them and came to set them free, they read this book about love. Now the *King James Version*, which some of you may have tonight, indicates in the headings that the book represents Christ's love for the church. But there's no authority to those headings, except to the extent that they tell the truth, but they certainly represent a long tradition.

Our question is, what does the book represent? And how do we know for sure? Does Ellen White ever comment on it? Well, in *Mount of Blessing* on pp. 79, 100, and maybe another place or two, she does refer to it, but in a very general way. She speaks of Christ as "the Fairest

among ten thousand” and so on. Now sometimes we have assumed that the Rose of Sharon was Christ. There’s a quartet number. Have you ever sung it? “Rose of Sharon.” However, in Song of Solomon, who is the rose of Sharon? The girl. Not the king; he doesn’t fit. And so we should really stop that quartet. Except it’s a lovely thought; it just isn’t biblical at that point. The rose of Sharon is the girl that the king fell in love with.

Is God’s love ever compared to marriage in the Bible? The whole book of Hosea is about this, where God asks Hosea to marry a woman who may have already been a prostitute; but she certainly became one later. And this is an illustration of how God feels about his straying children. Other places—Isaiah 54—where it’s likened to marriage. God says, “I’m your husband” in Jeremiah 3:14, 20. We’ll see that the next week where it’s likened to marriage. 2 Corinthians 11. Ephesians 5. God uses these illustrations. Jesus even said, “How like a mother hen I’d like to have gathered you as my little chickens. God is looking for illustrations to show how he feels about his children. And very commonly he uses the illustration of marriage.

Well, is Song of Solomon a story about the love of two people that is to be read as an allegory? That is, each thing represents something, like Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. As you read along, that might go for awhile, until you come to chapter 6 and it says there are how many wives? Sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number. And by then you’re ready to throw up your hands and say, “I can’t make all these details fit!” Well, maybe we shouldn’t be trying. It seems to be a story about the king who fell in love with a girl who, it would appear, had not come with one of those treaties, but a girl of his own choosing. He really loved her, and she loved him. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon*, recorded January, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/31MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/32MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I like Song of Solomon so many ways. The fact that God would put a book that seems at least, if not more, at least just to celebrate human love. And it’s not prostitution. It’s not perversion. A king who had all those wives, this is a book about one man and one woman loving each other. And they really admired each other. They can’t get over saying nice things about each other, in terms that were appropriate at the time. And God puts it right in the *middle* of the Bible. He not only inspired it, he preserved it. If he didn’t like it, don’t you think he could have lost it through the years? How easy to drop out this little book! No, it was there when Jesus grew up and said, “Everything in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms is of authority.” Authority about what?

Well in the end, what do you think of Solomon's suggestion? The most important thing really is to be happy, to be able to eat and drink and enjoy life with your wife. That's what he picks out. Because, you know, in the end if you've won a thousand souls but you can't eat, you can't drink, and there's no one you love, what's life worth? So I love the suggestion that the relationship between us people, and the ability to wake up in the morning, find you are still alive and have the prospects of another day, and your breakfast still tastes good, and you can still see out the window and enjoy the view, and you have at least one person, maybe more, that you love and loves you, you can live a long time on that. And God says, "I made you that way. And if all your theology and all your Sabbath keeping doesn't help you enjoy life and experience feelings like this for someone who is very special to you, then it really hasn't done you a whole lot of good."

