



# *Introduction*



## Introduction

**T**hroughout my life the Lord has taken me into seasons through Song of Songs; this book is the result of one of those seasons. Every year Holy Spirit leads me to something specific for my time in the Word. In November of 2015, I once again heard Him calling me closer into intimacy with a journey through Song of Songs as a doorway to that end. He told me that it was time to write. Drawing deeper into intimacy with the Lord is really a journey inward, not into self-awareness, but into God-awareness. Jesus said, *“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him”* (John 14:23). That home within is where He abides now and is the new Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary where His presence, His very essence dwells.

Before I begin I want to describe my first real encounter with Song of Songs. I was at the beginning of a five-year healing journey that was going to transform my life. We had recently moved to Alaska, away from everything with which I had grown up and was accustomed. It didn't take long for it to come to my attention that the “me” that I thought had it all together was really in a state of chaos and on a trajectory to total breakdown. When I dared open the door of my heart long enough to see the chaos, I was shocked by what I saw, yet had no clue as to what was wrong. Thank God for the Wonderful Counselor, Holy Spirit. Through His grace I went to Him and said, “I have no idea what is wrong, but I have walked with You long enough to know You are faithful. I trust You enough to ask You to do in me whatever needs to happen to fix this.” He started out by putting His

## Let the Winds Blow

finger on a place deep in my heart where I harbored father hurts, which affected how I saw myself, and in turn affected how I viewed the Lord. The journey through the healing of father hurts is a subject that I'll touch on slightly.

About six months into this journey, I was reading Song of Songs with no real understanding. One day I was in chapter 4 and read in verse 12, *"You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride"* (NIV). A very still, small voice that ultimately rocked me to my very core said, "From the time you were a little girl, I have been cultivating the garden of your heart, producing a beautiful garden of flowers and fruit, but you're locked up. What is in you can't come out." Then I read on to verse 16, *"Awake, north wind, and come, south wind! Blow on my garden that its fragrance may spread everywhere"* (NIV). The Lord said, "I am sending the wind of My Spirit upon you. He is going to heal your heart so that the fragrance of what is in you can come out." This experience and the voice was so deep and quiet, I wasn't even sure it was real. I didn't say a word to anyone, but just held it in my heart.

It was 1992 when it so happened that we were about to make our first trip to the state of Missouri. Through a series of connections with a friend, we found ourselves in Kansas City with people from Metro Vineyard Fellowship where Mike Bickle was the lead pastor. I was unaware at first, but one of the main focuses of Mike Bickle's life and teaching is Song of Songs. (These were many of the same people who started IHOP, the International House of Prayer, several years later.) At the time, the church had three or four worship and prayer meetings a day in their office building. David Ruis was the main worship leader. We were able to attend several of the meetings. I had never experienced anything like it before in my life. Their worship was real and passionate; their prayer was totally relational before the Lord. When the music started, all I could do was cry. Healing waves of the Lord's presence washed over my heart.

We happened to be there the weekend that David Ruis and his team were recording a live worship album. We got to be in on it that

## Evelyn Donelson

Sunday night. We found ourselves in a room of about 2,500 people of all ages who were passionately worshipping the Lord. The songs they were singing were songs we would take back with us that would impact worship in Alaska. Somewhere in the evening they started singing a song that I later found out was the theme of the album called "Let the Winds Blow"<sup>1</sup> from the very Scripture the Lord had spoken to me before. I can remember standing there, realizing what was happening, and that what I had heard was real.

I came home from that trip changed, although it was just the beginning. The Lord was really healing me. I started being able to worship with an open heart like I had never experienced before. I was also able to lead others to the same place. His healing of my heart allowed me to open my heart more in worship, which in turn healed my heart more, which helped me to open my heart more; and on and on. The process was amazing, sometimes painful, but wonderful all the same. My life was totally changed.

The Song of Songs is a story of a journey from a love that is genuine and immature, to a love that is mature and fit for partnership with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The maiden of the story truly loves the Bridegroom/Shepherd/King, but is caught in self-focus in the first half of the story. She faces some trying experiences through the journey and comes out on the other side no longer consumed with herself and her desires, but with the One she loves and His desires.

