Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

PREVIOUS NEXT

SONG OF SOLOMON Union and Communion			
The Courtship (Falling in Love) Song 1:2-3:5	**The Wedding** (United in Love) Song 3:6-5:1	**The Maturing Marriage** (Struggling and Growing in Love) Song 5:2-8:14	
Fostering of Love	**Fulfillment of Love**	**Frustration of Love**	**Faithfulness of Love**
Falling in Love	**United in Love**	**Divided in Love**	**Devoted in Love**
Cultivating Love		**Acclaiming Love**	
Courtship Before the Marriage	Procession for and Consummation of the Marriage	The Honeymoon is Over! Song 5:2-6:13	The Marriage Deepens Love Matures Song 7:1-8:14
Chief Speaker: The Bride ("Darling")	Chief Speaker: The Groom ("Beloved")	Chief Speaker: Both	Chief Speaker: "Duet"
Theme - The joy and intimacy of love within a committed marriage covenant.			
Song of Solomon foreshadows Christ, the Bridegroom's relationship with His Bride, the Church. (Eph 5:32-note, Rev 19:7-8-note)			
Date - Circa 950-965BC Time Period estimated at about 1 year Before Solomon plunged into gross immorality and idolatry (Compare only 140 women in Song 6:8-note with 1Ki 11:1-4, 5-7, 8, 9-10)			
Adapted from Charles Swindoll's book chart			

SELECT RESOURCES
Song of Solomon 5
See also main resource page for Song of Solomon

Adam Clarke -

- Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

- Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

Century Bible Commentary -

- Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

Thomas Constable - well done

- Song of Solomon Commentary

Gene Getz short videos (3-12 minutes) -

- Song of Songs 4:16-5:9 - Idealism and Reality
- Song of Songs 5:10-16 - Learning to Love

Net Bible Notes synchronized with Thomas Constable's notes

- Song 5 Commentary

Ellicott's Commentary -

- Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

David Guzik

- Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

H A Ironside

- Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

Keil and Delitzsch - not always literal

- Song of Solomon 5 Commentary

Lange - Comments by verse at top of page literal. Doctrinal section at bottom is allegorical.

- Song 5 Commentary

Reformation Study Bible Notes

- Song 5:1
- Song 5:2
- Song 5:5
- Song 5:6
- Song 5:7
- Song 5:10–16
- Song 5:12
- Song 5:13
- Song 5:14
- Song 5:16

Rob Salvato Sermon Notes

- Song of Solomon 3:6-5:1
- Song of Solomon 5:2-6:3

Third Millennium - relatively detailed comments

- The Young Man - Song of Solomon 5:1
- The Friends - Song of Solomon 5:1
- The Young Woman - Song of Solomon 5:2-8
- Chiastic Structure - Song of Solomon 5:8-6:9
- The Friends - Song of Solomon 5:9
- The Young Woman - Song of Solomon 5:10-16

Bob Utley - brief but insightful comments on Hebrew words and phrases

- Song of Songs 5 Commentary

Steve Zeisler - sermon notes

- Song of Songs 3:7-5:1 You Have Made My Heart Beat Faster

Solomon (see NET Note below)...
Song 5:1 I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh (note) along with my balsam (note). I have eaten my honeycomb (picture) and my honey (note); I have drunk my wine and my milk.

THE YOUNG MAN'S RESPONSE
TO THE YOUNG BRIDE'S INVITATION

NET - I have entered my garden, O my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my balsam spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk! Eat, friends, and drink! Drink freely, O lovers!

NLT - I have entered my garden, my treasure, my bride! I gather myrrh with my spices and eat honeycomb with my honey. I drink wine with my milk. Young Women of Jerusalem Oh, lover and beloved, eat and drink! Yes, drink deeply of your love! Young Woman

NET Note on the identity of the speakers - There is no little debate about the identity of the speaker(s) and the audience addressed in 5:1b. There are five options: (1) He is addressing his bride. (2) The bride is addressing him. (3) The wedding guests are addressing him and his bride. (4) He and his bride are addressing the wedding guests. (5) The poet is addressing him and his bride. When dealing with this issue, the following factors should be considered: (1) the form of both the exhortations and the addressees are plural. This makes it unlikely that he is addressing his bride or that his bride is addressing him. (2) The exhortation has an implicitly sexual connotation because the motif of “eating” and “drinking” refers to sexual consummation in 5:1a. This makes it unlikely that he or his bride are addressing the wedding guests – an orgy is quite out of the question! (3) The poet could be in view because as the writer who created the Song, only he could have been with them – in a poetic sense – in the bridal chamber as a “guest” on their wedding night. (4) The wedding guests could be in view through the figurative use of apostrophe (addressing an audience that is not in the physical presence of the speaker). While the couple was alone in their wedding chambers, the wedding guests wished them all the joys and marital bliss of the honeymoon. This is supported by several factors: (a) Wedding feasts in the ancient Near East frequently lasted several days and after the couple had consummated their marriage, they would appear again to celebrate a feast with their wedding guests. (b) The structure of the Song is composed of paired-dialogues which either begin or conclude with the words of the friends or daughters of Jerusalem (Song 1:2–4, 5–11; 3:6–11; 5:9–16; 6:1–3, 4–13; 7:1–10) or which conclude with an exhortation addressed to them (2:1–7; 3:1–5; 8:1–4). In this case, the poetic unit of Song 4:1–5:1 would conclude with an exhortation by the friends in Song 5:1b. (NET Note on Song 5)

Longman has an interesting observation on **myrrh...balsam...honeycomb...honey...wine and milk** - The use of the double objects indicates the experience of total satisfaction in his intimate encounter with the woman.

Glickman - So few couples seem to experience that kind of wedding night. Why is this so? Perhaps one reason is that their courtship does not prepare them for it. (**Solomon's Song of Love - Let a Song of Songs Inspire Your Own Romantic Story**).

My sister, my bride (Song 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2) **-** As discussed, In the ancient Near East "**sister**" was a term for one's wife in love poetry and was used to emphasize the closeness of their relationship and **bride** speaks of their marital status.

Notice the repetition of the possessive pronoun "**my**" - **my** garden, **my** sister, *my* (added by translators) bride, **my** myrrh, **my** balsam, **my** honeycomb, **my** honey, **my** wine, **my** milk. Earlier, the young man had used the pronouns **you** and **your**. Now, however, the king accepted the delights as his using "my" some 9 times!

Grant Richison - Now that sexual lovemaking is complete, Solomon tells the Shulammite that it was a good experience (Song 5:1). This communication reassures her that she was sexually satisfying (From his free book **Theology of Sex - Recommended**)

I have come into my garden - Speaks of intimacy consummated. He calls her "my garden" because in a very real sense before God and men her sexuality now belonged to him, even as his belonged to her. If we truly understood this in our marriages, it would serve as an impediment to affairs! Paul emphasized this principle writing that "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does." (1 Corinthians 7:4)

Paige Patterson notes the following about Solomon’s three expressions: (1) The gathering of myrrh and spices refers to the fragrant and enriching result of their union. (2) The eating of honey and honeycomb suggests the sweetness of their relationship. (3) The drinking of wine and milk focuses on the satisfaction derived from the relationship and the complete fulfillment of their sexual thirsts and appetites.

POSB - Each of these terms expresses the groom’s abiding satisfaction after sexual intimacy. He had indulged in the pleasures of his spouse and found complete and lasting satisfaction. This pure and utter fulfillment is only possible within the boundaries of

married love. Casual sex outside of God's ordained purposes cannot and does not fill the need for loving, permanent intimacy and security. It is short-lived and leaves both the man and woman empty and hollow inside. (**Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible-Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon**)

Guzik writes that "Of course, this principle could never justify a husband abusing or coercing his wife, sexually or otherwise. Paul's point was that we have a binding obligation to serve our marriage partner with physical affection. It is an awesome obligation: out of the billions of people on the earth, God has chosen one, and one alone, to meet our sexual needs. There is to be no one else." (**Song of Solomon 5 Commentary**)

G Lloyd Carr - Here, for the first time in the Song, the 'garden' is opened and entrance is invited and fulfilled. (**The Song of Solomon - Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries**)

NET Note - The physical love between the couple is compared to eating and drinking at a wedding feast. This is an appropriate figure of comparison because it would have been issued during the feast which followed the wedding and the consummation. (**NET Note on Song 5**)

I have drunk my wine - This refers to intoxication, and compares becoming drunk on wine with enjoying the physical love of one's spouse (e.g., Pr 5:19–20).

Kinlaw - The language used here of love's consummation is classic in its chasteness, a character possible only through the use of symbolic language.… Metaphor plays the same role here as the veil in the temple. Sinful man needs such to protect the mystery.

Speaker (see NET Note above)
Song 5:1b Eat (imperative = command), friends; Drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers.

MacArthur - Given the intimate and private nature of sexual union, it seems difficult to understand anyone but God speaking these words (cf. Pr 5:21). This is the divine affirmation of sexual love between husband and wife as holy and beautiful. (**MacArthur Study Bible**)

Jack Deere - A more plausible suggestion is that the speaker was God Himself. Only their Creator would have been a "guest" on that occasion. Since their love was from Him it was fitting that He approve it. He invited them to enjoy sexual love in marriage as if it were a banquet ("eat … and drink"). This clearly indicates God's approval of marriage, which He designed in the Garden of Eden (cf. Gen. 2:24). (**The Bible Knowledge Commentary**)

Glickman agrees writing that "He lifts his voice and gives hearty approval to the entire night. He vigorously endorses and affirms the love of this couple. He takes pleasure in what has taken place." (**Ibid**).

