



SONG OF SONGS

A Biblical Vision for Marriage, Sex, and the Body

SONG OF SONGS: THE GREATEST SONG EVER

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Scripture Reference: Song of Songs 1:1; Genesis 1:26-27

Today we will be reading Song of Solomon one verse one, which says "the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's", as well as Genesis chapter one, verse 26 through 27. "Then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him; male and female he created them." This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Song of Solomon, Song of Songs. What is it called? We're gonna talk about it. Um, marriage, sex, relationships, the body. That's what we're talking about today. The, the issue, uh, of children. If you've got kids under nine years old and they can hear you and they're not babies, we encourage you guys to definitely send them up to kids ministry. If you've got students, we encourage you to use your discretion. If you've got 10 to 17 year old kid, fifth grade to 12th grade, that's up to you what you think would be best for them, whether or not they should participate in this. There will be some weeks again, that are a little bit more, um, forward and clear about. We wanna be clear with that over the weekly, so please sign up for that. We want you guys to, to, to make sure that you have all the information you need to, to decide what you'd like your kids to hear from.

But for now, we begin a massive undertaking to preach through the Song of Songs, which is what I'm going to call it. And for those of you that are new, by the way, my name is Eddie. I am one of the pastors here. Glad you guys could all be joining us. Now -- we are starting an 11 week series on what essentially can be called semi erotic love poetry. It's in the Bible. Okay? So we're gonna, it's gonna be a little giggles at the front end of this. Just bear with me. Now its purpose -- for the semi erotic love poetry, here, right in the Old Testament, is to give biblical God-inspired vision for marriage, sex, and the body.

Now, why is Doxa teaching on this? I was talking to my father-in-law. He was a pastor for 40 years. He said in 40 years we never taught on the song of Solomon -- Song of Songs. Why are you doing it, <laugh>? Yeah, that's a good question and maybe after this week, I'll probably regret a lot of deciding that we're gonna walk through this. But it's no secret in this culture just how important marriage and sex

are to all of us, right? And still in modern culture, we've still struggled to pinpoint marriage and sex and their primary purpose. What is it for exactly? Is it for pleasure? Is it for happiness? Is it for our identity? Do we get our identities from these things?

Now, whatever you think, there's a lack of clarity in culture in society today. And for us that lack of clarity as a society has led to further demise of things like sex and marriage. And you're likely aware of many of the consequences that follow. I'll list a few -- rise in divorce. As you know, 51% of marriages end in divorce. A rise in sexual promiscuity. The number of sexual partners for people before marriage has gone up considerably rises of things like disease rises in things like children born without both a mother and a father in the home, particularly with a massive emphasis on the father's absence is going up. It was up high 15, 20 years ago. It's even higher now. Rise in things like gender confusion. This is a new one for kids and adults. Rises in broken homes, things like abuse taking place in the homes, and of course rises in things like sexual addiction.

Song of Songs we believe helps recenter us to reveal that covenantal, Godly marriage is in fact the way forward for the best relational, the best relational and the best sexual satisfaction. We believe that. But even more than that, and here's like the kicker here for you. Godly marriage is a window. It's not a means to an end, right? It's a window. Godly marriage within the covenant, within the covenant points us forward actually to an even more satisfying reality. A future reality when Jesus will one day come back and triumph over the world. We will experience immeasurable pleasure and joy and peace in that context. Marriage points us forward and helps create a longing in us for a day where we'd experience ultimate pleasure. Okay?

This book has been preached by many preachers in the past to be sure. There was a famous one that sort of birthed around this church. And the diving endpoint has often been, uh, marriage. We can start sort of at marriage and we can start, we've been able to simply sort of start the conversation on marriage. Now, sex is context is for Godly, monogamous marriage, and we sort of go from there and it's like off to the jumping point. Let's talk about that first, right?

But in today's culture, in today's culture, we have to zoom out and talk a little bit more clearly because sort of the definitions for the same words that we would use have changed. So today we're gonna talk about and focus in on like sort of the 5,000 foot overview before we can drill down and talk about marriage and how to react or how to wait for marriage or to be ready for marriage or to what happens after a marriage ends or any of the nitty gritty in regards to marriage, in regards to sex, we have to start with something even more, I would say elementary. And that's the body. The human body. That's right. Your body. Our body, my body. We have, we have to focus there first because if you haven't noticed culturally, politically, there's been some sort of, you know, it's been a countrywide conversation around the importance or maybe lack thereof of gender, of sex, of relationships, even specific body parts and whether or not they're even relevant to understanding who you are as a person.

