

## Life of King Solomon

### SESSION #7: Song of Solomon 3:1-11

#### TEXT:

v. 1 How I miss the one I love so deeply. I could not wait to see him.

v. 2 I thought to myself, "I must get up and find him. I will get up now and look around the streets and squares of the city for him. Surely I'll be able to find this one I love so much." But I could not find him.

v. 3 When the night watchmen of the city found me, I immediately asked them if they had seen this one I loved so deeply.

v. 4 But they had not. Yet no sooner did I pass from them than I found my beloved. I held on and on and would not let him go until I could bring him to my home. I still held on until my fearful anxieties left me and I felt peaceful once again. How hard it is to be patient!

v. 5 You women of the court, we must promise ourselves, by the gazelles and deer of the field, not to awaken love until love is pleased to awaken itself.

v. 6 What can this be coming from the outskirts of the city like columns of smoke, perfumed clouds of myrrh and frankincense, clouds of the scented powders of the merchant?

v. 7 Look! It is the royal procession with Solomon carried upon his lavish couch by his strongest servants. And take a look at all those soldiers around it! That is the imperial guard, the sixty mightiest warriors in the entire kingdom.

v. 8 Each one is an expert with his weapon and valiant in battle. Yet now each one has a sword at his side only for the protection of the King and his bride.

v. 9 Look at the luxurious couch Solomon is carried on. He has had it made especially for this day. He made its frame from the best timber of Lebanon.

v.10 Its posts are made of silver, its back of gold, and its seat of royal purple cloth. And do you see its delicate craftsmanship! It reflects the skill of the women of the court who gave their best work out of love for the king and his bride.

v.11 Let us all go out and look upon King Solomon wearing his elegant wedding crown. Let us go out and see him on the most joyful day of his life.

## INTRODUCTION:

First we need a little Cowboy poetry to get us in the mood for study:

(Humorous Cowboy Poetry: A Knee-Slappin' Gathering edited by Gibbs  
Smith staff members)

**Howard Parker**  
Gordon, Nebraska

Howard is a full-time cattle rancher who has participated in poetry gatherings in eleven of the western states. His work has been included in *Western Horseman*, *Cowboy Magazine*, and other publications. He won the Nebraska State Rodeo Association saddle bronc championship three times, and says, "While I never made any money at it, I am still proud of the fact." He loves the land he lives on and the people and animals that share it with him.

### **Horse Tradin'**

Well, a horse trader he showed up one day,  
And he sure would wheel and deal,  
For horses, saddles, bridle bits--  
Anything he could buy or steal.

And I started thinking about Ol' Pal  
And wonderin' what he'd bring.  
He was cow-hocked and parrot-mouthed  
And he just turned twelve this spring.

And anything that he could do,  
He couldn't do too well.  
I just happened to have him handy,  
Out in the round corral.

Well, the trader takes a look at him,  
And Lordy, don't ya know,  
He found some other things that's wrong,  
That I didn't think would show.

Well, he'd make me an offer,  
Then he'd take another chew,  
And I'd talk about how dry it was,  
And wondered what the hay would do.

Then finally we struck a deal,  
 Some later in the day.  
 And I've got the money in my hand  
 As I watch him pull away.

Then I got to thinkin'  
 About that ol' horse, ya see;  
 Wonderin' where he'd end up,  
 And who his new owner would be.

'Cuz if ya didn't want to rope him,  
 You better have some oats or corn.  
 And that ol' devil would still bog his head  
 On a cold December morn.

Well, they were gonna have an auction,  
 And it wasn't far away.  
 And I thought that I would drive over,  
 Not doin' much that day.

Well, the trader gave his testimony,  
 With Ol' Pal a-standin' there,  
 How, "he was plumb safe for anybody,  
 And you could catch him anywhere."

Then there was a lot of other things  
 I didn't know that he could do,  
 Like, "rope calves or steers off him,  
 Pick up buckin' horses, too!"

So when the biddin' started,  
 I just got right in the game.  
 And I guess I didn't know when to stop,  
 'Cuz the ringman called my name!

Well, I lost two hundred dollars,  
 But Ol' Pal is mine once more.  
 At least he's four years younger  
 Then he was the time before.

In this SEVENTH EPISODE of the LIFE OF KING SOLOMON we are going to witness his marriage to Shulamith.

Here are few HELPFUL HINTS from a Cowboy's Guide to Romance:

(Just One Fool Thing After Another: A Cowfolks' Guide to Romance by Gladiola Montana & Texas Bix Bender)

"When there are two on a horse, one must ride behind."  
p. 54

"Big problems will pull you together. It's the little things that tear you apart."  
p. 62

"Treat the one you love the same as you'd treat your horse. No one likes to be rode hard and put up wet."  
p. 65

"Don't be surprised if a vision the night before is a sight in the mornin'.  
p. 121

(Rainbows: The Book of Hope edited by George W. Humphreys)

### **No Desertion**

Rastus after being reprimanded by the judge for deserting his wife, made answer thus:-

"Jedge, ef yo' knowed dat woman like ah does yo' wouldn't call me a deserter. Ah's a refugee."  
p. 82

(Sportin' a 'Tude by Patsy Clairmont)

My friend Lana, while shopping at an antique store, picked up an old book on graveyard humor, *Chuckles in the Cemetery*, by William Pellowe. It was full of old quotes from tombstones written by people who knew the deceased and who had left their evaluations of the individuals carved on the headstones for future generations. Whoa, now that's scary! Can you imagine what some people might say about you?

