



# Song of Songs

Session 3:

A Misunderstood Book

1. What is the significance of the “refrains” Dr. Wolfe points out in *Song of Songs*?
2. Some of the poetic features used in *Song of Songs* include repetition, rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia and even artistic representation in print. Explain.
3. What are some of the possible genres of *Song of Songs*?
4. For many centuries, a popular interpretation of the *Song of Songs* was as an allegory of the love of God for Israel, or of Christ for the church. How does this interpretation fit with your reading of the book?
5. Describe a “wasf.”

6. What are some of the common words or phrases in our culture used to compliment someone's body that, if taken literally, make no sense?

7. Dr. Wolfe points out that sexual innuendo and double entendres are widespread in *Song of Songs* – and yet the cultural and language barrier render many of them just beyond our understanding.

Some examples to flirt with:

-- Look up *Song of Songs* 1.7 and 2.16. Remember that in these cases, "pasture" (which can also be translated "graze," or "feed") does not have an object in the Hebrew. "Flocks," or "sheep" have been added in most English translations. What do you think the poet(s) might mean by this imagery?

-- Read *Song of Songs* 2.1-2; 4.5; 5.13; 6.2-3; and 7.3. Where do you think the poet is going with the "lily" imagery?

8. Hair like a flock of goats (6.5), breasts like date clusters (7.7), and a belly like a heap of wheat (7.2) are just a few of the metaphors *dodi* uses to describe *ra'yati*. What other examples can you find in the poem? Share your favorite with your group.

7. What are the implications of this session's material for your personal life? Your spiritual journey? For your local faith community?

