

SONG OF SOLOMON

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to the book of Song of Solomon chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we begin this fascinating and controversial book. This is Solomon's third and final book that has made it into the Scriptures, God's Word. Tragically, many don't even realize this book is part of God's Word, or they avoid reading it because they see no real purpose in it. Or it is too sensual for them. Hopefully, by the time we finish this book, you will see clearly the purpose of this book and it will help you in your walk with the Lord.

Now the most obvious reason this book was written was that Solomon wrote a love song to one of his wives. Since he had 700 wives and 300 concubines by the end of his life, this song was probably written early on in his life. And thus, this is nothing more than an erotic love song describing the romantic virtues of a man and a woman in the context of marriage. Is this book romantic? You bet it is! But please understand that this romance, this love is between a husband and wife and yes, they engage in sex.

I realize that some may be offended by that but when you read the words of Solomon and his bride, there is no other way to look at this. The key to me is that this is between a husband and wife and not an unmarried couple and as Paul said in Hebrews 13:4, "**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**"

That is the key, the marriage bed is undefiled but outside of marriage, sexual relations is defiled and God will judge those who are involved in fornication or adultery, whatever the case may be. Sex is not a sin between a husband and a wife. Sex is not only for having children. God has given to us sexual relations to enjoy and that is what we will see here with Solomon and his bride!

But that is not the only picture that the Lord is painting for us. Many believe that the Holy Spirit is showing us this love story as a picture of God and the nation of Israel. In fact Jewish tradition holds to this idea, seen in the *Mishnah* (the first part of the Talmud, containing traditional oral interpretations of scriptural ordinances compiled by the rabbis about 200 A. D.), the *Talmud* (a collection of writings constituting the Jewish civil and religious law: it consists of two parts, the Mishnah [text] and the Gemara [commentary]), and the *Targum* (any of several translations or paraphrases of parts of the Old Testament).

Also keep in mind the problem with that interpretation. Israel practiced Spiritual fornication and was called the unfaithful wife of Yahweh. In Hosea 3:1 we read, “**Then the LORD said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.’**” God wanted a deep intimate relationship with them, but they turned from Him. Thus, this picture may not fit as well.

But there is another way to look at this song. In a spiritual sense it is a picture of Christ and His great love for His bride, the Church. Now some are taken back by this because of the sexual overtones that are seen in this song. But God wants to *“know”* us in a deep, intimate way. So I do think it is a picture of God’s great love for His bride, you and me and that intimate relationship that He desires with us. And my prayer as we go through this book is that it will help you to fall deeper in love with your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So which way are we to interpret it? There is the literal interpretation, these things did take place in the life of Solomon, and there are the spiritual truths that we can apply to our life to help us in our walk with the Lord and we also can apply it to our marriage to help us grow in our relationship with our spouse. I think all are legitimate and applicable to us. Let the Spirit of God speak to your heart, what you need to hear.

Now this song seems to open up at the wedding banquet and we will see flashbacks on how this relationship developed between Solomon and his Shulamite bride. Now some of your Bibles may have who is speaking, but these were not in the original texts, they are not inspired. Thus, they might not always be correct. And so this is not necessarily an easy book, but it truly is an important one, so much so that God has placed it in His Book, the Bible!

One more thing before we dig into this book. Listen to what George Burrowes wrote regarding the Song of Solomon.

In the glorious temple of revelation, a place which the Lord our God has chosen to cause his name to dwell there, even in brighter glory than in the temple of the material world, does this book stand, like one of the apartments in the temple on Mount Zion, small indeed, but exquisitely finished, the walls and ceiling of something richer than cedar, richer than bright ivory overlaid with sapphires, and filled with specimens of truth brought down from heaven by the Holy Spirit, and here deposited for the comfort and delight of those who love the habitation of God's house, and the place where his glory dwelleth.