Look at what someone wrote on poor George Hotten's gravestone:

Hotten  
Rotten  
Forgotten

Certainly succinct. Either George didn't make a lot of points with people in this life or his mother-in-law wrote the comments during a gall bladder attack.

Evidently this next inscription was written by someone who lived close enough to Obadiah and Ruth to have experienced the dynamics of their relationship, for that person wrote:

Here lies the body of  
Obadiah Wilkinson and  
Of Ruth his wife.  
"Their warfare is accomplished."

In 1714, Ann Marr, the wife of the parish clerk, passed away, and someone (the clerk perhaps?) had this engraved on her stone:

The children of Israel wanted bread,  
And the Lord he sent them manna  
Old Clark Marr wanted a wife,  
And the devil he sent him Anna.

But then Sarah didn't fare much better;

This stone was raised by Sarah's lord,  
Not Sara's virtues to record,  
For they're well known to all the town,  
But it was raised to keep her down.

I guess Sarah's hubby had wearied of hearing her rehearse her own inner goodness. Well, perchance Anna and Sarah can commiserate one day with this man's wife:

Within this grave do lie,  
Back to back my wife and I;  
When the last trumpet the air shall fill  
If she gets up, I'll lie still.

pp. 152-3

(Getting the Right Things Right by Charlie Hedges)

It's the need to be heard that's often the hardest to meet. In a stirring scene from the first Crocodile Dundee movie, Croc and Linda are standing on a balcony outside a New York hotel. Linda is trying to explain to Croc why she has to leave for a couple of hours. The conversation goes something like this:

Linda: *Sorry Crocodile, I have to leave for a couple of hours.*

*I'm going to see my therapist.*

Croc: *Oh, what's a therapist?*

Linda: *He's someone I talk to once a week for about an hour.*

Croc: *What do you talk about?*

Linda: *I tell him how things have gone during the week, about my joys and fears and frustrations and accomplishments. I pretty much just tell him how I'm feeling.*

*At this point Crocodile Dundee has a very puzzled look on his face as if he can't quite catch what she's saying.*

*Linda notices and says, "Well, all my friends also go to therapists."*

*To which Croc responds so brilliantly in his strong Australian accent, "Don't they have any mates?"*

pp. 191-2

(Mama, Get the Hammer! There's a Fly on Papa's Head! by Barbara Johnson)

THE BEST EXERCISE FOR GOOD RELATIONSHIPS  
IS BENDING OVER BACKWARD.

p. 72

TALKING IS SHARING--LISTENING IS CARING.

p. 76

## PIG OUT

Priest: "When are you going to break down and eat some ham?"  
Rabbi: "At your wedding."

## STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN

Marriage for him is like a railroad sign--when he first met her, he stopped, then he looked, now he listens.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to conceive.  
Don Herold

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

A friend said:

"BURY WE ME AT WAL-MART SO MY WIFE WILL  
COME AND SEE ME."

(No More Excuses: Be the Man God Made You to Be by Tony Evans)

Some men feel like they made a mistake in getting married. They become disenchanted because their wives turn out to be different than what they thought they were. The story is told of a man who fell in love with an opera singer. He heard her sing and was so enchanted by her voice that he was convinced he could live happily ever after with a woman who could sing like that.

The man was so infatuated that he didn't notice she was considerably older than he, and he didn't seem to care that she walked with a limp. After a whirlwind romance and a hurried ceremony, they were off on their honeymoon.

As the man watched his new bride prepare for their first night together, his chin dropped to his chest. She plucked out her glass eye and dropped it into a container on the night stand. She pulled off her wig, revealing a bald head. She rubbed off her false eyelashes and took out her dentures. Then she unstrapped her artificial leg and took out her hearing aid. Stunned, the man hollered out, "Sing, woman, sing!"  
p. 150

Unfortunately, soon after they say, "I do," they don't anymore. Their relationship looks as if they were married by the secretary of war instead of the justice of the peace. They're like Winston Churchill and his nemesis, Lady Astor. One day she said to him, "Sir, if I were your wife, I would put arsenic in your tea."

