

# Come Away, My Love • A Study in the Song of Solomon – Part 1

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## INTRODUCTION

Some background on the Song of Solomon is essential as we begin.

This book is recognized as one of **the most difficult** books of the Bible to interpret.

There's a couple reasons for that ...

- 1) It uses a lot of archaic Hebrew words found only here.
- 2) 3 different people speak in a back & forth dialog with no notation to tell us who's speaking; we have to figure out who it is by what they say.
- 3) The Song is a frank & bold celebration of marital intimacy some find **too** frank & **too** bold.

The Song of Solomon is the Bible's manual for marital romance & intimacy.

Its description of the physical relationship between the 2 main characters is so clearly described, not in a cold & clinical manner, but in a poetic & picturesque way, that some find it embarrassing.

In fact, so graphic is it that in **ancient** Israel, Jews were not allowed to read the Song till they were 30 or married.

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So, to avoid that embarrassment, over the centuries, interpreters have handled it differently.

Some see it as **pure allegory**.

Allegory is an extended metaphor – a story where nothing is real; it's all fiction that serves to teach some higher truth.

So both Jewish & early Christian commentators understood the Song as a picture of God's love for His people.

For the Jews of course that was Israel & for Christian, it was the Church.

Now, to be sure, in the OT, God does call Israel His wife.

And in the NT, the Church is the bride of Christ.

But to see the Song as purely allegorical presents a huge problem for a couple reasons –

- 1) The **physical intimacy** described between the 2 main characters here is pretty explicit. Trying to apply it **spiritually** just doesn't work.
- 2) In allegory, there are all kinds of internal clues that the story ISN'T to be taken literally. People & places are fictional so that the reader realizes there's a difference between the realm of the story & real life.

In the Song, we read of real people & places; Solomon, Jerusalem, Lebanon, & En Gedi.

The best way to interpret the Song is to see it as a **Hebrew love poem**.

It fits well within that genre. That is, we've found other manuscripts from that time with such poems and they are in the same form.

The Song of Solomon is an expression of intimate marital love between a lover & her beloved.

For that reason, we ask → So why is it in the Bible?

There's no obvious spiritual lesson in it.

It's references to God are at best incidental.

There's no mention of sin, forgiveness, salvation, grace, mercy or any of the other spiritual elements that we find in the rest of the Bible.

So – why does The Song make it in?

Well, precisely because it is a marvelous, wonderful celebration of marital intimacy!

Listen, this is something God wants His people to understand:

Marriage, and ALL that marriage includes, is part of His plan to bless us and to bring us into closer fellowship with Him.

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Marriage aims at both our holiness & happiness.

The relationship of a husband & wife has a unique ability to mold & shape our character.

Now, we're going to be talking a LOT more about this in our study of the Song, & in the Marriage series that will follow.

But let's begin by turning to Genesis 2:18-25 →

<sup>18</sup> And the LORD God said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*" <sup>19</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. <sup>20</sup> So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. <sup>22</sup> Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> And Adam said: "*This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.*" <sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Again, we'll be going deep into this in the marriage series, but tonight want to note the goal of marriage we find here – Two become ONE. That's what intimacy *is*.

Intimacy is 2 people growing in their knowledge & experience of each other – on EVERY level!

Through communication,

- through shared experiences,
- spending time together,
- facing challenges,
- building a social network together,
- pursuing their joint vision as a couple,
- and in their physical relationship
- Intimacy GROWS and they *become* ONE.

Now, here's the deal – Intimacy embraces & includes every area of life; spirit, soul & body.

That's why Moses includes the word "flesh" in v. 24.

That's *sex* folks – the *physical* intimacy of a husband & wife.

The intimacy described in the Song is multi-faceted & includes all that the lover & beloved are, body, soul & spirit.

And it doesn't balk at describing that intimacy in some pretty explicit ways.

Because – God wants His people to understand that the sexual relationship between a wife & her husband is good & holy in His sight, and something to be enjoyed & celebrated!

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Our culture is *obsessed* with sex, as you well know.

But we're not unique in history in that regard. There have been long periods *even worse* than ours.

It seems like things have gotten really bad over the last 30 years only because for generations a Biblical Worldview dominated Western Civilization.

But now that that Worldview is losing its grip on culture, society is turning back to the paganism that prevailed for thousands of years.

Sadly, the Church has mostly been silent on the subject of sex, even though the Bible *isn't* silent on it.

