

A romantic scene of a couple walking through a field of tall grass at sunset. The woman is wearing a light-colored sweater and dark pants, and the man is wearing a plaid shirt. They are holding hands, and the warm, golden light of the setting sun creates a soft, intimate atmosphere.

Love Story



A STUDY OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON

The Real "Love Story" Song of Solomon 1:1



Song 1:1 The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's.

Review

Tonight, we continue our new journey into a book that I have never taught, only studied. As I mentioned last week, the book known as “Song of Solomon,” is a very complicated and controversial book. For about the last 3,000 years, scholars have debated its contents, how to interpret it, and whether or not it should be included in the canon of Scripture.

TITLE

In the Hebrew Bible the title of this book is "The Song of Songs of Solomon." It comes from 1:1.

WRITER AND DATE

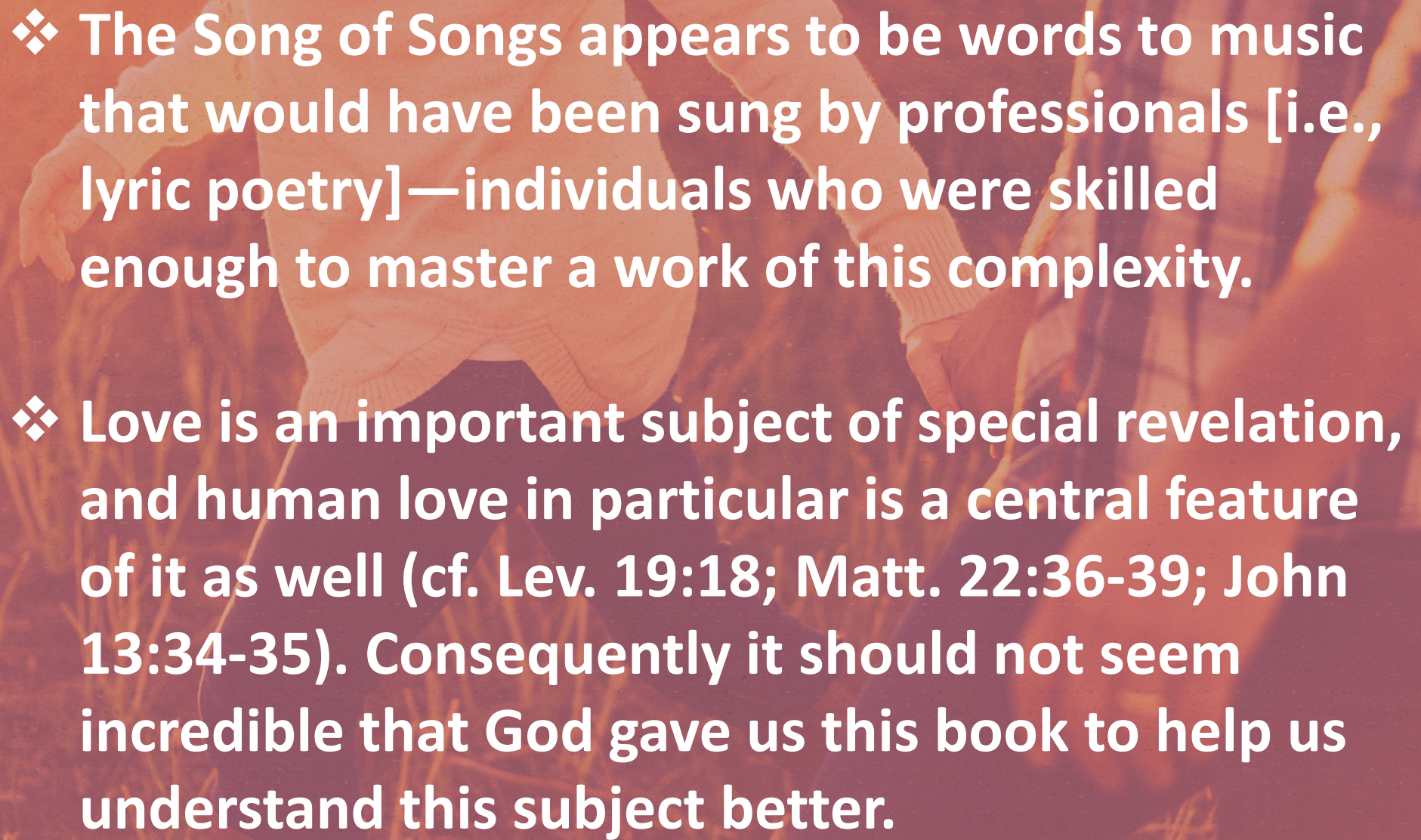
Many references to Solomon throughout the book confirm the claim of 1:1 that **Solomon wrote this book** (cf. 1:4-5, 12; 3:7, 9, 11; 6:12; 7:5; 8:11-12; 1 Kings 4:33). **He reigned between 971 and 931 B.C.**