- George Burrowes, A Commentary on the Song of Solomon

With that said, let's begin reading this romantic song, not really book, a song that was sung, the song of Solomon beginning in verse 1 of chapter 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

SONG OF SOLOMON

VERSE 1

1. As this book opens up we read, "**The song of songs,**" which is another title for this book. That phrase, "**song of songs**" is a Hebrew idiom or expression meaning, "the most exquisite song" or "the loveliest of songs." Keep in mind that Solomon wrote 1005 songs, but this is his best and this is the one that the Lord wanted to be preserved in His Word, the Bible.

As we read through this we will see that this is a love song describing the relationship Solomon had, from dating to marriage, with this Shulamite woman. These are the two primary characters in the book, Solomon and his Shulamite bride. Some secondary characters are the daughters of Jerusalem and her brothers. As we read on we will see that most of the next 3 verses are the words of the Shulamite woman.

VERSES 2-4a

1. We tend to think that affection is wrong; it is not when that affection is toward your spouse. You should have that kind of affection for your spouse! And here we see her saying, “Let him smoothe me with kisses.” There is nothing more she desires in this world than his affection towards her, it was satisfying, refreshing, a source of joy. May we have that kind of love for our spouse!

2. Now I did say that we see here a picture of Christ and His Bride, the Church. And in regards to the Bride, His Bride, we are to have that kind of love for the Lord. True joy, true satisfaction is found in Him and not in this world. That is the kind of love God wants us to have for Him. That there is nothing else we would desire more than an intimate relationship with Him.

Think of it like this to help put it into perspective. You can't kiss two people at the same time. That means that God wants us to love Him and not be in love with the world! We are told in Psalm 84:10-11, "**For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.**" And knowing that God's love for us is better than anything that the world has for us should cause us to love Him even more!

The old Puritan commentator John Trapp said of this verse, "She must have Christ, or else she dies; she must have the 'kisses of Christ's mouth,' even those sweet pledges of love in his Word, or she cannot be contented, but will complain." May we have that kind of love, that kind of passion for the Lord!

3. The Shulamite woman goes on to say that his ointment is good, and ointment is soothing and it releases a fragrance when applied to our lives. Glickman put it like this regarding these words, "When she said that his name was 'perfume poured forth,' she meant that his character was as fragrant and refreshing as cologne poured out of a bottle. This is the reason the girls around the palace loved him – not just because he was handsome though that he was, but because his inner person was so attractive."

Make no mistake about it, the fragrance of Jesus is beautiful and it draws people to Him. When we draw close to Him, know His character, we pick up His fragrance and thus, we carry it with us wherever we go. Paul speaks of this very thing in II Corinthians 2:14-17, **“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”**

We are to emanate the fragrance of Jesus, it should permeate our lives and spring forth from our being and as we do some are drawn to it and get saved and others are repulsed by it and are lost. But you will never emanate the fragrance of Jesus unless you are close to Him. Whatever you are close to is what will emanate from your life!

4. Now in this first part of verse 4 we see the Shulamite woman asking Solomon to take her away, for she has been swept off her feet by his love for her. In our relationship with the Lord we should be swept away, blown away by His unconditional love for us!

VERSE 4b

1. Some say that this is still the Shulamite woman speaking. The problem for me is that it says, **“We will run after you.”** That doesn’t make sense since it is speaking of more than this Shulamite woman. I think these are the words of the daughters of Jerusalem and they too see this man and how wonderful he is and they too will run after him with her and see how this love relationship plays out.

2. Now let’s look at this through a Christian perspective. As we live out our faith do others see the love we have of Christ and are they drawn to Him by what we say of Him? That truly should be the case. That they would desire to have what we have. Now will all desire this relationship? No, but as we live out our faith may they see the love we have for Jesus. Paul put it like this, **“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”** I Corinthians 11:1. If we do they will see that love!

VERSE 4c

1. As some read this, that she has been taken into the Kings chambers, they feel that Solomon and this Shulamite woman had sexual relations before they were married. Think about that for a minute. Would this book be in the Bible and would it be called the **“song of songs”** or “the most exquisite song” or “the loveliest of songs”? Of course not, God calls sex outside of marriage fornication and thus, He would not put it in the **“song of songs.”** Yes we see sex outside of marriage in the Scriptures, but never in a positive context!