And contrary to what probably MOST people think, the Bible's counsel on sex isn't all proscriptive – meaning, prohibitory!

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You can't read The Song & come away thinking the Bible is down on sex.  
It's positive on it – very positive! If that sex is between a husband & wife.  
Sex is for marriage! That's God's plan. That's the way it's supposed to be.  
Fire is great, in a fireplace, a furnace, a BBQ, a candle.

Fire doesn't belong on the living-room floor, on a coffee-table, in your bed.  
The proper, God-ordained realm for physical intimacy, from romantic touch to intercourse is  
between a wife & her husband; marriage only!  
And what the Church needs to do in this sex-crazed , sex-drenched culture we live in is to get  
over its embarrassment and issue a clear word on what God says about sex. It's good & holy  
– ***in marriage***.

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Throughout history, people have tended to look at sex in 3 ways.

The way most of humanity throughout history has seen sex comes from the Fall.

In the Fall, the image of God in which man & woman were created was shattered and humanity  
did a huge reversal.

Before the Fall, we were primarily ***Spiritual*** & found our greatest meaning & purpose in  
communion with God & one another.

But after the Fall, the ***Body*** took over. The desires & demands of the flesh took the wheel of our  
will and began to drive us.

One of the strongest desires humans experience is the sex-drive. **So sex became a kind of god**;  
a driving & defining force many lived for.

History tells us entire cultures became defined by sex.

Their idols were lewd, obscene objects.

Their religious services were disgusting sexual practices.

Sodom & Gomorrah have become for us symbols of how low human beings can sink when  
they set up **sex as a god**.

The Canaanites Israel took the Promised Land from was a culture ***given over*** to the worship of sex.  
The Greco-Roman culture into which the early Church grew was sexually depraved.

Homosexuality & pedophilia were widely accepted.

In the city of Corinth there was a temple to Aphrodite staffed by a thousand ritual prostitutes;  
both men & women.

The Ephesian temple to Diana was one of the wonders of the ancient world – her idol had  
***dozens*** of breasts!

This is why the Apostle Paul has to write so often in his letters about the danger of sexual  
immorality – because he wrote to people who'd been saved out of a sexually-perverse  
culture and needed to learn the new Biblical ethic of sex in its proper place – marriage.

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Today, as Western Culture has drifted away from its Biblical roots it's quickly returning to the  
immorality of the past.

Pornography is a \$60-billion a year ***annual*** industry ***globally***.<sup>1</sup>

\$12 billion of that is spent by Americans.

That's more than is spent on professional basketball, baseball & football ***combined***.

That's more than the combined earnings of the top 3 television networks.

200 porn films are made in the US ***every week; more than 1 an hour***.

Porn internet sites are 12% of the total.

40% of internet users view porn.

***Every second \$3,000 is spent on porn*** in America.

90% of children between 8 & 16 have viewed porn online.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Driscoll – His first study in The Song of Solomon

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10% of American adults **admit** to being addicted to porn.

Of that 10%, **28% are women**. It's a myth that women don't struggle w/this.

In the US, the average person has their first sexual experience by 16.

The **#1 consumer of pornography is boys ages 12 to 17**.

I'm well aware of the caution of parents of young teens who'd say they don't think their son or daughter is ready for this study because their child hasn't been exposed to the subject of sex yet.

I want to preface what I'm about to say with this: This is my just my opinion; but I think it's an opinion based on both statistics & wisdom – If you haven't had a frank & open discussion about sex with your child by the time they're 9 or 10, it's too late.

Unless there's no TV in your house, no radio, no internet, they don't have a cell phone, & their only friends are **equally** innocent, & you've overheard every conversation they've ever had with their peers – then chances are they've already been exposed to sex & from a source you'd not agree with!

Parents today need to understand that this is the culture we live in.

When sexting became a national headline, *USA Today* did some research & discovered that junior high boys expect to have a naked photo of their junior high girlfriend on their phone.

Back when I was in school, going steady was signified by getting a girl a ring.

Today it's done by her sending him a naked picture of herself.

I could go on & one describing the many ways our culture has become super-sexualized, but I don't need to – you already know it.

Sex is not a god; it's not worthy of worship; of living for as so many do today.

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The second attitude people take toward sex is a **reaction against** sex as a god & worth living for.