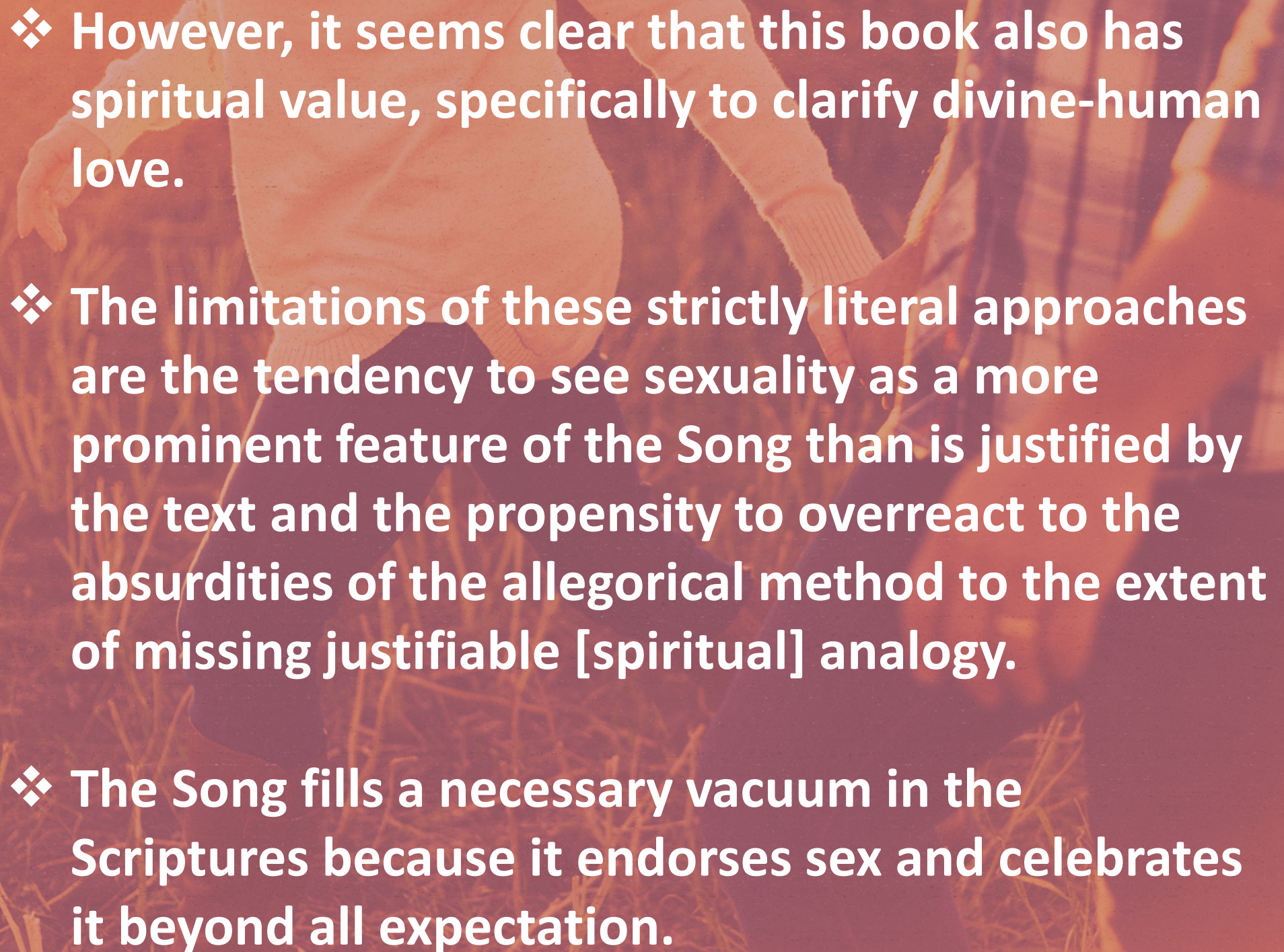
GENRE AND INTERPRETATION

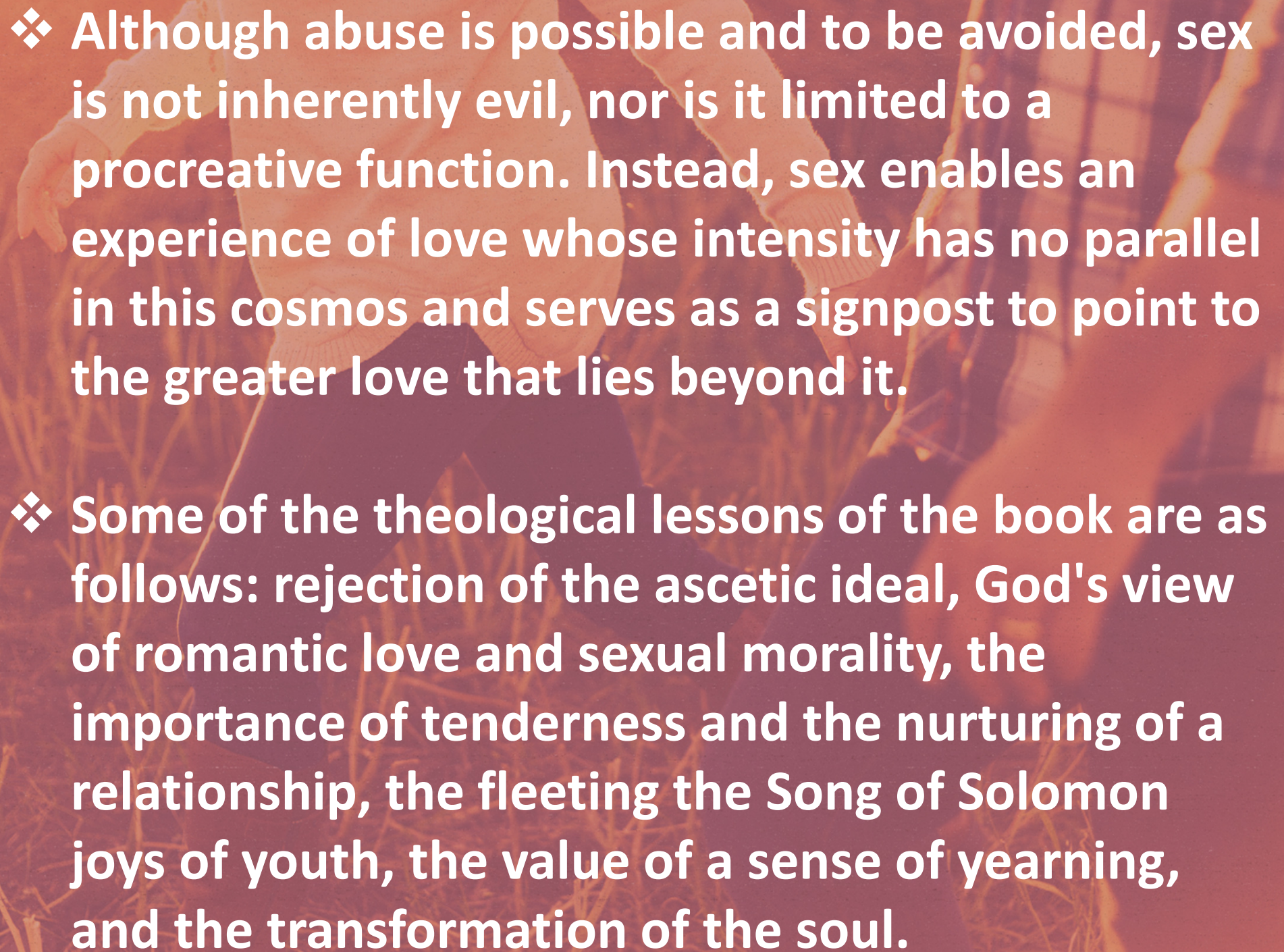
❖ Personally, I believe the characters are Solomon and a “Shulamite” woman, perhaps Rehoboam’s mother, Naamah, whose name means “loveliness.”

2 Chron. 9:30 And **Solomon reigned** in Jerusalem over all Israel **forty years**.

2 Chron. 12:13 So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for **Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign**, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And **his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess**.

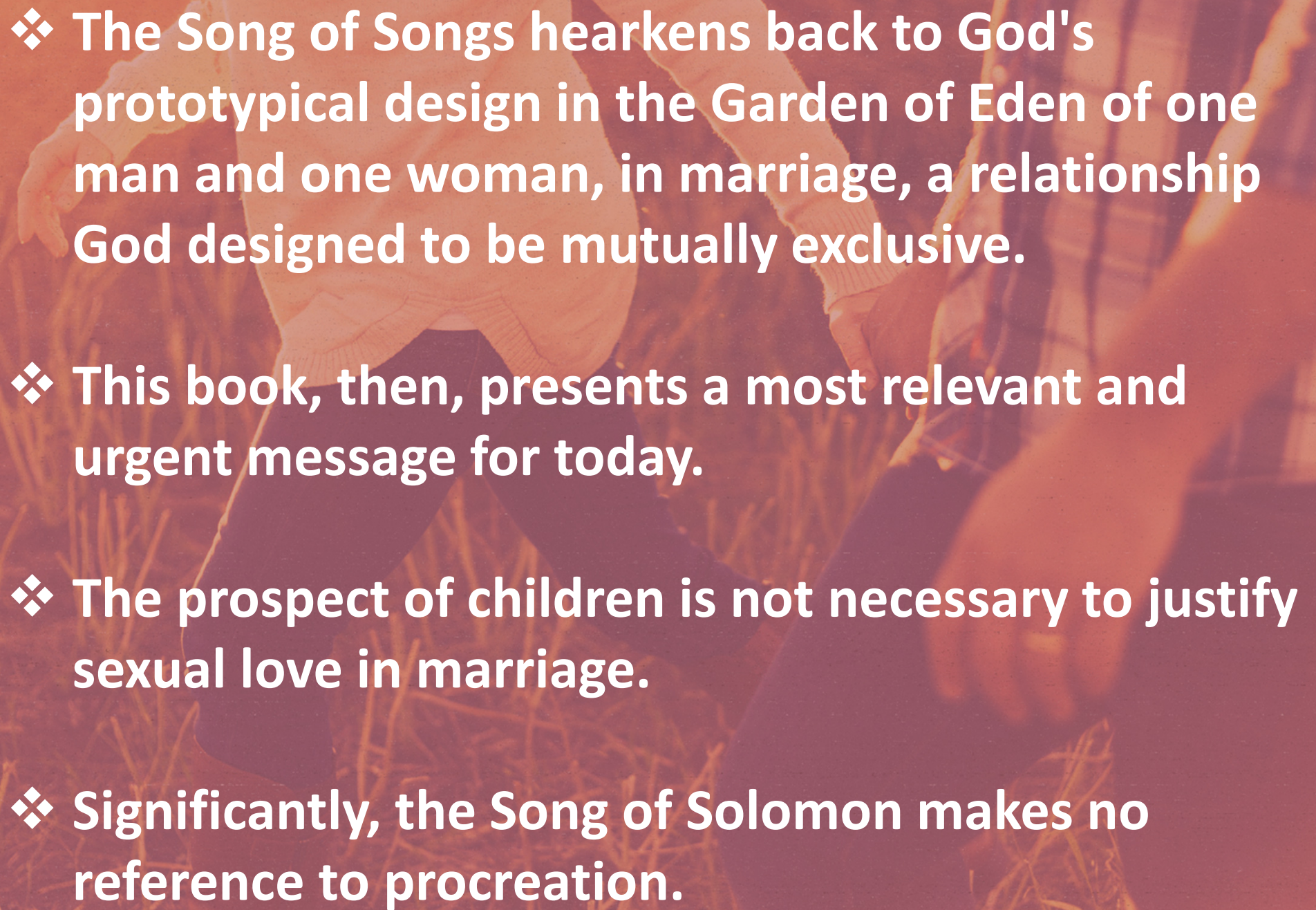
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- ❖ The Song of Songs appears to be words to music that would have been sung by professionals [i.e., lyric poetry]—individuals who were skilled enough to master a work of this complexity.
 - ❖ Love is an important subject of special revelation, and human love in particular is a central feature of it as well (cf. Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:36-39; John 13:34-35). Consequently it should not seem incredible that God gave us this book to help us understand this subject better.

