

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמֹה



The Song of Songs

**3-Week
Devotional
Guide
Week 2**



**PILLAR
SEMINARY**
for CONTEXTUAL LEADERSHIP

Week 2

A Song of Love



In this study, we are referring to the Song as a “Song of Love and Protest.” As we’ve seen, the Song should not be viewed as an allegory of divine-human love, but rather a poetic story of three individuals: a shepherd, a Shulammitte woman, and Solomon, who receives criticism for his abuse of power over the vulnerable. In this section, we’ll focus on the Song’s message of God’s love and concern for the vulnerable—in particular the Shulammitte woman.

God’s concern for the vulnerable is not unique to the Song—it’s a theme that can be seen throughout the Hebrew Bible, especially in Torah, the Lord’s instructions to his people. The Lord speaks into the culture of the ancient world and elevates his people’s concern for vulnerable populations by legislating a special concern for other humans as fellow image-bearers. The Lord moves redemptively to dignify his image on earth despite the chaos brought about by human sin. Some of those that receive special attention in Israel’s laws are landless people/immigrants, the poor, and women.

	Example
Immigrants	Deuteronomy 10:14-19
Poor	Exodus 21:1-6
Women	Deuteronomy 21:10-14

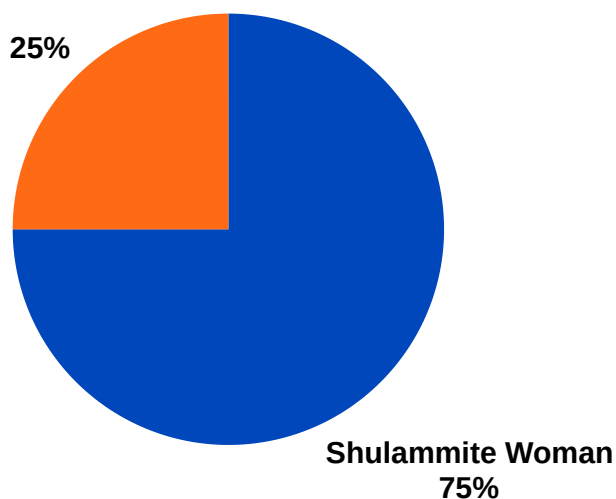
We therefore see the Song as continuing and advancing the Lord’s consistent love and care for vulnerable people, in this case, the Shulammitte woman, who has likely been forced to join Solomon’s harem despite her strong love for another—the shepherd (e.g., Song 1:7).

Week 2

A Song of Love

It goes without saying that in the ancient world, women were a vulnerable population. Women's rights, especially choices regarding whom they married, were vastly limited in comparison to what we see in the West today. It's likely, due to the evidence of the text in Song 8:8-12, that the Shulammitte woman who serves as poet in this Song has been forced to marry Solomon by her brothers, against her wishes.

The "song of protest," which we'll explore in next week's study, gives air to the grievances of the Shulammitte woman who would rather be with her beloved shepherd than the king her brothers have forced her to marry. In this critique, God shows his love for the Shulammitte woman, and by extension, vulnerable populations everywhere.



"...the Old Testament world... is often a dark place, in which male power wreaks havoc on the female world."

--Iain Provan

Impressively, 75% of the Song is written from the perspective of the Shulammitte woman who has been taken against her will into Solomon's vast harem. In no other passage or book do we see such space given to a female voice.

As you read through the Song, consider the significance of the Lord choosing to speak to his ancient people through the voice of the Shulammitte woman, despite her lower societal status, and how incredibly dignifying this is.

Week 2

A Song of Love

Guided Prayer

Father, please help me to see the vulnerable people of the world as you see them--people in need of your care and my protection.

1


Read

- Genesis 1-3**
- Deuteronomy 10**
- Song of Songs 2-4**


2

Reflect


As you read through the Song, take note of how much space is given to the Shulammitte woman's perspective.

 What does this tell you about God's concern for the voice of women in general?

The refrain that the daughters of Jerusalem not "stir up or awaken love before it pleases" (Song 2:7; 3:5; 8:4) has often been taken to refer to a prohibition against pre-marital sex in Christian culture. How do you read this refrain today?




Does the argument that God is concerned for and loves the vulnerable of society challenge your ideas or assumptions about God's character?



3

Respond

What vulnerable populations should you seek to serve in your community? Are there any services in your church or non-profit organizations that God may be calling you to work with?



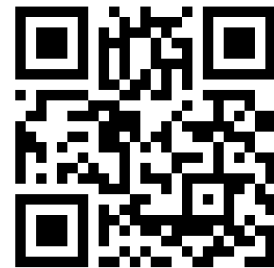
שִׁיר הַנְּשִׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמָה



**PILLAR
SEMINARY**
for CONTEXTUAL LEADERSHIP



Partner with us



Study with us

Email info@pillarseminary.org

Phone 402.807.3060

pillarseminary.org