So in order to really understand the Song of Songs in its totality, we need to begin with the body. Okay? So with that said, if you've got a Bible, please open up to Song of Songs. If you have the ESV, it's the Song of Solomon. Open up there. I'm gonna pray for us, chapter one, and we'll dive in.

Well, Lord, I pray heavily for my friends here. Lord, this is such a controversial topic. It's such a needed topic. It's such a relevant topic. And we know that the enemy loves to trickle in in these moments. Marriages are so important for the building up of the kingdom of God, and the enemy likes to tear them down. And so we pray for protection for marriages. I pray for protection over relationships with children. I pray for the hearts of those that maybe aren't married and are waiting for marriage or no longer will be married. And I pray for their hearts, Lord God, that as Proverbs says, we, they would guard their hearts for in it flows the wellspring of life. And I pray for that. I pray, uh, for this church, Lord, that as we go through this church the next 11 weeks, that we would be built up, that we would be

encouraged and energized by a topic like this. And that we will inevitably get questions from friends as we bring them, or in our MCs or even uh, us as elders and, and leaders and staff, that we might get questions around some of the subject matter that we would be, um, shrewd and kind and, um, generous with our answers, but that we also would be biblically accurate as best as possible. We love you. We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right, let's read verse one together again as Brittany read verse one, "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's."

Okay, first things first, despite the ESV, the book, the translation that we use, calling this book or rather this love poem, it's not a book necessarily, it's a poem. Despite the ESV calling this Song of Solomon, we're gonna call this Song of Songs and it's because of this verse right here. You see, the reason is, is that Jews and the original Hebrew scriptures, they'd always referred to it as the Song of Songs or something similar in all translations from its inception, including the Latin Vulgate referred to it this way as well. And it really wasn't until the 13 hundreds where a guy named John Wycliffe, I dunno if you've heard of him, probably don't care, some guy called it the Song of Solomon, okay? And he produced the Wycliffe Bible. And then most English translations after that called it, uh, Song of Solomon as well, like the King James version.

So, uh, but there are rather some, some modern translations that do refer to it as Song of Songs like for instance, like this Christian Standard Bible, which is relatively new and it's a word for word translation. It calls it the Song of Songs.

Now, there's nothing incorrect with you calling it the Song of Solomon or anything like that necessarily, but I just, but just as a matter of fact, it was tacked on in the 13 hundreds and not called that until way later. Additionally, it's not immediately obvious that Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon. It's not immediately obvious. So why does it say Song of Songs, which is Solomon's? Well, many theologians believe that Song of Songs, uh, was essentially could this verse rather, it could essentially mean something like Song of Songs, which is written in the manner of Solomon. It was written in the ilk of Solomon. It was written like that of Solomon. And Solomon produced much wisdom literature like the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. And so it's written in that ilk, so to speak, right? That's what it means.

But either way, Doxa here is gonna take the traditional view that Solomon wrote the Song of Songs, but we're going to call it by its original name. We're not gonna call it Song of Solomon. Okay? Uh, now what does this verse mean? 'cause it seems like it would be funny to focus an entire sermon on this without everyone just falling asleep. And I, I get that and we won't, I promise. What does this verse mean exactly? What does the term Song of Songs mean? Well, think about it best like a turn of phrase or like a cultural idiom. It's kinda like saying the cream of the crop or the best of the best. The song of all songs, right?

Or, or in other words, like the Greatest Thing Ever. This is the, the very best of all songs. Now, we know that Solomon from other parts of the Old Testament that he wrote 1005 songs, almost as many as Taylor Swift has written. And this song was the very best of all the songs. It was the very best, the song of all songs. Now, why is this one the very best? Well, if you've read it, then you might know this is the very best because this song is about sex. It's about sex within a covenantal, godly marriage. So the Bible through Solomon teaches that sex in the context of godly covenantal marriage is legitimately the greatest thing ever using that idiom there.

Okay. Question. Does society as a whole believe that sex within a covenantal, godly marriage is the greatest thing ever? No. Good guess. No. Just turn on any news channel at any point, at any time, and you'll find out that that's true, right? We don't -- today we are going to explore why that's the case. Why doesn't the world, why doesn't culture, why don't we sometimes believe that sex within a covenantal,

Godly marriage is the greatest thing ever? And it has everything to do with the subject of the body like we talked about earlier. Okay?