So what does it say about God, do you think, that he would put this in the middle? At least our theology should not get so far out of sight that it's not related to life again. As in the book of Proverbs. Isn't it interesting that books like Proverbs and Song of Solomon are right here in the middle? So now, let's go back into our theology, but let's not forget the kind of person our God is. Does it even mean that if he could create us capable of such feelings, that he, as our infinite God, is capable of even greater feelings? Does God feel keenly about his people? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon, recorded January, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/31MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/32MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

This raises the significant point, how could it be said that Israel does not know God? Who else knew God so well? Look at all the prophets, and all their marvelous pictures of God. Jeremiah said, "I'm glad to know God as I do." But the way many people knew God those days was not knowing God in the special, biblical sense. That is, to know God as a friend; to even know God intimately as a husband and a wife know each other. The Bible says, "Adam knew Eve" his wife. And as a result, they didn't learn each other's names. They had a baby. Elsewhere, God says of Israel, "Thee only have I known." He knew all the rest. But he knew *them* in a special way. And when those disappointed saints find that they are not acceptable in the kingdom, and they plead, "Lord, Lord. Open unto us." He says, "Go away. I never knew you." Why, he knew the hairs on their head, but he did not know them as friends. And friendship is the very essence of the relationship God wishes to have with his people. If Israel had really *known* God, they would have been better friends. They would have been jealous for his reputation. And they would have been better people themselves, as were the wonderful prophets in the Old Testament

who wrote so well of God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2, "What Went Wrong In God's Universe?" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

God has given us these precious things as an expression of His love. The Lord is a lover of the beautiful, and to please and gratify us He has spread before us the beauties of nature, even as an earthly parent seeks to place beautiful things before the children that he loves. The Lord is always pleased to see us happy. Sinful as it is with all its imperfections, the Lord has lavished upon this earth the useful and the beautiful. The beautiful tinted flowers tell of His tenderness and love. They have a language of their own, reminding us of the Giver. {TDG 241.3}

Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences (MS 78, 1901). {1BC 1081.2}

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth (RH Feb. 11, 1902). {1BC 1081.3}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

Next to the angelic beings, the human family, formed in the image of God, are the noblest of His created works. God desires them to become all that He has made it possible for them to be, and to do their very best with the powers He has given them. {MH 397.1}

God created man a superior being; he alone is formed in the image of God, and is capable of partaking of the divine nature, of cooperating with his Creator and executing His plans. {SD 7.4}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead

men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. . . . {HP 8.3}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of his love in giving "his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our Heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 5}

Jesus came into the world to illustrate the character of God in His own life, and He swept back the misrepresentations that Satan had originated, and revealed the glory of God. It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God. The unbelief of men was deep seated, and yet they could not resist the testimony of His God-like example, and His deeds of love and truth. {SD 139.3}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship Him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them spitefully. In this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted His teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul. {FE 177.1}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented Him as a God who delights in the sufferings of His creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone human reason. {CT 27.2}

Heaven, looking down and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to the earth. Through the misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character. Those in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and He must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of spiritual darkness and gloom enveloped the world. The Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for He is the

light of the world. By His presence He could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God.—First published Nov. 17, 1891. {CT 28.1}

The infinite love of God has been manifested in the gift of His only-begotten Son to redeem a lost race. Christ came to the earth to reveal to men the character of His Father, and His life was filled with deeds of divine tenderness and compassion. {PP 469.2}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, “I have declared unto them Thy name,”—“merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,”—“that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look,” and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. He ascended on high as a personal Saviour, and will come again as He ascended to heaven—a personal Saviour (MS 86, 1898). {6BC 1054.2}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. {TMK 38.4}

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul. {COL 206.1}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, “I believe it; it *is* so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.” {SC 51.2}

Jesus says, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24. There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we *have* received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1. {SC 51.3}

To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, “A new heart will I give unto thee.” The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, and heart, and soul. The apostle says, “And we have the mind of Christ.” {RC 303.4}

God does not leave His erring children who are weak in faith, and who make mistakes. The Lord hearkens and hears their prayer and their testimony. Those who look unto Jesus day by day and hour by hour, who watch unto prayer, are drawing nigh to Jesus. Angels with wings outspread wait to bear their contrite prayers to God, and to register them in the books of heaven. {HP 80.6}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. {OHC 154.5}

Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity. {SC 52.2}

Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Whosoever will, may take hold of God’s strength, and make peace with Him, and He will make peace. {MH 90.1}