It's the polar opposite – the proverbial swing to the other side of the spectrum.

It's to denigrate sex & put it under a ban.

It's to see sex as dirty, evil, wicked, wrong – & I'm talking about sex in marriage.

Because sex outside of marriage is forbidden, they assume sex within marriage is also tainted.

Maybe not forbidden – but certainly not encouraged or something to enjoy.

This attitude was not helped by the early centuries of the Church when Greek philosophy was embraced by the Church Fathers to defend against attacks made on it by paganism.

Those early theologians thought that by quoting Greek philosophers like Plato & Aristotle, they could root the Christian faith in the ideas their contemporaries already respected.

But in appealing to Greek philosophy, they ended up imbibing some clearly non-Biblical ideas.

Chief among these was Plato's **dualism** which saw the material world as unalterably evil & the spiritual realm as untarnishable goodness.

The result was that the Church began to think of the physical world as disgusting & bad while the realm of the spirit was the thing to aim for.

This is where the hermits & monks got started; deny the body while pursuing spiritual disciplines.

Life became a kind of waiting to die, so the wicked body could be left behind.

Marriage was denigrated and celibacy was elevated.

And even Christian married couples were told to only **use sex** for making babies – & even then, they weren't to enjoy it.

1 church father, **Tertullian** said, "I prefer the extinction of the human race to marital intercourse."

The hugely influential father **Origen** read in the NT where Jesus said that if your hand or eye offends you, to cut it off and castrated himself.

The famous early preacher **Chrysostom** said that Adam and Eve did not engage in marital intimacy before the fall. **Gregory of Nyssa** claimed that Adam and Eve not only didn't have

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any sexual desires, they were never physically intimate. He said Eve got pregnant by eating of a special tree in Eden.

Jerome was so plagued by sexual thoughts he tried all kinds of extreme ways to end them, including throwing himself into thorn bushes.

Then of course, the Church eventually got to the place where this idea was so ingrained, that priests were not allowed to marry.

As this idea grew the Church began to set rules for when a husband & wife could & couldn't engage each other physically. They actually developed a calendar.

It's not difficult to imagine where this all went.

The more you put a restraint on a God-given desire, the more it will come to dominate your thinking.

When **even** marital sex is turned into a tolerated taboo – people will go to extreme lengths, as happened in the Victorian Age, to tamp down their unrelenting desires.

So modesty went wayyyy toooooo faaaaaar!

Women's dress hemlines went all the way to the floor lest guys see her ankles – because those ankles! Wowiee kazowee!

But wait, look at that table, it has legs that end in little ankle-like feet.

A guy might see that and think of a woman's ankle, then he'll think of her calf, then her knee, and that leads to her thigh – and we all know where that leads. So for heaven's sake put a dress on that table too = Table clothes!

Listen, if you're a guy who gets turned on looking at a table leg – you need some real help, my friend!

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This all leads us to the present day when there are Christians who have a **negative** view of sex.

Pre-marital sex is bad. Extra-marital sex is forbidden. Pornography is bad. Sexting is no bueno.

This is bad, and so is that. And the moral momentum builds and so they assume ALL sex is bad, off-limits, forbidden, dirty, disgusting, gross.

NO! God made us as male & female. He gave us this plumbing and these desires.

Sex is **His** idea, His **gift** to enhance the intimacy & pleasure of a husband & wife.

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Now, I need to say this before we finally get to our text for tonight.

Some people are crippled when it comes to physical intimacy because they've been sinned against.

As a child or young person, they were molested.

Others have been the victim of violence or a crime.

These can inflict an emotional wound that attaches distress to physical intimacy.

We believe there's healing & redemption for those who are the victims of sin.

And **part** of that healing comes from discovering what God's plan & purpose for sex within marriage is.

And that's why The Song of Solomon is such an important book for us to study.

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EJ Young wrote: "The song celebrates the dignity and purity of human love. This is a fact that has not always been sufficiently stressed in the study of the book. It comes to us in this world of sin, where lust and passion are on every hand, where fierce temptations assail us and try to turn us aside from the God-given standard of marriage. And it reminds us in particularly beautiful fashion, how pure and noble true love is."

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## Set Up

As I mentioned, there are 3 main characters in the Song:

1) There's a woman called the **Shulamite**.

2) There's her lover, **Solomon**.

3) There's a **chorus** of women called the **daughters of Jerusalem**.