So we've gotta start at the top and now come with me down the mountain and I promise it'll be worth it and it'll set up this series very nicely. We gotta start with a figure by the name of Charles Darwin. Have you heard of him? No. You haven't heard of him? Just kidding. I know you have, you've heard of him, as many of you have learned a lot of it. Now, Darwin, I hate to break it to you, if you're a Darwin enthusiast, he was a racist. Uh, and who most notably contributed this idea of natural selection in regards to evolution. Now, his discoveries led to the support to support the ideas that essentially the strong eat the weak in culture, right? The weak are genetically predisposed to weakness and therefore the strong will naturally take over. And essentially, weak traits will not be passed off because strong traits will prevail and the weak will die. Okay?

And if you're like, Hey, I'm offended, I think you, I love Darwin. Forgive me, I'm not a massive Darwin apologist. I love Jesus. I don't think they're necessarily, um, you know, in direct opposition, but I, many of you have read the, the term, the, the book or maybe you've heard of the book, Origin of Species. Darwin's first massive or biggest massive work, its original title wasn't the Origin of Species. The original title was on the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life.

So one of his biggest discoveries was how that uncivilized and uncultured, uh, races would essentially be eliminated by more civilized races. He says this in one of his works, the western nation of Europe now. So immeasurably surpassed their former savage progenitors that they stand at the summit of civilization. The civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the Savage races through the world.

Now you might say, geez, didn't learn that one in science class, right? Kind of, kind of skipped over that one. Edit the title, leave out the racist verses. You might say that's cold hearted. And you might say, that's even evil. I might be one of those people, which it is. But this is kind of one of his larger points. You see, Darwin did not deny that nature appeared to be designed. He said it, it does appear to be designed. But through his work, he sought to show how any intelligent design was merely coincidental and random chance. It was a stardust bumping into stardust millions and millions and billions of years ago.

And boom, nothing outta nothing came something right, like a, like a big bang or something. And if the universe sort of fell into existence and was not designed then well then any morality or any deciding something's bad or good or evil or any values that I could have or anyone could have, could not be embedded in nature. They couldn't be embedded in nature. 'cause if there was no designer, if there was no created order, no creator, then values and morality are basically created by us. However we want to craft 'em, we are sort of just making these things up because again, the universe came into form by accident. Values can't come from an accident. I can just provide values, right?

And here he contributes to something we'll call, actually society calls, the Fact/Value Split. And I got a graph here for you, the Fact/Value split. Now this is where we've essentially divide what's real, what we can see, right? Objective and valid for everyone from values. Subjective, private, these are, these are morals and ethics from the fact that like, I'm living and breathing and oxygen exists and gravity exists. Those are just matters of fact. Facts are essentially what is real and concrete and values are things we sort of craft or make up. They don't have any transcendent meaning from creation because again, creation or let's say the world is a total accident, a mistake in the cosmos. That's what it is. So the fact/value split is a big thing that most, a lot of people have contributed to, but has greatly contributed to our misunderstandings about the body, coming full circle.

Following this pattern, we have something called the person/body split. The person/body split. Now this idea, the person in the body being divided, comes from a wonderful book called *Love Thy Body*, by a woman named Nancy Pearcy. And I highly recommend this book to you, *Love Thy Body*. I absolutely think you should pick that book up. You see, the facts of a human being are their body. Blood, bones, oxygen, I need water and the like. But the person, the person is the value aspect of a human being. This is where our desires and our feelings and our hopes come from. The thing, the the thing in me that says, oh, that's right, and that's wrong. Those are values and they can't be taken by everybody. Your personhood can't necessarily be taken by anyone, It's up for sort of you to make that decision what sort of person you are. But it's totally distinct from your physical body.

What does this have to do with the body as a whole? Well, it just has all sorts of ramifications, all sorts of ramifications. Three massive ones as it relates to the topic we're talking about today. First, sexuality. This is where we say essentially the, the in the person/body divide that my desires are different and distinct from my biology. I know I'm wired to sort of procreate and be intimate to have sex with a specific opposite sex. But I am unaligned with my body and it has my physical body, although it says one thing has no bearing on my personhood. My values are different.

Second thing, sexual freedom, sexual freedom. This is where we say things like, well, it's just sex. It doesn't really matter. I don't have to feel any sense of connection or emotion of in in my sexual encounters because it's just my body. It's not me, it's just my body.

