



Song of Songs

Session 4:

Don't Hurry Love

1. Dr. Wolf points out that the Hebrew conjunction used in *Song of Songs* 1.5 can mean both “and” and “but.” Compare several translations. What do you think *ra'yati* intends to say here?

2. What does this one little conjunction reveal about the need to take into consideration the agenda of translators – not to mention broader issues of social class and race?

3. The refrain repeated in 2.7, 3.5 and 8.4 can be interpreted with a prudish, cautionary spin or in a more sensual, indulgent sense. Based on what you've come to know of the *Song of Songs* and *ra'yati*, what is your hunch as to the best interpretation?

4. Read *Song of Songs* 3.6-11 and then use your own words to describe the scene. What do you think is going on in that scene – Solomon's literal wedding or *ra'yati's* dream wedding fantasy?

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

EXTENDED STUDY: If the *Song of Songs* is about a couple "in love," how does it compare to other stories in the Hebrew Bible about love, courtship and marital relationships? You may want to work with a partner in studying the following stories to answer that question. Be sure to report back to the whole group before the next session.

- Ruth; Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 24.1-67; 26.1-11)
- Jacob and Leah and Rachel and Bilhah and Zilpah (Genesis 29.1-30.24)
- Abram and Sarai (Genesis 12.10-20; 20.1-18) and Hagar (Genesis 16.1-16; 21.1-21), and Keturah (25.1-6)
- Tamar and Judah Genesis 38.1-30; Moses and Zipporah (Exodus 2.11-22)
- David and Michal (1 Samuel 18.17-29; 19.8-17) and Abigail (and others, 1 Samuel 25.2-44) and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11.1-12.25)
- Esther 1.1-2.18
- Proverbs 31.10-31
- Ecclesiastes 7.27-28; 9.9
- Hosea 1.2-9