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Since there are no breaks telling us when a new speaker starts, we discover who's speaking by the pronouns used.

In Hebrew they're masculine, feminine & neutral, so this helps us sort how who's speaking. Solomon always refers to her as "**my love**," & she calls him "**my beloved**."

The NKJV helps us by inserting headings before each speaker.

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Now **last** before we dive in – we're faced with the complex issue of the **background** of the Song.

What's the **story behind the song**?

This story takes place **early** in Solomon's reign.

He already possesses large estates throughout Israel & has some vineyards in the region of Baal Hamon he's leased out to others to work for him.

One of these leasees is a family w/several sons & a daughter who is probably the youngest.

The brothers have pressed their sister into service in the vineyard

They make fun of her youth & tell her she isn't old enough for romance or marriage.

It's kind of a **Cinderella** story.

Ecclesiastes tells us Solomon investigated every kind of life & work.

Early in his reign, possibly even when he was still a prince while his father David ruled, Solomon took off his royal robes, donned the garments of a common person & lived incognito among the people of the land to get a feel for their lives.

He'd even been a shepherd as his father had.

He lead the flock around the countryside - checking up on those who'd leased his lands.

It was an **undercover investigation**.

When he came to Baal Hamon, he saw a young woman working his vineyard & was struck by her diligence & natural beauty, much as his great grandmother Ruth had attracted the eye of his great-grandfather Boaz.

They conversed, & she was taken with him, not knowing who he was.

Love sprung in their hearts toward each other.

And the passion that comes with love began to be aroused.

Solomon then left, under the pretense that he had to return his flock to his homeland pasture.

Sometime later he returned to Baal Hamon, but this time, in all his royal regalia.

And when he arrived, he called for this young woman.

She realized her shepherd boyfriend was none other than Prince Solomon.

They returned to Jerusalem, where they were wed.

That's where the Song **begins**.

But there are **flash-backs** throughout to those days of waiting to be re-united, before she knew who her beloved was.

## Chapter 1

### **<sup>1</sup> The song of songs, which is Solomon's.**

In 1 Kings 4:32 we learn Solomon composed 3000 proverbs & a thousand songs.

In his own estimation, this was the **most sublime** of them all, **his song of songs**.

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Now we read the words of the woman, called her in the NKJV the **Shulamite**.

That's from ch. 6 where she's named that. Shulam was her village.

No where do we find her actual name.

**<sup>2</sup> Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— For your love is better than wine. <sup>3</sup> Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. <sup>4</sup> Draw me away!**

Then the young women of Jerusalem say -

**We will run after you.**

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She says, "Lead me away." The idea is - "Quick, let's go because I want you!"  
Here attendants reply, "Yes, *go*. We'll follow."

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Then again she says -

**The king has brought me into his chambers.**

They arrive in Jerusalem & Solomon takes her to their room.  
The chorus of young women replies -

**We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine.**

And she says -

**Rightly do they love you.**

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What's going on here is this: She aches to be with him, to hold & kiss him.

She yearns for the consummation of their love when they'll be alone together after their wedding.

As she thinks of him, she thinks of a lovely fragrance.

His very name when spoken is like breathing perfume.

The best way to get in touch with the emotion here is to remember the *first time* we were head over heels in love.

Remember how it felt like you were going to burst?

You got butterflies in your stomach whenever the object of your affection was around.

Your palms got sweaty - your brain turned to mush.

You couldn't even say a simple "Hello. It came out as %^\$#@F\$#H.

You would practice saying his or her name out loud in private.

You wrote it on your PEE CHEE or notebook cover.

You filled whole pages w/doodles of your names together.

That's what she says here. His name is enough to send her into *ecstasy!*

**v. 2 - Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—**

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Who speaks first in the Song? It's the woman, the Shulamite.

And what does she say? Is she all demur & reserved or does she make her longing for him obvious?

Talk to most Christian women & they will tell you that men are the initiator, the aggressor and that a godly woman is supposed to be demur & withdrawing when it comes to love-making.

Men play offense & women play defense.

Now generally → Yes, as the God-ordained leader, the man ought to be the initiator.

But that doesn't mean a wife can't or ought not initiate a deepening of their intimacy as a married couple.

This is an area where their unity & equality really ought to be seen.

And what does she say here - "Kiss me!"

The kiss is a *profoundly intimate thing*.