Many times today as people are dating they say, “I love you!” which is a phrase meaning “I want to go to bed with you!” This is not what is going on here. I believe that they were married before they had any intimate relationship with each other. There was a commitment before God, a covenant before God towards each other and thus, their love was rich and it was deep because it was based in the Lord.

Others see this as not a physical room but that Solomon has welcomed her into the secrets of his heart, to be part of his life. This is also possible. The point we need to understand is that they did not have sexual relations prior to marriage.

Today people have superficial relationships that are based upon sex and because of that those relationships don’t last. And we see that played out in our society today!

2. In regards to our relationship with Jesus we cannot have that intimate relationship with Him apart from first making a pledge to Him, a commitment, that He is our Lord and Savior. In Psalm 63:1-8 we read, **“O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.”**

As we have that hunger for God, as we thirst for Him, Jesus will fill us as He said in John 7:37-38, “**. . . ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’**” May we have that kind of love, passion for our Lord!

VERSE 4d-e

1. The daughters of Jerusalem, these virgin women, are rejoicing for the love their friend has found, and they will always remember the love he showed towards her. Their love for each other was open, it was beautiful, it was real, and others saw it and desired to have that kind of relationship. Do others see that in your relationship with your spouse? They should! Do others see that in your relationship with the Lord? They should!

VERSES 4f-6

1. The Shulamite is speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, these virgins and she understands why these virgins love Solomon, but she is his!

2. I believe the song moves to a period of time prior to their meeting and goes into their dating, and-so-on. What we know of this woman is as follows. Her father was probably dead. She had a mother, a sister, at least 2 brothers or step-brothers and these brothers did not treat her too kindly. She was living, most likely, in an area of Ephraim, caring for a vineyard, and she also was a shepherdess. And one day she has an encounter with this handsome stranger, and she is embarrassed.

Why is she so embarrassed? Because her skin was dark, she was tanned and back then, if you were suntan that meant you worked out in the fields. Please understand that this is not saying she was black, it is saying that she was tanned. God has created us with a vast difference in colors and because of sin we differentiate that by what we call “races” and that is wrong. There is only one race and it is called the *HUMAN RACE!* No one is more important or less important, we are all on the same playing field and the problem comes when we try to put people into categories, and like I said, there is only one, the human race! The pigment of the skin is of no importance whatsoever. The condition of the heart is the important matter. So that is not the issue here.

This issue here, like I have said, is that she was tanned. You see, only those who were living in luxury had light skin or pale skin because they did not work out in the fields. In that culture tanned skin was not thought of as beautiful. Today people go to tanning salons to get tanned, go figure!

In verse 5 when it speaks of the “tents of Kedar” keep in mind that the people of Kedar were Nomads whose tents were dark black, and Solomon’s curtains were white. This truly gives us a picture of what we are like as Christians. Outwardly we blow it, fail, we sin. But inwardly we are clean, pure; we are white by the righteousness of God imputed to us by Christ. That is why we need to crucify the flesh, less of us and more of Jesus that is seen in our lives!

And make no mistake about it, she was not lazy. She worked hard and her brothers or step-brothers forced her to work even harder. She worked so hard she couldn’t even take care of herself. She is a farm girl who is going to encounter royalty! I guess you can call this a Cinderella story as she was forced to work by her cruel relatives.

3. Also, I think we can get so busy in our day-to-day life that we don't have the time or we don't take the time to cultivate in us those things that really matter, that intimate relationship with God, that inward beauty that God desires us to have! And because of that what flows from our lives is the works of the flesh instead of the fruit of the Spirit. Spend time with God, you can't afford not to because it will affect your life in a negative way if you don't!

VERSE 7

1. Her desire is to be with him, she is in love with him and thus, she wants to know where he will be. She does not want to go around looking like a prostitute, veiling herself and wandering around. Glickman sums it up for us like this, "In their culture this term, 'a veiled woman,' referred to a loose girl, likely a prostitute. If she were going to see the king, she wanted it to be at the proper time and place – say, for example, when he was free in the middle of the day. She didn't want to go wandering around looking for him, appearing to be an aggressive and available prostitute to everyone else."