Churchill replied, "Madam, if I were your husband, I would drink it!"  
pp. 150-51

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

As I reflect back on my life before Martie and with Martie, I see the dramatic difference her presence has made. Life without her was focused primarily on me. It was often random and at times--to many times--irresponsible. But once she became a part of my life, I found that she occupied my thoughts and stretched my horizons. My deepening love for Martie meant that I not only lived with her, but for her. Significant relationships have a way of transforming us.  
p. 86

(The Essential Abraham Lincoln by John Gabriel Hunt)

I am often thinking of what we said about your coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here, which it would be your doom to see without sharing it. You would have to be poor, without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe you could bear that patiently? Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine, should any ever do so, it is my intention to do all in my power to make her happy and contented; and there is nothing I can imagine that would make me more unhappy than to fail in the effort. I know I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no signs of discontent in you. What you have said to me may have been in the way of jest, or I may have misunderstood you. If so, then let it be forgotten; if otherwise, I much wish you would think seriously before you decide. What I have said I will most positively abide by, provided you wish it. My opinion is that you had better not do it. You have not been accustomed to hardship, and it may be more severe than you now imagine. I know you are capable of thinking correctly on any subject, and if you deliberate maturely upon this subject before you decide, then I am willing to abide your decision.

(Abraham Lincoln in his Letter to Mary S. Owens, Springfield, May 7, 1837)  
pp. 18-19

It is going to be our joy on this occasion to turn from the HISTORICAL BOOKS of Kings and Chronicles and study the record of Solomon's marriage to Shulamith.

The RECORD of this marriage is found in Song of Solomon 3:1-11. These are the verses that will come under our scrutiny on this occasion.

C. S. Lewis in his book *The Four Loves* says:

The event of falling in love . . .  
In one high bound it has overleaped  
the massive wall of our selfhood;  
it has made appetite itself altruistic,  
tossed personal happiness  
aside as a triviality and  
planted the interests of another in  
the centre of our being.

(Quoted from Glickman's commentary, p. 27)

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

It is sundown at Camelot. King Arthur walks alone on a terrace of his onstage castle. Spotlights illumine his form as the background dims in the red glow of the day's end. Arthur pauses, perplexed. He looks out upon the audience and then begins to haltingly sing these unforgettable words:

How to handle a woman.  
There's a way, said a wise old man,  
A way known by every woman  
Since the whole rigamarole began.  
Do I flatter her? I begged him answer.  
Do I threaten, cajole or plead?  
Do I brood or play the gay romancer?  
Said he smiling, No indeed.  
How to handle a woman.  
Mark me well. I will tell you sir,  
The way to handle a woman is to love her,  
Simply love her, merely love her, love her, love her.

(Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe)

That may be the theater . . . but a wealth of truth there is in that song! How to handle a woman? Men—King Arthur's answer speaks to us all: love her, simply love her, merely love her . . . tenderly, consistently, prayerfully, sacrificially. Just how to do that is the theme of an entire book of the Old Testament: the Song of Solomon.

p. 71

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

1 Kings 4:32 tells us of Solomon. "He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five (NIV)." Of these thousand and five, the Song of Solomon is the longest included in Scripture. It is what we might label the king's "greatest hit," his biblical "platinum record." As it is sometimes called, it is truly his Song of Songs.  
p. 72

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

One wonders how Solomon could penned such an intensely romantic love story, and then turned around later in his life and had "seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines" (1 Kings 11:3 NIV). The Songs of Songs was probably written before all of that, before Solomon dissipated his potential by surrendering his principles. The Song deals only with the relationship between the king and his first bride, Shulamith. It is the poetic account of the time when he was young and in the raptures of first love, completely smitten with the country girl from Lebanon.  
p. 73

The question that comes before us at the beginning of this study is how did King Solomon meet this little Lebanese farm girl from the north?

Solomon was extremely wealthy. He had extensive real estate holdings. Among these holdings was a vineyard at Baal-Hamon far up in the northern part of Galilee in the foot hills of the mountains of Lebanon.

This real estate holding was leased to this farming family and Shulamith was a part of this family.

When Solomon went north to check out on some of these matters, this beautiful young lady captured his heart. How different she was from the women of the court. How beautiful her person. How simple her lifestyle. How pure she was in every way.

For the purposes of our study I would like to first back away and give you a brief overview of the entire song before we dig into the verses that we are going to be considering in chapter 3:1-11.

I have outlined the song with these FOUR MAJOR SECTIONS:

- I. THE COURTSHIP (1:1-2:17)
- II. THE COMMITMENT (3:1-5:1)
- III. THE CHALLENGE (5:2-6:13)
- IV. THE COMMUNION (7:1-8:14)

The COURTSHIP PHASE of this relationship has had to deal with two very real PROBLEMS that Shulamith brings to this courtship.

- 1. HER SELF-IMAGE--She is just a little farm girl from the north and what is she in comparison to these grand ladies of the palace.
- 2. HER SECURITY in leaving her simple lifestyle in the north to be involved in the complicated and difficult lifestyle of being a wife to the king.

As the courtship phase of their relationship comes to a conclusion in this beautiful song, there are some statements in chapter 2:15, 16 that we would do well to heed.

