

The Song of Solomon, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 2: My Beloved Is Mine: Spring and the Voice of Love

Song of Solomon 2:8–3:5

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

What is doctrinally at stake in this passage is the goodness and seriousness of married love within God's design. The Song refuses both errors of the human heart. It will not treat physical, marital love as something low or merely tolerated, for God Himself put this poetry in His book and let it sing. And it will not treat love as cheap or self-serving, for it warns of "little foxes," calls for seeking that costs a sleepless night, and charges us twice not to awaken love before its time. Your aim is to help the class see that "my beloved is mine, and I am his" describes the covenant God authored in Genesis 2:24, the lifelong, exclusive, one-flesh union of one man and one woman, and that Paul tells us this very union was always meant to whisper of Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:25–32). Guard against forcing every detail into allegory, and equally against reducing the Song to romance with no relationship to God.

The spiritual formation aim is twofold. First, to stir longing and faithfulness in married hearts, and reverent hope in unmarried ones, by showing that love can be renewed (the winter passes), love must be guarded (the foxes), and love is worth seeking with everything (the night search). Second, to lift the eyes higher, so that the student who learns to listen for a beloved's footstep learns also to listen for the voice of the Lord in His word, and the student who learns to say "I am his" to a spouse learns to say it without reservation to Christ.

Keep the tone warm and unembarrassed but never crude. You are teaching a mixed-age congregation. Speak plainly of marriage as God's good gift, speak honestly of the small sins that erode love, and let the passage do its tender, searching work.

Question 1

Student Question:

When the bride says "The voice of my beloved!" and describes him "leaping upon the mountains," what does this opening reveal about love that recognizes and longs for the beloved, and how does Scripture describe God Himself as One who comes to us?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Notice how the section turns on a sound. "The voice of my beloved!" The bride does not begin with what she sees but with what she hears. Love trains the ear. A mother wakes at her own infant's cry while sleeping through a thunderstorm. The bride knows her beloved's coming the way you know a familiar laugh across a crowded room. This is the intimacy of covenant, an attentiveness that has learned the other by heart.

The imagery of him “leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” pictures eagerness and strength. Nothing slows him. Hills that would exhaust a tired man become stepping stones for a man hurrying to the one he loves. The Song wants us to feel the joy of being eagerly sought, of being someone’s destination.

Here we may rightly, and carefully, lift our eyes to God. Scripture again and again shows a God who comes. He came down to walk in the garden, came down at the burning bush, and at last “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Our God is not distant or reluctant. He is the One who comes leaping over every mountain that stood between us and Him, even the mountain of our sin, removed at the cross.

We should not press the allegory into every word, but Romans 15:4 reminds us the Old Testament was written for our learning. The picture of a beloved who comes eagerly teaches us something true about both faithful human love and the heart of God toward His people.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Love recognizes the beloved; intimacy trains the ear and the heart.
- God is by nature One who comes to His people, not One who hides from them.
- The incarnation (John 1:14) is the ultimate “coming” the heart longs for.
- Eager, costly pursuit marks both true married love and divine love.
- Old Testament Scripture instructs us still (Romans 15:4).

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to be eagerly sought rather than merely tolerated?
- Where do you see in Scripture a God who ‘comes’ to His people?
- How does knowing you are pursued by God change how you walk today?

Question 2

Student Question:

She heard his voice before she saw his face. How well do you know the “voice” of those you love, and how attentive are you to the voice of God in His word? What competes for your hearing?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

She heard him before she saw him. That is a quiet challenge to us, because hearing requires attention, and attention is exactly what the modern heart struggles to give. We can share a house and a bed and a budget with someone and still not truly hear them anymore, our ears full of screens and schedules and a hundred louder things.

Ask yourself honestly how well you know the voices God has placed in your life. Do you still hear the unspoken weariness in your spouse’s tone, the loneliness behind a friend’s joke, the cry for help dressed up as anger in a child? Love listens beneath the words.

There is a higher hearing too. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The bride's trained ear is a picture of the believer who has learned to recognize the Lord's voice in Scripture amid all the competing noise. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27).