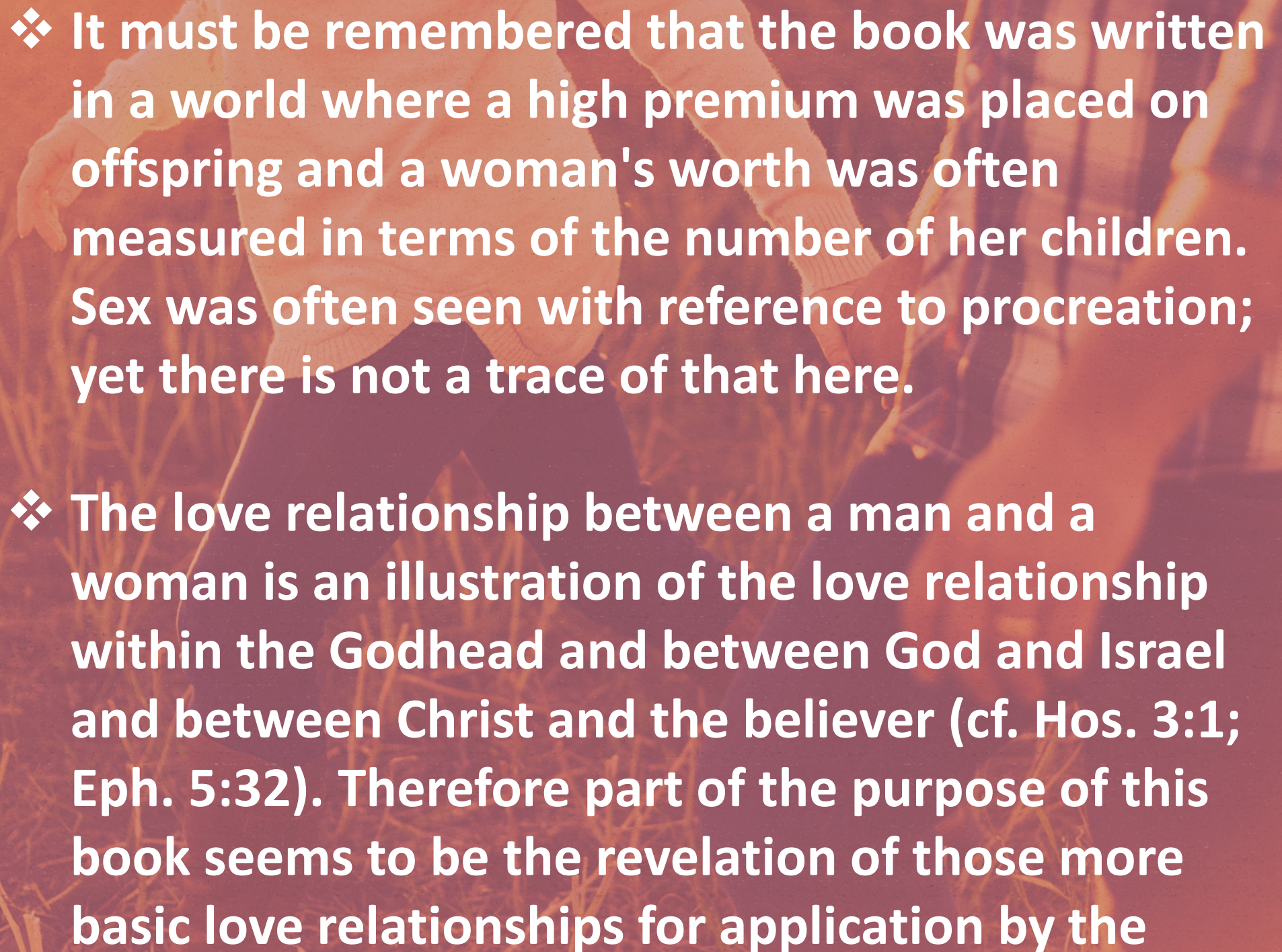
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- ❖ However, it seems clear that this book also has spiritual value, specifically to clarify divine-human love.
 - ❖ The limitations of these strictly literal approaches are the tendency to see sexuality as a more prominent feature of the Song than is justified by the text and the propensity to overreact to the absurdities of the allegorical method to the extent of missing justifiable [spiritual] analogy.
 - ❖ The Song fills a necessary vacuum in the Scriptures because it endorses sex and celebrates it beyond all expectation.

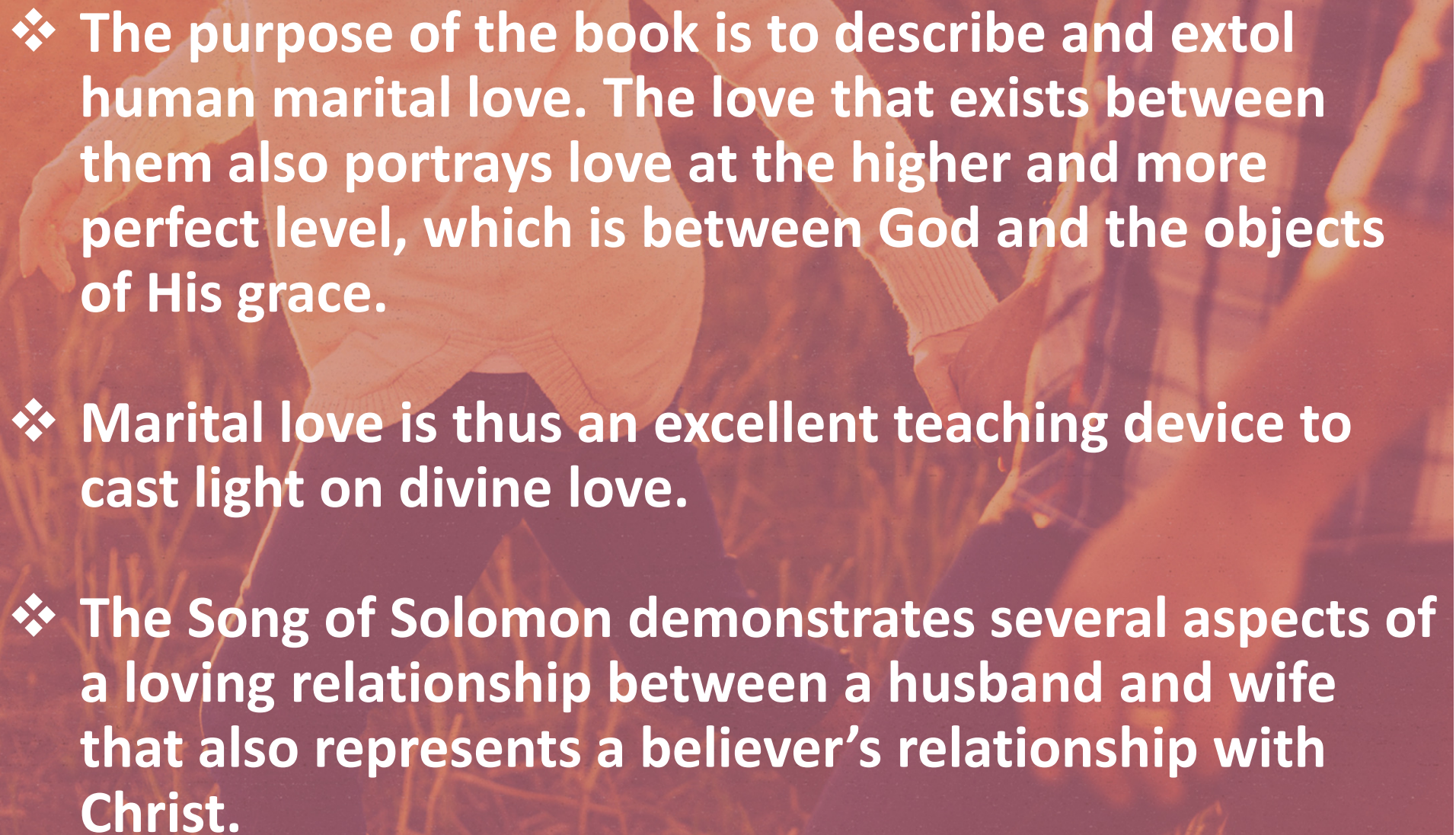
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- ❖ Although abuse is possible and to be avoided, sex is not inherently evil, nor is it limited to a procreative function. Instead, sex enables an experience of love whose intensity has no parallel in this cosmos and serves as a signpost to point to the greater love that lies beyond it.
 - ❖ Some of the theological lessons of the book are as follows: rejection of the ascetic ideal, God's view of romantic love and sexual morality, the importance of tenderness and the nurturing of a relationship, the fleeting joys of youth, the value of a sense of yearning, and the transformation of the soul.

PURPOSE

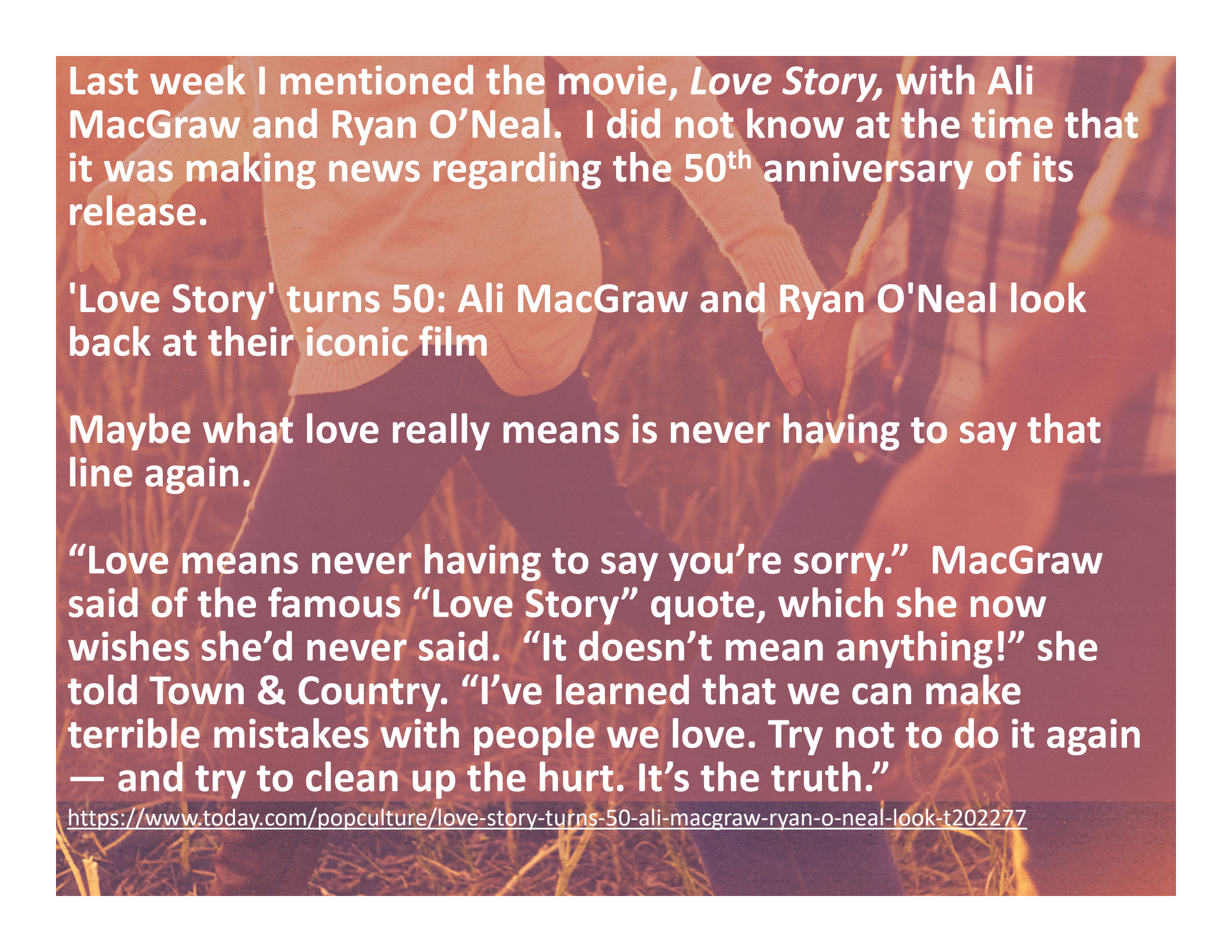
- ❖ Probably God's primary purpose in inspiring this book of the Bible was to give us revelation concerning the way love between a husband and a wife should look.
- ❖ This book gave the practical directions for marital bliss, was ignored by Solomon, and by the consensus of the world since.
- ❖ The characters in the book usually behave toward one another the way men and women in love should conduct themselves in attitudes and activities.