And the third thing, and perhaps the most prevalent today, gender identity. My body is different from my person. Fundamentally, I am different from my biological sex. I'm not a man. I am a woman despite my body, my hormones and my body parts saying the opposite. I know as a person I'm different.

And this leads me to my first thing, which is this culture tells us to detach and disintegrate from your body in order to find your true self. If you want to know who you really are, you need to ignore all the physical and embrace the inner right, embrace the inner. Now, funny enough, we've sort of been told that culture in society as it is today, as I've just explained, it values the body more, not less because of course sexual freedom and freedom of sexual identity and gender, that puts a greater emphasis on the body because I get to fully embrace who I really am.

And of course, if I can be intimate with people, I shouldn't be that. That's total and utter freedom. I, I value the body body more because I'm using it more, right? And I'll just say that's flat out false. That's flat out false. Culture in society as as it is today, values the body far less than any sort of traditional understanding of the body. Far less. One can make the argument, it hardly values the body at all. And I'm gonna try to make that argument because this perspective that my feelings, my personhood is different from my body are in direct opposition. The person and the body are at war with one another in this worldview. It has disintegrated our spiritual selves from our physical. We are two different beings essentially. I've got a, a meat flesh pod that I sort of float in inside, like this is a good analogy. And so I'm puppeteering this flesh that doesn't really matter, but my true self is in here. And if I need to make modifications, I make modifications as such. That's where we're at. And it sounds ridiculous, but that's how we're living, right? This perspective's at war with the body.

Now, all of this is birthed from an ideologically and racially motivated evolutionary theory, almost all of it, including when we believe that. Now, is this what God says about you? Is this what God says, that your body doesn't matter and who you are, um, is actually deep inside of you and maybe your body itself doesn't represent, it might even represent the very opposite of who you really are inside. Is that what God says about you?

Well, in order to figure that out, let's go way back to the beginning, Genesis chapter one. Okay, look at verse 26 with me. God had just got done creating all of everything. He just creates all this stuff and he declares it good. And then he moves on to creating human beings. Here's what it says, Then God said, let

us make man in our image after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them. In the beginning, God creates everything, the heavens of the earth, the beast of the field, the birds of the air. He creates the oceans and he creates the land and he declares it all to be good. And then he creates human beings, man and woman. He declares them to be very good. Why? Because God makes man and woman, male and female in his image, both male and female are uniquely crafted based on the very image of God. It says, God makes a man and woman in our likeness.

That's the Trinitarian community. The Father, Son, Spirit preeminent in the very beginning, united together, coming together and saying, I wanna make man in our image. And he crafts them beautifully, the human bodies of immeasurable value to God. And he even puts man and woman over in dominion over all of the other created things. Why? Because they're created in his image. We bear the image of your creator. This is a beautiful, wonderful thing. So your body matters to God.

There's so many verses and we're gonna go over them where God uniquely knits people. Before you were formed in the womb, I knew you. God understood the importance. I need to give this person a unique body that I'm gonna craft for them made in my image. It matters so much to God that he, that God the Father, would ultimately have to send the Son Jesus to die on our behalf, not just for our souls, but for our physical, literal bodies.

First Corinthians six, 18 through 20, apostle Paul says this, in this context, flee from sexual immorality, flee from it. Don't engage in it. For every other sin a person commits is what? Outside of the body. That means there's something unique about a sin that occurs within the body because the body matters, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have for God, from God.

In the Old Testament, God empowers, empowers people by the power of the Holy Spirit to craft the temple, to craft the tabernacle. Wonderful, beautiful. He spent so much time crafting it, years building this beautiful thing for the, for the arc of the covenant to go in God's presence, to dwell in what He's, what he's done with that. Beautiful pictures give you a, a wonderful metaphor for exactly how he's crafted you uniquely, beautifully, wonderfully as a temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in. Your bodies of immeasurable value to the God. Or do you not know that your body's a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? And says this, you are not your own. You were bought with a price.

So glorifying God in your body, friends, this idea of it's my body, I can do what I want, is not true for a Christian. It's not true for the Christian. The Father makes us in his image. The Son sheds his blood for us and the Spirit seals us with his presence. Our bodies are not ours, they're his. You are not just floating flesh pods as the world tells you that you can disagree with because some non creator made you the wrong way. You are uniquely knitted by God and loved by him. So glorify God in your body.