Be specific with the class. What competes for our hearing is rarely evil in itself. It is the constant, the urgent, the entertaining. The little foxes of the ear, we might say, that spoil our capacity to listen.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Real love and real faith both begin with attentive listening.
- Distraction, not just sin, dulls our ability to hear those we love.
- Faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).
- The Lord's sheep learn to know His voice (John 10:27).
- What we let fill our ears shapes what we are able to love.

Discussion Prompts

- Whose voice in your life have you stopped truly hearing?
- What habit could you change to hear God's word more clearly?
- What 'noise' most often crowds out the voices that matter most?

Question 3

Student Question:

"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away... for, lo, the winter is past." What does the picture of spring teach us about renewal in love and in the life of faith, and how does God use the created order to instruct us (Romans 1:20)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." Every winter feels permanent while you are in it. The bride's beloved announces what feels impossible in the cold, that the season has turned. "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come." God built renewal into the very rhythm of creation, and He means for us to read it.

This is the language of invitation: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Love calls love out of hiding, out of the long gray indoors of the heart, into the open air. Notice the tenderness of the address. Not a command barked from a distance but a wooing, a beckoning by name.

Romans 1:20 tells us the invisible things of God are understood by the things He has made. The God who turns winter to spring every single year is preaching to us about His power to bring life out of death, warmth out of cold, song out of silence. A marriage that feels frozen is not beyond His thaw. A heart grown cold toward the Lord can feel the sun again.

We should be careful not to promise that every painful season ends quickly. The Song is poetry, not a guarantee against hardship. But it is true testimony that renewal is woven into God's world, and that the same God who made the seasons can renew what we feared was dead.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God built the picture of renewal into creation's seasons (Romans 1:20).
- Love invites and woos; it calls the beloved by name, not by command.
- No winter of the heart is necessarily the final word.
- Creation preaches God's power to bring life out of death.
- Poetry of renewal is hope, not a promise against all hardship.

Discussion Prompts

- What does creation's springtime teach you about God's character?
- How does an invitation differ from a demand in love?
- What in your life have you assumed is past renewal?

Question 4

Student Question:

Is there a "winter" in one of your relationships, or in your devotion to the Lord, that has gone on too long? What would "rising up" and "coming away" look like for you this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Press this one personally and gently. Most of us are carrying some winter, a relationship that has gone quiet, a coldness toward the Lord we have stopped noticing, a distance we have learned to live with. The danger of a long winter is that we forget any other season exists.

"Rise up" is an active word. Renewal in the Song is not passive waiting for a feeling to return. It is a rising, a coming away, a deliberate turning toward. James says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). The movement begins with us responding to His invitation.

Be concrete with the class about what rising up looks like: a hard conversation finally begun, a confession finally made, a habit of prayer or Scripture finally restarted, an act of kindness toward a spouse you have been quietly resenting. Small risings often start the thaw.

And remind them that we rise in response to His call. The bride rises because she is invited. We draw near because God first drew near to us in Christ. Grace goes before our movement; our movement is the answer to grace.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Renewal requires active 'rising,' not passive waiting.

- Drawing near to God invites Him to draw near to us (James 4:8).
- Long winters dull us until we forget renewal is possible.
- Concrete first steps often begin the thaw in a cold season.
- We rise in response to God's prior call and grace.

Discussion Prompts

- What is one 'winter' you have quietly accepted as permanent?
- What single step of 'rising up' could you take this week?
- How has God already invited you toward renewal?

Question 5

Student Question:

Consider "the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." What does this teach about the nature of love and the kind of watchfulness God calls us to in marriage and in holiness?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." The Song turns suddenly practical. In the middle of all this springtime joy comes a warning, and it is not about wolves or storms but about little foxes. Small creatures. Small damage at first, but vines ruined all the same.

Why little foxes and not great dangers? Because love is rarely destroyed by one great blow. It is nibbled away. The unkind tone that becomes a habit. The phone that always comes first. The apology never offered. The small contempt that hardens into distance. "Our vines have tender grapes," the text says. Love in its growing season is fragile and needs guarding.

Notice the word "take us," plural. Catching the foxes is shared work. A marriage is guarded by two people who agree the relationship is worth protecting and who hunt the small spoilers together rather than blaming each other for them.