Today we see many women who really don't care how others think of them. They flaunt themselves around and they are not looking for a loving relationship, but for fornication. For this Shulamite woman, she understood that when it comes to sexual attraction and reputation, what others think does matter. And most of all, what does God think of your behavior, that should be the most important thing because if you get that right, you are in good shape!

2. One more point here and that is our relationship with the Lord. Are we satisfied in Him? Are we longing for that deep personal relationship with Him? Do we desire Him and we have come to that place where we are not going to let anyone else get in our way of spending time with Him? David said, “**The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**” Psalm 23:1. May we learn to be satisfied in Him!

VERSES 8-10

1. He welcomes her presence and companionship, and is happy to have her with him. And he tells her that if you want to find out where he is, just follow the footsteps of the flock, they will lead you to me!

Think about that for a minute. Where is the shepherd to be found? With His sheep of course! What does that mean to us? I think that too often Christian’s play the “Lone Ranger” and they are out there on their own. The old “Lone Ranger” not the new one! And the problem for us with being out there on our own is it is wrong. God desires us to come together as a body of believers.

Hebrews 10:25 says, and this is from The Amplified Bible, “**Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.**”

What Satan does is try to draw or divide the body apart, making people small, isolated islands, left in the open for the storms of life to come sweeping by. Don’t allow a wedge to be placed between you and the body of Christ. The fellowship of the brethren is important! Follow the flock; let the little goats eat upon God’s Word because that is where the shepherd is!

2. Remember how this Shulamite woman was insecure about her looks, well we see here that Solomon takes away that fear by telling her she is beautiful, that her beauty radiates. And we will see that throughout this song. Solomon speaks of her beauty and that has to bless her, encourage her. Men, I realize that this is hard for many of you, but your wife needs to hear you say those words, not necessarily that she is as beautiful as a filly but you know what I mean. Encourage them, bless them, tell them that they are beautiful!

3. And we see that God does the very same thing with us. You see, we know we are sinners. We know that there is no good in us, no beauty in us. But God does not see us as we are but what we will be.

In Isaiah 1:18 we read, **“‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.’”**

Also, in Ephesians 1:4-8 we read, **“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”** Jesus has made us beautiful, never forget that!

VERSE 11

1. These are the words from the daughters of Jerusalem and they want to bless this Shulamite woman with ornaments of gold and studs of silver. Why did they want to do this? I think that they just responded to the example that was set by Solomon, the beloved. The way that he treated her caused them to honor this Shulamite woman. Men, it is so important that you treat your wife with respect, with honor not only in the home but in public. That is so important because how you treat her in public others will also respond accordingly.

2. Now let's look at the picture that is being painted for us here. Gold is the metal of kingship, of glory. Silver is the metal of redemption. In other words, all the riches we have, all that God has given to us, is supported by what Christ has done. Paul, in Ephesians 1:3 said, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**"

Also, remember all that Christ has done for us, our King has redeemed us, gave His life for us. Paul said in Ephesians 5:25-27, "**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**" He redeemed us and we will stand before God with the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith, "**. . . not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**"

VERSES 12-14

1. There they are together at the banquet table and her spikenard permeated the room. This fragrance was costly and yet she was willing to sell all to be a sweet smelling fragrance to her lover. She was a poor farm girl brought into the King's palace! In a sense it speaks of the worship of God, it should cost us something, our lives!

Then she speaks of Myrrh, and let me start out with this so you have a picture of what is going on here. When she says in verse 13, "**A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, That lies all night between my breasts**" she is referring to a custom from that period of time. You see, they would wear a small bag of myrrh, a perfumed ointment, around their neck all night. Then, the next day that fragrance would linger about her. That is how she sees her lover, her beloved!