Let us catch the foxes, the little foxes who ruin vineyards for our vineyards are in blossom. My beloved is mine and I am his, he who pastures his flock among the lilies.

Every young couple in love must make a commitment to deal with the things that can ruin the relationship. I have come up with FIVE FOXES that can do great damage to a budding relationship that has all the potential in the world to be a successful marriage.

These FIVE FOXES are:

1. SLOTH--It is the attitude, I'm tired of serving.
2. SEX--This can be forced prematurely and as a result be distorted and ruined for the marriage bed.
3. SILVER--That is, money really matters in a marriage relationship. There must be a proper adjustment in attitude and agreement on money matters.
4. SELFISHNESS--What am I getting out of this relationship?
5. SATAN--It is his desire to disrupt, discourage, and destroy the marriage relationship.

Chapter 2 records one of Solomon's visits to the north to spend time with his sweetheart. The courtship scene ends with the words of Shulamith

1. feeling secure by saying, "My beloved is mine and I am his" and
2. having a passionate desire for the consummation of the physical.

The king has departed for Jerusalem and the pressing matters of the kingdom that are before him. But he leaves Shulamith with the promise that he will one day return and claim her to be his bride.

This now prepares us for the ELEVEN VERSES that we are going to be considering in Song of Solomon 3, Phase #2 of the song, titled the COMMITMENT (3:1-5:1).

v. 1 How I miss the one I love so deeply, I could not wait to see him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The king returned to Jerusalem, leaving his beloved at her home in the country. The phrase **All night long on my bed** indicates that the experience she was describing took place in a dream. When a person loves another person deeply, it is natural to fear losing him or her. In her dreams she lost her lover and sought to **find him**. The repeated expression **the one my heart loves** (once in each of these four verses) revealed the depth of her love for Solomon.  
p. 1016

Glickman in his commentary says:

Just before the great event of marriage, the bride-to-be of our song has an experience of this sort. The narration of it indicates it may be a dream. But whether dream or not, it illustrates the intensity of her love for her future husband. So deep is her love that the fear of losing him produces great anxiety.  
p. 52

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

As chapter 3 opens, we find Shulamith at home in Lebanon. After weighing the pros and cons of royal life, she has accepted the marriage proposal of Solomon, and he has returned to Jerusalem. There he will attend a business and make arrangements for the upcoming wedding. Meanwhile, she waits.

Being apart from the one you care about is tough any time, but it is especially so during the period of engagement. The questions "Does he love me? Will she say yes?" have already been answered, and all that remains is an excruciating period of waiting for the wedding day.

As we've seen from her last comments in chapter 2, Shulamith's desire for the physical consummation of her relationship with Solomon is building to the boiling point. It's difficult enough to be patient, but now that her beloved has gone back home, her heart aches with anxious longing. She is unbearably lonely, nurtured by thoughts of him, yet missing him terribly. She would like simply to see him again, to touch her lips to his, to hold his hand. It seems as if, in telling him goodbye, she has also bid farewell to a part of herself.  
pp. 109-10

There are FOUR PHRASES in these first four verses that help us to really set the tone of the passage. We read the phrase:

1. "I LOVE SO DEEPLY" (verse 1),
2. "I LOVE SO MUCH" (verse 2),
3. "I LOVED SO DEEPLY" (verse 3), and
4. "MY BELOVED" (verse 4).

The stress that Shulamith is facing is the sorrow of separation and the longing desire to be in the presence of her lover.

This desire to be together never departs from a healthy marriage relationship. Having traveled on the road in ministry for these many years, I find myself coping often each week with the thought of how glorious it is going to be when the week is over and I am once again in the presence of my lover.

v. 2 I thought to myself, “I must get up and find him, I will get up now and look around the streets and squares of the city for him. Surely I’ll be able to find this one I love so much.” But I could not find him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In her dreams she went to a **city** (either a town near her home or Jerusalem) to look **for him**, but she was unsuccessful.  
p. 1016

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

The contents of the following letter probably express the mind and heart of Shulamith as she waits for her lover’s return. The note was written by a young woman whose sweetheart had left to return to his home in a distant city. The letter is addressed to him.

Dear Terry,

You’ve been gone about 3 ½ hours and I guess you know what’s on my mind and heart *now*. I can only trust the Lord to convey to you the way I feel, because I certainly can’t. I can only use words, and there aren’t any in the English language that quite express how awed I am at the love He has shown me. Why did He choose to bless *me* at this time with you and your love? Why am I so fortunate when there are so many deserving? I am really feeling this tonight. He has given you freely to me because he loves me. You know, that’s amazing. I can barely grasp such grace and love. Terry, after you left, I was sort of in a daze for a while and sat outside by myself. Only He kept my emotions under control *while* you were *still* here, because I couldn’t have. I sensed His restraining Spirit then, but *soon* as you left He removed the restraint and let me pour out my heart and emotions to Him. My tears weren’t because I was desperate or lost, but because I really felt like a part of me was missing (Thomas 1979, 38-39).