It is so true, as James says in chapter 1:2-4, "*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything*" (NIV). The Father, along with Holy Spirit, is committed to preparing a bride that is a fit companion for the Son. We, the church, as a whole and as individuals, are that bride who is being made ready. He is calling us to mature partnership with Him for eternity. Will we say "yes" to the process? My heart says yes, and

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1. David Ruis, Let the Winds Blow, 1993, Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, Admin. in North America by Music Services o/b/o Vineyard Music. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

## Let the Winds Blow

I believe that yours does too. That is what the Father is looking for. He is faithful to complete what He starts (Philippians 1:6). It is His work within us, if we will but submit to Him.

I will use many resources throughout the book, such as teaching notes from Mike Bickle, *The Passion Translation* with notes by Brian Simmons, and more, but mostly I will rely on my personal life experience with Holy Spirit. I pray that we will each fall more deeply and passionately in love with our Bridegroom-King, Jesus, through this journey.

I have divided the book into eight chapters, following the book of Song of Songs. Each chapter is divided into small sections on which the reader can meditate. I recommend taking your time and not rushing through each section. These pages are a result of the wind of the Spirit, blowing out of the garden of my heart all that He has produced within it. I pray you will be blessed and experience the rush of Spirit wind upon your own heart.

*Evelyn Donelson*



*Chapter One*





## Chapter One

### The Most Amazing Song of All

This is Solomon’s song of songs, more wonderful than any other (Song of Songs 1:1 NLT).

It is incredible to me that God would choose to have this book, filled with the language of intimate love, called “more wonderful than any other” in the middle of His gift of the written Word to mankind.

I remember back in the mid-1980s, when I was in my twenties and I started hearing the Lord talk to me in marriage terms; it was a bit unnerving. I didn’t know if I was making it up and my imagination was running wild, or if this was truly the language of the Spirit. I remember asking Him, “Is this OK?” His response was that of desire for my spirit to be one with His Spirit. I had never heard anyone talk about that kind of intimacy with the Lord. I kept it secret, hidden in my heart, just between us for many years. It wasn’t until my first trip to Kansas City many years later at Metro Vineyard Fellowship, that I heard the ideas I had hidden in my heart expressed openly.

We see precedence for this relationship in the New Testament:

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32 NIV).

This really has been the message of the Spirit upon the earth throughout the ages. We see it from Genesis to Revelation. The quote

## Let the Winds Blow

above actually comes from Genesis 2:24 after God took the rib from Adam's side and formed a fit companion for Adam. Here is the story:

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." This is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh (Genesis 2:18-24 NIV).

When God created man, He said, "Let *Us* make mankind in *Our* image" (Genesis 1:26, NIV, emphasis mine). Just as God created a fit partner for the first Adam, so God is forming a fit partner for the second Adam.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready (Revelation 19:7 NIV).

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband (Revelation 21:2 NIV).

If this is truly so (and I believe it is), God in His desire to express the ultimate significance of this relationship and union, would call this story of a bride and bridegroom, the Song of Songs, the song that is "more wonderful than any other."

## Evelyn Donelson

This relationship with the Son of God is both individual and corporate. He is calling us as individual believers into an intimate, passionate love relationship with Him. He is also desiring that the church, as a whole, would be in love with Him, fully His, and ready to partner with Him to see His kingdom come on the earth. We are united with Him for eternity.

It was July of 1979, and I was sixteen years old when I had an encounter that was to set in motion my life's message. Mind you, I didn't know it was an encounter, or that such a thing existed; this wasn't something taught or discussed in our church sphere. Yet this experience set a course in my life that would affect everything. I was home alone for a few days. My parents went on a trip, and I stayed home because I was working. I was attending evening meetings at the Assemblies of God camp meeting in Brooks, Oregon. I was hungry for the Lord and my heart was awakened by Holy Spirit.