And her beloved was an "**En-Gedi**" to her and I think Glickman sums it up nicely what this means. He wrote, "The king was En-Gedi to this girl, an oasis of life in a desert of monotony, and like a weary traveler she found refreshment with him."

VERSE 15

1. Notice the beauty he sees in her and he is not afraid to tell her. How important it is to tell our wives how we feel about them, that they are beautiful. It gives them security, comfort, peace.

2. I do realize today that many of us feel ugly, not beautiful, not worthy, we are nothing! If you are in Christ you are wrong! As you read the Scriptures you will see that you are beautiful in God's eyes. Now some may say, "He has to feel that way!" No He doesn't. And let me say this, did He not form you in the womb? Of course He did! Do you think He made a mistake, ran out of material? Maybe that is why I am short? Of course that is not true, He didn't run out of material, you are the person He wants you to be and He loves you and He thinks you are beautiful. Is there anything else that is needed? I don't think so and yet He gives to us so much more!

VERSES 16-17

1. Notice how she responds to the compliments from her beloved! She was attracted to his appearance, but keep in mind that it was not just his outward good looks, he had an inward beauty that she was drawn to. Remember back in Song of Solomon 1:3, "**Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you.**" True love is based on outward appearance; you should be attracted to your spouse. But if that is all your relationship is based upon you are going to be in trouble. Outward beauty fades over time. I am not the same person I was when I met Julie; I have grown a lot, but not in height but in circumference! And yet Julie loves me, hopefully because of the inward beauty that is then manifested outwardly and because of that she does not see what age has done to me! That is true love, it needs to be inward and that will take care of the outward appearance!

2. And the description of their bed being green and the beams of their houses are cedar, the rafters of fir, could be speaking of them out on a walk in the country and seeing the beauty and relating it to their love!

SONG OF SOLOMON 2

VERSE 1

1. Many attribute the rose of Sharon to be Solomon, but it seems to be speaking of the Shulamite woman. And there are many pastors and many commentaries that speak of the Rose of Sharon being Jesus, that it is a picture of Christ. I am not going to argue with you over it because it is a beautiful picture, but it does not fit with our text here. This is speaking of the Shulamite woman. And thus, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valleys were very common, and she did not see herself as anything special, especially to have a man like Solomon love her. Yes there was beauty to these flowers, but again, they were common. And yet Solomon saw her as more beautiful than anything he has ever seen and we will see him respond to what she said in the next verse. And think about that, I like the picture here because I think we see ourselves as being very common but God see's us as beautiful as we have seen!

VERSE 2

1. She sees herself as common but Solomon says that she is more than that. Solomon tells her that she is special, like a beautiful lily among all the thorns. She is one in a million! Those words must have been encouraging to her.

2. In a spiritual sense, that is how God sees us. Thorns represent sin, and on a practical level, we are like thorns, imperfect. And yet God sees us as perfect in Christ! Paul makes that point that we are perfect in Christ in a positional sense, as the Father looks at us as he said in Colossians 1:28, **“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”**

VERSE 3

1. Finding a fruit bearing tree, not necessarily an apple tree because that was not common in that area, but a pomegranate or the orange tree and finding one in the forest was not common. And she is saying that her beloved is special, he is one in a million! And she found contentment, satisfaction; joy in just sitting next to him, in his shadow. She did not want any recognition. And I like the way that Glickman sums this up as he wrote, “Whereas before she came to him she worked long hours in the sun (1:6), now she rests under the protective shade that he brings. And although formerly she was so exhausted by her work she could not properly care for herself, now she finds time for refreshment with him.”

2. Now let's apply that to our relationship with our Lord. That is how we should feel in our relationship with Him. That we can rest and be refreshed in the shadow of His wings! That means we need to be lift Him up, we need to have a proper perspective of who He is. Then, when people look at us they should see Christ in us. Just like a refreshing fruit bearing tree is to our taste, is the Lord sweet to our taste? David said in Psalm 34:8, "**Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!**" That means you need to experience the Lord, walk with Him and trust in Him, and see that His love for us is good and as you do others will see the Lord!

