

Introduction

While we were only able to cover 1 chapter last week, we'll get thru 4 chs. tonight.

I think last week's introduction was the longest I've ever given for a book of the Bible.

But it was crucial to do so since the Song is a difficult book to interpret as well as presents all kinds of questions & cautions.

As we saw last week, it's an *explicit if poetic* description of marital intimacy.

And seeing how sex-drenched our culture is, with some really goofy ideas, the Song provides the followers of Christ a wonderful view of how God sees the physical relationship of a husband & wife.

And AGAIN - want to emphasize that: What we're looking at here is for married couples – not for singles or unmarried couples.

Singles can certainly LEARN what God says about these things from The Song, but it's not to be put into practice UNTIL marriage!

By way of reminder as we dive in to ch. 2, The Song *isn't chronological*; it doesn't tell a straight narrative.

It bounces back & forth between different parts of the romance between Solomon & a young woman named the Shulamite.

There are 3 speakers throughout the book;

- 1) The woman who does *most* of the speaking.
- 2) Solomon.
- 3) A chorus of young women who are the Shulamite's friends.

The woman refers to Solomon as her *beloved*, while he calls her his *love*.

As we read the Song of Solomon & see the intense emotions both she & he express toward each other, those who know Solomon's larger story tend to be bummed –because we know what happens.

Solomon wrote The Song when he was a young man, possibly even while he was a prince, being groomed by his father David to rule.

The Book of Proverbs was something he wrote over the 4 decades of his reign.

Ecclesiastes he wrote last, when he was an old man nearing the end of his days.

And he looks back over his life, realizing what a mess he'd made of it.

A good part of that was how very far he drifted from the purity & passion expressed here in the Song.

That's something we'll come back to review in our last study next Wednesday.

For now, as we dive into ch. 2 – remember the story ...

Probably while he was still a prince, Solomon dressed up in the garb of a simple shepherd and went out to see how the common people lived so that he'd better understand their situation when he came to the throne.

He'd leased out one of his vineyards to a family and decided to check on how they were tending it.

So as he drove his flock by the vineyard, he saw this young woman whose older brothers had compelled to tend the vines.

They struck up a conversation as young people are won't to do, and though she didn't know who he was, she fell for him, as well as he for her. This went on for a few days & they talked of marriage.

Feigning he had to return the flock to his home, he left, and returned later to her village, this time wearing his royal regalia and attended by guards.

She realized her shepherd was Prince Solomon, and that she was to become a queen.

She returned with him to Jerusalem where she settled into life in the palace.

After their glorious honeymoon – they settled into daily life, where she realized as a member of the royal court, her husband had a lot of responsibility & she wasn't able to be with him as much as she wanted.

This presents a little bit of trouble for her.

After all, she's away from her family & childhood friends, & knows no one but Solomon.

Time drags as she waits for him to come home at night so they can be together.

Ch. 2

The Shulamite speaks -

¹ I am the rose of Sharon, And the lily of the valleys.

This verse has been widely misunderstood. Because it's poetic & the rose is a *romantic* flower, English interpreters more often than not give it the wrong spin.

The *Hebrew* word translated 'rose' refers to a common wildflower.

And Sharon is a vast plain along the sea north of Tel Aviv that during Spring is a *mass* of such flowers.

Lilies, while pretty, grew in great numbers.

So what she's saying is – "I'm common! There's lots of women as pretty as I. Why is the king attracted to me?"

He replies –

² Like a lily among thorns, So is my love among the daughters.

He says, "You're *not* just one among many. To me – you're a flower among thorns!"

"I *like* looking at you & being with you. The others can't compare to you."

See, he's saying it *again* – he finds her *beautiful*.

And to him she is! She *is* his standard of beauty.

This doesn't mean that she's some perfectly proportioned, flawless, drop-dead gorgeous total hunk of babe-aliciousness.

But because they were married & joined in the sacred covenant of companionship, *he'd set her* AS his standard of beauty by which others were measured by.