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- ❖ The Song of Songs hearkens back to God's prototypical design in the Garden of Eden of one man and one woman, in marriage, a relationship God designed to be mutually exclusive.
 - ❖ This book, then, presents a most relevant and urgent message for today.
 - ❖ The prospect of children is not necessary to justify sexual love in marriage.
 - ❖ Significantly, the Song of Solomon makes no reference to procreation.

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- ❖ It must be remembered that the book was written in a world where a high premium was placed on offspring and a woman's worth was often measured in terms of the number of her children. Sex was often seen with reference to procreation; yet there is not a trace of that here.
 - ❖ The love relationship between a man and a woman is an illustration of the love relationship within the Godhead and between God and Israel and between Christ and the believer (cf. Hos. 3:1; Eph. 5:32). Therefore part of the purpose of this book seems to be the revelation of those more basic love relationships for application by the

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- ❖ The purpose of the book is to describe and extol human marital love. The love that exists between them also portrays love at the higher and more perfect level, which is between God and the objects of His grace.
 - ❖ Marital love is thus an excellent teaching device to cast light on divine love.
 - ❖ The Song of Solomon demonstrates several aspects of a loving relationship between a husband and wife that also represents a believer's relationship with Christ.

Eph. 5:32 This is **a great mystery**: but I speak **concerning Christ and the church.**



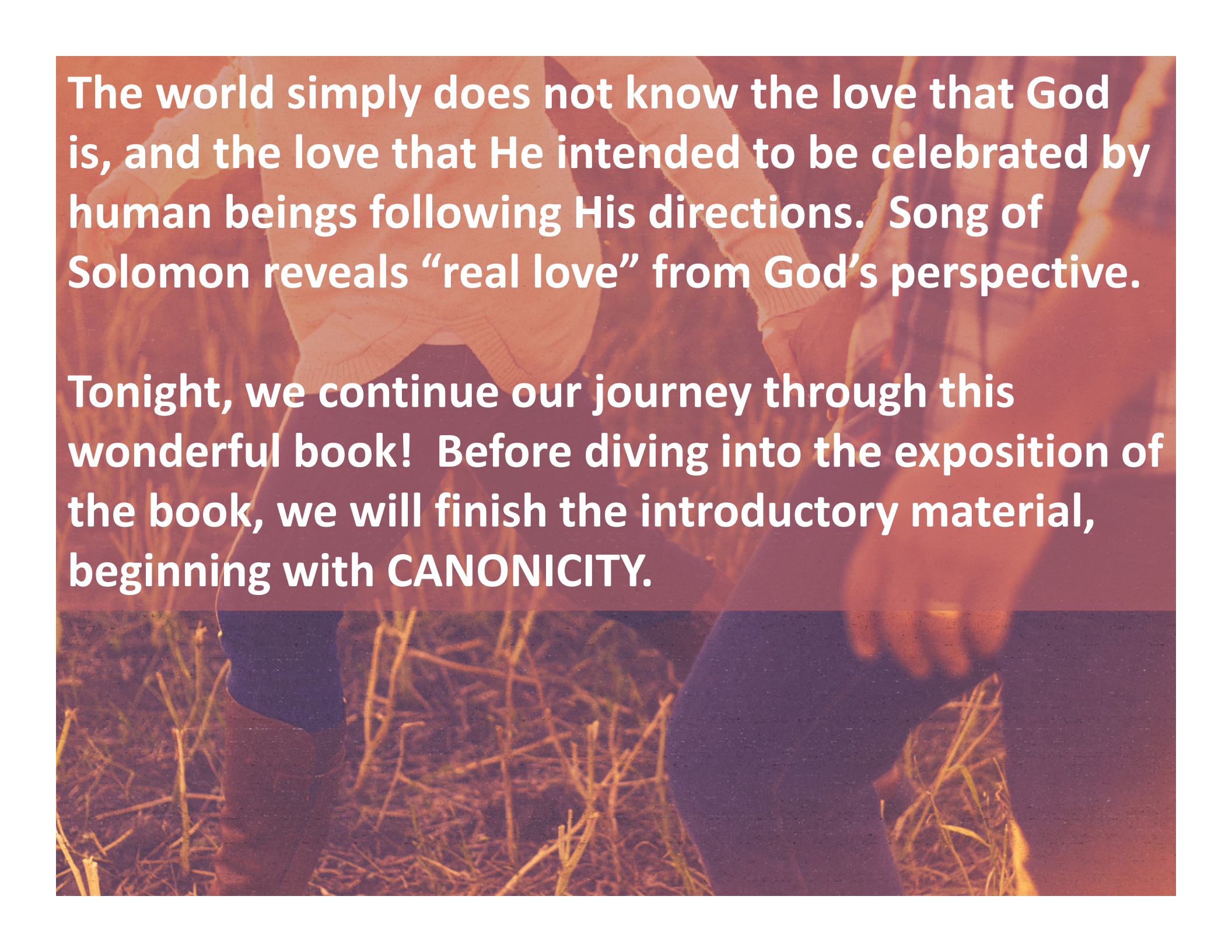
Last week I mentioned the movie, *Love Story*, with Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal. I did not know at the time that it was making news regarding the 50th anniversary of its release.

'Love Story' turns 50: Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal look back at their iconic film

Maybe what love really means is never having to say that line again.

“Love means never having to say you’re sorry.” MacGraw said of the famous “Love Story” quote, which she now wishes she’d never said. “It doesn’t mean anything!” she told *Town & Country*. “I’ve learned that we can make terrible mistakes with people we love. Try not to do it again — and try to clean up the hurt. It’s the truth.”

<https://www.today.com/popculture/love-story-turns-50-ali-macgraw-ryan-o-neal-look-t202277>