That message was sent from Nancy Jane Groover to Terry Thomas. This young couple was deeply in love, and their subsequent wedding was a joyous affair. Nancy, a beautiful girl even in blue jeans and sweatshirt, glowed radiantly in her gown of white. The ceremony was all that it should be and could be, and the wedding night left Terry with memories to last a lifetime. They had to last, for that one wonderful, magical night was to be their only one as man and wife. The next day Nancy was killed and Terry severely injured as an oncoming vehicle collided with their compact car on a rainslick freeway.  
pp. 110-11

v. 3 When the night watchmen of the city found me, I immediately asked them if they had seen this one I loved so deeply.

While Shulamith is making her search in the night, she is greeted by someone from the police department wondering why she is roving the streets at night. She asks them if:

“THEY HAD SEEN THIS ONE [THAT SHE] LOVED SO DEEPLY.”

v. 4 But they had not. Yet no sooner did I pass from them that I found my beloved, I held on and on and would not let him go until I could bring him to my home. I still held on until my fearful anxieties left me and I felt peaceful once again. How hard it is to be patient!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

When she **found** him in her dream, she took him **to her mother's house**, the most secure place she knew.

p. 1016

Glickman observes:

When a person is insecure or anxious about someone or something, it is natural to want to go to a place which he associates with security and stability. Therefore, home is a great place to go after a disorienting and hectic trip or a lonely and depressing experience away at college. It is natural in times of anxiety to want to go to a place where one always feels secure, where everything was okay.

Understandably, then, after fearing the loss of her fiancé, and finding him, this young girl takes him to her own home.

p. 53

(Windows of the Soul: Experiencing God in New Ways by Ken Gire)

I remember praying before I left work for God to help me understand. If indeed this was His voice, I didn't want to squelch it. If it wasn't, I didn't want to encourage it. I was driving home with these thoughts when I stopped at a Salvation Army Thrift Store, where I usually stopped once or twice a week, looking for used books. As I looked, my eye caught the spine of a slender book, titled, *A Dream So Real*. I remember thinking, *Odd coincidence*. I pulled the book off the shelf, and it fell open to a picture of a little girl on one page and a poem on the other. The little girl had her leg raised, as if trying to dance. And the poem? "Dream Dancer."

Was this the answer? So soon? Was God meeting me in a thrift store and telling me, yes, it's true, yes, it was me, it was my voice? I bought the book and brought it home, told Judy what I had prayed when I got off the phone, and I read her the poem. Again, she wept. Especially at the stanza which read:

*Step then  
from the staid and somber line.  
Move out in dancing  
into dreams so daring;  
without them you will settle for the road  
that wanders by and winds to nowhere.*

p. 154

## PRAYING TOGETHER

Louis Evans, former pastor of the Hollywood Presbyterian Church, made an amazing statement. He said that he never knew a couple who went ahead with a divorce after first praying together, on their knees, every day, for a week.

Praying together is both a solvent and a glue. It dissolves resentments and bitterness, and binds hearts in new and joyous harmony. Swiss psychiatrist Dr. Paul Tournier writes, "It is only when a husband and wife pray together before God that they find the secret of true harmony: that the difference in their temperaments, their ideas, and their tastes enriches their home instead of endangering it . . .

"When each of the marriage partners seeks quietly before God to see his own faults, recognizes his sin, and asks the forgiveness of the other, marital problems are no more . . . This is the price to be paid if partners very different from each other are to combine their gifts instead of setting them against each other."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Pearl and I at this stage of the game in our lives find ourselves often awake in the middle of the night. How precious are these times for us to feel that we have been awakened by our loving Father to intercede in the behalf of our children and those things which concern us. How precious it is to come to those moments of peace and rest and to commit ourselves into the loving arms of the one who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

(The Seeking Heart by Fenelon)

Encourage peace. Become deaf to your overactive imagination. Your spinning imagination will harm your health and make your spiritual life very dry. You worry yourself sick for no good reason. Inner peace, and the sweet presence of God, are chased away by restlessness. How can you hear God speak, in His soft and tender way, when your hurried thoughts create a whirlwind within? Be quiet, and He will soon be heard. Allow yourself one excess: to be excessively obedient.  
p. 35

Isaiah 26:3, 4

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.

Isaiah 32:17

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

The confession of Shulamith is the confession of all of us. How hard it is to be patient.

Psalms 27:13, 14

I am still confident of this:  
I will see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.  
Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalms 28:7

The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.  
My heart leaps for joy  
and I will give thanks to him in song.

Psalms 29:11

The Lord gives strength to his people;  
the Lord blesses his people with peace.

Hebrews 10:36, 37

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

v. 5 You women of the court, we must promise ourselves, by the gazelles and deer of the field, not to awaken love until love is pleased to awaken itself.