And the reason he'd done so, is because in marriage, her beauty was God's gift TO HIM.

Just as he was God's gift to her.

And those gifts were to be enjoyed by each other w/o restraint or inhibition.

Age happens to all of us. And the fact is, for both men & women, we can't hang on to the vitality & freshness of youth that is only for youth.

As a couple ages, their standard of beauty & what they find attractive has to mature in pace with their bodies.

My standard of beauty today is the wife I've been married to for 31 years.

And when we've been married for 50, she will **still** be my standard of beauty & I hers because that's the standard God has given us – each other, in the sacred covenant of marriage.

His affirmation of love & attraction to her sparks her reply ...

³ Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, So is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

If she's a flower, he's a fruit tree she's going to enjoy!

Now I want to be careful, discreet – but the commentators admit her mention of **taste** suggest physical intimacy.

She's a flower he delights to feast his **senses** of sight & scent on.

She responds with her sense of taste.

In the vocabulary of many Christians, the word "**sensual**" carries a strong **negative** connotation. The man or woman who is **purely sensual** – that is, **they live solely for** the delight & pleasure of their senses – is in sin.

But being sensual **isn't** wrong when the senses are used in the manner & for the purpose God gave them.

Marriage is one of them. // Paul says it this way in 1 Cor. 7:4 -

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.

Here 2:16 we read -

My beloved is mine, and I am his.

Same thought, same idea as Paul in 1 Cor 7.

The husband's body belongs to the wife, for her satisfaction & enjoyment, & her body belongs to him.

Now, we'll talk a more on that later but the point here is that it's God's intention for a husband & wife to enjoy each other **sensually**, with their senses. **All of them!**

She goes on -

⁴ He brought me to the banqueting house,

This was the place of feasting where a crowd gathered to celebrate their wedding.

He was so thrilled with her he wanted **everyone** to see her & know he'd set his affection on her.

He wanted all the men to know she belonged to him **alone**, & all the women to know he belonged **solely** to her.

That's amplified by what she says next -

And his banner over me was love.

Banner = Think **flag**. It's a mark of identity & loyalty.

When Solomon married her, he'd made it public & clear to all he was cleaving to this woman with all his heart. They were now one.

Guys, this is crucial. Your wife needs to know **she has your heart** – all of it.

The Shulamite is saying she feels **protected & safe** because Solomon had made sure both she & everyone else understood that his heart was hers.

We didn't leave anything open to others that would give her cause to wonder about his loyalty.

He didn't keep any love letters from old girlfriends.

He didn't have any old girlie magazines.

He didn't carry on friendships with other women she wasn't fully aware & approving of.

In fact, he'd done his utmost to make sure she wasn't threatened by anything that might compete with his heart & loyalty to her.

This is a question men need to ask of their wives: What do I do that makes you feel safe & protected?

What do I do that hurt or harms your confidence in my loyalty to you?

Then, guys, you need to hear that and take immediate action to change it.

If you argue, defend, explain – only reinforces her unease & validates her concern.

Love wants to take care of the wife.

⁵ Sustain me with cakes of raisins, Refresh me with apples, For I am lovesick. ⁶ His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me.

Yep – that's what this is; she says it; it's a straight-forward description of them enjoying each other.

Whose speaking? The Shulamite, the woman.

She's describing the initial phase of their physical intimacy; their love-making.

And in **this case** – that's exactly what it is – an expression of their love for & to one another.

The phrase "making love" is all too often applied to some sexual act when there's no love involved.

Only a husband and wife, **committed** to one another in that sacred covenant can express their **love** to one another through physical intimacy.

Outside of that, it's just sex.

Here, there's an intimate embrace that's going to take some time.

In fact, they're going to need some snacks, some refreshment to renew their strength.

In v. 6, the way she words this indicates she's not just describing what he's doing; she's **coaching** him.

As they move together, she's advising him on what she likes.

A woman asks, "Can I do that? Can I talk & tell him what to do?" Yes! He'd love it.