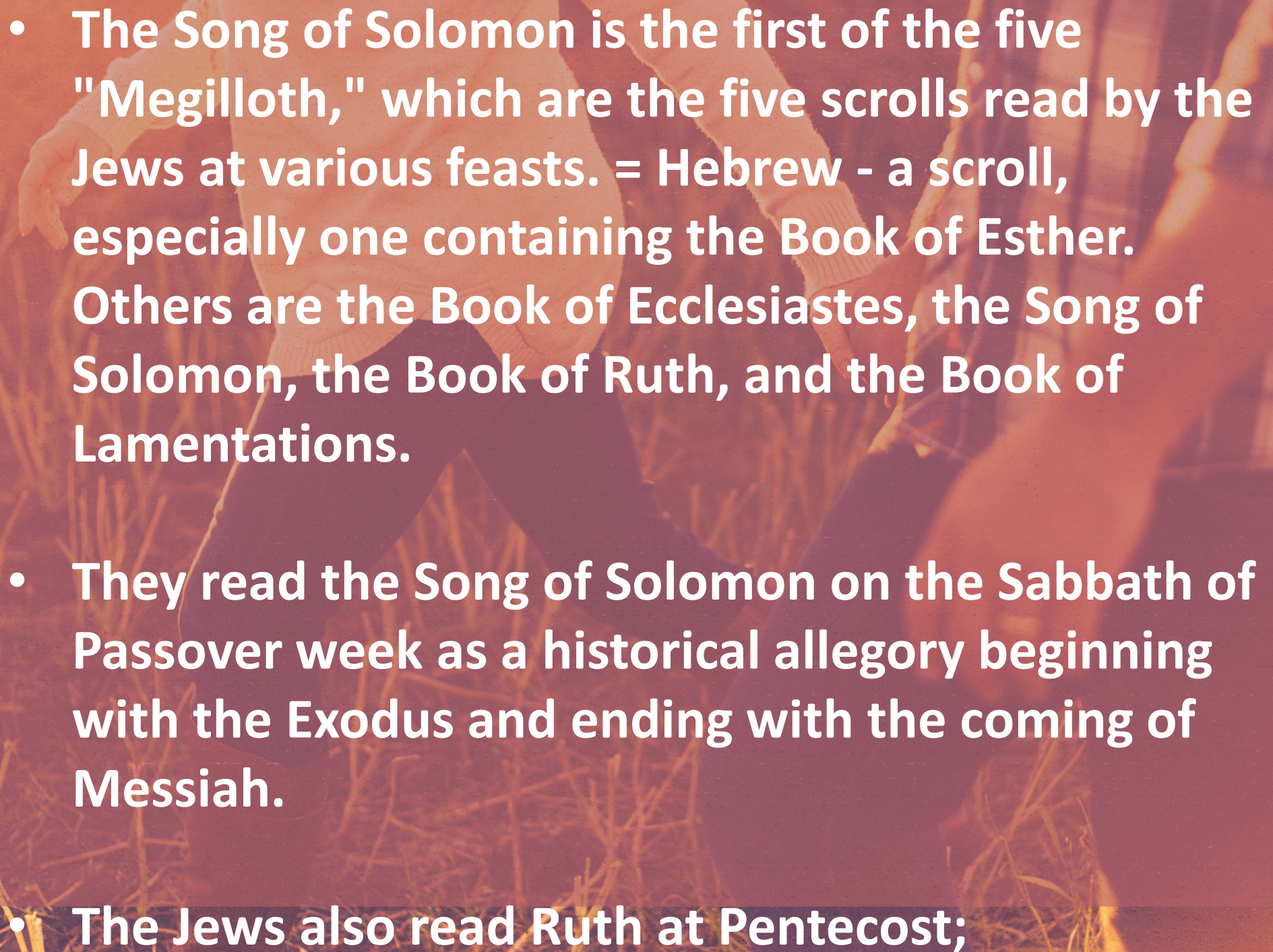


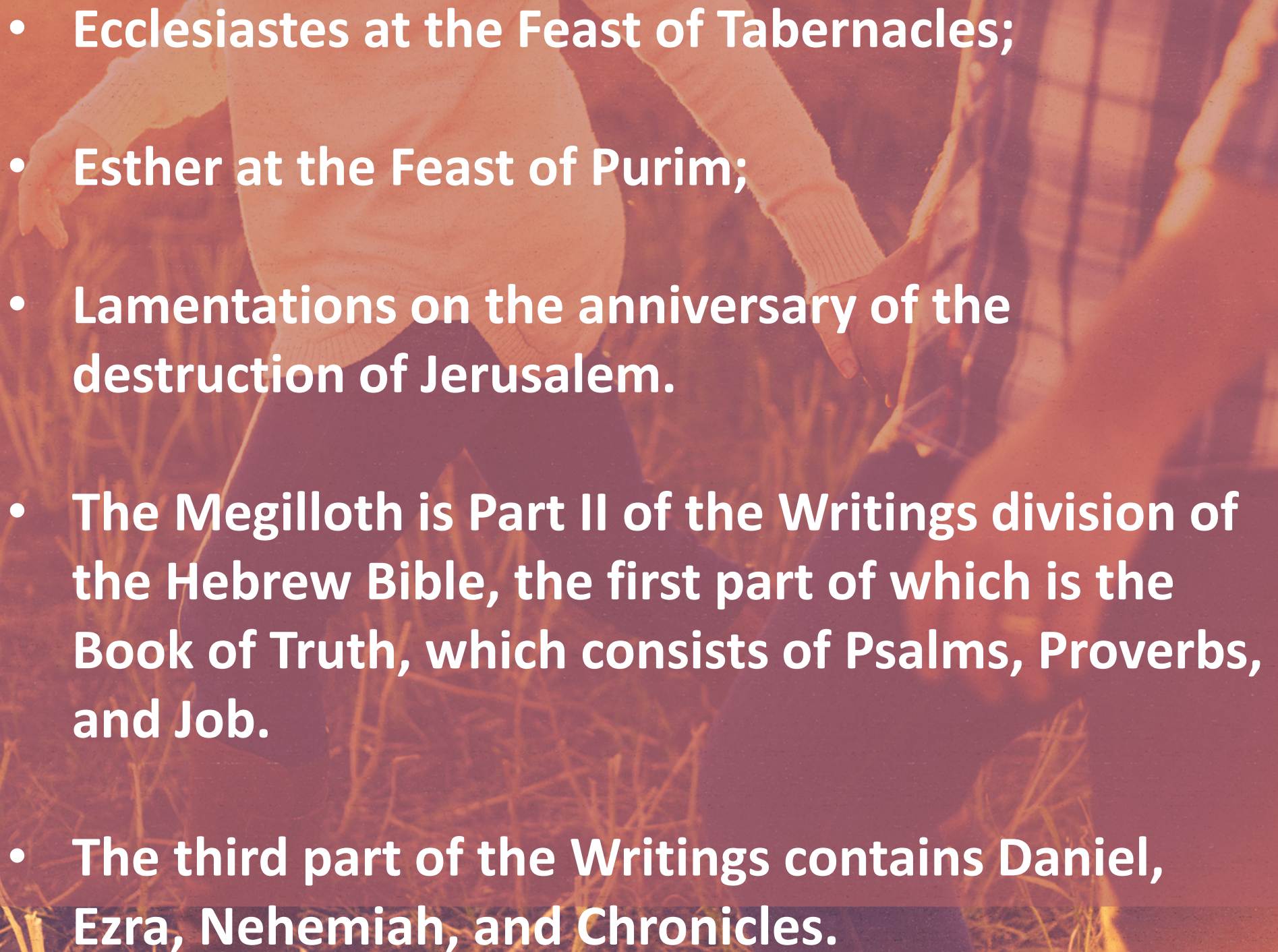
The world simply does not know the love that God is, and the love that He intended to be celebrated by human beings following His directions. Song of Solomon reveals “real love” from God’s perspective.

Tonight, we continue our journey through this wonderful book! Before diving into the exposition of the book, we will finish the introductory material, beginning with **CANONICITY**.

CANONICITY

- There have been three primary reasons that some scholars have thought this book does not deserve to be in the Bible.
 - First, it does not contain the name of God.
 - Second, the presence of frank language describing physical intimacies seems inappropriate in the Bible to some people.
 - Third, the difficulty of interpretation has caused some readers to reject it as non-canonical. This criticism fails to recognize that finite and fallen human beings may not easily comprehend the revelations of an infinite and omniscient God.

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- The Song of Solomon is the first of the five "Megilloth," which are the five scrolls read by the Jews at various feasts. = Hebrew - a scroll, especially one containing the Book of Esther. Others are the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, the Book of Ruth, and the Book of Lamentations.
 - They read the Song of Solomon on the Sabbath of Passover week as a historical allegory beginning with the Exodus and ending with the coming of Messiah.
 - The Jews also read Ruth at Pentecost;

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- Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Tabernacles;
 - Esther at the Feast of Purim;
 - Lamentations on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - The Megilloth is Part II of the Writings division of the Hebrew Bible, the first part of which is the Book of Truth, which consists of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job.
 - The third part of the Writings contains Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

- The Law section contains the Torah or Pentateuch: Genesis through Deuteronomy.
- The Prophets contains the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and The Twelve minor prophets).