Drink and imbibe deeply - Be intoxicated not literally but figuratively (intoxicated by love).

Longman - All of the garden imagery combined with talk of eating honey and drinking wine and milk is the language of physical intimacy, of sexual intercourse, and the chorus chimes in to celebrate this delicious moment.

Criswell adds an interesting comment (especially on the identity of the speaker at the end of the verse) - This verse speaks beautifully of the consummation of the marriage, and the mutual satisfaction enjoyed by both husband and wife. Solomon found his bride delightful, sweet, and enjoyable when she invited him unto herself in Song 4:16. The latter part of this verse has been understood in several different ways as to (who is) the **speaker**. Some see a reference to the friends or chorus, and others to Solomon. However, it seems unlikely that friends, no matter how close to the wedding couple, would have been present in the bedroom on the wedding night. (**Ed comment**: And I fully agree!) Furthermore, the words do not seem appropriately ascribed to Solomon. It seems more likely (**Ed**: And I fully agree) that **the speaker is God Himself**, who though never mentioned directly in the book, blesses the entire Song with His quiet and approving presence. Only the Sovereign Creator would be a welcome guest to this special event, and the words voiced express His pleasure in sexual union and the joy such intimacy engenders for a man and a woman within holy marriage. (Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version. 1991. Thomas Nelson)

Richison agrees with **Criswell** commenting that "God addresses the couple, encouraging them to continue to enjoy sex with his endorsement. God is pleased with what he sees in sexuality between husband and wife. He commands them to continue with sexiness in sex (Drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers.)" (**Theology of Sex - Recommended**)

Tremper Longman writes that "The Song serves an important canonical function with its explicit language of love. Allegorization in early times arose from the belief that such a subject (Ed: The sexual relationship between a husband and wife) was unsuitable for

the Holy Scriptures. The church and the synagogue had been influenced by foreign philosophy (**Neo-Platonism**) to the point where bodily functions were seen in opposition to the things of the Spirit and thus to be avoided. The same attitudes and beliefs that motivated the monastic movement led to the allegorization of the Song (**Ed**: See **Rise of Allegorical Interpretation**). The Song, however, stands against such attempts and tells the church that **sexuality within the context of marriage** is something God created for the pleasure of his human creatures. Thus, the woman delights in the physical beauty of the man (Song 5:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16) and vice versa (Song 4:1-15), and this physical attraction culminates in passionate lovemaking (Song 5:1, 2). God endowed humans at creation with sexuality as a **blessing**, not as a **curse**. (Song of Solomon, Theology of - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)

POSB - The Song of Solomon gives us special insight into the world of dating and the proper limits of physical and sexual contact. "**How far is too far?**" This is a question youth pastors frequently have to deal with in regard to physical activity between those who are dating. Note the honor and restrain shown by both the king and his young fiancée: (1) Solomon and the Shulamite kissed before they were married (Song 1:2). However, deep, passionate kissing is mentioned only after they were married (Song 4:11). (2) Solomon's description of the Shulamite's beauty was restricted to her face before their marriage (Song 1:8-11). There was no mention of the rest of her body, and no contact with the rest of her body, until after they were married. (3) The young woman was careful not to allow sexual arousal until after she and Solomon were married. Her language in her charge to her friends (Song 2:7; 3:5) and on her wedding night (Song 4:16) reveals this control. This is also displayed in the abrupt ending of her springtime date with the king (Song 2:17). In light of God's Holy Word, then, there is a general principle that answers the question, "How far is too far?" A young man and woman should not arouse sexual desire in each other until they are married. Their premarital physical contact should be affectionate, not sexual, in nature. (**Ibid**)

TODAY IN THE WORD - While the church has always valued moral purity, at some points in history it has felt ambivalent about marriage. Sex in particular, even within the confines of marriage, has been an uncomfortable subject. As early as the second century, some Christian leaders reacted against growing worldliness in the church by urging believers to practice extreme forms of asceticism. They even urged married believers to abstain from sex altogether–or at least not to enjoy it too much.

This point of view was reflected in the "desert fathers" of the second century, who chose to live a solitary and ascetic lifestyle. They told the married believers who came to them for spiritual counsel to live like celibate monks. Augustine taught that sexual intercourse, even in marriage, should not be enjoyed for its own sake. He believed that it was only for the propagation of mankind.

This stands in sharp contrast with today's sex-obsessed culture. Wendy Shalit, in her book entitled A Return to Modesty, noted that sex on many college campuses today is so frequent and impersonal that the two partners may as well be "two airplanes refueling."

Both views–the aversion of some in the early church to sex within the confines of marriage, and modern society's casual approach to sex–are equally unhealthy and unbiblical. The Song of Solomon does not portray sexual pleasures in marriage as a necessary evil that must be suppressed or endured. Instead, the bride and groom are encouraged to enjoy themselves until they are satisfied (v. 1).

Procreation is certainly one of the obvious purposes of sex within marriage. The first command to the human race recorded in Scripture was the command to "be fruitful and increase in number" (Ge 1:22). But as we see in the Song of Solomon, enjoying sex in marriage is also important.

Every day we face a constant barrage of sexual images from films, television programs, and magazines. Passion, however, is not the problem. Society's problem is not that it enjoys sex too much. The problem is that our culture has removed the boundaries God set in place for sexual expression. His rules are not intended to spoil our fun, but to protect us from the consequences of unbridled passion. Those who choose to quench the fires of passion by having sex outside the confines of the marriage relationship are destined to get burned.

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:2 "I was asleep, but my heart was awake. A voice! My beloved was knocking: 'Open (imperative = command) to me, my sister, my darling, My dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, my locks with the damp of the night.'

NET - I was asleep, but my mind was dreaming. Listen! My lover is knocking at the door! "Open for me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one! My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night."

NLT - I slept, but my heart was awake, when I heard my lover knocking and calling: "Open to me, my treasure, my darling, my dove, my perfect one. My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night."

A DREAM OR
A LIVING NIGHTMARE?

There seems to be a time gap between Song 5:1 and Song 5:2.

MacArthur on Song 5:2–8:14 - This third major section features the couple's first argument (Song 5:2–6:3) and their reconciliation (Song 6:4–8:14). Inevitable discord comes to even the most idyllic marriage. The "little foxes" of Song 2:15 have visited the home in this segment. (**Ed Note** - Most commentators disagree with MacArthur and feel this was a dream sequence.) (MacArthur Study Bible)

Jack Deere on Song 5:2-8:4 (cp another dream in Song 3:1-4) - This section of the Song of Songs deals with the growth of the couple's marriage. The intimacy, joy, and physical desire of their wedding night did not fade as is often common in many marriages. They nourished their life together so that the joy of their married life increased rather than decreased. This does not suggest, however, that they did not encounter problems potentially harmful to their relationship. This section opens with the problem of indifference and offers a paradigm for the successful resolution of a serious marital problem. (Ibid)

Carr - The most common approach to this section is to take it as a dream sequence. Delitzsch comments, 'to sleep while the heart wakes signifies to dream, for sleep and distinct consciousness cannot be co-existent'. Others argue that only by understanding this as a dream can the rapid shifts of emphasis or the seemingly inexplicable reactions of the protagonists be justified. But such an understanding is not the only possibility. The opening colon may indicate the status of near-sleep—those drowsy minutes when the mind is still alert to outside stimuli, but one is never really sure that the things one hears then are really taking place. Pope remarks that these comments would 'suit very well the condition of one expecting or hoping for a tryst with a lover'. That may well be, but the reaction of the girl in Song 5:3 is not one which would be expected in such a situation. A much more realistic approach to this section is that proposed by **Glickman**. This section, particularly Song 5:2 and Song 5:3, records the tender approach of the lover and the unexpected apathy and indifference of the beloved to his overtures. It was a temporary lapse in their relationship (Song 5:6), but certainly a common one between husband and wife, and, if continued, bears the seeds of the disintegration of the relationship. Here, as elsewhere, the Song is realistic and unselfconscious in recording and describing human responses. (The Song of Solomon - Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)

Constable calls Song 5:2-8:14 "**The Maturing Process**" - In this last major section of the book the married love of Solomon and the Shulammite is in view. This stage of love is not without its share of problems. However the king and his bride worked through them, and these chapters provide insight into dealing effectively with basic marriage difficulties. (Song of Solomon Commentary)

Carr points out that "Here we are given the beloved's perspective. Of the 111 lines, 80 in this section are the words of the girl. This is really her book." (**Ed**: Note the first word "**I**" emphasizes the young woman in this section.) (Ibid)

My heart was awake - NAB "My heart kept vigil." This has been interpreted "in two basic ways:

> **(1)** The Beloved had been asleep or was just about to fall asleep when she was awakened by the sound of him knocking on the door of her bedroom chambers. The term לִבִּי (livvi, "my heart") is a synecdoche of part for the whole: "my heart" = "I." The participle עֵר ('er) functions verbally, describing a past ingressive state: "was awakened." The line would be rendered: "I was sleeping when I (= my heart) was awakened."
>
> **(2)** The Beloved was sleeping, but her mind was dreaming (in her dream she heard him knocking on her door). In this case, לִבִּי ("my heart") is a metonymy of association for the thoughts (e.g., Ps 90:12; Pr 18:15) and emotions (e.g., Pr 15:13; Song 3:11) she experienced during her dream: "my heart" = "my mind." The participle עֵר functions verbally, describing a past progressive state: "was awake." The line could be nuanced, "I was asleep, but my mind was dreaming." Many translations adopt this approach: "I was asleep but my heart waketh" (KJV), "I was asleep but my heart was awake" (NASB, NIV), and "I was asleep, but my heart was wakeful" (NJPS). (NET Note on Song 5)