Guys are pretty simple but women are complicated, not just inwardly; that includes the body.

And the fact is, for all the exposure to sexually-oriented information out there, most guys are pretty clueless.

So especially with young couples, as Solomon & the Shulamite were, it's good to talk & tell each other how to do things in the marriage bed.

⁷ I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the does of the field, Do not stir up nor awaken love Until it pleases.

After such a frank admission of their intimacy, she pulls back to issue a word of caution.

She's experienced the **power** of romantic love & as she's already said, it's intoxicating.

So singles need to exercise caution that they don't work themselves into a passion that would only either bring frustration or encourage sin.

The question that so often arises today from Christian singles is, "How far can I go before it's sin?"

“Where’s the line?”

And what they want is to name some specific act; holding hands, kissing, fondling, what?

“Where’s the line?” = That’s the wrong question & reveals a wayward heart toward this whole issue.

The person who is in love with & following Jesus doesn’t ask, “What can I get away with?”

They ask, “What will ensure I don’t fall into sin or the place that what I do or even how I think would displease Jesus?”

We ought to say – “How far can I stay FROM sin?” not “How close can I get?”

The question isn’t “Where’s the line?” but “When’s the time?” Look, she says,

Do not stir up nor awaken love Until it pleases.

A young man or woman ought not even pursue a romantic relationship with ANYONE until they’re ready & able to marry.

Unrealistic? Because our culture practices serial dating & cohabitation before marriage?

Well, how’s that working?

Is it good to start dating at 14, break 3 hearts & have yours broken 4 times while you test drive different relationships?

Then, when you get a little older, move in together to make sure you’re compatible before taking the big dive into marriage?

Statistically, co-habitation doesn’t improve the chances of a successful marriage. On the contrary, it **increases** the likelihood of divorce.

And besides, co-habitation is really just a **pretend** marriage where 2 people try to blend their lives.

When it blows up, do they really think they’re just going to walk away without a broken heart?

The numbers are in: Men who are virgins at marriage are 37% **less likely** to divorce & women, 24% less likely to divorce.

Now we have a scene change.

They’re going to have a romantic time together. She says -

⁸ The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills. ⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, Gazing through the lattice. ¹⁰ My beloved spoke, and said to me:

Now she quotes him all the way thru v. 15 -

“Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away. ¹¹ For lo, the winter is past, The rain is over *and* gone. ¹² The flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove Is heard in our land. ¹³ The fig tree puts forth her green figs, And the vines *with* the tender grapes Give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away! ¹⁴ “O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret *places* of the cliff, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice; For your voice *is* sweet, And your face *is* lovely.”

We get the idea it’s been a while since they’ve been intimate.

Maybe they’ve settled into a routine as married couples so often do.

He’s busy with royal concerns & affairs of the kingdom while she’s occupied with her duties as queen; administrating life in the palace.

They realize it's been a while since they've connected, so they set a date to spend some time together at a special place.

She gets ready & then waits for him to come get her.

The time arrives and she looks out the window to see him coming.

He's not just casually strolling along, he's hurrying, calling out to her that he's on his way.

When he gets to their place, he's so eager to see her and see if she's ready to go that he peers through the window – and this thrills her because she knows he wants her and that intensifies her desire for him.

It's a little foreshadowing of the delight they will soon enjoy in one another.

Where they're going to go on their romantic get-away we don't know; maybe now one did – it was a secret between just the two of them.

One that would be especially fun since as the royal couple there were so sought after & privacy so rare.

Imagine being a king & queen, making a secret date to set aside your royal garments, dress as commoners then sneak out of the palace & run off to some quiet little hotel-spa for a weekend where no one knew who you were. Fun!

Couples – You need to do this! Break the routine. It's fine to have a routine, but don't let it be **all** there is.

Take a vacation. By yourselves. Little kids? Child-care co-op. Get away.

Spa, Jacuzzi, Massage. Feed each other chocolate-covered strawberries.