But like Darwin, if you don't understand or believe in the doctrine of sin, you won't see the big E on the eye chart. That having sin in you means that you are at war with all of creation because of sin. Adam and Eve, our original male and female, their parents, their original rebellion against God, and really by the way, our current rebellion against God, our sin natures are at war with all of creation. That's what Genesis three tells us. That that Adam's work would produce thorns and thistles and that he would have to do it by the sweat of his brow. The the things that he was created for, by the way we're gonna talk about it, were created for work and and on the woman created to give birth. It's gonna be painful and difficult. The the things God created us for as a result of sin are gonna be absolutely hard. We're gonna go at war with our all of creation, including our physical bodies.

So as a result of Adam and Eve's sin, the way we experience this is that we're gonna learn to hate creation. We're gonna learn to hate our human limits. We're gonna learn to hate our work. We're gonna learn to hate our bodies and we're gonna learn to hate each other. That's what sin does.

But first Corinthians six has such a better message. You in your sin were purchased for a price that Jesus Christ came into the world. Had his bloodshed on your behalf. And all of your sin could be pulled from you. And you could wear the righteousness of God before Jesus, before God the Father in glory. This is beautiful, wonderful imagery. It's amazing.

So while culture says detach and disintegrate from your body to find your true self, the Bible teaches that Jesus comes to attach and to integrate your soul and your body because you are made in God's image. You are not two separate floating things, body and spirit. You are beautiful, you are integrated spirit made in God's image and your body affects your soul and your soul affects your body. Those two things are connected.

When you have anxiety and depression, your physical body has, uh, has a reaction to it. Your blood pressure goes up. You have a heart attack, you have a stroke as a result of what's taking place. When you are physically ill or something happens to you, your soul can become depressed. You can be sad and depressed and angry and frustrated at what's happened to your physical body. They're not separate. You don't lose an arm and go, huh, well, I feel a lot differently. I feel as if I have an arm. That's not, that's not how it works. We experience and understand it's so hard for us.

Now, okay? My guess is by now I think, I hope that many of you are sort of exploring your own heart and starting to see where you, even if maybe you, let's say you call yourself a Christian and you're here have maybe implemented the person/body split in your life. Maybe you've seen your personhood as distinct from your physical body in a way. Or maybe you've used that language to sort of justify doing things you know you don't wanna do or shouldn't want to do. We do that and maybe you hear of some of the, the way we implement this in the sort of sexual context. You think that's just not me, like this idea of it's just sex, it's just college, it's just a hookup. That's not really who I am. I can, I can sort of divorce myself from feeling that and do something else, or it's just an addiction online. I I don't have to actually be connected to that if you're feeling and experiencing that.

We also implement this in all sorts of other areas too. I'll give you a few. First, food and alcohol, this is a really easy way to see if you've implemented person/body split. It doesn't really matter what I put into my body so long as I love Jesus. All things in moderation. It turns out God caress a great deal about your body. It's a temple of the Holy Spirit. And it's not just sexual sin. He's convinced with -- or he's upset with. He's upset with all sins against the body because you're made in his image. It turns out that the way you steward your body in every area matters to God. And we've accidentally or purposely implemented a person/body split in order to justify we can eat and drink whatever we want or to even, even to house an addiction that's disguised as like a craft brewery hobby. And so we can get involved in, they go, oh, I just love brews. No, you, you're an alcoholic. God caress about what you put in your body. Sexually and otherwise.

We do this with things like views on abortion. And I'll say, not gonna make a lot of friends in this series. I'm not planning on it. That's totally fine. We're gonna talk about more, more about this in greater detail. But views on abortion absolutely implements the fact body person split. In fact, in order to uphold the position of abortion, you have to implement a person/body split in order to, in order to justify that in your own head morally, because scientists all widely agree, the body inside of a woman growing is in fact a distinct person. We just know that for a fact. Now, it used to be 25 years ago, you could say we don't really know. Now we know it's a distinct person with distinct or distinct body with distinct DNA. We understand that's true, right? It's different heartbeat, et cetera.

But -- so it's a person or it's a body, but is it a person? Is it a person? It's a body. It's separate. The question for pro abortionists has to be - when does it, the body, become a person? Because once it becomes a person, I go from being able to abort a baby for any reason or for no reason at all to it's now a person. If I kill it, life in prison or perhaps the death penalty, that's a fine line. So then the question is,

when does it become a person? Because if it's a person, it's morally unconscionable. People have been increasing the number of that, we don't know, we're gonna talk about that later. But in order to hold a pro abortionist view, you absolutely have to implement a person/body divide.