The same is true of holiness. Galatians warns that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). It is usually the small, tolerated sin, the cherished resentment, the private compromise, that spoils a whole life with God. Watchfulness over the little things is not legalism. It is love guarding what it treasures.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Love is rarely destroyed by one blow; it is nibbled away by small things.
- Tender, growing love is fragile and needs deliberate guarding.
- Catching the foxes is shared, mutual work ('take us').
- A little leaven leavens the whole lump (Galatians 5:9).

- Watchfulness over small sins guards both love and holiness.
- Neglect, not just betrayal, spoils relationships.

Discussion Prompts

- Why are 'little foxes' more dangerous than obvious threats?
- How can two people hunt the little foxes together?
- What small, tolerated thing is spoiling a relationship you love?

Question 6

Student Question:

Name one "little fox" you have let run loose in your closest relationship or in your own heart. What is the small, faithful step that would begin to catch it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now make it personal and specific. We are all skilled at naming the foxes in someone else's vineyard. The Song says "take us" our foxes. Each of us has one running loose somewhere, in a marriage, a friendship, or the secret vineyard of our own heart.

Name yours honestly. Maybe it is the habit of the last word, or the silence you use as a weapon, or the comparison that poisons gratitude, or the small lie you tell to keep the peace. Foxes hate the light. The first step in catching them is admitting they are there.

Then take the small faithful step. You do not have to solve a whole marriage tonight; you have to catch one fox. Speak one kind word. Offer one overdue apology. Put the phone down for one evening. Confess one private sin to God. Tender grapes are saved one act of guarding at a time.

Encourage the class that this is not despair but hope. Foxes can be caught. The very fact that we can name the small spoilers means we can begin, today, to protect what God has given us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We name others' foxes easily and our own reluctantly.
- Naming the small sin honestly is the first step to catching it.
- Faithfulness in love is built from small, specific acts.
- Foxes can be caught; small spoilers are not beyond remedy.
- Confession brings the hidden fox into the light.

Discussion Prompts

- What 'little fox' have you let run loose in your heart?
- What single act of guarding could you do today?
- Why is it easier to see others' foxes than our own?

Question 7

Student Question:

“My beloved is mine, and I am his.” What does this mutual belonging reveal about God’s design for marriage as a lifelong, exclusive, one-flesh union, and how does it point forward to Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:25–32)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

“My beloved is mine, and I am his.” Here is the heart of the Song in seven words. Notice the balance. Not “my beloved is mine” alone, which would be possession. Not “I am his” alone, which could be servitude. Both together, mutual belonging, each fully given and each fully received. This is covenant love, the kind that holds.

This belonging is exclusive. “My” beloved, “his.” There is no room here for a third. The Song celebrates exactly what God established in the beginning: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Marriage as God designed it is the lifelong, exclusive union of one man and one woman, two becoming one.

Paul takes this very mystery and lifts the veil. After quoting Genesis 2:24 he writes, “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:32). The one-flesh belonging of husband and wife was always meant to picture something greater, Christ giving Himself for the church and the church belonging wholly to Him.

So “my beloved is mine, and I am his” is true of married love at its best, and gloriously true of every soul united to Christ. He gave Himself for us, and we are not our own, “for ye are bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20). To belong to Christ is the deepest belonging the human heart was made for.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Covenant love is mutual: fully given and fully received.
- Marriage is the lifelong, exclusive, one-flesh union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24).
- The one-flesh union was designed to picture Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32).
- Belonging is not possession that crushes but covenant that holds.
- To belong to Christ is the deepest belonging the soul was made for (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Discussion Prompts

- Why does true belonging require both ‘mine’ and ‘his’?
- How does marriage picture Christ’s love for the church?
- What does it mean that you are ‘bought with a price’?

Question 8

Student Question:

Belonging means both receiving and giving yourself away. In what relationship are you tempted to want “he is mine” without truly offering “I am his”? What does wholehearted devotion ask of you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Belonging cuts both ways, and the second half is the harder one. It is easy to want “my beloved is mine,” to enjoy what the relationship gives me. It is costlier to say “I am his,” to actually hand myself over, my time, my preferences, my pride, my plans.

Examine where you stand. In your marriage, do you want the comfort of belonging without the surrender it requires? With the family of God, do you enjoy the fellowship while keeping your real self at a safe distance? With the Lord, do you want His blessings while reserving the right to run your own life?

Wholehearted devotion asks for the self, not just the sentiment. Jesus said the great commandment is to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). All, not some. The bride’s “I am his” is a small picture of that total self-giving.