Men, set the whole thing up and just tell her to pack a bag and what to put in it.

Ladies, you can do the same.

Bring some fun & spontaneity into your lives.

“That's not me.” Well, that's just sad!

Then he says in v. 15 – & it gives us a clue to what may have prolonged the delay in their intimacy.

¹⁵ Catch us the foxes, The little foxes that spoil the vines, For our vines have tender grapes.

Foxes would come into a vineyard & ruin the plants. So keepers of a vineyard set traps for them. We have an orange tree in our backyard. The squirrels & possums **love** it but our dogs go crazy whenever they see or smell one of the little rodents.

I went to pick some oranges the other day, and found several on the tree that were just the rind, the fruit had been eaten right out of them.

Solomon knew his marriage was young & he & his bride were **still** in that early phase of intense longing & desire for each other; their vine was heavy with ripe, sweet grapes just waiting to be plucked & enjoyed.

But they'd been married **long enough** that they'd seen how little distractions can easily sneak in & spoil things between them.

The remedy? – Identify then deal with them.

This would be a great time & place to launch into a look at the things couples usually struggle with as threats to their intimacy.

But I'm going to save that for our marriage series in a few weeks.

Question: What are some “little things” that seem to interfere in deepening your intimacy as husband & wife?

She says -

¹⁶ My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his. He feeds *his* flock among the lilies.

Note that the words, “his flock” is in italics, means it’s added by the translators.

She says, “He feeds among the lilies.” // Who’s his flower? She is!

Let’s read on then come back to this.

Remember, they’re going on a romantic get-away and he’s just called to her to join him.

In a sense, he apologizes he’s allowed distractions to keep them apart.

But now that they’re ready to go, he tells her how eager he is.

She’s equally eager & encourages him to pursue her by saying – “Come & get it.”

¹⁷ Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, And be like a gazelle Or a young stag Upon the mountains of Bether.

She makes a pun. Bether = 2-pieces, separation, cleft. / ESV, the ***cleft*** mountains.

Mountains w/cleavage.

“Come my beloved & be like a fleet-footed gazelle on Cleavage Mountains.”

You can figure it out from there.

As they connect and begin their journey to their get-away, she responds to his romantic invitation by saying, “Yes! I’m yours, and you’re mine. Come feast! Let’s spend all night enjoying each other.”

Chapter 3

This is another scene change. The Shulamite has a dream.

It’s a ***flashback*** to the time ***after*** they met, fell in love, then he left.

And remember, she didn’t know at that time her shepherd boyfriend was Prince Solomon.

So she doesn’t dream of leaving her village to go live in a palace in Jerusalem.

Her dream sees her married & living in her ancestral home.

¹ By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him. ² “I will rise now,” I said, “And go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love.” I sought him, but I did not find him. ³ The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, “Have you seen the one I love?” ⁴ Scarcely had I passed by them, When I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go, Until I had brought him to the house of my mother, And into the chamber of her who conceived me.

The dream is at first a ***nightmare*** as she’s separated from the one she loves & yearns for.

What makes it troubling is that she has no idea where he is or if they’ll be reunited.

So she makes a bit of a fool of herself running around asking everyone where he is.

Finally, she finds him and her longing is so intense, she leads him back to her house, where in her dream, her passion pushes her into thoughts that aren’t proper. So she again says -

⁵ I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the does of the field, Do not stir up nor awaken love Until it pleases.

There it is again. She calls the other young single ladies to watch themselves because she knew how strong the yearning can be and if not kept in check by setting boundaries, it’s easy to slip over into sin.

Don’t let your imagination run wild!

Don't let yourself get all worked up in a fit of desire until the time is right

It's sad how early children are encouraged to present themselves to members of the opposite sex as something to be desired.

Girls wear make-up & alluring styles when still just little girls.

The public schools keep pushing the teaching of sex-ed to lower & lower grades.

And the curriculum teaches children **how to perform** all kinds of sexual behavior.