This is the **THIRD TIME** we have had the little word “UNTIL” in verses 4 and 5:

1. “I held on and on and would not let him go until I could bring him to my home” (verse 4),
2. “I still held on until my fearful anxieties left me and I felt peaceful once again” (verse 4),

And now as Shulemeth speaks to the women of the court, she says:

1. “WE MUST PROMISE OURSELVES, . . . NOT TO AWAKEN LOVE UNTIL LOVE IS PLEASED TO AWAKEN ITSELF.”

In the face of all the desires and the devotion, there must be a discipline that will exercise restraint “UNTIL LOVE IS PLEASED TO AWAKEN ITSELF.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This refrain marks the end of the section on the courtship (1:2-3:5) and the beginning of the wedding section (3:6-5:1). Perhaps the wedding was to be seen as a reward for patience on the beloved's part.  
p. 1016

As you will remember in my earlier exposition, I concluded the courtship phase at the end of chapter 2 but this certainly does not preclude the thought that courtship concludes at the wedding ceremony.

## MAKING COMMITMENT WORK

Successful marriages are not held together solely by the iron of commitment. They get their strength from the alloy of commitment plus caring.

Author Lewis Smedes, in his book *Commitment and Caring*, describes a couple about as opposite as two people can be: "He is spiritual; she is earthly. He is detached; she loves to be intimate with people. He is dependent; she could manage almost anything by herself. He is always careful; she likes to take risks. He hates conflict; she dares take on any."

This husband and wife, however, have developed a deep and satisfying relationship because they have given each other permission to be themselves. Smedes sums it up, "These two people have turned commitment into joy, mostly because they have gradually learned how to set each other free."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Glickman observes:

Hence the next words of this bride-to-be are words of advice to be patient. "I adjure you by the gazelles or the hinds of the field not to arouse, not to awaken love until it pleases." One should not force the development of love. One should not try to awaken love until love pleases. Trying to force love to develop would be like trying to force a flower to blossom—it could only tear the petals. But when a flower blossoms naturally, it is very beautiful. Thus it is with love. So this was very timely advice for the girl herself. She was already to the point where she wanted to marry this man and give herself to him. Yet, she realized that she could not force the relationship to develop faster than its natural course would take. Love would awaken and progress when it pleased. She could not force it awaken. So after experiencing the most intense longing of her courtship she gives sound advice to be patient.

p. 44

Glickman says further:

But after she comes to rest and realizes that all is well, she very wisely gives counsel to others and herself to be patient. She repeats the very same advice she previously gave when her own longing and the courtship had itself reached new peaks. "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field not to arouse, to awaken love until it pleases." In other words, let the flower blossom in its proper season.  
p. 54

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

I image Shulamith then awakens, breathless. Her pounding heart slows as she sighs in relief and release from the tension. "Thank you, Lord, that it was only a dream," she possibly whispers. Soon her nights will be spent in the arms of her lover. Soon Solomon, as was the custom of their culture, will lead the wedding procession to her town, and take her with him to their new home.  
p. 113

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

Falling in love is easy; growing in love must be worked at with determination as well as imagination.

—Lesley Barfoot

p. 123

Henry Ford was asked on the occasion of his fiftieth wedding anniversary, "What is the formula for a good marriage?" He replied, "The same as for a successful car; stick to one model."  
p. 124

(The Pleasures of God by John Piper)

These lines are as true today as when I wrote them on our twentieth anniversary:

Although the fig tree blossom not,  
And all the vines of our small plot  
Be barren, and the olive fail,  
The sheep grow weak and heifers frail,  
We will rejoice in God, my love,  
And take our pleasures from above:  
The Lord, our God, shall be our strength  
And give us life, whatever length  
On earth he please, and make our feet  
Like mountain deer, to rise and cleat  
The narrow path for man and wife  
That rises steep and leads to life.

p. 10

(The Tribute by Dennis Rainey with David Boehl)

Soon after Gwen Cantwell of Sharon, Wisconsin, gave her parents a Tribute, her mother nearly died of an illness.

"It was a very trying time emotionally and physically. I felt I needed to put feelings into words, so I wrote a piece for my dad on how he must have felt while my mom was in intensive care. My dad was very moved by it."

He held her hand, not knowing what to say besides, "I love you." She squeezed his hand in reply, "I love you, too." It started as a simple procedure, but then everything was falling apart. The doctors didn't understand, but they kept a silent watch at her bedside.

He remembered years ago making a promise to her--in sickness and health, until death do we part. Was this their parting time come so soon? She was the Lord's, but she was also his life. It seemed like only yesterday she was his young bride, and life was just beginning. Through the years they had become so used to each other. He gave it all to God--the pain, the fear--and God gave His comfort. God said, "Not yet, My child, you do not have to walk alone. I am not ready to take either of you home with Me yet. When that time comes--if it comes--you will be there for each other, holding each other's hands and loving each other until death do you part, and I will embrace you and hold your hand to welcome you home--My beloved child."

p. 261

Patience and purity are the cry from the heart of Shulamith on the eve of this glorious occasion of her wedding to Solomon.

v. 6 What can this be coming from the outskirts of the city like columns of smoke, perfumed clouds of myrrh and frankincense, clouds of the scented powders of the merchant?