This is good news, not bad. The self we surrender to love is not lost; it is the only self ever truly found. To withhold yourself is to stay alone. To give yourself, in marriage to a faithful spouse and supremely to a faithful Lord, is to be more fully alive than guarding could ever make you.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- It is easier to want ‘he is mine’ than to offer ‘I am his.’
- Wholehearted love asks for the self, not just warm feeling.
- We are called to love God with all that we are (Mark 12:30).
- The self surrendered in love is found, not lost.
- Reserving ourselves keeps us alone.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you want belonging without surrender?
- What part of yourself are you reluctant to give away?
- How is the surrendered self more alive, not less?

Question 9

Student Question:

In 3:1–4 the bride rises by night, seeks him through the city, is found by the watchmen, and at last finds and holds him fast. What does this seeking and finding teach about the costliness, persistence, and reward of love, and how does Scripture call us to seek the Lord with the whole heart (Jeremiah 29:13)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

“By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.” The bride rises in the dark, walks the city streets, is found by the watchmen, and at last finds him and “held him, and would not let him go.” Love that is real does not stay comfortable. It rises, it searches, it risks the night.

Notice the costliness. She leaves the safety of her bed. She braves the empty city. She endures not finding him before she finds him. Real love and real seeking involve effort, exposure, and the willingness to keep looking when the first search comes up empty. “I sought him, but I found him not” is not the end of the story; it is the middle.

And notice the reward: “I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go.” Persistence is met. The seeking is not in vain. The one who searches with the whole heart finds, and holds fast.

This is exactly how God speaks of the soul’s pursuit of Him. “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). Jesus said, “Seek, and ye shall find” (Matthew 7:7). God is not playing hard to get; He is teaching us that some treasures are found only by those who will rise in the night and refuse to stop until they have laid hold of Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Real love is costly: it rises, searches, and risks.
- An empty first search is the middle of the story, not the end.
- Persistent seeking is rewarded; the one who searches finds.
- God is found by those who seek Him with the whole heart (Jeremiah 29:13).
- Jesus promises that those who seek will find (Matthew 7:7).
- Holding fast, not merely finding, marks devoted love.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it cost you to truly seek the one you love, or the Lord?
- How do you respond when the first search ‘finds him not’?
- What would it mean to hold fast and ‘not let him go’?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across the whole passage (the voice on the mountains, the call of spring, the little foxes, the mutual belonging, the seeking in the night, and the charge not to “stir up” love before its time), name one specific way the Lord Jesus is forming you through this song, in your marriage, your purity, or your pursuit of Him.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Step back and let the whole passage settle on you. The voice on the mountains taught us that love listens and that God comes. The call of spring taught us that renewal is real and that He invites us out of our winters. The little foxes taught us to guard tender love against small spoilers. “My beloved is mine, and I am his” taught us mutual, exclusive, covenant belonging that pictures Christ and His church. The night search taught us that love seeks at cost and that God is found by those who seek with all the heart.

And the passage closes with the charge, “that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.” Love has its proper time. There is a wisdom that refuses to force or rush what God means to unfold in its season, a restraint that honors love instead of grasping at it. For the unmarried, this is the call to purity and patience. For all of us, it is the call to trust God’s timing rather than seizing love on our own terms.

So bring it home. The Lord Jesus is forming you through this song. Perhaps He is calling you to listen better, to your spouse and to His word. Perhaps to rise out of a long winter. Perhaps to catch a fox you have ignored. Perhaps to give yourself more fully, to say “I am his” without reservation. Perhaps to seek Him in the night with a whole heart, or to wait on His timing with patient trust.

Whatever the specific work, the aim is the same: a heart that belongs more wholly to Christ, and a life that loves the way He loves, faithfully, attentively, sacrificially, to the end.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Love has a proper time; wisdom refuses to force or rush it (3:5).
- Purity and patience honor love rather than grasping at it.
- The whole passage forms us toward fuller belonging to Christ.
- Listening, rising, guarding, giving, and seeking are all acts of love.
- Faithfulness to the end is the shape of Christlike love.

Discussion Prompts

- Which image from this passage struck you most, and why?
- What does it mean to not ‘awaken love’ before its time?
- Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this song.