



AUTUMN
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS
Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
October 4, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

TEND YOUR GARDEN

Catch for us the foxes . . . that ruin the vineyards.

Song of Songs 2:15

READ Song of Songs 2:8-17

I was so excited to plant our backyard fruit and veggie garden. Then I started to notice small holes in the dirt. Before it had time to ripen, our first fruit mysteriously disappeared. One day I was dismayed to find our largest strawberry plant had been completely uprooted by a nesting rabbit and scorched to a crisp by the sun. I wished I'd paid closer attention to the warning signs!

The beautiful love poem in Song of Songs records a conversation between a young man and woman. While calling to his darling, the man sternly warned against animals who would tear apart the lovers' garden, a metaphor for their relationship. "Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards," he said (Song of Songs 2:15). Perhaps he saw hints of "foxes" that could ruin their romance, like jealousy, anger, deceit, or apathy. Because he delighted in the beauty of his bride (v. 14), he wouldn't tolerate the presence of anything unwholesome. She was as precious as "a lily among thorns" to him (v. 2). He was willing to put in the work to guard their relationship.

Some of God's most precious gifts to us are family and friends, although those relationships aren't always easy to maintain. With patience, care, and protection from "the little foxes," we trust that God will grow beautiful fruit.

By Karen Pimpo

PRAY & REFLECT

Jesus, thank You for loving me so well. Amen

Where have you become complacent in a close relationship? What foxes are you tolerating?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Several questions have been asked regarding the Song of Songs (also known as the Song of Solomon). Who was the author? Some scholars believe it was written by Solomon; others, however, conclude that it could've been written for Solomon or about him. Should it be interpreted literally, as fiction, or as allegory (depicting "love" as God's love for His people or as Christ's love for His church)? Over the years, scholars have come to view the book as Wisdom Literature that extols the beauty and blessedness of human love in the context of marriage. Douglas Sean O'Donnell is one such scholar. In his commentary *The Song of Solomon: An Invitation to Intimacy*, he concludes that the book is a song about human love that was written to give us wisdom. – **By Arthur Jackson**

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