MacArthur on **my heart was awake** - Some have suggested the beloved dreams here, as in Song 3:1–4. However, she acknowledges "**my heart was awake**," indicating that she was not sound asleep. To make this a dream would make the rest of the book a dream, which is highly unlikely. (MacArthur Study Bible)

Carr on **heart** - Heart frequently in the Old Testament means simply the physical organ (e.g. Ps. 38:10), but more often is the seat of the emotions (e.g. Pr 15:13; Song 3:11) and the will (e.g. Ex. 35:21; 36:2), as these reflect the rational function we ascribe to the brain and intellect (cf. Ps. 90:12; Prov. 18:15). The Song uses the word only three times: here, Song 3:11 and Song 8:6 (but cf. Song 4:9 for the verbal form). (Ibid)

NET Note on **a voice -** The noun קוֹל (qol, literally, "sound, noise, voice") is used as an exclamation: "Listen!" or "Hark!" (e.g., Gen

4:10; Isa 13:4; 40:3; 52:8; Jer 3:21; 4:15; 10:22; 50:28; 51:54; Mic 6:9; Zeph 1:14; 2:14; Song 2:8; 5:2) (HALOT 1085 s.v. 8 קוֹלb; BDB 877 s.v. 1 קוֹלf; Joüon 2:614 §162.e; GKC 467 §146.b). The term often refers to a loud or unexpected sound that arrests the attention of a character in a narrative. The speaker/writer uses it as a rhetorical device to dramatically portray his/her own startled reaction to an unexpected sound that called his/her attention. The Beloved is startled from her sleep by the unexpected sound of him loudly knocking at her bedroom door late at night. (NET Note on Song 5)

POSB - He was calling to her to open the door. Keep in mind that most husbands and wives in the Ancient Near East occupied separate bedrooms. Wealthy couples had private suites. In any event, Solomon declared his intentions by using four very special names for his wife. (Ibid)

My beloved (01730) (**dod**) - This specific phrase is found 24x in 23v in the Song of Solomon - Song 1:13, 14, 16; 2:3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17; 4:16; 5:2, 4, 5, 6 (twice), Song 5:8, 10, 16; 6:2, 3; 7:9, 11, 13; 8:14. (There are only 2 other uses in the OT - Isaiah 5:1, Jeremiah 11:15). The Lxx uses the noun **adelphidos** which is a term of endearment meaning beloved one. It can also mean kinsman.

NET Note - The phrase קוֹל דּוֹדִי (qol dodi, "Listen! My lover …!") that introduces this scene in Song 5:2–8 is the exact same phrase used in Song 2:8 to introduce the courtship section Song 2:8–11. In Song 2:8–11, the Beloved was excited about his unexpected arrival; however, in Song 5:2–8 she is apathetic about his unexpected approach. One should not miss the dramatic contrast between the Beloved's eagerness to see her lover in 2:8–11 and her apathy about his approach on this evening in Song 5:2–8. The repetition of קוֹל דּוֹדִי ("Listen! My lover …!") in Song 2:8 and Song 5:2 is designed to draw out the parallels and contrasts between Song 2:8–11 and Song 5:2–8. (NET Note on Song 5)

Was knocking - Continually knocking, his persistence indicating his desire to enter! The other use of this same verb for knock is found in Judges 19:22 but there the Hebrew tense (Hitpael) indicates a more violent knocking and thus it is translated pounding.

Open to me - While this is a command, it is still a polite, albeit earnest request. The young man is persistent but is not being a pest. He is almost certainly knocking at her bedroom door. The NJPS renders it well: "Let me in!" As an aside note the 3 uses of open (patakh) in this section - Song 5:2, 5, 6. Some suggest the latter 2 uses are not her opening a literal door but opening her body to his advances.

Deere observes that "The fact that the lover no longer addressed her as "my bride" indicates there is a time lapse between Song 5:1 (the wedding night) and Song 5:2. The couple should no longer be regarded as newlyweds. But he did address her by other affectionate terms." (Ibid)

Note his affectionate terms - **my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one**! - Talk about "sweet talking" his sweetie! But to our amazement as we read on, this did not entice her! Nevertheless, Solomon's example of uplifting names is one we husbands who have been married for a while would do well to speak to our wife (with sincerity of course). And despite the fact that it did not gain his desired ends. It is interesting that when he is refused who does not say "I'm sorry I said all those kind things about you. I retract them all!" He does not do that. He simply quietly walks away. And we should do the same when our wife responds as did this young woman. And do so with no pouting. No passive aggressive behavior.

My perfect one - Perfect (tam 08535 - תָּם - blameless, complete, guiltless, integrity; Lxx = teleios) could also be translated "flawless" and speaks of ethical and moral wholeness (Job 8:20; 9:20–22), and in this context (cp Song 6:9) would also seem to emphasize her physical perfection.

Head is drenched with dew - because he was outside in the moist night air. During the humid, rainless summers, the land of Palestine was watered by heavy dew.

POSB - the word **honeymoon** is defined as the first month (moon) of marriage when everything is sweet. The word has acquired many applications beyond its original meaning. The early months of a new job or various relationships are often referred to by this term. It is even used of a pastor's first months in a new church. Honeymoon describes the fleeting time when life is ideal, everybody is blissfully happy, no problems exist, and everybody is at his or her best all the time. No one is noticing the flaws or imperfections of the other because everything is so new and fresh. Some honeymoons are extensive, while others are quite brief. The best advice regarding a honeymoon is to enjoy it while it lasts because it will come to an end sooner or later. This is true in every situation, including marriage. The newness wears off, conflicts arise, and reality sets in. Between Song 5:1 and Song 5:2, reality set in for Solomon and his wife. In Song 5:1, they were basking in the afterglow of their wedding night. In Song 5:2, Solomon's wife rejected his sexual advances and refused to allow him to enter her bedroom. Bear in mind, though, that these nights were not in succession! This is a common scene in marriages. Men and women have different sex drives and different sexual needs. Men usually desire sex more frequently than women do. Psychologist and marriage coach Willard F. Harley, Jr. lists the top five needs of men and women in his best selling book, His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-proof Marriage." The top five needs of men, in order of priority, are… sexual fulfillment, recreational companionship, physical attractiveness, domestic support, admiration. The top five needs of women are: affection, conversation, honesty and openness, financial support, family commitment. Notice that sexual fulfillment is man's

number one need, but it is not even on the list for women. Most men have a continuing appetite for sex. Though most women have a sexual appetite, it is usually not as strong. If a wife has a long, hard day, the last thing she feels like doing is having sex. If a man has a long, hard day, he may need to have sex to relive some tension! In this area and countless others, marriage partners must adjust to each other. Considering only one's own desires and needs makes these adjustments impossible, and leads to serious marital problems and often divorce. Attitudes other than selfishness are just as dangerous: indifference, emotional withdrawal, lack of consideration, failure to communicate, bitterness, impatience, and so many more. These "little foxes" (Song 2:15) can do great damage to marriages. Every couple experiences problems in their marriage—even kings and queens! In fact, any time there is more than one person, problems will arise....The honeymoon is over when the problems start. (Ibid)

Guzik has an interesting note - The beloved made several appeals to the maiden:

• The appeal of his presence; simply knowing that he sought her out and was at the door might have persuaded the maiden to open the door.

• The voice of the beloved; the sound of his call to her should have prompted her to open the door.

• The specific request; when the beloved asked, "Open for me," it should have been enough to make the maiden open the door.

• The warm and affectionate appeal; the tender and beautiful names that he called the maiden should have melted her heart. Nowhere else in the song does he pour out upon her so many affectionate names.

• The description of his own discomforts for her sake; if nothing else, these should have warmed her heart to open the door.

iii. Yet for all this, the maiden did not open the door for the beloved and allow him to enter in!

iv. This picture—of the beloved standing outside the door and appealing to his maiden for entry—may provide the only New Testament reference to the Song of Solomon, found at Revelation 3:20: Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Ibid)

Shulammite (young woman)...
Song 5:3 "I have taken off my dress, How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet, How can I dirty them again?

THE HONEYMOON IS OVER:
HIS OVERTURE IS REFUSED

NET - "I have already taken off my robe– must I put it on again? I have already washed my feet– must I soil them again?"

NLT - But I responded, "I have taken off my robe. Should I get dressed again? I have washed my feet. Should I get them soiled?"

Carr on **my dress** ("my robe") - "The word is used of Joseph's coat (Ge 37:3), of the high priest's robe (e.g. Ex 28:4), and of official robes (Isa. 22:21). It is also found in Genesis 3:21 of the skin coats made for Adam and Eve, and this use reflects the basic idea of the word. It is the garment worn next to the skin, not the 'garment' of Song of Solomon 4:11 which served as a bed-covering, nor the common begged which was used to described clothing in general. Delitzsch's comment 'she lies unclothed in bed', catches the precise meaning of the colon." (Ibid)

Longman on **my feet** - "Feet" can be used euphemistically for male or female genitalia; for example, the Heb. expression "water of the feet" refers to urination (cf. uses of "feet" in the Heb. of Ex 4:25; Dt 28:57; Jdg 3:24; 1Sa 24:3; Ezek 16:25). (**Ed**: the **Lxx** translates the Hebrew with pous = foot)

Carr adds - Feet (Heb. regel) normally has its common meaning, but on several occasions is a euphemism for the genitals (e.g. 'wash your feet' and 'lie with my wife' are used as parallels, 2 Sam. 11:8, 11; cf. Deut. 28:57; Ruth 3:3–9; Isa. 7:20). Whether or not this is the meaning here is open to question, although there is certainly sufficient evidence for this sort of **double entendre** in the next verse where her description of her lover's action and her own response to it continues. (Ibid)

How can I is used twice - This clearly sounds like she is making excuses and suggests she is not interested in a romantic encounter. It would simply be too much trouble for her!