It's fascinating to me that **this book**, so frank in its expression of joy in marital love-making, & so incredibly graphic, contains a **thrice** repeated refrain to not go there with sexual longing until married.

That's the point we need to make tonight because it's the big lie the world keeps telling.

That sexual desire & thoughts are NOT something we have any control over.

The fact of the matter is - we **are** in control of our desires.

That control comes in **how & when** we're going to satisfy them.

Hunger is a desire & drive; stronger even than the sex drive.

But we decide what, when & how we're going to eat.

If we're on a diet, we don't watch the *Food Network*, or go to the donut shop to smell all the fresh-made pastries.

So, if you're single, don't inflame sexual desire by giving free reign to your imagination & fantasy.

Don't use pornography - because ...

1) It's sin.

2) It'll diminish your capacity to enjoy your husband or wife when you **do** get married.

3) It could very well lead to an addiction that will cause all kinds of other problems.

Now, the woman reminisces back to when Solomon came to get her after their separation.

She realizes her little shepherd boyfriend fiancé is in fact the mighty, majestic, Prince Solomon, future King of the Land.

How's that for a wedding story? Isn't this every little girl's dream. To have her groom come for her, riding a white horse, dressed in a royal garment, the biggest & most important guy of all?

Rich, handsome, making all the other women swoon and all the guys super-jealous?

That's her; that's the Shulamite. She's ready. She's stoked. Let's do this!

⁶ Who is this coming out of the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all the merchant's fragrant powders? ⁷ Behold, it is Solomon's couch, With sixty valiant men around it, Of the valiant of Israel. ⁸ They all hold swords, Being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh Because of fear in the night. ⁹ Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King Made himself a palanquin: [litter, to carry them] ¹⁰ He made its pillars of silver, Its support of gold, Its seat of purple, Its interior paved with love By the daughters of Jerusalem.

Picture a rectangular floor about 10 feet wide & 15 feet long.

It has sturdy poles attached to the side so it can be carried on the shoulders of strong warriors who are all decked out in their best armor.

Rising from the floor at the 4 corners are silver pillars that support beams from which a rich tapestry hangs to provide shade.

In the center of the floor is a throne, wide enough to hold 2 people.

All around are pillows & decorations made of gold & rich fabrics.

Sitting on the throne is Solomon all decked out in his royal robes, smelling mighty good.

¹¹ Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And see King Solomon with the crown With which his mother crowned him On [for] the day of his wedding, The day of the gladness of his heart.

She does a little bragging here. "Check out my guy!"

The crown mentioned here *isn't* the *royal* crown. According to 1 Kings 1, that was placed on his head by the high priest.

This was a special crown a groom wore for his wedding & traditionally it was placed on his head by his mother.

Chapter 4

Okay, scene shift to their wedding night & they are alone in their room. He says -

¹ Behold, you *are* fair, my love! Behold, you *are* fair!

Not "fair to middlin'." Yah-feh = beautiful! / He tells here again!

And each time he says it he begins with "Behold = LOOK!"

Because that's what guys do. They like to look. / God made men to be visually stimulated.

And it's why the woman is so good to look AT! It corresponds to his being visually oriented.

Let's read on then come back to this. / He describes what he sees as he looks at her body ...

You *have* dove's eyes behind your veil.

He's seeing now what *had been* hidden by the veil.

She has big, beautiful, dark, sexy eyes.

Your hair *is* like a flock of goats, Going down from Mount Gilead.

That doesn't sound especially appealing to us but the idea is this; her hair is clean & healthy & made up in wavy tresses that fall along the sides of her face & onto her shoulders.

And if her hair is down, not all pinned up under her veil, that means they're alone together and there's more than the veil that's gone.

He's looking at her, starting with her face & head & moving down.

She's not all embarrassed & hiding, she's smiling at him – So,

² Your teeth *are* like a flock of shorn *sheep* Which have come up from the washing, Every one of which bears twins, And none *is* barren among them.