Spurgeon gave an allegorical application to the idea of the maiden (representing God's people) resting under the shade of her beloved (representing Jesus). This is what he wrote, "Straightway she sat down under its shadow, with great delight, and its fruit was sweet unto her taste. She looked up at it; that was the first thing she did, and she perceived that it met her double want. The sun was hot, there was the shadow: she was faint, there was the fruit. Now, see how Jesus meets all the wants of all who come to him." May we not forget that!

VERSES 4-7

1. Here we see the Shulamite woman speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem and telling them all that has happened to her. She speaks of how Solomon took this farm girl and brought her to his table, the King's house.

Now his banner over her was not, “Clean the house!”, “Try harder next time!”, or “Is that the best you can do?” No, his banner over her was **“LOVE!”** And because of that love it gave her encouragement, contentment, and peace, knowing that there was nothing she could do to earn more of his love or anything she could do to have him love her less. May we speak to our wives that way, that we build them up and not tear them down!

As Christians we need to remember that in our relationship with the Lord. God can’t love you any more or any less. Don’t let Satan confuse you about that. Paul said, regarding the love of God in Ephesians 3:18-19, that we, **“may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”** You can never make yourself more worthy of God’s love, ***HE ALREADY LOVES YOU!***

In verse 5 we see the idea of her being so in love with Solomon she is ready to pass out. She needs food to keep her love going as raisins were symbolic of sexual passion. And as we move into verse 6 we see that Solomon has pulled her close to him and with the gentleness of his left hand, he lifts her head up, reassuring her of his love for her.

Think about our Christian walk and how at times we can become discouraged. David experienced this in his own life and he wrote in Psalm 3:3, **“But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.”** God will lift up the downcast soul, we just need to look to Him, seek Him!

Also, maybe she was exhausted from all the work she was doing, the heavy burdens she was carrying, and Solomon is supporting her head, giving her rest. I think there is another picture of our walk as Christians. You see, have the burdens of life overwhelmed you? Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”** Allow the Lord to draw you close to Him so that He might lift you up and give you rest.

2. Now verse 7 is interesting. Some say Solomon spoke these words but I think the Shulamite woman did and she is speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem. She is giving some very sound wisdom here. She is telling them not to push the issue of love, allow love to happen, allow it to grow, allow the Lord to bring the person into your life. Wait before you get involved in a sexual relationship with another person, wait until you are married, **“Do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.”**

VERSES 8-14

1. After a night of intimacy, she awakens hearing **“The voice of [her] beloved.”** And as she looks out the window she sees him just excited, leaping and jumping because of the love that he found.

And I get the picture that he can't wait to get home. There is a bounce in his step you might say and joy in his heart as he anticipates seeing his love again. And she feels that same way. Is that the way you feel about your wife that you can't wait to get home? Is that the way you feel about your husband that you can't wait to see him? It should be!

2. So as he comes home and gazes through the window he calls for her to come to him. The time for rest was over, it was time to get up and follow her beloved. He wants her to come and see the things that he has for her, the adventures that are before them as they enjoy their life together. He wants to take her to the mountains, and in verse 17 we are told that these are the mountains of Bethel or separation. He wants to take her to a place where they can be alone together.

I think that is an interesting point for us in our Christian lives. We need to take that time with the Lord, to get alone with Him. In Mark 6:31 we see this played out as Jesus said, **“... ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.”** Now why did they separate when there was work to do? They needed time for refreshing with the Lord and so do we, just to be alone with Him. If you don’t take that time you will just burn out!

3. Now have you ever made plans with your spouse, and you are ready to go and what happens? Everything happens! Here we see that as soon as Solomon calls for her to come and spend time alone with him, the phone rings, the kid’s act up, someone is at the door, she remembers a list full of things that need to be done, and-so-on. In this case, we are going to see her brothers or step-brothers speak, telling her to get to work. “You don’t have time for this foolishness!”