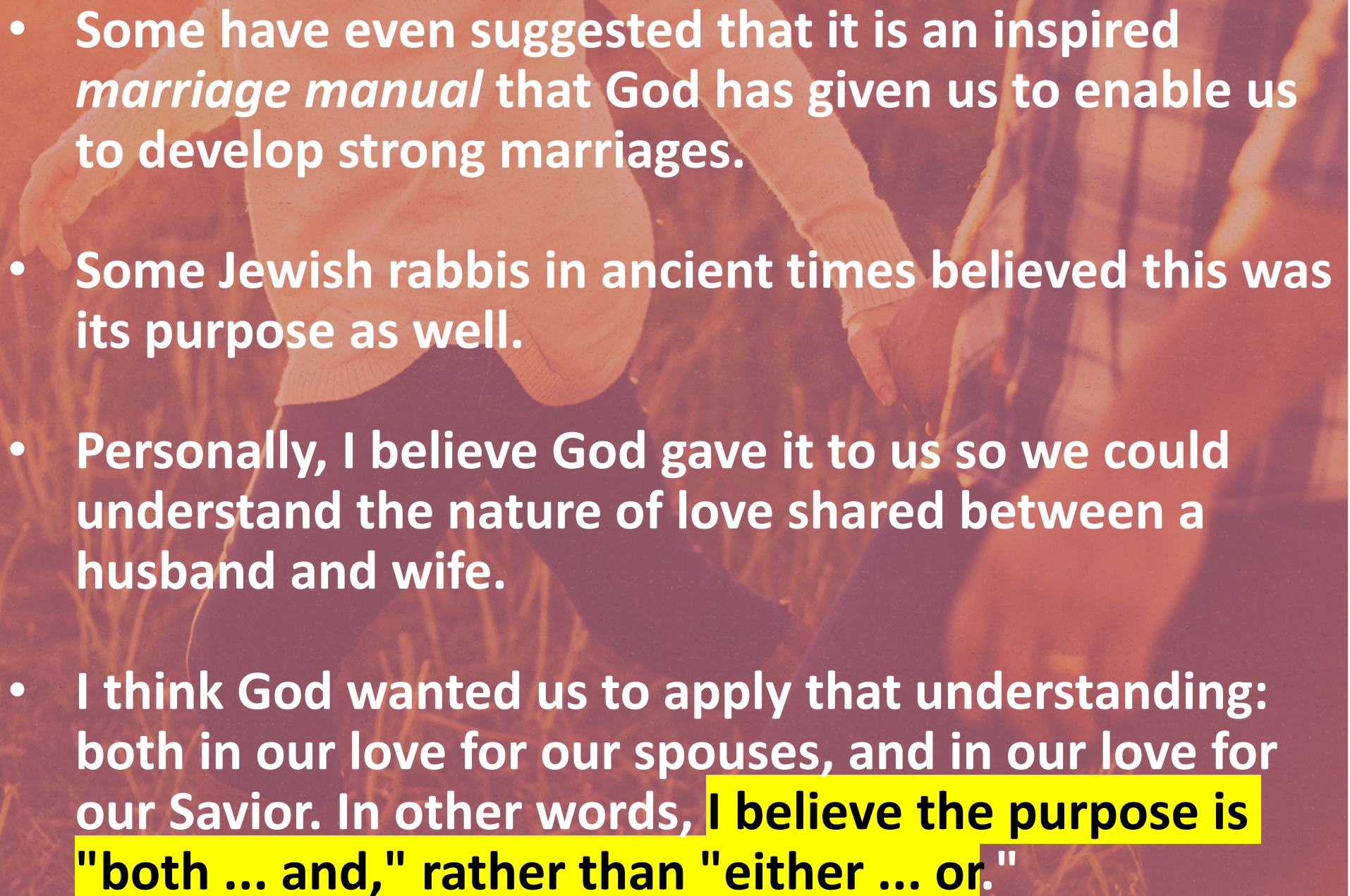
TEXT

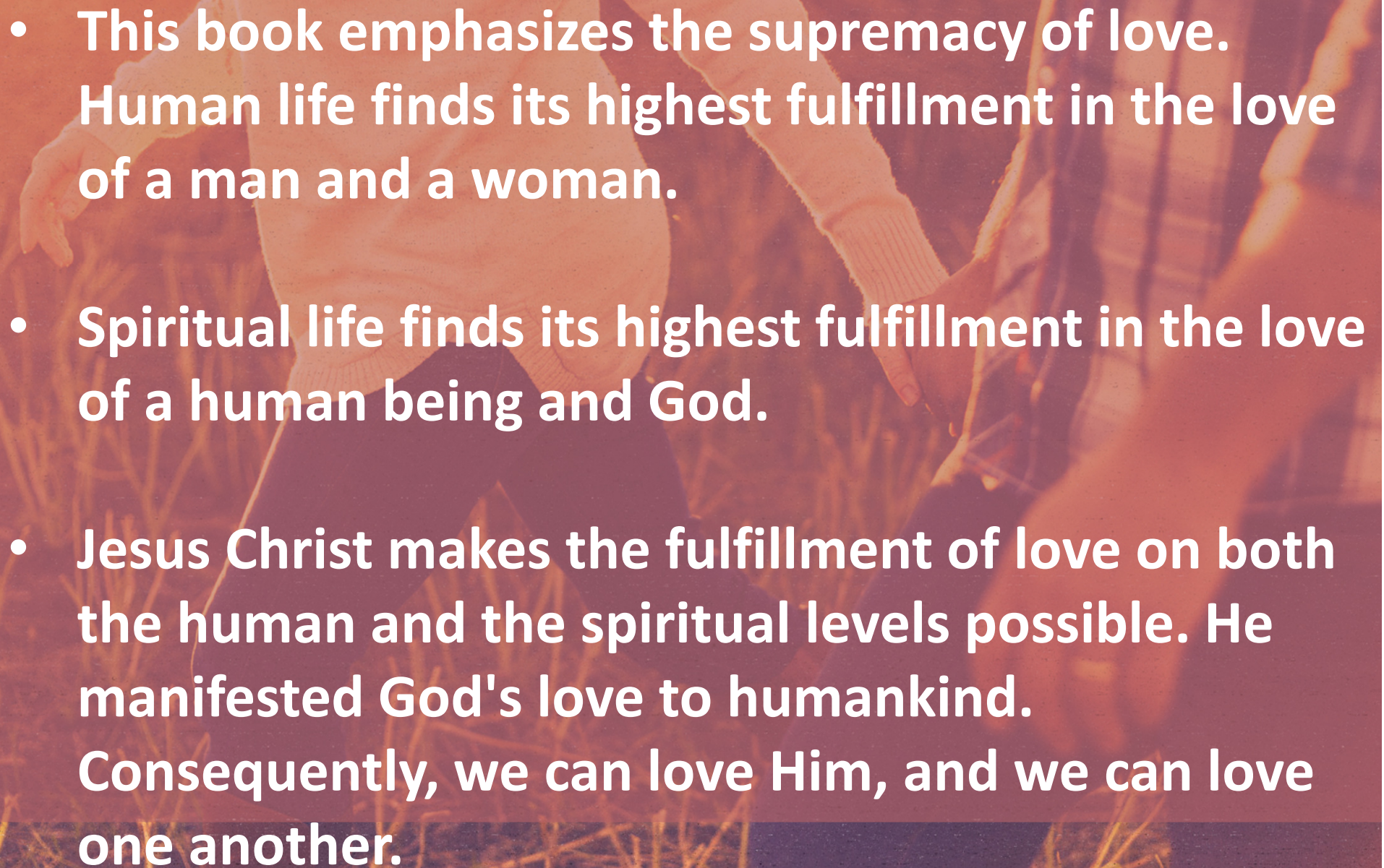
The Hebrew text of the Song is sound, but the book is very difficult to translate. Words that occur only in this book (hapax legomena) comprise 9.2 percent of its vocabulary, and 11.3 percent of the words are unique to this book.

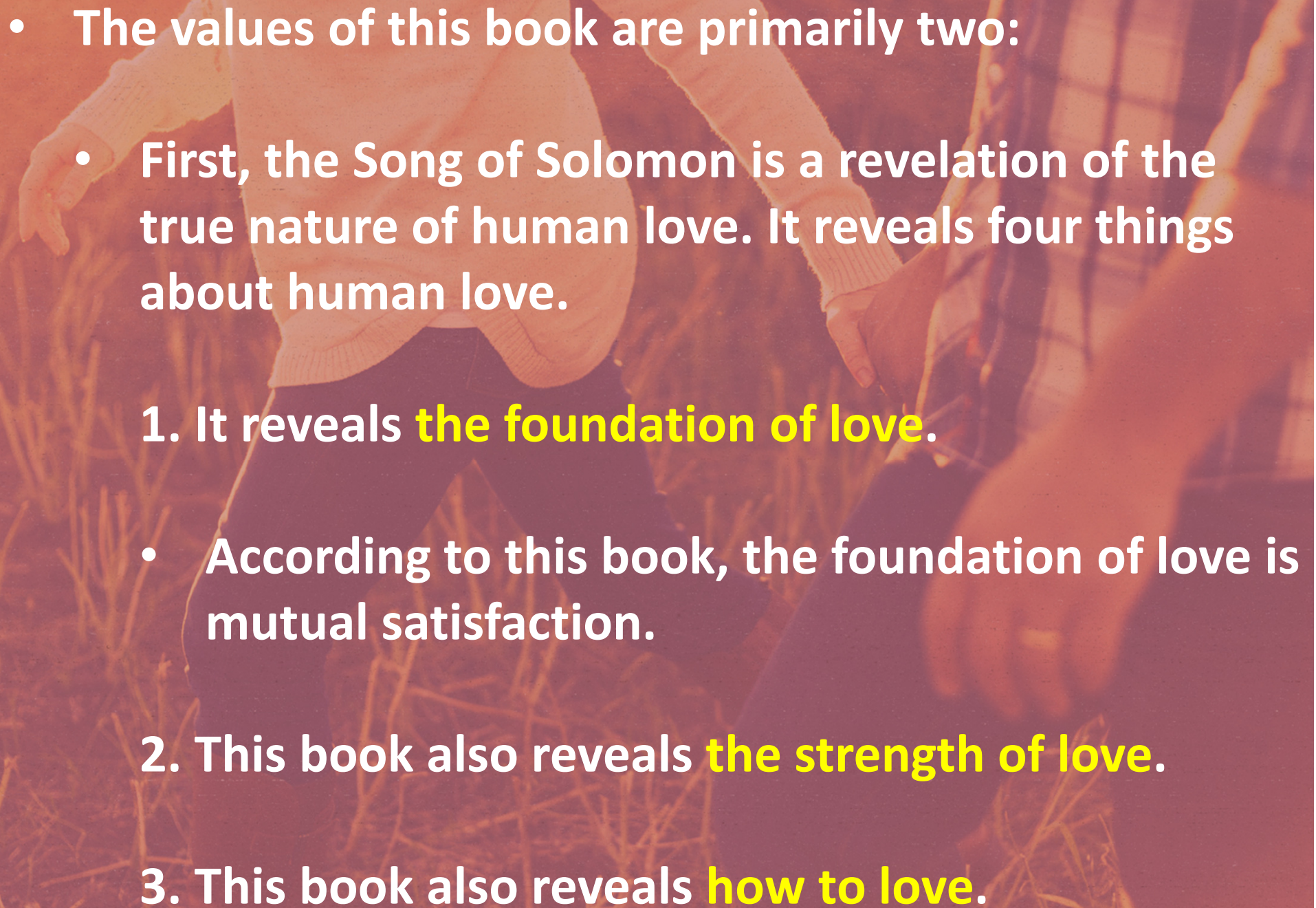
This book has 8 chapters, 177 verses, and 2,662 words. The words “God” and “Lord” are NOT mentioned in the book.