She's got all her teeth! Which again doesn't sound to us like something a guy would say to a woman he's complementing.

But remember that they didn't have dental care back then & with their diet it wasn't uncommon for people to lose teeth at an early age.

Bad teeth usually meant bad breath too.

So, when he says, "Your teeth are nice," it means their kisses will be sweet.

³ Your lips *are* like a strand [cord] of scarlet, And your mouth is lovely.

You have nice, full lips.

Your temples behind your veil *Are* like a piece of pomegranate.

Your skin is rosy & smooth.

⁴ Your neck *is* like the tower of David, Built for an armory, On which hang a thousand bucklers, All shields of mighty men.

Her neck was long, in fact, far longer than normal.

Some might consider that a flaw, but he says he likes it. It turns him on.

In fact, he's going to cover that beautiful neck in jewelry, like an armory's walls are covered by shields.

Solomon hits on an important point here.

No woman is perfect and most women have some things they think are serious flaws in their appearance.

They will often be embarrassed of them even with their husband when they are intimate.

The Shulamite was probably pretty conscious of her freakishly long neck.

Her older brothers had likely ribbed her about it growing up.

Other kids had commented on it.

And so she was probably greatly concerned about how Solomon would react when they finally got naked on their wedding night.

What does he say? I love your neck! I want to climb that think like a mighty-hero climbs a tower.

I love that neck of yours so much it deserves special decoration. Let's put gold chains on it!

⁵ Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle, Which feed among the lilies.

Again, this may not sound so appealing to us. "Your breasts are like 2 fast, furry, forest animals.

What's he saying really? Honestly, he's saying, like fawns or baby gazelle's, they're perky, & like to play.

So -

⁶ Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of frankincense. ⁷ You are all fair, my love, And there is no spot in you. ⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, With me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, From the top of Senir and Hermon, From the lions' dens, From the mountains of the leopards. ⁹ You have ravished my heart, My sister, my spouse; You have ravished my heart With one look of your eyes, With one link of your necklace.

He's undone by her beauty. He calls her to come to him, *exclusively* to him.

She must leave her home & any past relationship or experience that would keep her from giving herself completely to him.

And that is why he calls her both, his *sister* & his spouse.

There is *absolutely nothing* of incest in that statement. *Not even close.*

What it means is that as husband & wife they become one flesh & are bound in a covenant of companionship that trumps all others relationships, including those of their previous families.

The relationship of a husband & wife *redefines* all other relationships.

When the Shulamite first met Solomon, thinking he was just a shepherd, she told him her older brothers had

forced her to tend the vineyard on her own.

It was an abuse of their role as brothers. It looks like hers had not been a very healthy family.

Solomon knew this and determined as her husband, he would be for her the kind of good brother she'd never had.

Yes, they were **lovers**. But they were also what **every** good marriage is – **partners**.

Solomon treated her with respect. He was sensitive to her needs.

By calling her his **sister & spouse**, he was letting her know he'd always be her friend, confidant, protector, & companion.

Some of you come from a background of terrible abuse.

As a child, a relative or someone **molested** you.

Maybe even in marriage a spouse **abused** you.

And the trauma you suffered has crippled you so that you're unable to enjoy the rich, full relationship God intends for a husband & wife, know that there's redemption & healing in Christ for that.

It's shocking to hear of **men** who think because the Bible calls a wife to submit to her husband he can **use** her any time he wants. That attitude is **ABUSE**.

The Bible says a husband is to **love his wife** AS CHRIST LOVES THE CHURCH & DIED FOR HER.

That woman, your wife, is also your sister in Christ. And she will be your sister long after she's no longer your wife when you're both in Heaven.

You need to treat her as a daughter of God & instead of taking **from** her, **give yourself to her**.

I'm going to share one of THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES of the Christian bedroom now. Don't miss this.

Good lovers are **servants**.

Your goal in marital physical intimacy ought to be to **serve** your mate, for it is **more blessed** to give than to receive.