When God created man, he formed a body from the dust of the earth, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

The word breath, wind & spirit are all the same in Hebrew, as well as in Greek.

Ruach in Hebrew, Pneuma in Greek.

In essence, God put man's life, his *soul* into Him, when He gave him a kind of mouth to mouth *suscitation*. [not *resuscitation*]

When 2 people kiss, their mouths come together, the place of breath, the place where they speak words that are the way they convey their hearts, souls, their innermost person.

It's a profound picture of the *sharing of life*.

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It's one life moving into the other in a mutual, simultaneous exchange.

It's the very act of intimacy.

I'm going to say something now that is totally radical for our culture when people treat kissing so casually.

The kiss in the wedding ceremony was supposed to be something special.

It's supposed to be the couple's *first!*

Think about it – they've just been declared husband & wife. So, first thing, kiss.

It was the opening moment of the foreplay that would end soon when they consummated their union in the privacy of the wedding chamber.

I've had the privilege of doing 3 weddings where the couple made their wedding kiss their first.

By the way, contrary to the popular notion couples need to have lots of sex *before* they get married to make sure they're compatible – the statistics show that's totally bogus.

**And** Those 3 couples are still happily married; 2 of them many years later.

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Married couples should kiss - a lot!

**For your love is better than wine.**

She's thinking of the wine used in celebrations like a wedding when it was drunk by the guests to celebrate a time of joy.

That's what his love does for her; it brings her a warm, relaxed sense of joy.

<sup>3</sup> **Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,**

Solomon took the time to prepare himself *physically*.

He took a bath, groomed himself, put on a cologne. → This is important.

Guys –take a shower, clean up. Put on some deodorant.

Put on a little cologne – and make sure it's something she likes.

Maybe Brut works for you because it costs \$3.50 cents for a 2 pack.

Check with her to see if she likes it.

Don't buy cologne at the dollar store!

Don't care that it says it's just like Bulgari, or Michael Kors – for a buck, it's NOT!

**Your name is ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you.**

Name means reputation. Not only does he smell good for real, he has an excellent reputation as a man of integrity.

This is something that is very important to most women. Character is crucial.

While some women are attracted to bad boys because they have some unhealthy emotional needs, a healthy woman is drawn to a noble man of valor.

That's why not only is the Shulamite attracted to this guy, so are the other single women, those daughters of Jerusalem who form the chorus and encourage her yearning for her beloved.

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Guys, this is something you need to realize when you're courting a woman; she has friends.

And not only are you courting her, you're in a sense courting them too; you have to win their favor & approval.

Because when your lady goes to the bathroom 3 of her friends are going with her and guess what they're going to talk about – you!

“Oh my goodness, he's so dreamy!” or “Are you sure honey? I mean, he's okay but he's not really your type.” Which really means – drop that sucker like a used bandaid!

<sup>5</sup> **I am dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.**

<sup>6</sup> **Do not look upon me, because I am dark, Because the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me the keeper of the vineyards, But my own vineyard I have not kept.**

Her time in the vineyard at the insistence of her brothers means she's deeply tanned.

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Today, we think a ***tan*** is a sign of beauty; pale skin is deemed unhealthy.

In the ancient world, it was the ***opposite***; pale skin was lovely & tanned was considered common; fit only for peasants who had to work outdoors.

Only the wealthy could afford to be indoors.

Today it's the opposite. The wealthy have more leisure time so they go outdoors while the rest have to work, usually indoors under fluorescent lights.

So the Shulamite is dark & sees this as a hindrance to her beauty.

She knows that she's basically put together well; as she says she knows she's lovely.

But her in her mind, the sun has negated all her assets.

This is so typically female.

A woman can be beautiful in nearly every way but she'll fixate on the 1 or 2 thing she sees as a blemish.

Notice who she addresses this to – not to her beloved.

She says this to the other women because women like to size each other up & rank each other in terms of where they think they line up in terms of beauty.

But they know they do this and often ***fight it*** by self-identify what they think are their weak areas.

It's a pre-emptive "You don't have to judge me & treat me like dirt because I already know I don't measure up."

Men, this is why it's crucial you make sure you're telling your wife she's beautiful.

And that's precisely what she needs to be for you. As your wife, she must ***become*** your standard of beauty.

We'll talk a LOT more about this in later studies.

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She goes on & says to her beloved-

***<sup>7</sup> Tell me, O you whom I love, Where you feed your flock, Where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself By the flocks of your companions?***

She wants to know where he's gone.