VERSE 15

1. Her brothers or step-brothers come and call on her to get out in the fields, get those who are working with you and take care of those foxes that are destroying the vines! Was this really a problem? I think it was, that is not the issue. You see there will always be issues, there will always be things to do, there will always be things that come up when you and your spouse are coming together for an evening or day out. What you do about it will either strengthen your marriage or weaken it.

I learned this valuable lesson from my wife many years ago, when we were living in Schaumburg. I was busy with work, I was busy with the church, I was just plain busy! Surprise, surprise! And one day I came home from work and found suitcases at the front door. That made me a little nervous.

Then my wife came to the door with a big smile on her face and said, "I am kidnapping you for the weekend!" My response to her was, "What about the kids?" She said, "They are taken care of!" I said, "What about the dog?" She said, "The dog is taken care of!" I said, "I have so much work to do?" She said, "No you don't!" Guess what, she won and so did I. She taught me a valuable lesson that there will always be things that need to get done, things that take me away from my wife, but where is my priority? Is it to things, to stuff, to work, or is it to her?

What about all the church stuff I was doing? Do you really think God is more interested in that than my relationship with the wife He has given me? Of course not and the reality is, keep your house in order and the work He wants you to do you will get done! And we had a wonderful weekend and I learned about what is really important. Don't let distractions, work, things, stuff get in the way of your relationship with your spouse!

For the Shulamite woman, the call of the world was trying to get her focus off of what was needful in her life. They wanted her to get back to work in the vineyard, to cut off that relationship she was having. Now she will respond with words of commitment to the one she loves, he is a priority in her life.

2. One more point before we move on and that is how this relates to our spiritual life and Spurgeon nails this one as he wrote, “If you have any sign of spiritual life, if you have any tender grapes upon your branches, the devil and his foxes will be sure to be at you; therefore, endeavor to get as close as ever you can to two persons who are mentioned hard by my text, namely, the King and his spouse. First, keep close to Christ for this is your life; and next, keep close to his Church, for this is your comfort.” May we take the time to be with our Lord!

VERSES 16-17

1. She realizes that her duty is to the one she loves, her husband. That is the priority in her life. How important this is. She is not saying, “My beloved is mine, and I belong to him and a few others guys!” Also, on the other end of the spectrum she is not saying, “I am by beloveds and he is mine and he also belongs to many other women.” They were made for each other and they were not going to let anyone separate them. At least that is what they wanted and yet, as much as the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak and things can get in the way.

2. In verse 17 the idea here is these mountains of Bether or mountains of separation! And her cry is that like a gazelle or like a young stag, don’t let those mountains separate you from me! And as much as the things he was doing caused a separation, she too had some struggles.

She wanted him to come when the timing was better. Maybe it was too early in the morning to get up, or it was too cold out, or she was just too comfortable and just rolled back over in bed. Maybe the timing was bad and as much as she wanted to go, she also wanted to wait until she felt like going. Now we are going to see next time that Solomon does go and he doesn't come back right away, and she is scarred. It is like a nightmare to her. But we will deal with that more next time.

Make no mistake about it; difficulties will come in regards to our marriage relationship. It is how we handle them that will make all the difference. Don't let those mountains of separation keep you apart. Do everything you can to spend time with your wife. Don't let circumstances, don't wait for a more convenient or opportune time to get together with your husband. I would think most people, if they had an opportunity to go to a Green Bay Packer game they would do everything possible to get there. What about in your marriage, you should have more determination to spend time with your spouse than some football game or whatever. The time you invest in your marriage will pay back with great dividends you might say!

3. One more point as I close this evening and that deals with our spiritual life, our walk with the Lord. Spurgeon sums it up like this, "The spouse speaks of 'mountains' dividing her from her Beloved: she means that *the difficulties were great*. They were not little hills, but mountains, that closed up her way . . . It is plain, from this sacred Canticle [song], that the spouse may love and be loved, may be confident in her Lord, and be fully assured of her possession of him, and yet, there may for the present be mountains between her and him." Don't let anything or anyone get in your way of your relationship with the Lord and don't let anyone or anything get in your way of your relationship with your spouse!