We also implement this in views on things like euthanasia or assisted suicide. Not an easy subject, but I'll just ask one question. At what point does the body exist but the person no longer does?

Churches have even implemented this from the other side of the aisle? Oh, you Christians are not free of this. This is where the church gets, its sort of, sex is gross, so don't talk about it theology our doctrine, just worry about giving your life and your heart to Jesus. The body, it's a little bit gross, just be fruitful, multiply, let's move on. Okay, let's not talk about that and let's just give our hearts and our lives to Jesus. Jesus, I love you and we sing our worship songs, but we, we go right off of that forgetting that God made pleasure and he made the body and that they're worth celebrating in their proper context and they're beautiful and wonderful in marriage.

Now, if this is you and you're seeing where maybe you've implemented this sort of body, soul, person body facts value split in your life on some level, you need to know that you've got this understanding, not from the bible but from something called gnosticism. Gnosticism. If you don't know what it is, and you don't probably have to, but I'll, I'll explain it. It was an ancient belief that sort of trickled into Christianity. It was a belief structure that said that essentially evil and sin and all of brokenness really just comes from the physical world and essentially the spiritual world, mostly good; physical world, mostly evil, right?

Nancy Pearcey in the book *Love Thy Body*, she says this: gnosticism, it created creation as a kind of fall of the soul from a higher spiritual realm into the corrupt material realm. A few examples of this, and this happens, we, we implement this on sort of both sides, quote unquote of the aisle. If you say things like, it doesn't matter what I eat or drink or whatever I do with my body, as long as I love Jesus. Well, you've learned that thinking unknowingly from gnostic roots. You've created the person body divide. And on the other side, if you say it's just sex, it's really not who I am, then you've adopted a sort of secular gnosticism. Either way, both lanes of thinking are sort of cousins from the mother of gnosticism, right?

We can get all uppity as Christians, people, if you're not, here and you're not Christian, you probably not shocked you that Christians get uppity about their religion and stuff. I get that. We get all uppity as religious people. Sometimes we judge other people, but then on the very next day, just absolutely not honor your physical body at all.

And you might be someone who's not a Christian going, at least I'm taking care of myself and I'm looking at this person, I'm saying, they're a mess and here I am. At least if he believes God made this, why doesn't he care about it? And you're noticing that and I'm like, yeah, you notice, right? Christians aren't great at some of this stuff. We, we fail in these areas, right? We do food, sex, abortion, views, euthanasia, whatever it is or otherwise. But if that's you, I would just let CS Lewis respond. Someone far smarter than I ever could be. He said this, there is no good in trying to be more spiritual than God. God never meant man to be purely spiritual creature. He likes matter. He invented it.

Now maybe you still think, ah, this guy, he's reaching. I'm seeing some things. I got some verses in the can that I know sort of alleviate what he's saying. Now, all of that thinking maybe you think might seem okay to have this sort of thing. Do not fear the body. That can't kill the soul. And we're gonna get to all that.

Now, it might be okay to think like that. If it wasn't for, I don't know, the whole Jesus resurrecting in a body from the dead thing, kind of a big deal in Christianity. It's a huge deal. When Jesus rose from the grave, gnostics believed that Jesus wasn't really there in the flesh in any real meaningful way, right?

Rather, he merely was sort of had the illusion of a resurrection, but was really only there in some sort of floaty Casper, the friendly ghostly way.

And so he was there 'cause he was really too holy to be there physically in an actual body. But they were wrong. They were wrong because of the Bible and the resurrection. You see, when Jesus comes back, he doesn't come back as a ghost. He doesn't come back as Patrick Swayze or whoever else, right? He comes back in a resurrected body. Gosh, that was an old joke. I'm too young to make that joke guys, you know that. Tell me I'm too young to make that joke. Jesus comes back, he comes back in a resurrected physical body.