MESSAGE

- Contemporary culture has affected the interpretation of this book more than that of most other Bible books.
- For many years, believers considered this book to be a revelation of God's love for the believer and the believer's love for God, expressed in vivid metaphorical language.
- This was the predominant viewpoint for centuries when most people did not talk about the intimacies of human physical love publicly.
- With the sexual revolution that began in the 1960s, there are now many interpreters who believe this book is a revelation of two human beings' love for each other

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- Some have even suggested that it is an inspired *marriage manual* that God has given us to enable us to develop strong marriages.
 - Some Jewish rabbis in ancient times believed this was its purpose as well.
 - Personally, I believe God gave it to us so we could understand the nature of love shared between a husband and wife.
 - I think God wanted us to apply that understanding: both in our love for our spouses, and in our love for our Savior. In other words, **I believe the purpose is "both ... and," rather than "either ... or."**

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- This book emphasizes the supremacy of love. Human life finds its highest fulfillment in the love of a man and a woman.
 - Spiritual life finds its highest fulfillment in the love of a human being and God.
 - Jesus Christ makes the fulfillment of love on both the human and the spiritual levels possible. He manifested God's love to humankind. Consequently, we can love Him, and we can love one another.

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- The values of this book are primarily two:
 - First, the Song of Solomon is a revelation of the true nature of human love. It reveals four things about human love.
 1. It reveals **the foundation of love.**
 - According to this book, the foundation of love is mutual satisfaction.
 2. This book also reveals **the strength of love.**
 3. This book also reveals **how to love.**



4. This book also reveals **the fruits of love**.
These are three:

1. In true love **there is rest**.

- The home in which genuine love resides is a haven from the storms of life.

2. In true love **there is also joy**.

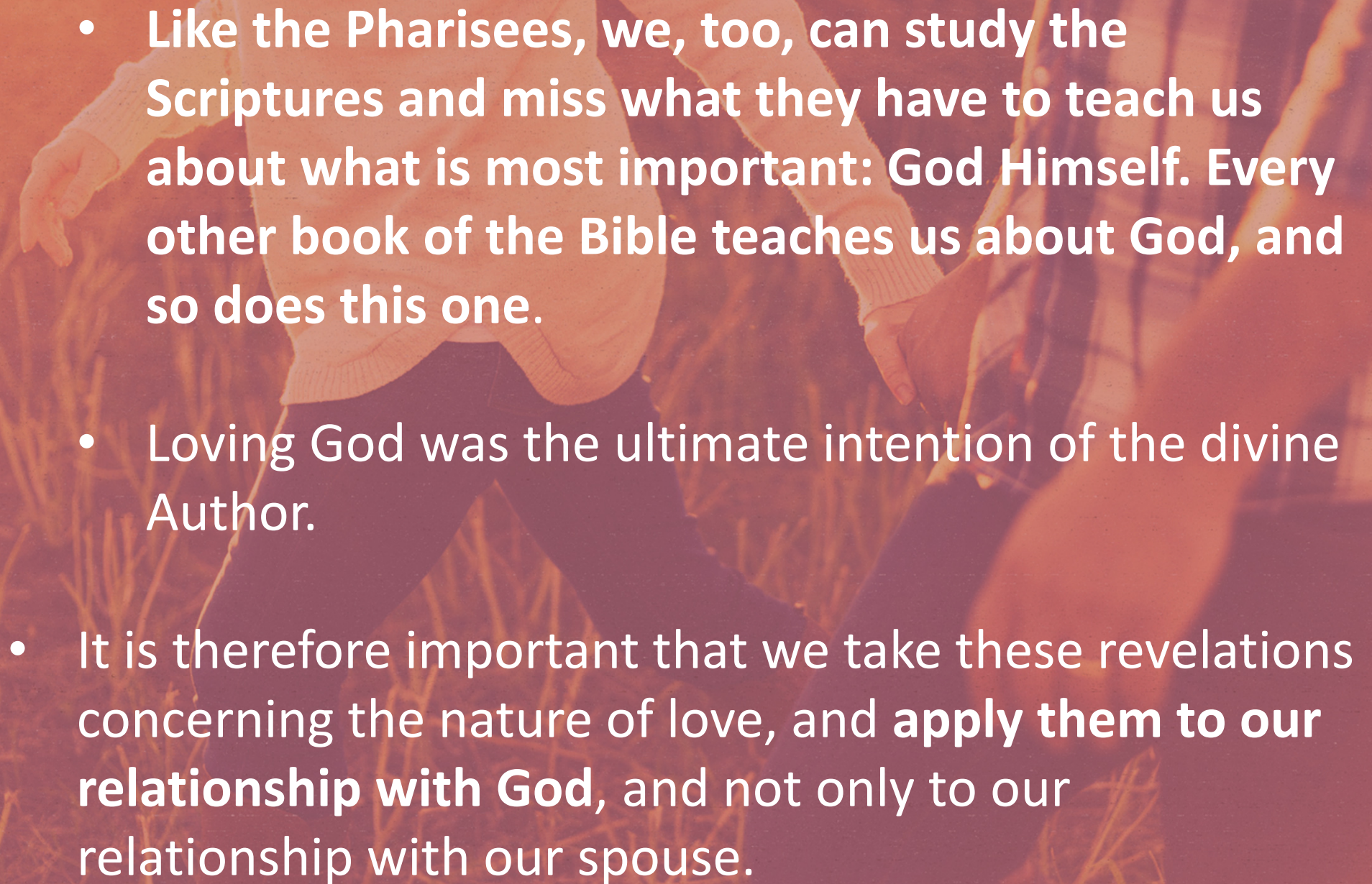
- No matter what other conditions may exist (poverty, misery, etc.), real love fills the heart with song and brightens the darkest day.

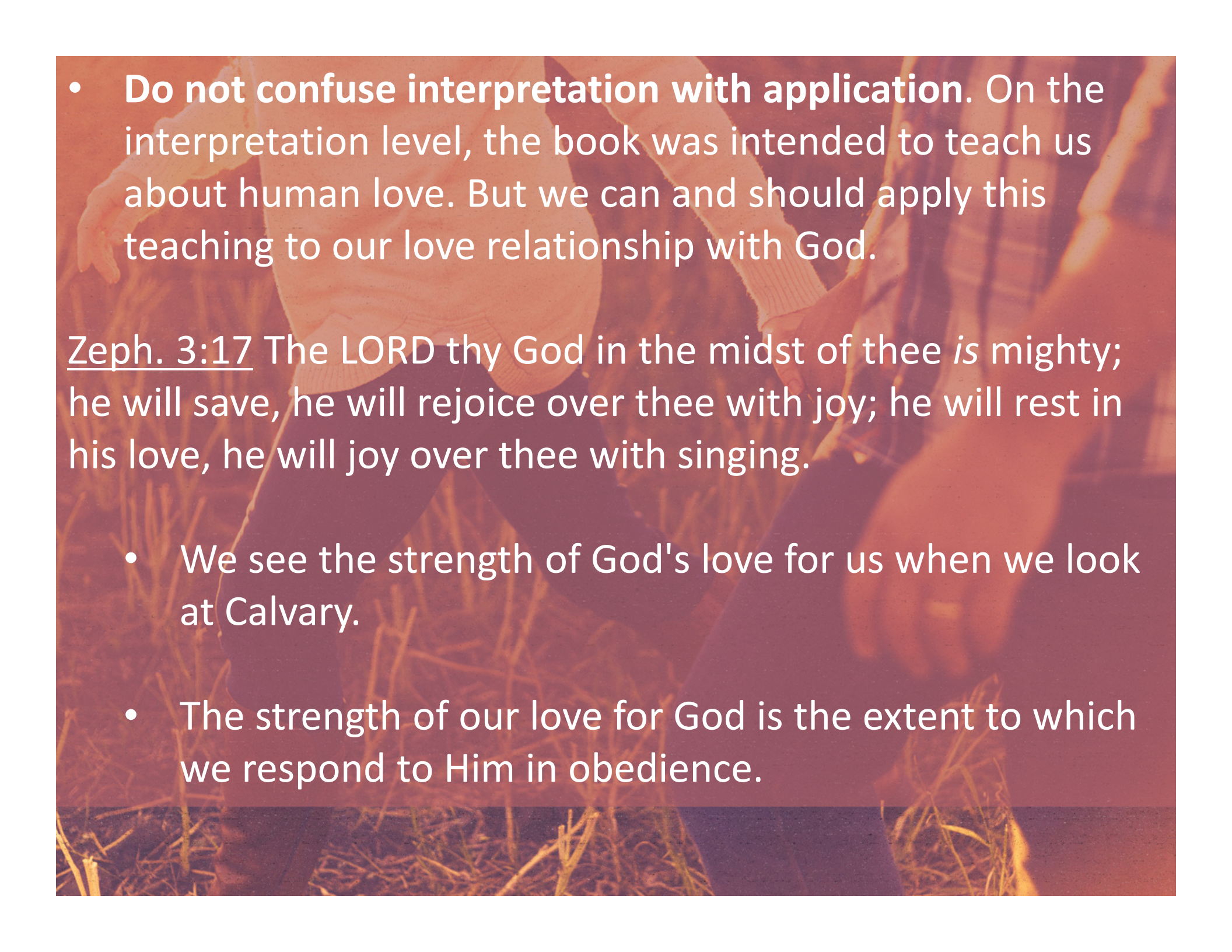


3. And in true love **there is courage.**

- Both individuals gain strength from their love to face circumstances boldly, and to recover from their failures and go on.
- All three of these fruits of love are prominent in this book.
 - The second value of this book is that it reveals spiritual experience at its highest level.