I went home after the meeting one night, went to bed, but could not sleep. My heart continued to be stirred by the presence of the Lord. I finally turned on the light and picked up my Bible, which at that time was the olive green Living Bible entitled *The Way*. Holy Spirit was taking me from passage to passage, teaching me from the Word. The hours were passing quickly and I realized that I probably wasn't going to sleep that night. I said to the Lord, "If you keep me up all night, please give me energy for tomorrow morning when I have to go to work."

Eventually I opened to Hosea 6 and read:

I don't want your sacrifices—I want your love. I don't want your offerings—I want you to know me (Hosea 6:6 TLB).

As I meditated on these words, it was like the Lord was pouring into my heart His longing and desire for His church, His bride. I felt the ache of His heart because she was not fully given over in love, but caught up in works and duty. It was a message for me personally, but also for the church at large.

## Let the Winds Blow

I looked at my clock; it was about 5 a.m. My alarm would be sounding in about an hour. Finally, I felt a release and closed my eyes. My back was to the door. Suddenly, I heard the sound of someone walking in the room and brushing against the furniture. Startled, I quickly turned, only to see a glow of light quickly dissipating. I said to myself, "You've been awake all night; this is just your imagination." Closing my eyes again, the same thing happened, but this time I heard a very loud inner audible voice that said, "Whatever you do, don't turn around, just let Me touch you." Suddenly I felt what I can only describe as pure energy reach inside me and touch my spirit. A bolt of electricity instantly surged through me from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. It was over as quickly as it started.

I came to realize that something had really happened. I had not just imagined this! I sat up, realized that I was full of energy, got up, and started my day. I tried sharing my experience with my youth pastor, but he had no real grid for guiding or affirming me in this experience, and I lacked the language or understanding to be able to articulate the experience and message. It has taken many years and many more experiences to put this message together.

Years later I had a dream that further developed my life's message. The Lord has spoken to me many times in dreams. It took me a long time to realize it was the Lord really speaking and that what I was seeing and hearing was valid. In this particular dream I walked into the doors of a church and continued through the foyer, stopping at the back doors of the meeting room. I stood and watched what looked like a beautiful sight. The room was full of brides. There was beautiful music being played and sung. Small groups of brides stood on the platform moving and singing in perfect sequence; the rows of brides in the audience stood with their hands raised, swaying back and forth, looking as though they were caught up in the ecstasy of what was happening in the room. The longer I stood and watched, the sicker to my stomach I felt. When I awoke I felt the presence of the Lord and knew the dream was from Him, but I didn't understand

## Evelyn Donelson

it. How could something so beautiful make me feel so sick? What was wrong?

I filed the dream away in the back of my mind, having no answer or direction as to its meaning and not realizing it was linked to anything else I had heard from the Lord. A few years later the Lord brought the dream back to my memory. I asked Him, "I know what I saw and I know how I felt, but what does it mean?" He simply asked, "Who was missing?" I realized that there was no groom in the entire building. He showed me how the church, His bride, had become satisfied to "do church" without Him. She was able to keep all the outward motions going by simply relying on her own talents and abilities, but He was not in it, and she didn't even know it. Again, He poured into my heart His ache and desire for a bride who desired Him more than anything else, and wasn't willing to just have meetings without His presence.

Why do I share this at the beginning of this book of Song of Songs with the words, a song "more wonderful than any other?" I believe Song of Songs is an amazing expression of the Lord's desire for the depth of relationship He wants to have with His people, His church, both corporate and individual. This truly is the Song of Songs: the most important song, one to which we should pay close attention. He wants to grab our hearts, breathe the fiery passion of His love into us, and empower us to pour out the love and devotion He so desires and deserves back to Him. We are being formed into an eternal partner with the Son of God.

### **The Shulamite**

In this love story we can see Solomon, the Bridegroom-King, as a type of Christ, and the Shulamite as a type of the church, or the believer.

The footnote for Songs of Songs 1:2 in *The Passion Translation* brings out the fact that in the Hebrew, the words *Shulamite* and *Solomon* actually come from the same root word, one being masculine and