Your service of your mate doesn't begin when the clothes are off & the lights are out.

Men, the best foreplay begins in the afternoon w/a phone call to your wife.

It proceeds with how you greet one another when you walk in the door.

Doing the dishes. Feeding the dog. Taking out the trash – for a woman, that's all foreplay.

Giving her a neck rub in the living room at 7:30 while she works on a project.

Putting the kids to bed & reading them a story & praying for them.

It's telling her she's pretty when she's got all her clothes on, and she knows you're not just saying it because in a half hour you want to be breathing heavy.

Good lovers aren't takers, they're givers.

He goes on -

¹⁰ How fair is your love, My sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, And the scent of your perfumes Than all spices!

Her love is intoxicating.

¹¹ Your lips, O my spouse, Drip as the honeycomb; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

How would he know what was under her tongue unless he'd been there?

This isn't French kissing. This was long before France. This is **Biblical kissing** is what this is!

¹² A garden enclosed *Is my sister, my spouse, A spring shut up, A fountain sealed.* ¹³ Your plants *are an orchard of pomegranates With pleasant fruits, Fragrant henna with spikenard,* ¹⁴ Spikenard and saffron, Calamus and cinnamon, With all trees of frankincense, Myrrh and aloes, With all the chief spices— ¹⁵ A fountain of gardens, A well of living waters, And streams from Lebanon.

When they were married, she was a closed garden, a virgin.

But now she's opened to him that which she saved and treasured so that she could lavish it on her husband.

And lavish is what she does. There's no holding back or foolish inhibition on hers or his part.

They both understand that their bodies are gifts to one another God **wants** them to enjoy.

If she's a garden filled with ripe fruits trees, he's going to climb every one of them & eat.

He's articulated his intention to enjoy her.

Instead of withdrawing & acting all reserved & shy she says -

¹⁶ Awake, O north wind, And come, O south! Blow upon my garden, *That its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden And eat its pleasant fruits.*

Up to know she's said what – don't awaken love or stir passion till the right time.

Well- this is it & she's saying, stir up all the passion you can my beloved because I'm ready!

Chapter 5

Then he says -

¹ I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk.

This is their wedding night, right? They've consummated their union & take a break.

He gets up and goes out to the wedding party that's still celebrating & says -

Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!

This was traditional. It was a way to let everyone know that the couple was now fully & completely married.

After this, he'd quickly go back to their room and rejoin his bride.

Now, there's a major scene change between v. 1 & 2.

V. 2 starts a totally new phase of their relationship. Considerable time has passed & a problem has risen.

That problem is that after their honeymoon, Solomon had to go back to work.

And that work meant long hours.

He was busy & occupied with work while her life was spent in waiting for him.

Honestly, as we see how she handles this, she seems a bit immature & unrealistic.

She can't understand why he doesn't just want to hang out with her all day, every day.

The fact that he has to run a kingdom with millions of people in it doesn't seem to register with her.

Here we go. She says -

² I sleep, but my heart is awake;

She's not quite awake or asleep, she's in the Netherlands between the 2.

It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night."

He get home really late. He's been on an important mission that required he be outside until late but now the task is over and he wants in.

Problem is, she's locked the door. So he knocks and calls to her to open.

So, because she wants him so badly, she gets up and opens, right? Not quite.

Being the supremely rational creature she is, she calls from her bed -

³ I have taken off my robe; How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; How can I defile them?

Those are 2 of THE MOST LAME EXCUSES ever devised.

He doesn't want her to put her robe on. Answering the door naked would be just fine by him.

And how dirty can the floor of a palace be?

What she's really saying is, "I'm upset that you got home late! I want to see you earlier and now that you're home so late, I'm going to ***punish*** you."

Ladies - God bless you - but sometimes you do the most irrational things.

And it can be so very frustrating to figure you out.

⁴ My beloved put his hand By the latch of the door, And my heart yearned for him.

He jiggled the handle, but it was locked. A part of her hoped he'd just bust down the door.

