

worksheet answers

The figurative language in Song of Solomon is often difficult to understand, but the brothers' words in 8:8-9 are clear (A-3). They were concerned about their sister's purity (D). There is nothing to indicate that they were afraid she would be raped, however (D-7). Rather, their main concern for her was about what kind of woman she would become when she came of age (D-2). They hoped that she would guard against immorality and compared this to being like a wall (D-3).

Thankfully, the Shulamite agreed with her brothers about the need for purity (D-5), declaring in 8:10 that her beloved (probably Solomon) was attracted to her because she had consistently rejected immorality. Thus she shows that remaining pure is a key aspect of finding true love (D-6). In light of her high moral standards, there is no reason to think that her brothers were opposed to the romance and marriage (B-6).

That said, the Shulamite indicates in 1:6 that her brothers had been angry with her for some reason (D-8). Her words, however, probably indicate that she did not believe that their anger was justified. Thus line B-2 may be partly correct.

Line B-8 is incorrect. The brothers had more authority because they were men and because they were older. Lines A-4 and C-4 are also incorrect.

So what?

If the Shulamite's brothers were omitted from chapter eight, it would change the chapter greatly (B-7). Much of the emphasis on moral purity would be lost. Moreover, it would wrongly imply that romance and marriage are strictly personal and should not involve one's family. Although the Shulamite spoke more with the daughters of Jerusalem than with her brothers (B-9), the brothers and their moral emphasis are still important.

Did the brothers believe in arranged marriages (C-3)? The answer is "no," if arranged marriages are seen as an alternative to courtship. There is far too much about courtship and romantic love in the Song to hold such a view. (See 2:11-13 for instance.) On the other hand, the brothers and the author of the Song show that family involvement is normally a good thing, since it helps prevent sexual immorality.

The setting of the Song of Solomon is ancient, but basic human nature has not changed in three thousand years. Jealousy and romantic love are just as powerful emotionally today as they were back then (8:6-7), and fornication is just as destructive as ever. (Carefully read 1 Thes. 4:3-8.) The Shulamite's brothers appear at the end of the Song to remind us all of this.

applications

Apply the points which you believe are most important or seem most needful.