Verse 6 is a QUESTION.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The author spoke as a narrator in this verse, as if he were a spectator watching the approaching wedding procession, which was elaborate. What at first appeared in the distance to be a great **column of smoke** was actually **incense** ("frankincense") burning in front of the procession. The fact that the incense was **made from all the spices of the merchant** emphasizes the costly nature of this display. The **myrrh** added another fragrance to the procession.

The pomp and beauty of this procession were wholly appropriate in light of the event's significance. The Scriptures teach that marriage is one of the most important events in a person's life. Therefore it is fitting that the union of a couple be commemorated in a special way.

p. 1017

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further:

Marriages in the ancient Near East were usually sanctioned through civil contracts rather than through religious ceremonies . . .

A central feature of a wedding ceremony was a procession to the bride's home led by the groom, who then escorted her back to their new residence. Next a wedding feast was given which lasted up to a week or even longer. Though the feast was prolonged the couple consummated their marriage on the first night. The wedding feast is not described in the Song of Songs but both the wedding procession (3:6-11) and the wedding night (4:1-5:1) are presented in some detail.

pp. 1016-17

Jesus uses a similar scene in:

Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. "And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

O joy! O delight should we go without dying, no sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying, caught up thru the clouds with our Lord into glory, when Jesus receives His own.

**Chorus:** O Lord Jesus, how long, how long ere we shout the glad song--  
Christ returneth! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen, Hallelujah! Amen.

p. 387

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The current practice of couples casually living together apart from the bonds of marriage demonstrates how unfashionable genuine commitment to another person has become in contemporary society. This violates the sanctity of marriage and is contrary to God's standards of purity.  
p. 1017

I am sure there is a thorn in Bathsheba's heart as she witnesses what she and David missed because of their relationship and how it all came about.

What a tragic loss is ours when we settle for something short of the Lord's will for our lives.

v. 7 Look! It is the royal procession with Solomon carried upon his lavish couch by his strongest servants. And take a look at all those soldiers around it! That is the imperial guard, the sixty mightiest warriors in the entire kingdom.

As an eyewitness the writer is describing in graphic detail what is taking place on this glorious occasion as Solomon arrives in this little Lebanese town to claim his bride Shulamith and carry her back to Jerusalem.

The first thing that is spoken of is the “ROYAL PROCESSION WITH SOLOMON.” He is being “CARRIED UPON HIS LAVISH COUCH BY HIS STRONGEST SERVANTS.”

The reporter then continues by saying:

“TAKE A LOOK AT ALL THOSE SOLDIERS AROUND IT!”

He then describes this group:

“[THEY ARE] THE IMPERIAL GUARD, THE SIXTY MIGHTIEST WARRIORS IN THE ENTIRE KINGDOM.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The 60 warriors who accompanied **Solomon’s carriage** (cf. v. 9) were friends of the groom. It was common for a groom’s friends to go with him in the wedding procession. But they were also **the noblest** and most **experienced** soldiers in **Israel**, probably Solomon’s royal bodyguard. David had a bodyguard (2 Sam. 23:23) and so possibly did Solomon. Since the caravan may have had to travel some distance (“ . . . coming up from the desert”), . . . the king was taking no chances with the safety of his bride. If bandits would appear at **night** and terrorize the bride, the soldiers were ready for them. [The contemporary application of this preparation] the would-be husband . . . should give proper thought and planning to protect his bride. One form this takes is providing economic security for her.  
p. 1017

v. 8 Each one is an expert with his weapon and valiant in battle. Yet now each one has a sword at his side only for the protection of the King and his bride.

These “sixty mightiest warriors” of the imperial guard are described in TWO WAYS:

1. “EACH ONE IS AN EXPERT WITH HIS WEAPON,” and
2. he has a history of being “VALIANT IN BATTLE.”

On this occasion, however,

“EACH ONE HAS A SWORD AT HIS SIDE ONLY.”

The REASON is:

“FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE KING AND HIS BRIDE.”

Glickman says:

This is a full-dress military wedding and all the king’s best soldiers are in their finest uniforms. This picture really emphasizes the strength and importance of the king, his ability to protect and provide for his bride.  
p. 56

v. 9 Look at the luxurious couch Solomon is carried on. He has had it made especially for this day. He made its frame from the best timber of Lebanon.

This is the THIRD TIME we have the word “LOOK” used by the reporter.

His first focus in verse 7 was upon the ROYAL PROCESSION.

His second look in verse 7 was at the SOLDIERS or the imperial guard.

And now his third look is at the LUXURIOUS COUCH that Solomon is carried upon.

In verse 9 and in verse 10 he goes into specific detail about this marriage carriage that has been especially prepared for this day. He talks about:

“ITS FRAME,”

“IT’S POST,”

“IT’S BACK,” and

“IT’S SEAT” in these verses.