John chapter one, verse 14 says, the word became flesh and what dwelt among us, literally the word of God, the logos truth and love incarnate comes down. These are metaphysical ideas come down into this distilled human being physically and lives amongst us. Colossians two, nine. For in him, Jesus, the the fullness of deity dwells, bodily, bodily. The fullness of deity dwells bodily. And if that's not enough for you, when Jesus resurrects in Luke 24, look how he appears to his friends, see my hands and my feet that it is I myself touch me and see for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. And when he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, have you anything to eat. And they gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and he ate it. Jesus says, I'm back and I'm here in the very flesh bone. I've got scars. I've got piercings. Like, what do you want to see? I am here in the literal flesh. I am not a spirit very much, very much, and very clearly tries to, uh, tries to go right against that belief that he's a ghost.

I have flesh and bones. Unlike a ghost. Unlike a spirit. I am physically here. My body is here in your presence. And it's so much so here that I'm, I'm hungry. Do you have anything to eat? He's here. He's present. So while the culture tells you to detach and disintegrate from your body to find your true self, and the Bible teaches come and Jesus comes to attach and to integrate your soul and your body because you are made in God's image. Jesus says, I redeem your body with my body and soon you're going to live in that same body forever.

That is good news. That is good news. Jesus came in the flesh for your physical body, not just for whoever you think you might be inside. They're all integrated together.

One more insight that might be helpful in understanding this. Jesus' ascension is so overlooked, it's so overlooked. Seen as kind of like a, a footnote. If you don't know Jesus Christ comes into human history for the sole purpose of living a perfect life, becoming a perfect sacrifice. He was killed by his own people, executed on a cross by the Roman Guard and by the Jews. Three days later he resurrects from the grave and then after that he comes back, he asks for something to eat and he hangs for several days with his friends teaching them the gospel. He appears to 500 people, he's hanging out. Then he says, alright, I've taught you enough. You're gonna go do some work. I'm gonna send the Holy Spirit. I'm gonna head off. Okay? Then he ascends. And most people think he just like spiritually floats off like some star into the ground. Jesus' physical body ascends into heaven. When he ascends, he ascends with his body. This isn't just a purely spiritual spiritual ascension. His body goes with him, which means that his physical body is forever connected with his spiritual self.

That's the reality of the new of the kingdom of God. That Jesus is showing us a vision and a picture of what the kingdom of heaven is going to be like. That, that the pure spirit of Jesus is fully united with a wonderful redeemed body. Physically the two worlds met or emerged forever. And so it will be with you too.

So what does all this mean for us in the Song of Solomon, quite the rabbit trail? Well, it matters a lot because it, it really means fundamentally that culture has a low view of the body. But we must have a very high view of the body. And with that understanding, we're really better able to understand something like marriage and sex. If I were to just tell you, stop sleeping around with people you're not

married to, you might go, okay, well sure that seems like good advice. But there's all sorts of perspectives out there. I mean, what do I really need? If we know our bodies matter to God, then we know these things are very important. And if you understand how important your body is to God, you can view marriage and sex through four very specific lenses. Okay?

First one is pleasure. If you understand God created your soul in your body as integrated, as integrated, then you can see pleasure of the human body in its proper context. It is beautiful. It is wonderful. It is a gift from God. It is meant to compel you towards wonderful covenantal marriage. It is not devoid of emotion and thought like so many of of of people try to figure out in high school and college, like, I can divide myself from this. No, you can't. You know, you can't. That's why we cry so much when it happens. 'cause you've, your spirit has merged with another human being where spiritual beings we're our bodies also are a part of that. And there's this wonderful connection that is meant when we experience pleasure to compel us towards our partner. That's what it's for.

Pleasure is beautiful. It's not bad in and of itself when it's practiced in an integrated God honoring way. It's meant to compel you in a deeper intimacy. But when we practice the person body split and sex becomes something you do with your body, but it's not who you are or as a religious person, sex becomes gross. Something you do just to have kids pleasure.

Second thing we understand when we know that we're merged and integrated is holiness. Ah. You see, if you understand yourself as integrated and that your body matters to God, then you know how much holiness matters. And the reason I didn't use the word purity was because that's kind of created some trauma over the last few decades. Purity, church culture, purity, movement sort of book. You know, I Kissed Dating Goodbye and all this stuff. It's really rubbed people a lot the wrong way. And, and maybe you have some church trauma around that yourself, but I would say it might've gone a little better for you if kids and people, teenagers, parents knew why purity was important. If we just heard we are supposed to practice it and it doesn't really help us sometimes. But it's important because God has bought you with a price.