Carr on "**how can I?**" - Often it is found in songs of mourning or lamentation, and here reflects a petulant unwillingness to act rather than the impossibility of action … she appears unwilling to put herself to any trouble even for her lover. (Ibid)

Constable - She gave a weak excuse: she had already gotten ready for bed (and may have had a headache). When he tried to

open her door but found it locked, he gave up and went away. It was not long before she knew she had erred in discouraging him. (Ibid)

POSB - The coat or robe (kuttoneth) (**03801 - כְּתֹנֶת - coat, dress, garment, garments, tunic, tunics**) she wore was a long linen undergarment worn next to the skin. It was distinct from the night garment or lingerie of Song 4:11 (salmah) and from the general term used to describe clothing (beged). Wearing sandals on the dirt roads and paths of that day made it necessary for people to wash their feet frequently. For that reason, it became a tiresome task. The same ritual had to be performed whenever a person entered a house and before retiring. People of means employed someone to perform this task for them and their guests; this servant was usually the lowest ranking in the household (Jn.13:4-14). The queen would have had a maid for this service, but at that late hour the maid would have already been dismissed for the night. (Ibid)

Guzik - Perhaps she was simply not willing to be inconvenienced; perhaps she did not appreciate the unexpected nature of the beloved's visit; perhaps he came much later than she had expected him, and therefore she felt annoyed. Perhaps this was her effort to control the relationship ("Why should I run as soon as he knocks? He can wait a little while.") Whatever the specific reason, she refused to promptly rise from bed and open the door. Her problem was not that she didn't go to the door; but that she did it so slowly and reluctantly, making excuses all along the way. "This attitude shows an insensitive spirit. She was thinking only about her comfort and not at all about Solomon's desires or her relationship with him." (Estes)"This is a remarkable picture of the kind of adjustments that are necessary in life style in marriage. Our natural sloth, the differences between a man and a woman, our uncertainty about the other's thinking, the variations in our life rhythms, our unwillingness to alter our preferred patterns for the other, our own self-consciousness—all contribute to the problem of reading each other's advances." (Kinlaw) "Although this romance is an ideal, it is not a fantasy. It is realistic, and presents the realistic problems of marriage … also the principles for solving them." (Glickman) (Ibid)

TODAY IN THE WORD - Not long after they were married, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had an argument. Afterwards the prince left the room in anger, went to his private quarters, and locked the door. Victoria followed him and knocked loudly at the door demanding that he let her in. "Who's there?" Albert answered, knowing full well that it was his wife. "The queen of England, and she demands to be admitted." This went on for some time. Each time Albert refused to admit her. At last, Victoria gave the door a soft tap. "Who's there?" the prince asked again. The queen gently replied, "Your wife, Albert." The prince opened the door and let her in. The phrase "the honeymoon is over" alludes to the fact that people who have been married awhile sometimes act differently from those who are recently married. The same can be true in the spiritual realm. Those who begin the Christian life with great zeal can grow cold. In our verse for today, we see Jesus' criticism of the church of Ephesus because they had forsaken their first love. In today's reading the groom comes seeking the bride at what seems to be an inopportune time. Her initial response is one of reluctance. When she finally does open the door, she discovers that the moment has passed. Her lover has departed.

According to noted Bible teacher H. A. Ironside, this is a good picture of our insensitivity to divine love. "We have an idea that the beloved one should be ready whenever we are for a time of gladness together, but it is not always so," he explains. "And so when He comes to the heart's door we practically say, 'No; it is inconvenient. I do not want to drop things right now.' " One of the ancient spiritual disciplines of the church is a practice known as a "vigil." A vigil is a time of prayer, worship or fasting, often during the night.

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:4 "My beloved extended his hand through the opening, and my feelings were aroused for him.

NET - My lover thrust his hand through the hole, and my feelings were stirred for him.

NLT - My lover tried to unlatch the door, and my heart thrilled within me.

NET Note has an interesting note on **hand** - Possibly a euphemism (**double entendre**). The term יָד (yad, "hand") normally refers simply to the physical hand (HALOT 386 s.v. I 1 יָד; BDB 388 s.v. 1 יָד). There are, however, at least three occasions when יָד refers to tall stone pillars (translated "monument" or "pillar"), such as those used in Canaanite fertility-cults in the form of phallic representations (1Sa 15:12; 2Sa 18:18; Isa 56:5). It is clearly used as a euphemism for the male copulative organ in Isa 57:8, 10. It is now an established fact that **yad** is sometimes used as a euphemism for the male sexual organ in Ugaritic literature (e.g., text no. 52:33–35) (UT 1072). The noun יָד is also used in the Qumran literature in this sense in a list of penalties for indecent exposure (Manual of Discipline 7:12–15). Thus, several scholars suggest that a subtle **double entendre** in Song 5:4–6. The imagery of the man thrusting his "hand" through the "hole" in the door, and the Beloved "opening" to her lover, with her fingers dripped with "myrrh" on the "handles of the lock," might have a double reference to the literal attempt to gain entry to her bedroom and his desire to make love to her. See M. Delcour, "Two Special Meanings of the Word yd in Biblical Hebrew," JSS 12 (1967): 230-40. (NET Note on Song 5)

NET Note on **extended his hand** - He was attempting to open the door from the outside by extending his hand inside the door through some kind of latch-opening: "he put in his hand by the opening of the door" (KJV), "he extended his **hand** through the opening" (NASB), "he thrust his hand through the latch-opening" (NIV). (**NET Note on Song 5**)

Constable has a note on that "It may be that "**the opening**" is a euphemistic reference to the entrance into the woman's vagina." (Ibid)

Guzik - The maiden could hear that the beloved put his hand upon the latch mechanism of the door. This was a clear (and final) indication of his desire to enter and be with her, but only at her invitation. The beloved would not break or force the latch of the door, but insisted that the way be opened to him. Some commentators and translators have wondered if the wording here presents a **double entendre**, cleverly describing sexual intercourse between the beloved and the maiden. The basis for this is found in the fact that on at least one occasion (Isaiah 57:8) in the Old Testament, this Hebrew word translated **hand** is a euphemism for the male sexual organ. In addition, the word translated **latch** of the door is more literally "**opening**" or "**hole**." The idea behind this **double entendre** is better illustrated by comparing some other translations of the phrase: • NIV: My lover thrust his hand through the latch-opening. • NASB: My beloved extended his hand through the opening. • LXX: My kinsman put forth his hand by the hole of the door. • KJV: My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door. • NLT: My lover tried to unlatch the door. While allowing for the **slight possibility** of such a **double entendre**, it clearly is not the direct meaning of the section, as demonstrated by the context. The idea of the couple engaged in intercourse does not match the context, which places the beloved as outside the presence of the maiden, which is the dynamic that drives the entire section. If anything, the **double entendre** may refer to the conflicted sexual longings within the maiden (especially with the phrase, my heart yearned for him). She obviously loved and longed for her beloved, yet refused to promptly open the door for him.. "If it were a real scene, which is mentioned in this and the two following verses, it must refer, from the well-known use of the metaphors, to matrimonial endearments. Or, it may refer to his attempts to open the door, when she hesitated to arise, on the grounds mentioned. But this also bears every evidence of a dream." (Clarke) "None of this is decisive, of course, but as Cook notes, the **double entendre** by nature is 'so delicate as to leave some doubt about its presence at a specific point'. Nevertheless, this appears to be one text where the erotic meaning is present. If *yad* does mean the male member here, *hor* is its female counterpart." (Carr) (Ibid)

My feelings (NIV - "my heart began to pound for him", Jerusalem Bible = "the core of my being") - Most feel this refers to an arousal of her feelings for love. **Jack Deere** disagrees writing it is "used elsewhere to express pity or compassion (e.g., Isa. 16:11; Jer. 31:20). It was not used to express sexual arousal as some scholars have maintained." (Ibid)

Feelings (04578 - מְעֶה) (**me'ah**) meant intestines, bowels, stomach (of fish - Jonah 1:17, 2:1), abdomen (used to describe her beloved's "abdomen" = Song 5:14), heart (Ps 40:8) and sometimes the reproductive organs (Ru 1:11). Metaphorically it referred to emotions or feelings. The Hebrews commonly used organs of the the body to express emotions (Job 30:27, Jer 4:19, 31:20, Lam 1:20, 2:11)

POSB - Why did the Shulamite reject her husband and refuse to meet his sexual need? It is possible that the hour was late, she was tired, and not in the mood for making love. Sometimes it is that simple. Husbands must realize that every refusal by their wives to have sex is not a rejection of them personally. Women who must cook, do laundry, tend to a house, and care for their children are usually exhausted by bedtime. And the fatigue of a wife who must work outside the home in addition to these never-ending tasks is even greater. It is more likely in this case, however, that the wife was angry with Solomon for some reason. Perhaps they had set an appointed time when Solomon would be home and they would spend the evening together. Perhaps she had prepared and waited for her husband, and as the minutes—then hours—ticked by, her resentment grew. She then finally gave up on him and went to bed. There is another possibility not openly acknowledged by commentators. It is revealed in Song 6:8. The most common explanation is very realistic: the Shulamite was Solomon's first love—his only true love. He met and married her as a young king, and for a period of time faithfully and exclusively devoted himself to her. This is the perspective of this commentary. Of the various explanations offered for 6:8, the literal and most obvious best fits the circumstances of this episode: at the time this occurred, Solomon had added 60 queens and 80 concubines to his harem. This would place the timing of the present scene several years after his marriage to the Shulamite, and still relatively early in his reign. The king's harem ultimately grew over the entire period of his reign to 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Ki. 11:3). The historical reality of Solomon's polygamy must be dealt with in a fair and consistent manner in this Song. When it is admitted into the framework of this episode, it provides the best explanation for the woman's rejection of Solomon and the details presented in the text. Solomon's wife refused to sleep with him because she was hurt, angry, and resentful that she was no longer his only queen and that he had built, up to that point, a harem of 140 women. Why should she give herself to him now? If he had truly loved her, he would not have done this to her. Perhaps the reason he was so late was that he had been with one of his other wives or concubines. How could she accept being merely one of many women in his life when she had once been his one and only love? None of Solomon's other wives would have dared reject him like this. But, the Shulamite's relationship with Solomon was different; it was real. He did not marry her for political reasons. He had married her for love. (Ibid)

Shulamite (young woman)...