But then, what would she do?

Act all indignant that he was violent and didn't respect her privacy?

Or rise and ravish him because he was such a stud that he wasn't going to let a little thing like a palace door stop him?

Honestly, I'll bet that SHE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HOW SHE WOULD ACT until he busted down the door.

Thing is, he's smarter than that. He doesn't break the door to get in. He walks away.

Because that locked door means she's upset with him.

And he knows that if you fight with your wife, you can never win.

Because even if you win the fight, you've lost in the relationship.

So, it's best not to fight.

When she realizes he's left, she gets up, puts on her robe & soils her feet to go open the door.

⁵ I arose to open for my beloved, And my hands dripped with myrrh, My fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the lock.

Now she wants him, desperately!

⁶ I opened for my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. ⁷ The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; The keepers of the walls Took my veil away from me.

It's late at night at the city watchman don't believe the queen would be running around calling out for her husband, so they assume she's drunk or crazy & punish her for disturbing the peace.

When they snatch her veil away, either they realize it really is the queen and are embarrassed, or in shame she runs back to the palace.

She goes for help -

⁸ I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, If you find my beloved, That you tell him I *am* lovesick!

She asks them to help her search for him & if they find him to tell him she's *so* sorry.

They ask -

⁹ What *is* your beloved More than *another* beloved, O fairest among women? What *is* your beloved More than *another* beloved, That you so charge us?

This translation sounds like they're disparaging him, but that's not at all the point.

They're giving her the chance to ***make up for*** the slight she gave him by refusing to open.

So takes that opening & says -

And BTW, there are only a tiny few ancient such poetic descriptions by a woman of a man, and this is one of that very few.

¹⁰ My beloved *is* white and ruddy [really, better = radiant & vigorous], Chief among ten thousand. ¹¹ His head *is like* the finest gold; His locks *are wavy*, And black as a raven. ¹² His eyes *are like* doves

Again, as when he spoke of her eyes, his also are big, dark & sexy.

By the rivers of waters, Washed with milk, And fitly set.

He's fresh. His skin is smooth & his features are perfectly proportioned.

As she makes her way from his head, south. She comes to his cheeks ...

¹³ His cheeks *are like* a bed of spices, Banks of scented herbs.

He smells good.

His lips *are* lilies, Dripping liquid myrrh.

His breath is pleasant. This is a major big deal guys!

Kissing is one of the most important parts of romance and if you breath smells like decaying fungal matter, chances are it's going to quench the amours feelings of your spouse.

So, watch your diet. Brush & floss. Use a breath freshener & go to the dentist.

¹⁴ His hands *are* rods of gold Set with beryl. His body *is* carved ivory Inlaid *with* sapphires. ¹⁵ His legs *are* pillars of marble Set on bases of fine gold. His countenance *is like* Lebanon, Excellent as the cedars.

She's checked him out just as he's done her and she says he's is one solid hunka' hunka' burning love.

¹⁶ His mouth *is* most sweet, Yes, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, And this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!

Not only is his breath pleasant, what comes out of his mouth in the way of words is sweet too.

He's been a good man & husband to her & her behavior in locking him out was totally uncalled for.

She praises him in specific & highly complementary ways.

I'll have more to say on this in the marriage series - but ladies - what she says here about her husband, even though it comes hard on the heels of a spat they've had - is something any & every man ***craves*** to have his wife say about him to her friends.

Her description of him needs to be updated & modernized.

But if a husband knew his wife was talking him UP like this to others, I'll tell you what!

He would do ***whatever he could*** to make it true.

What far too many women do is the exact opposite of what The Shulamite does.

She praises him. They criticize and pick their husband apart.

They're afraid if they praised him he'd get a big head and so get lazy – er!

They think by criticizing him it will provoke him to change, that he'll want to improve himself.

Nope. Because a wife's criticism & put downs only validate the way he **already** sees himself.

When she praises him, it inspires him to **become** what she says she sees in him.