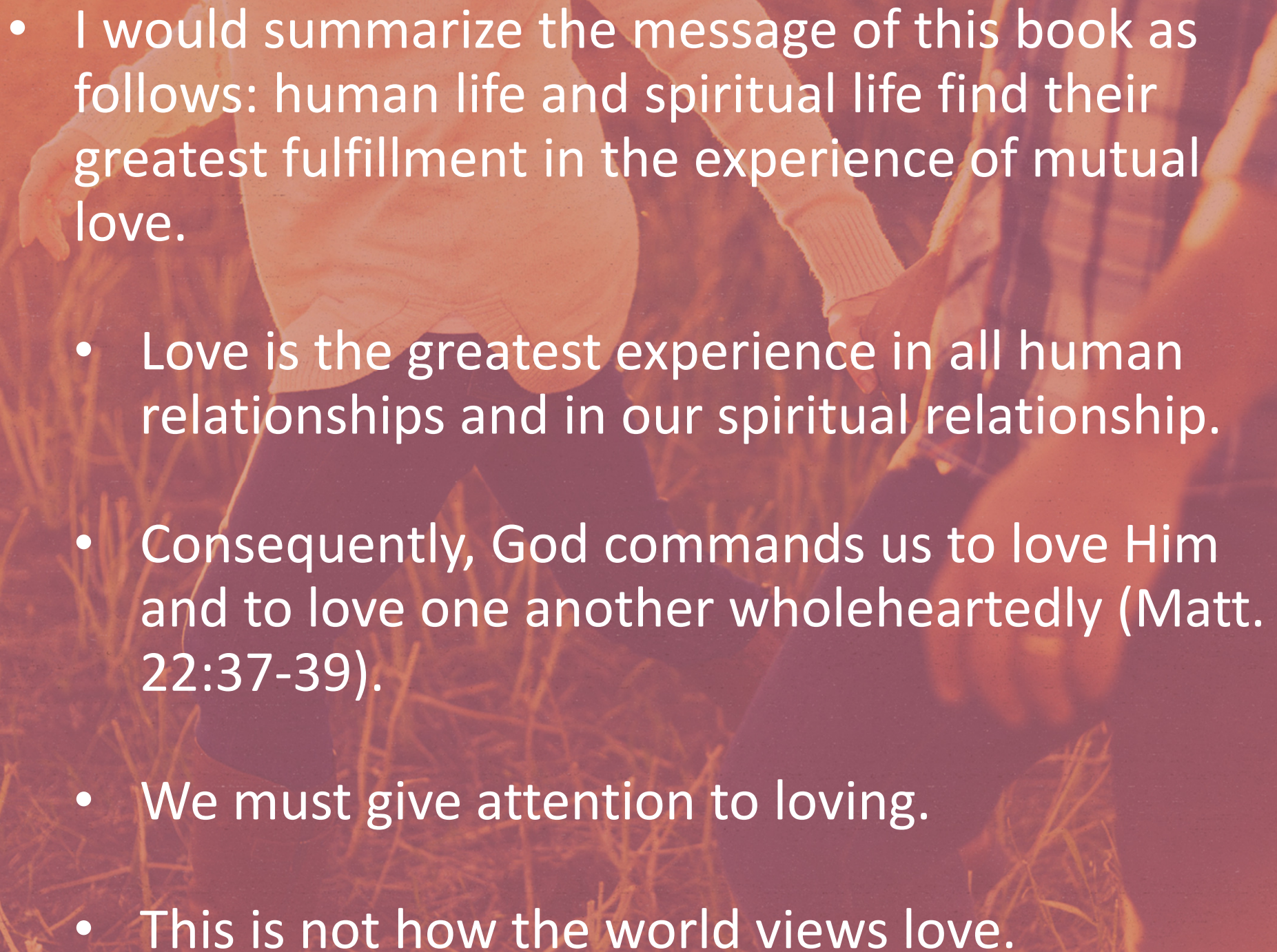
Jn. 5:39 **Search the scriptures**; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and **they are they which testify of me.**

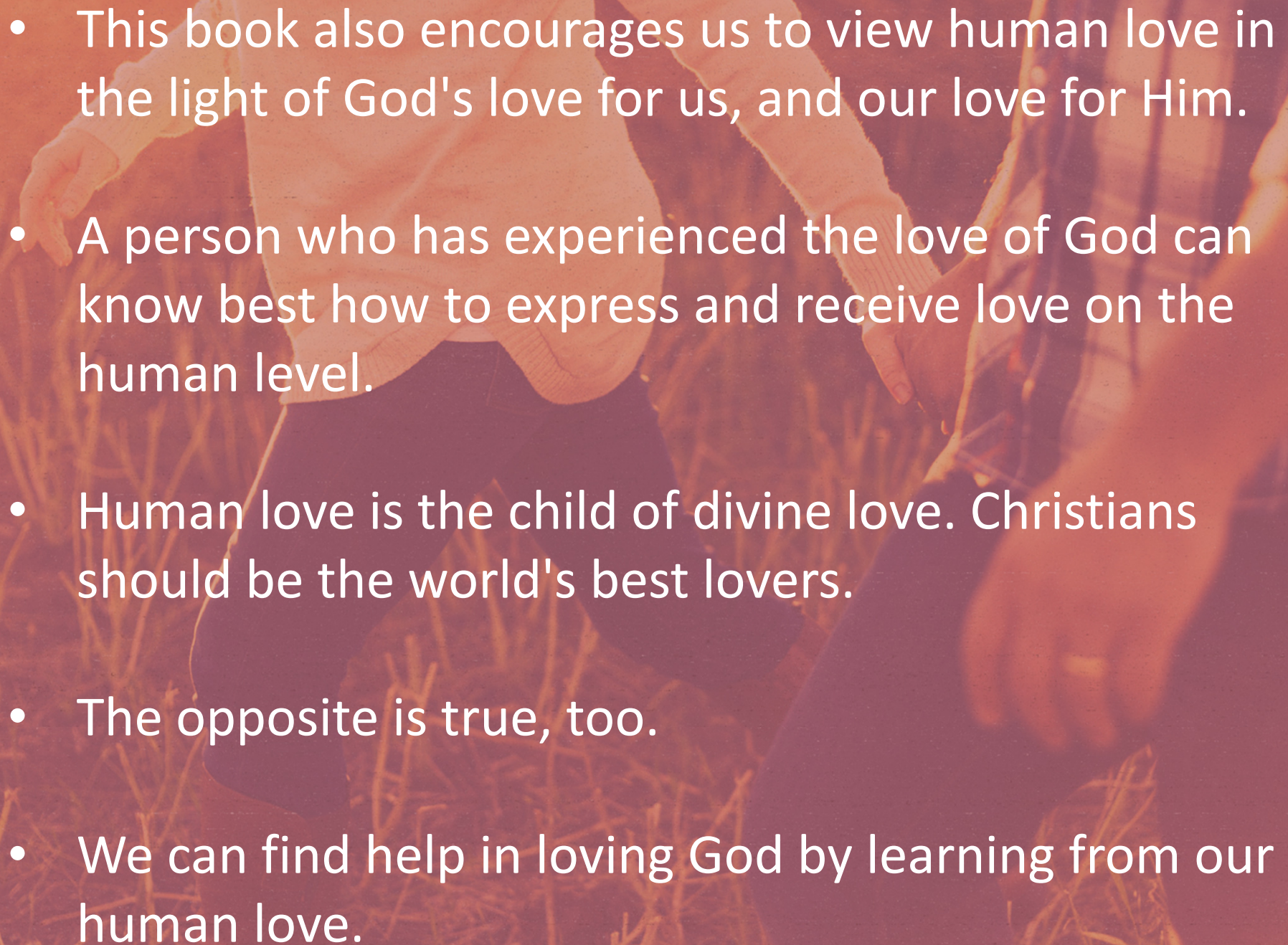
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- Like the Pharisees, we, too, can study the Scriptures and miss what they have to teach us about what is most important: **God Himself**. Every other book of the Bible teaches us about God, and so does this one.
 - Loving God was the ultimate intention of the divine Author.
 - It is therefore important that we take these revelations concerning the nature of love, and **apply them to our relationship with God**, and not only to our relationship with our spouse.


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- **Do not confuse interpretation with application.** On the interpretation level, the book was intended to teach us about human love. But we can and should apply this teaching to our love relationship with God.

Zeph. 3:17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

- We see the strength of God's love for us when we look at Calvary.
- The strength of our love for God is the extent to which we respond to Him in obedience.

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- I would summarize the message of this book as follows: human life and spiritual life find their greatest fulfillment in the experience of mutual love.
 - Love is the greatest experience in all human relationships and in our spiritual relationship.
 - Consequently, God commands us to love Him and to love one another wholeheartedly (Matt. 22:37-39).
 - We must give attention to loving.
 - This is not how the world views love.

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- This book also encourages us to view human love in the light of God's love for us, and our love for Him.
 - A person who has experienced the love of God can know best how to express and receive love on the human level.
 - Human love is the child of divine love. Christians should be the world's best lovers.
 - The opposite is true, too.
 - We can find help in loving God by learning from our human love.

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- Our passion, abandonment, and fidelity to our mate on the human level should help us practice these things in our relationship with God.
 - I believe God created the family to help us understand our relationship with Himself.

Summary

- The primary purpose of this book is to demonstrate love's fulfillment between a husband and wife.
- By application, this book is reflective of a deepening love relationship between God and a believer.

Conclusion

Song of Solomon 8:6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for **love is strong as death**; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame.
7 **Many waters cannot quench love**, neither can the floods drown it: **if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.**