Song 5:5 "I arose to open to my beloved; And my hands dripped with myrrh, And my fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the bolt.

NET - I arose to open for my beloved; my hands dripped with myrrh– my fingers flowed with myrrh on the handles of the lock.

NLT - I jumped up to open the door for my love, and my hands dripped with perfume. My fingers dripped with lovely myrrh as I pulled back the bolt.

LXE Song of Solomon 5:5 I rose up to open to my kinsman; my hands dropped myrrh, my fingers choice myrrh, on the handles of the lock.

Carr introduces this passage with an interesting comment - There are several parallels in the next four verses with Song 2:10–3:5, and we are left again with the distinct impression that these are deliberate **double entendres** on the part of the poet. Note the lover's invitation to 'arise' (Song 2:10, 13) and her response in Song 3:2. Following the arousal of her love in Song 5:4, and reflecting on her coldness of Song 5:3, she attempts to rectify that situation. The 'I' here and in Song 5:6 is the emphatic form which begins Song 5:2. To open, a common Old Testament word, in the form used here often means '*surrender*' (e.g. 2Ki 15:16; Isa. 45:1). (Ibid)

RSB on **dripped with myrrh** - Myrrh in its virgin, liquid state, exactly as it flows from the tree, was a rare and precious substance (cf. Ex. 30:23). It is not clear from the Hebrew whether the girl has applied it liberally to herself before going to the door, or whether her disappointed lover has left it on the door latch as a token of his love. The repetition of the exact expression in Song 5:13 marginally favors the latter.

Clarke - it was a custom among some ancient peoples to anoint doors used by a bride with fragrant oils, and this same custom (or some form of it) may have existed among the ancient Jews.

Glickman posits that "He simply left her a 'love note' and then went away. In their culture a lover would leave this fragrant myrrh at the door as a sign that he had been there." (Ibid).

Guzik - It wasn't that the maiden refused to open for her beloved; it was that she long delayed to do so, and delayed out of self-interest and self-indulgence, probably connected with some resentment towards the beloved. Here the writer gave us an emotionally accurate picture of the dynamic of conflict in a relationship, especially in marriage.

• The maiden felt resentment towards the beloved (the nature and reasonableness of that resentment is impossible to determine).

• The beloved refused to force himself upon his maiden, and would only enter at her invitation.

• The beloved made a true and persistent appeal to his maiden, that they might be together and enjoy their relationship.

• Because of her resentment, the maiden long delayed her response to the desire of the beloved.

• When she finally did respond, it seemed too late—the moment had passed and her beloved was gone.

In applying this dynamic of conflict to a relationship, one may fairly reverse the roles of maiden/beloved and wife/husband, but the fundamental principles remain. Significant damage may be done to a relationship by:

• Holding on to resentments and refusing to be generous with forgiveness.

• The attempt to force one's interest and affections upon another, and not waiting for their response.

• Refusing or delaying response when approached in a loving and persistent way.

• Failing to appreciate the value of an appeal to resume or build relationship, typically out of self-interest and self-indulgence, or a desire to control the relationship. (Ibid)

Guzik applies this section - His response—not of anger, not of objection, but simply a non-threatening display of love—would soon awaken a loving response in her. This is a wonderful picture of the way a husband should respond when he feels disrespected by his wife; instead of angrily demanding respect, he should instead display his love for her in a non-threatening way and wait for the response of love to her. (Ibid)

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:6 "I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him, but I did not find him; I called him, but he did not answer me.

NET - I opened for my beloved, but my lover had already turned and gone away. I fell into despair when he departed. I looked for him but did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me.

NLT - I opened to my lover, but he was gone! My heart sank. I searched for him but could not find him anywhere. I called to him, but there was no reply.

ROLE REVERSAL
SHE SOUGHT AND CALLED

RSB - At this point the dream (**Ed**: But not everyone sees this as a dream) becomes a nightmare as the girl's fears rise up to confront her. First is the fear of losing her lover.

Constable - She went to the door and found that he had been ready to make love (Song 5:5; cf. Pr. 7:17; Song 4:6, 5:13). She opened it but discovered he had gone. (Ibid)

My heart (soul) **went out** - Hebrew idiom connoting great despair (e.g., Ge 35:18; Jer 15:9). NIV = "my heart sank at his departure." Young's Literal = "my soul went forth." Her breath—her very life—went out of her. The word for **soul** is **nephesh** which is frequently translated "life" (and is translated in Lxx with psuche which means breath, as the breath of life), so the picture I get is of her even gasping for breath as she realized what had transpired. Many of us have had a close, harrowing call while driving and narrowly missed being smashed, leaving us virtually breathless. This is how she felt at this moment and so she flies out of her bedroom trying to find him, calling out but all to no avail. She is too late. He has gone.

Carr - My soul failed suggests a fainting spell. Rachel's death is described this way (Gen. 35:18). (Ibid)

POSB on **my beloved had turned away and had gone** - Men want to be wanted. As much as they feel that they need their wives at times, they do not want to make love with an unwilling spouse. Many times women grudgingly satisfy their husbands out of obligation. Such efforts may meet a husband's physical need, but they leave him with the emotional pain and scars of rejection. In Solomon's case (within the context of Song 6:8), he walked away not only feeling rejected but also dejected—perhaps realizing the consequences of his choices and his own responsibility in his wife's response to him. Yes, he was on his way to becoming the most powerful king of his day, but what a price he was paying! And what a price his darling—his one true love—was paying for his success! He had nobody to blame but himself, and he should not have been surprised that his beloved would not welcome his advances. (Ibid)

Guzik - If we consider this all happening, it lends to the idea that this is in fact a dream sequence of the maiden. In the sense of the text, it does not seem that she lingered so long that when she did open the door it was too late to see where he went. Yet in the creative nature of dreams, it is entirely natural. In whatever sense dreams make, the slowness of her response was directly connected to her difficulty in finding him. (Ibid)

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:7 "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, They struck me and wounded me; The guardsmen of the walls took away my shawl from me.

NET - The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They beat me, they bruised me; they took away my cloak, those watchmen on the walls!

NLT - The night watchmen found me as they made their rounds. They beat and bruised me and stripped off my veil, those watchmen on the walls.

The watchman who make the rounds - Identical to Song 3:3.

They struck me and wounded me (ESV - they beat me, they bruised me) - Contrast with her first dream in which the watchmen helped her look for her lover (Song 3:3).

MacArthur (who does not interpret this as a dream) - Unlike what happened in her dream (Song 3:3), the watchmen treat her badly. Between the darkness and the unfamiliar features of the new bride, this could easily have happened. (MacArthur Study Bible)

Deere postulates that "the dream symbolized the pain of separation brought about through her selfishness and the dream dramatized her need of the lover for her well-being and protection." (**Ibid**)

Kinlaw asks this question: “Does this treatment by the watchmen reflect the girl’s guilt and sense of failure at the slowness of her response to her husband?”

Constable - The fact that in her dream the watchmen beat her may indicate that she subconsciously felt that someone should punish her for refusing him. (Ibid)

Shawl (07289 - רָדִיד) (**radiyd**) something spread, wide wrapper or large veil.

POSB - Then, panic-stricken and desperate, she did something very foolish: she ran out of the palace courts and into the city streets (v.7). She risked both her safety and her reputation. The only women on the streets at night were prostitutes. At this point, however, the woman was not thinking rationally; and besides, she had nothing to lose. She had rejected her husband, and her husband was the king. She was so desperate to make things right with her husband that she totally disregarded public decorum and her personal safety. Just as she had dreamed years before, the city watchmen saw her as they patrolled the city and confronted her (v.7a). She was wearing a cloak-like outer garment (radiyd), spread like a shawl or mantle over her shoulders to keep her upper body warm. She had quickly thrown it on as she rushed out to search for the king. Obviously, the watchmen thought she was a fleeing criminal or a prostitute. If she had spontaneously covered her head with her cloak—which was highly possible because of the heavy night dew—she would have been even more suspicious. Prostitutes were the only women in Israel besides mourners who veiled their heads. Even if she had been a prostitute, the guards’ treatment of her was inappropriate: they beat and bruised her (v.7b). The latter word wound or bruise (patsa) appears only three times in the Old Testament and comes from a root that means to split. It speaks of an open, visible wound. The beating by the watchmen lends credibility to the interpretation that this episode was a dream. The city guards would not have assaulted the queen, but would have assisted her. However, if her head was covered they would not have recognized her, and may not have known her anyway. It is natural to assume that she told them her situation, which they would have found unbelievable. A queen would never run out into the streets at night. Her supposed deceit would have compounded their abuse. (Ibid)