The palace is large and is filled with people.

She's no longer at home among her own people.

She's in a foreign place filled with strangers while he's in his element, going about his business and she's lonely for him.

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It's simple; she wants some love & affection from him.

She can't stand to be apart from him but knows he's busy & has a lot to do.

So she says, "Just tell me when we can meet for a time to reconnect. How does noon sound? Just tell me where & I'll be there."

And what do you suppose she has in mind to do when they meet at noon?

Go pick out new silverware?

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Now Solomon speaks -

***<sup>8</sup> If you do not know, O fairest among women, Follow in the footsteps of the flock, And feed your little goats Beside the shepherds' tents.***

She declaimed her beauty by saying she was too dark.

He tells her, "You're a total hottie!" Okay, that's what "O fairest among women" means.

Guys, never stop telling your wife she's beautiful!

Find different ways to say it.

And say it again & again, & again.

Here's why – When God created humanity as male & female and put His image in us, part of His glory that consists of beauty was given to the woman in a unique a special way.

That's why men are attracted to a woman's face & form.

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Now, sin has twisted & distorted both the woman's beauty & the man's attraction to it. The **loss** of that original image haunts women & they long to be restored to the beauty that was originally theirs.

The world, the flesh & the devil are forever at work to co-opt that desire & drive & turn it to sin. A husband plays a powerful role in his wife's life helping her find the redemption of her beauty in their marriage & as they grow in Christ together.

And he can do that by constantly telling her she's beautiful.

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The Shulamite had pleaded with Solomon to tell her where to find him.

In poetic language he tells her to look for him where duty calls, "Look for me where you should expect me to be; shepherding the nation."

Then he speaks words of praise & affection to her

**<sup>9</sup> I have compared you, my love, To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots. <sup>10</sup> Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, Your neck with chains of gold.**

Some of the ways both Solomon & the Shulamite express their love toward each other may not be appealing to us today. But of course they were in that time.

Here Solomon likens her to his prize horse.

And you have to admit, there **is** something incredibly beautiful about a well-bred & cared for horse.

She's so beautiful jewelry looks better on her than by itself - she **lends beauty** to jewelry!

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The chorus chimes in -

**<sup>11</sup> We will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver.**

These friends of the Shulamite & her beloved want to help advance their relationship.

Solomon says she looks good with the right jewelry so they offer to make more.

Be careful to only have friends who are going to bless your marriage, not hurt it.

Friends who will give good counsel & encourage you to love one another.

Guys, you need to cut off those relationships w/other guys who cheat on their wives & instead do stuff that hurts the marriage.

Ladies, same for you. You need to end those friendships that work at cross-purposes to your marriage.

This means those women who relentlessly bag on their husbands or men in general.

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Again the woman speaks -

**<sup>12</sup> While the king is at his table, My spikenard [perfume] sends forth its fragrance. <sup>13</sup> A bundle [sachet] of myrrh is my beloved to me, That lies all night between my breasts. <sup>14</sup> My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms In the vineyards of En Gedi.**

Here's what's going on here. This is a marvelous piece of insight for women on what a man, what a husband needs.

En Gedi was an oasis in the desert on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

It's a perpetual spring of fresh, cool water that comes out of the hills and makes this gorgeous oasis where there's grass and fruit trees & flowers.

In fact, a tree grew there from which they got a special kind of sap that makes a beautiful perfume.

But it's this little slash of life & refreshment in a barren wilderness.

Here's the deal = Life is a desert! This world is a weary wilderness a man trudges thru all stinking day long. Really!

Life is a battle for most guys.

Work is tough, even on good days.

There's a boss who's a dork & people he works with who are, many of them, brain-dead.

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The news is bad & the forecast isn't any better.

Life is a desert a barren wilderness that he plows through all day long, then he comes home.

Home needs to be En Gedi. It needs to be **THE** place where he's refreshed, renewed, restored.

In a practical way, that means when he comes home, rather than walking into a battle zone or what looks like a tsunami just hit, it needs to be a place of rest.

Instead of walking in and having his wife hand him a bawling infant that needed a diaper change 40 minutes ago along with a list of repairs to make, she'd find she'll get far MORE from him by the end of the day if she meets him with a dish of beef stroganoff & an ice-cold Snapple.