First Corinthians six says, you are a temple of the Holy Spirit. You're not just disconnected bag of flesh you wanna guard your heart for in it flows the wellspring of life. You wanna protect this wonderful temple and grant it to someone that God's chosen for you and that would unite you two together. And you would flourish and produce babies that love Jesus and take over the world for him and share the good news of the gospel. This is what we want. Flourishing, joy and peace. Don't ruin that. Keep it holy. God loves you. God wants you to be protected.

I think it's a little easier now for you teenagers and you college kids. 'cause now you get to see the ramifications of what doing whatever you want with your body is getting people. It's destroying humanity. It's destroying people. I sit with college kids a lot. They're direct. They're a mess. It's hard because they're trying to create the person to body divide. And guess what? They're imago dei knows I can't divide these two things. Holiness is so important. 'cause one day there will be a beautiful and holy environment for you to practice sexual intimacy and you'll flourish as a human being as a result.

Third thing, worship. If you understand yourself as an integrated person, then you will learn that you can worship God. Not just when you sing, but with stewardship of your body as worship. Bodily stewardship, whether eating or drinking or sex is worship. If you can steward your money, the the gift that God has given you, and that can be worship and stewarding your body can also be worship as well. And Christians love this divide. We love to just peel off right here. But you stewarding the vessel that God has given you, creating longevity for yourself and your relationships, and also in your age, being able to be available longer to share the good news of Jesus is absolutely worship. If you can steward money God's given you, you can absolutely steward your body. Keep them healthy.

And lastly, identity culture wants you to hate your body. It wants you to hate your body. It wants you to say, I'm too fat. I'm too skinny. I'm too tall. I'm not tall enough. I'm not, I have too much muscle. I have not enough muscle. I'm too short. My legs are crooked, my eyes are too round, my face is too chubby. I'm too light. I'm too dark. I'm not a boy. I'm not a girl. It wants you to look in the mirror and go, this is not what I wanted. And in a sick twist of irony, our sin nature wants us to find in our identity in the very thing we're not. Whatever I see, I want something else.

It's a very familiar sin to human beings. God says, you are made specifically in my image. I uniquely crafted you exactly as you are. You are beautiful. I don't want you to look in the mirror and hate yourself. You're not good enough for even being in your own skin. You're, you're, you're fearfully and wonderfully made, not disgusting. And you need to find some way to make yourself feel better by saying it's okay that I could find my other way to be a boy or be a girl or be taller, be shorter, be bigger or smaller, or to lift more weights or to eat more protein or, or to finally go on that juice diet or whatever it is. It's a sick twist of irony. Transgenderism, body dysmorphia, anorexia, bulimia, all of these are twins. They're all cousins. This is all the world telling you that you should hate yourself and that who you -- how you are made is not the way it was supposed to be. But God says, I made you exactly as I wanted to. And you might not see it now, but there is an absolute purpose. And when you begin to live in sync with your created order, you're gonna see that the joy and the peace and the flourishing that I have for you is so much greater than anything you could have imagined.

And will it be hard? Yeah, it might be hard. Your sin nature doesn't want you to like yourself, but there's actually plenty, plenty to love about yourself. So much so I sent my son Jesus to die for it. You were bought with a price purchased by the blood of Jesus. How dare you hate yourself. God loves you. Okay?

And with that, I think we can get into Song of Songs. Okay? Let's pray.

Lord, thank you. Thank you. Just take a moment to just praise you. You're a good God, a good savior. You made us. The world, our own sin nature, everything about us wants us to hate the way we are. To change the way we are, to become something. We're not to engage in something we shouldn't, that harms us and doesn't bring us the ultimate pleasure and joy we seek. Our bodies matter to you. And I pray for a, a revival of holiness on our people. That we would see that. That all the ways we engage with our bodies matter. All the ways we engage with our heart matter, our souls matter. That we would get rid of this person body divide. And that we would become integrated as you created us. That our bodies were purchased by the blood of Jesus. And for those of my friends here, find themselves maybe not a Christian or trying to figure out where they're at in this process or maybe just don't want God at all. I pray for kindness on their heart. Would you show them that this world doesn't have an answer for this problem? But you do. You have an actual answer for this? And guess what? The values and the morals and the ethics that we all feel in our gut are right and wrong. Whatever they may be are not added by us. But they spring from the fact that you are the sovereign creator of the universe and you create those morals and ethics and values in us. And those come so naturally to us because we are made in your image. We love you, we praise you, and it's in Jesus wonderful name we pray. Amen.