TODAY IN THE WORD - “God will not accept a divided heart,” D. L. Moody once observed. “He must be absolute monarch. There is not room in your heart for two thrones.” Because of this, God sometimes leads us through difficulties that test our motives and enable us to develop an undivided heart. This also happened to the bride in Song of Solomon. After her initial reluctance, she finally responded to her lover’s overtures. The delay was costly. Once her interest was aroused and she opened the door to him, he could not be found. His absence sparked her desire and motivated her to seek him with renewed passion. The search, however, was not an easy one. She did not find him immediately, and during her travels she encountered the city watchmen. They badly mistreated her and stole her cloak, which some scholars suggest was a wedding gift from her groom. **The bride’s experience is analogous to what happens to human relationships and our relationship with God. In marriage, neglect inevitably leads to a loss of intimacy. If we look for help from the wrong source, we may end up bruised by the experience**. Likewise, God sometimes uses the bumps and bruises of life to show that only He can provide ultimate comfort. The sufferings we experience drive us closer to Him. Our verse for today captures this. The psalmist is thankful for his affliction, but this doesn’t mean that he enjoyed suffering (Ps 119:71). Rather, he learned to rejoice in the lessons he learned as a result of his suffering. Think of a time when hardship or disappointment prompted you to renew your determination to seek Christ. How did God use it to sift through your motives and give you singleness of heart? Would you say that you feel the same degree of devotion to Him today? If so, give thanks to God. If not, give some thought to the steps you might need to take to seek Him with a more fully devoted heart. When you are finished, write a love letter to Jesus telling Him of your fresh resolve to follow after Him.

Shulammite...

Song 5:8 "I adjure (Lxx = orkizo = solemnly implore, give a command under oath) you, O daughters of Jerusalem (picture), If you find my beloved, As to what you will tell him: For I am lovesick."

> **NET** - O maidens of Jerusalem, I command you– If you find my beloved, what will you tell him? Tell him that I am lovesick!
>
> **NLT** - Make this promise, O women of Jerusalem-- If you find my lover, tell him I am weak with love. Young Women of Jerusalem

She told her friends to tell her husband if they found him to let him know she wanted his love again

In many cultures there is an important distinction between the functions of right and left hands. hand used for eating, shaking hands, touching, caressing, while reserved “unclean” tasks. This probably applied biblical times, so it only logical that young man’s under woman’s head, his caresses her. (Ogden, G. S., & Zogbo, L. A Handbook on Song songs. UBS series. New York: United Bible Societies)

I adjure you- This phrase translates the Hebrew verb normally associated with making an oath and here calls upon the maidens to make a solemn promise. In the Old Testament the person swearing an oath does so by calling on a divine being or power, or even some part of the body (cf Amos 8.14; Mt 5.36) in this way the oath-takers indicating how serious they are about fulfilling what has been promised. The young woman is seeking their help to find her beloved and tell him she was lovesick.

Lovesick - Literally "sick of love" which in context denotes "lovesick." The Beloved was physically/emotionally sick because of her unrequited love for him. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** reads "*I am wounded with love*" where the Greek verb **titrosko** means inflicted with a wound, injured, damaged, and in context is used here to picture damage to her inner being. The Shulammite is expressing a strong emotion.

In Song 2:5 she was lovesick at the presence of love, but here she is lovesick by the absence of love!

Kinlaw - There is a realism in the Song that merits our respect. The course of true love seldom runs smoothly for long. For every moment of ecstasy, there seems to be the moment of hurt and pain.

Daughters of Jerusalem...
Song 5:9 "What kind of beloved is your beloved, O most beautiful among women? What kind of beloved is your beloved, that thus you adjure (Lxx = orkizo = solemnly implore, give a command under oath) us?"

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT HIM?

> **NET** - Why is your beloved better than others, O most beautiful of women? Why is your beloved better than others, that you would command us in this manner?
>
> **NLT** - Why is your lover better than all others, O woman of rare beauty? What makes your lover so special that we must promise this?

Beautiful (03303 - יָפֶה) (**yapheh**) is an adjective meaning lovely, beautiful, describing beauty of women (Ge 12:11, 14, 2Sa 13:1, Esther 2:7).

Constable on Song 5:9-16 - This pericope contains the most extensive physical description of any character in the Old Testament, namely, Solomon. Of course, it is poetic and so not a completely literal description. We might hear this attitude expressed in these words today: “What is so great about him? Surely you could find someone who would treat you better than he does!” (Ibid)

Carr - Love songs describing the physical beauty of the beloved are common in the ancient Near East, but most of them describe the female. Such detailed description of the male, as here, is seldom recorded. (Ibid)

POSB - The king’s wife then went to her friends to seek their help with her dilemma (v.8). She asked them to swear that, if they found her husband, they would intercede on her behalf. She instructed them to tell him that she loved him very, very much—that she was actually sick with love for him. She wanted her husband to know that she was passionately in love with him and that she desired him.....Take note of the friends’ response to her urgent plea (v.9). They were very skeptical about Solomon. To paraphrase, they asked, “What is so special about Solomon? Why do you want us to do this? Why do you care?” This attitude is markedly different from their earlier feelings for their king (Song 1:3-4). What changed their admiration and affection for Solomon to scorn? Their response to the queen’s request could be seen as sarcasm and mockery, but that does not fit the context. Solomon’s taking of additional queens and concubines offers a more realistic explanation for the change in their feelings: The Shulamite was their friend. They had been happy for her, and rejoiced with her that the king had chosen her. They had contributed a special, personal gift to their wedding (Song 3:10). They had once had the highest hopes for a lifetime of bliss for their friend, but Solomon had turned out to be a philanderer, or adulterer. He had broken her heart. He was no different from the pagan kings of the east who lustily and pridefully collected women like they collected horses. Their reference to their friend as the fairest or most beautiful of women fits into this line of reasoning. The daughters of Jerusalem were not mocking the queen. They were reminding her how he had wooed her before they were married. No doubt, this reference added insult to the injuries Solomon had already afflicted upon her heart. They were also speaking the truth when they said the queen was beautiful, for she was the most beautiful among the women. This was

how the king had treated her. (Ibid)

Shulammite...
Song 5:10 "My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand.

SHE HEAPS UP PRAISE
FOR HER BELOVED

NET - My beloved is dazzling and ruddy; he stands out in comparison to all other men.

NLT - My lover is dark and dazzling, better than ten thousand others!

Clearly the young woman loved her husband and did not take this opportunity to belittle him or denigrate him to her friends. Instead she heaps compliments upon him from head to toe!

Criswell - This section is the only occasion in which the Shulamite praises the physical appearance of her lover. She delights in his appearance, moving downward in her description from the top of his head to his legs. Overall he is handsome in both appearance and character, outwardly and inwardly. It is especially wonderful that she can call him her lover and her friend (Song 5:16). Such a valuable lesson should not go unnoticed if we would cultivate a marriage that is fulfilling and joyous.

Dazzling (06703 - **צַח**) (**sah**) is a Hebrew adjective which means glowing, radiant, beaming, pertaining to shining beauty or handsomeness. The Lxx translates sah with the adjective leukos which describe that which is characterized by bright light, so bright it appears white brilliant, shining, radiant. Leukos was used to describe clothes (Mt 17:2), the hair of the glorified Lord (Rev 1:14), clouds (Rev 14:14), of skin as white or fair (Liddell-Scott).

Dazzling and ruddy - compare verb form of sah in Lam 4:7. The exact meaning of these is somewhat obscure but clearly in the ancient world described attractive features.

Ruddy (0122 - אָדֹם) (**adom**) means red or ruddy (the stew Esau bought from Jacob - Ge 25:30), red heifer (Nu 19:2), as red as blood (2Ki 3:22), apparel of prophetic picture of Messiah (Isa 63:2), red horse (Zech 1:8, 6:2). The **Lxx** translates **adom** with the adjective **purros** which means having the color of fire (red).

Guzik on **ruddy** - "Most commentators take this simply as the normal complexion of a healthy young man." According to Carr, the ancient Hebrew word is adom, and Carr says: "The Hebrew noun adam, 'man', is a more likely source for the term here, in which case, her lover is 'manly'." (Ibid)

Kinlaw - The metaphors are ancient Near Eastern ones, but the import is clear: he is **one in ten thousand.**

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:11 "His head is like gold, pure gold; His locks are likeclusters of dates, And black as a raven.

NET - His head is like the most pure gold. His hair is curly– black like a raven.

NLT - His head is finest gold, his wavy hair is black as a raven.

HER BELOVED DESCRIBED
FROM HEAD TO TOE

Head...gold - Speaks of his value to her. He is very prized by her.

Henry Morris - The regal appearance of Solomon's head was appropriate for a king; his wavy black hair likewise.

Locks...black as raven - Reminds us his description of her hair (Song 4:1).

See articles on **clusters of dates**, **raven**.

Constable - the Shulammite still loved Solomon very much, as is clear from her description of him here. The comparisons illustrate his value and attractiveness to her more than giving us a picture of his actual physical appearance.....Some features in her description may be purely physical such as his black hair (v. 11). These verses show that a woman has the right to enjoy her

husband's body (cf. 1 Cor. 7:4). (**Ibid**)

She paints a picture of her beloved with numerous terms of comparison - Like gold...like clusters of dates...like doves...like a bed of balsam...like Lebanon. The Song of Solomon makes liberal use of **terms of comparison** // **similes** // **metaphors.** A **simile** is easily identified by a preceding "as" or "like." **As** is used in 9v - Song 5:6, 8, 11, 15; 6:4, 10, 13; 8:6, 10. **Like** is used 47x in 36v (some represent additions by the translators) - Song 1:3, 5, 7, 9, 15; 2:2, 3, 9, 17; 3:6; 4:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11; 5:11, 12, 13, 15; 6:5, 6, 7, 10; 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 8:1, 6, 10, 14. Ask the Spirit, your Teacher to guide you in the correct interpretation of these terms of comparison and this should greatly assist your understanding of this great love letter. In addition to numerous **similes**, the Shulammite also uses many **metaphors** to paint a picture of the wonderful appearance of her lover. See Solomon's description of the Shulammite.