I'm not even kidding!

Hey, do that, make his entrance into the house like walking into En Gedi, then in an hour ask him to do **anything**, & he'll be all over it like shine on a new paint job.

Here she says that when Solomon gets home after he's been working all day leading the nation, she wants to make their time special, fun, enticing.

She wants him to want to come home!

Even more, to be eager to get home and spend time with her.

Ladies, please understand that I'm not being insensitive to how hard life is for you at home all day with 2, 3 or more little children.

Hey, if life is a desert for your husband at his job, it's no less a challenge for you.

And I know after spending **hours** with those little sinners called children you're more than ready for a break.

But the break you **need** isn't to run out the door the moment your husband gets home.

It's to reconnect **with him**- and I'm telling you that the Shulamite here knows how to go about that.

Make it like En Gedi. Love & respect him by taking just a little longer to serve him this way, and the benefits to YOU will be astounding.

**V. 13 - A bundle [sachet] of myrrh is my beloved to me, That lies all night between my breasts.**

Part of what makes a home En Gedi for a man **is** his wife, **herself**.

Ladies, your body is a gift you share with your husband.

The picture here is this: As she prepared for this evening when he would get home from work and take his place in his customary seat, she put on special perfume so that he'd smell her & desire would be kindled.

She put some between her breasts so that as they began to kiss & snuggle, he'd be drawn to that part of her body she wanted to share with him and for him to enjoy.

He desire was that they'd spend the entire night sleeping in each other's arms, wrapped in an intimate embrace.

Over the years, some commentators just could not let this be literal so they allegorized it away, saying that her breasts really mean the Old & New Testaments.

Another said they refer to the 2 cherubim that stood on either side of the Shekinah glory on top of the Ark of Covenant.

All kinds of wild interpretations have been given to what is obviously meant to be understood **literally**.

Part of what makes this an En Gedi for him is her **readiness** to share with him.

Listen, it was her integrity & modesty that had so attracted him to her when they first met.

So there is nothing **brazen** or improper in her attitude.

She just understands that in marriage, her body belongs to him and his body belongs to her and she is hesitant **neither** to give nor take what God has ordained.

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He responds to her enticing invitation.

**<sup>15</sup> Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.**

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Though Solomon already told her she was a hottie in v. 8, he repeats it here for the reasons I mentioned earlier – because that’s part of a husband’s prime directive.

Honey, you’re hot. You’re a babe.

You’re gorgeous! You’re so hot you’re smokin’!

Your clothes must all be made out of fire-proof material otherwise they’d just catch fire.

How many people did you send to the burn ward today?

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Guys, tell your wife she’s beautiful because it’s a good way to affair-proof your marriage.

If you don’t tell her she’s beautiful and follow that up with some actions that prove it, there’s a good chance someone else, moved by the enemy to mess up your marriage, will tell her what you’re not.

And **ladies**, this works for you too in regards to making your home En Gedi for your man.

If after all day in the desert, going home is like an oasis and more like purgatory, there’s a good chance there’s some lonely little skirt out there somewhere ready to act all nice to your husband.

Don’t be naïve – that’s the way the devil works.

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The she says -

**<sup>16</sup> Behold, you *are* handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed *is* green. <sup>17</sup> The beams of our houses *are* cedar, And our rafters of fir.**

The praise goes both ways. Men need it too. A guy likes hearing from his wife now & then that he looks good.

“You’re easy on the eyes, old man.”

But even more important is the respect she shows by honoring what he’s done to provide for her.

He’s secured them a nice house & she loves it.

She feels safe & secure there.

How important is security to a woman? It’s like right there at the top of her needs.

A **Christian** woman looks to God to be her Protector but she understands God has given her a husband to be the **agent** through which His protection & provision comes.

So we go back to where we began to night- Genesis 2:24

**<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

The proper order is that he moves out & gets ready to support a wife by getting his own place.

He **proves** he’s capable of taking care of a wife.

When they’re first married, their place may be a small apartment.

That’s fine, that’s normal. The point is, it’s theirs.

The smart husband will ask his wife what she’d like in the way of a home one day.

Then he works to make it happen.

The godly wife will submit her desires for a home to the Lord, to her husband’s vision for their life & ministry together and adjust.

Then she’ll affirm and honor her husband by telling him how much she appreciates his work to take care of her.

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It will take us 2 more studies to get through the rest of the Song.