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:12 "His eyes are like doves, beside streams of water, bathed in milk, and reposed in their setting.

> **NET** - His eyes are like doves by streams of water, washed in milk, mounted like jewels.
>
> **NLT** - His eyes sparkle like doves beside springs of water; they are set like jewels washed in milk.

Eyes like doves - Compare his description of her (Song 1:5, 4:1). The meaning is not clear - perhaps his eyes spoke of his gentle, peaceful character. See articles on **doves**

Bathed in milk - pictures the colored (? grey) pupils of his eyes set off by the surrounding white of his eyes.

Reposed in their setting - Mounted like jewels.

POSB - "By the rivers of water" describes the eyes as glistening and sparkling. "Washed with milk" portrays the brightness of the whites of his eyes in contrast to his dark pupils. Pastor and marriage conference speaker Tommy Nelson says this is a reference to his sobriety. His eyes were not red or bloodshot from a life of debauchery. His eyes were neither deep-set nor bulging, neither close-set nor broad. They were perfectly mounted like precious stones, and they adorned his appearance like jewels. (Ibid)

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:13 "His cheeks are like a bed of balsam, banks of sweet-scented herbs; His lips are lilies, dripping with liquid myrrh.

> **NET** - His cheeks are like garden beds full of balsam trees yielding perfume. His lips are like lilies dripping with drops of myrrh.
>
> **NLT** - His cheeks are like gardens of spices giving off fragrance. His lips are like lilies, perfumed with myrrh.

His cheeks are like a bed of balsam - "They looked glowing and appealing. His cheeks both looked and smelled pleasant, so she loved his natural scent as well as his cologne (Song 1:3)." (**POSB**)

Balsam (01314 - בֹּשֶׂם) (**besem**) noun designating spice, balsam; fragrance, perfume which was highly prized. See **Balsam**.

Lips are lilies, dripping with liquid - myrrh - Soft, inviting, kisses sweet.

Carr on **lips...dripping with liquid myrrh** - Delitzsch understands this to describe the words the lover speaks, but the frequent use of the 'kissing' image in the Song (e.g. 1:2) suggests this as a better interpretation here. (Ibid)

See **balsam**, **lilies**, **myrrh**.

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:14 "His hands are rods of gold set with beryl; His abdomen is carved ivory Inlaid with sapphires.

> **NET** - His arms are like rods of gold set with chrysolite. His abdomen is like polished ivory inlaid with sapphires.

NLT - His arms are like rounded bars of gold, set with beryl. His body is like bright ivory, glowing with lapis lazuli.

Carr on **hands** - The Hebrew plural form here forbids the meaning (of hand - yad) discussed in Song 5:4. (Ibid)

His abdomen is carved ivory Inlaid with sapphires - Probably refers to Solomon's "six pack" stomach, but the meaning of inlaid with sapphires is obscure.

See articles on **beryl**; **ivory**, **sapphires**.

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:15 "His legs are pillars of alabaster set on pedestals (bases) of pure gold; His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars.

NET - His legs are like pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars.

NLT - His legs are like marble pillars set in sockets of finest gold. His posture is stately, like the noble cedars of Lebanon.

Legs are pillars of alabaster - Both words imply strength.

Ryrie on **pillars of alabaster** - He was strong. His entire appearance was as impressive as the cedars of Lebanon.

Set on pedestals (bases) of pure gold - His sandals which may indeed have been pure gold.

Choice as the cedars - Tall, strong and majestic like the famous cedars of Lebanon (cp Amos 2:9)

POSB - Solomon embodied the ideal male image of tall, dark, and handsome! (Ibid)

Song 5:15 - See articles on **alabaster**, **Lebanon**, **cedars**.

Shulamite (young woman)...
Song 5:16 "His mouth is *full of* sweetness. And he is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem (picture)."

NET - His mouth is very sweet; he is totally desirable. This is my beloved! This is my companion, O maidens of Jerusalem!

NLT - His mouth is sweetness itself; he is desirable in every way. Such, O women of Jerusalem, is my lover, my friend. Young Women of Jerusalem

TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME:
BEYOND COMPARISON!

His mouth is full of sweetness - Could refer to his speech and we know Solomon was skilled with words writing many wise words down as proverbs. Some think this refers to his kisses as "sweet."

Wholly desirable - This sums up her accolades for her beloved. As the NET says he was "totally desirable." He was everything she could ever desire in a man.

My beloved...my friend - Her **lover** and her **friend** is a good template for a satisfying marriage. Is your spouse your**lover** and your best **friend**? As we might say today, they were "soul mates." The Septuagint translates friend (rea) with the adverb plesion meaning near or close by and thus one near by, a good description to which all married couples should aspire! Too often it is "*far away*" (not physically, but in heart, mind and emotions -- a marriage covenant should not be that way beloved! We are to work out our salvation in fear and trembling, continually seeking to manifest to each other, to our children and to the watching world that glorious "one flesh" relationship!)

Carr on **friend** (07453 - רֵעַ)(**rea**) - A common Old Testament word, **rea** expresses companionship and friendship without the

overtones of sexual partnership … friendship goes far deeper than mere sexual compatibility and excitement. **Happy is the husband or wife whose spouse is also a friend.**

Kinlaw adds that "The Song of Solomon is unabashedly erotic. Yet it is never satisfied to be content with the physical alone. A normal person finds the erotic ultimately meaningful only if there is trust and commitment, delight in the other's person as well as in their body. The writer of the Song understands this. Our hero is her lover, but he is more: he is her friend."

Tim Jackson alludes to the Song of Solomon in his column "Answers to Tough Questions", specifically in his discussion of the question is "**What's the purpose of sex**?" - In the Song of Solomon, the husband's description of his bride's body (Song of Solomon 4:1-15) and her description of his (Song 5:10-16) reveals the joy of love and sexual intimacy that God extols for a married couple. While sexual intimacy between a couple is not to be observed by anyone outside of the relationship, God, the One who sees and knows all, must smile with delight when He sees two of His children enjoying the good gift of sex He has given to them. (**What's the purpose of sex - Answers to Tough Questions**)

Guzik brings this section very "close to home" observing that "A wife may think that this is the kind of man she could love; but she should probably remember that at one time, her husband was this kind of man. She can see him that way again. Instead of thinking "I deserve better than him," she started being amazed at what she once had and still does. Of course, the exact same reasoning applies to a husband in reference to his wife." (Ibid)

TODAY IN THE WORD - According to a story in the Christian Reader by Ida Pardue, shortly before four-year-old Kathie was to serve as a flower girl in a wedding, her mother told her: "The next time you see Kim, she'll be radiant." During the wedding, Kathie watched the bride with a growing sense of disappointment. When she couldn't contain herself any longer, the little girl went up to the bride, pulled at her gown to get her attention, and demanded, "Kim, when are you going to glow?"

One of the highlights of any wedding is the moment when the bride first appears. The music swells, the congregation rises, and the groom looks down the aisle to see the one he loves dressed in a "radiant" gown.

In today's passage, it is the groom who is described as "radiant," a Hebrew word that literally means "dazzling." Like David his father, Solomon is also characterized as "ruddy." This was a mark of physical attractiveness in Solomon's day (cf. 1 Sam. 16:12). The bride admires Solomon's dark hair and beautiful eyes, commenting on her beloved's physical features from head to toe.

Some commentators have interpreted this image of Christ in her description. But we shouldn't think of this as a picture of His physical appearance, or we'll miss the powerful imagery of Christ as our Bridegroom. Just as the bride was overwhelmed when she saw the one she loved in his splendor, we too will be overcome when we see Christ in His glory (Rev. 1:13–17).

What is the most beautiful sight you have ever witnessed? Perhaps it was a beautiful sunset or waterfall that you saw while on vacation. It may have been the look on someone's face when they opened a special gift from you. Or it may have been the moment when your spouse first came into view on the day of your wedding.

Today in the Word (Song 5:16) - When someone is in love, we often describe them as having a temporary sort of blindness. They see this person who has stolen their heart with rosetinted glasses. Everything he or she does is wonderful. She is more beautiful and gentle than any woman who ever walked the earth. He is the most handsome, kind, and wonderful person who ever lived. Professor Stephanie Ortigue reported in her scientific study that falling in love actually affects the intellectual areas of the brain, releasing euphoria-inducing chemicals. This feeling can change the way our brain operates, making us feel better about ourselves and altering our view of the object of our affection.

As the woman responds to the man in chapter 5, she describes in detail the object of her love and her overwhelming feelings of desire. She waits for her love to appear, and the effects of this longing are physical. She is unable to sleep soundly and her heart is beating with excitement. The chapter begins with her finding and losing her beloved. He disappears into the darkness of the night, leaving her alone. She again describes the physical sensations of love: "Tell him I am faint with love" (v. 8).

Her friends, who serve as the chorus throughout the book, ask the woman to describe her love. Again, the reader is given a metaphor as she compares her lover (the most handsome of all) to cultural objects. What is clear to modern-day readers as well is that she considers her lover far superior to all other men: "outstanding among ten thousand" (v. 10). Not only is he her lover, he is also her friend. He is beautiful to her in every way possible, "altogether lovely" (v. 16).

Apply the Word - Of the 68 times the word **beautiful** appears in Scripture, some 14 are in the Song of Songs. Do you feel "altogether lovely"? You are to God! We are described as His beautiful bride (Rev. 21:2). How incredible to be so loved by the Creator of the universe. Take a moment today to savor God's all-encompassing love for you.

Joe Guglielmo's
Sermon Notes
SONG OF SOLOMON 5

Song 5:1a

Here he is just speaking poetically of the joy he had in consummating the marriage. And remember, this is the first night, and as he gets up in the morning his guests are still partying and I believe that in the last part of verse 1 Solomon comes out and he tells them to enjoy the party, to eat and be filled. Let's read on and I think you will see what I mean.

Song 5:1b

There is some debate about who is speaking here but I see this as Solomon coming out of the marriage bedroom and speaking to the guests who are at their wedding party. Adam Clarke put it like this and I think he is right. He wrote, "These are generally supposed to be the words of the bridegroom, after he returned from the nuptial chamber, and exhibited those signs of his wife's purity which the customs of those times required. This being a cause of universal joy, the entertainment is served up; and he invites his companions, and the friends of both parties, to eat and drink abundantly, as there was such a universal cause of rejoicing."

Song 5:2

Keep in mind the chapter divisions and the verses were not in the original writings, they were added later for clarity. Thus, what we see here is that some time has passed by, we aren't sure how long but this we do know, the honeymoon is over and the bridegroom was out all night.

And he is going to call for her to come and follow him once again. He arrives back home early in the morning and he wants her to get up so they could go away together. We will see in a minute her response to the request.

In Revelation 3:20 we are told, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." I think the picture fits perfectly here. Our Lord knocks on the door of our heart, calling us to come away with Him but many times the response is like the response of Solomon's wife. Let's read on and see what happens.

Song 5:3-6

She is already in bed and to get up now is just not worth the trouble. Yes she has lots of excuses why she can't get up but for the most part, she is comfortable, complacent and indifferent or apathetic to his calling. Perhaps she was simply not willing to be inconvenienced; perhaps she did not appreciate the unexpected nature of the beloved's visit; perhaps he came much later than she had expected him, and therefore she felt annoyed. Perhaps this was her effort to control the relationship ("Why should I run as soon as he knocks? He can wait a little while.") Whatever the specific reason, she refused to promptly rise from her bed and open the door.

After some time, as she was there in bed and thinking about this, she decided to get up and go with him. But when she opened the door he was gone and all that she found, in a sense, was his calling card or the fragrant oil that he had left behind. She knew it was him by the fragrance he left behind. She wanted to do what she wanted and when she wanted and then when she came to her senses it was too late, he was gone.

Song 5:7-8

The watchmen of the city, for some reason, did not recognize her and they beat her and punished her. She knew she was wrong, she didn't need to be abused, but restored. What a great lesson for us to learn about a brother or sister in the Lord who may have gone astray and when they come to the end of themselves we are to restore them and not destroy them. We are to help them come back into the fellowship!

Now these watchmen can be a type or picture of pastors and leaders of the church as we have seen. And, unfortunately, some tend to beat the sheep instead of encouraging them and seeing that they are restored. It is not that we ignore sin or false doctrine and just accept what everyone does or says. Not at all, but we are to encourage them and help them to be restored and not destroyed.

Paul put it like this in Galatians 6:1-2, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

You see, it is all about restoration not demolition, not destruction. Jesus did not tell Peter, "Peter, if you love Me, beat My sheep!" But he said, "Peter, if you love Me, feed My sheep!" Let the Word of God bring them back into that deep relationship they once had. Let the Word of God keep them spiritually strong so they don't go astray. David said in Psalm 119:9-11, "How can a young man cleanse

his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You."

Now in verse 8 we see her call for the virgins, the daughters of Jerusalem to keep their eyes open and try to help her find her beloved. We will see in verse 9 how they respond to her request.

Song 5:9

This seems a little sarcastic in the way they are saying this, "What makes this guy so special? Why should we bother to look for him? Why do you love this guy so much?" And as we move on we are going to see how she responds to their question, she is going to tell them why he is so special, why he is so important to her.

Let me ask you these questions. "What makes Jesus so special to you? Can you give others a reason why you love Him? Can you tell others why they should look for Him?" You see, you should be able to give a defense for what you believe, why Jesus means so much to you. If I were to ask you why your spouse is so special to you I am sure you would give me a list of reasons. But what about the Lord, the One who created you and loves you, why do you love Him, why is He so special to you. Peter put it like this in I Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

We should be able to defend our faith and not say, "Just because!" That is not an answer. J. Vernon McGee summarizes it like this in regards to Jesus and how others may see Him. He wrote,

Who is this Jesus anyway? What makes you think Jesus is different from anyone else? There have been other great religious leaders. Why do you think that Jesus is different from them? Why do you think that He is who He claims to be? Jesus was only a man. That is the kind of skepticism we hear.

May I say to you, there has been a lot of discussion about Jesus. There has been more controversy about Him than any person who has ever lived. He is the most controversial figure in history. Let me ask you a question. If someone today tried to show that Julius Caesar was a real rascal, would you get all excited about it and rise to his defense? If someone tried to show that Julius Caesar was a saint, would you be all excited about that and try to argue about it? It wouldn't excite me. I'd let anyone think whatever he wanted to think about Julius Caesar. I wouldn't argue with him. But the minute you mention Jesus Christ, the whole human family chooses sides.

It is interesting that God forces us to make a decision about His Son. He wouldn't let Pilate off without making a decision. Pilate tried to evade any involvement. He called for a basin of water and washed his hands, saying, ". . . I am innocent of the blood of this just person . . ." (Matt. 27:24). How wrong he was!

The oldest creed of the church, which has been recited for over nineteen hundred years by multitudes of people, includes these words: "Crucified under Pontius Pilate." Pontius Pilate, you didn't wash your hands; you made a decision. God forced you to make a decision. Pilate thought that he was the judge and that Jesus was the prisoner. He didn't realize that Christ was the judge and he was the prisoner.

And still in our contemporary society every man must make a decision. "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" In anthologies of religion, great religious leaders are listed who are called founders of religions: Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Ghandi, Buddha, and all the rest. According to Tertullian, the early church father, the Christians in the early church would rather have died than have Jesus put down on a plane with the heathen deities of the Roman Empire. They refused to even take a pinch of incense and place it before the image of Caesar. They wouldn't do it, because their Beloved was different; He was God. - J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. III, pp. 173-174

Song 5:10-16

The challenge by the daughters of Jerusalem was "What makes your beloved so much more important than anyone else's?" And she tells them. She does not hold back but lays it all out why she is in love with Solomon, her beloved. And her summation of all this is given in verse 16, "Yes, he is altogether lovely." Did you notice that he is not just lovely from this angle or that viewpoint but "he is altogether lovely."

Did he have faults? He is a guy, of course he did but her love for him covered all those faults and she only saw how lovely he truly was. Peter tells us in I Peter 4:8, "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'"

In regards to our love covering a multitude of sins, Grudem tells us, "Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offences, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts abound – to Satan's perverse delight." Let us be wise and obey

the will of God for our lives and forgive others as God has freely and graciously forgiven us!

May we not only have that kind of love for each other but especially for our spouses! I think many times people are forgiving, they let things go with their friends but when it comes to their spouse they hang them out to dry you might say. They let them have it and they love finding imperfections in them. But if we are honest with ourselves, we have many, many imperfections in our own lives and our spouse does not point them out, but true love overlooks these things. I am not speaking of ignoring sin, but things that are not sin that grind at us and irritate us, and the cure is love, the love of Christ not only indwelling us but overflowing and touching the lives of those around us, especially our spouses!

Now let's apply this to our relationship with the Lord. If someone came up and said, "Why is your God more important than what everyone else believes?" Could you give them an answer? Listen to what J. Vernon McGgee had to say regarding this. He wrote,

My friend, if you are going to defend the Lord Jesus Christ today, if you are going to witness for Him, you must know Him. Not only do you need to know who He is, but you need to know Him enough to be able to wax eloquent on His behalf. When I say be eloquent, I don't necessarily mean eloquent in language. I mean full of enthusiasm, excitement, love, and zeal for His person. You and I need not only to know Him, but we must love Him. That is the challenge that we find here. The bride knew Him. She knew Him and she loved Him. She says that He is the chiefest among ten thousand.- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. III, p. 174

As a body of believers we should feel this way about our Lord. That He is so special to us that we want to tell everyone. He should be so lovely to us that others should see that love that we have for Him because He first loved us. We should let people know that He is our friend! You see, there is no other like Him that can truly satisfy our lives and because of that we need to be able to share that with others.

As David said in Psalm 27:4 and as you listen to these words may it be the desire of your heart. He said, "One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple."

He was able to speak of the beauty of the Lord because He experienced the beauty of the Lord himself. You can't share that which you don't possess! Spurgeon put it like this, "The vain world cannot see in him a virtue to admire. It is a blind world, a fool world, a world that lieth in the wicked one. Not to discern the beauties of Jesus is an evidence of terrible depravity. Have you, my dear friend, frankly to confess that you were never enamoured of him who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and went about doing good?"

Let me leave you this evening with these words from Pastor Jon Courson. He said, "Most of us believe that Jesus loves us generically. But the message of Solomon's song is that Jesus loves us individually and is in love with us radically." May we have that kind of love for Him and let others see it. May we be able to defend what we say we believe! And as we come to see, as we come to know, as we experience that "he is altogether lovely" may we share that with others!

Song of Songs 4 Commentary <> Song of Songs 6 Commentary

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