Solomon not only anticipated the need for protection on the part of his bride, but he also recognized the need to do something very special that would make a statement to her of his love for her. His big surprise is a marriage carriage. He has had it made especially for this day.

First, the reporter focuses on “ITS FRAME”:

“HE MADE ITS FRAME FROM THE BEST TIMBER OF LEBANON.”

I think it is very important to recognize Shulamith’s need for an assurance of Solomon’s commitment. He goes to the trouble to get timber from her homeland and with this timber he then has the frame for the carriage built.

v. 10 Its posts are made of silver, its back of gold, and its seat of royal purple cloth. And do you see its delicate craftsmanship! It reflects the skill of the woman of the court who gave their best work out of love for the king and his bride.

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Life

of King Solomon

SESSION #7: Song of Solomon 3:1-11

TEXT: v. 1 How I miss the one I love so deeply. I could not wait to see him. v. 2 I thought to myself, "I must get up and find him. I will get up now and look around the streets and squares of the city for him. Surely I'll be able to find this one I love so much." But I could not find him. v. 3 When the night watchmen of the city found me, I immediately asked them if they had seen this one I loved so deeply. v. 4 But they had not. Yet no sooner did I pass from them than I found my beloved. I held on and on and would not let him go until I could bring him to my home. I still held on until my fearful anxieties left me and I felt peaceful once again. How hard it is to be patient! v. 5 You women of the court, we must promise ourselves, by the gazelles and deer of the field, not to awaken love until love is pleased to awaken itself. v. 6 What can this be coming from the outskirts of the city like columns of smoke, perfumed clouds of myrrh and frankincense, clouds of the scented powders of the merchant? v. 7 Look! It is the royal procession with Solomon carried upon his lavish couch by his strongest servants. And take a look at all those soldiers around it! That is the imperial guard, the sixty mightiest warriors in the entire kingdom. v. 8 Each one is an expert with his weapon and valiant in battle. Yet now each one has a sword at his side only for the protection of the King and his bride. v. 9 Look at the luxurious couch Solomon is carried on. He has had it made especially for this day. He made its frame from the best timber of Lebanon. v. 10 Its posts are made of silver, its back of gold, and its seat of royal purple cloth. And do you see its delicate craftsmanship! It reflects the skill of the women of the court who gave their best work out of love for the king and his bride. v. 11 Let us all go out and look upon King Solomon wearing his elegant wedding crown. Let us go out and see him on the most joyful day of his life.

INTRODUCTION: First we need a little Cowboy poetry to get us in the mood for study: (Humorous Cowboy Poetry: A Knee-Slappin' Gathering edited by Gibbs Smith staff members) Howard Parker Gordon, Nebraska Howard is a full-time cattle rancher who has participated in poetry gatherings in eleven of the western states. His work has been included in Western Horseman, Cowboy Magazine, and other publications. He won the Nebraska State Rodeo Association saddle bronc championship three times, and says, "While I never made any money at it, I am still proud of the fact." He loves the land he lives on and the people and animals that share it with him. Horse Tradin' Well, a horse trader he showed up one day, And he sure would wheel and deal, For horses, saddles, bridle bits--Anything he could buy or steal. And I started thinking about Ol' Pal And wonderin' what he'd bring. He was cow-hocked and parrot-mouthed And he just turned twelve this spring. And anything that he could do, He couldn't do too well. I just happened to have him handy, Out in the round corral. Well, the trader takes a look at him, And Lordy, don't ya know, He found some other things that's wrong, That I didn't think would show. Well, he'd make me an offer, Then he'd take another chew, And I'd talk about how dry it waa **crown his mother** (Bathsheba, 1 Kings 2:13) gave **him**; it probably depicted happiness more than royalty. p. 1017

Secondly, "LET US GO OUT AND SEE HIM ON THE MOST JOYFUL DAY OF HIS LIFE."

We need to remember:

Psalm 37:3, 4

Trust in the Lord and do good;  
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.  
Delight yourself in the Lord  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

This is “THE MOST JOYFUL DAY OF HIS LIFE” because of some EARLIER STATEMENTS:

“How hard it is to be patient!” (verse 4) and

“We must promise ourselves, by the gazelles and deer of the field, not to awake love until love is pleased to awaken itself” (verse 5).

### Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

There is a note of IRONY in this LAST STATEMENT in verse 11:

“THE MOST JOYFUL DAY OF HIS LIFE.”

Yes, this is purely the most joyful day of his life because things are going to begin to go downhill from here.

Marriage can proceed from the:

GRAND to the

GRIND to the

GROAN to the

GROWTH.

But often times in our culture it moves from the:

GRAND to the

GRIND to the

GROAN to the

GO!

Successful marriages involve a FOUR-LETTER WORD and it is not:

L-O-V-E

but

W-O-R-K.

It is not long after the marriage ceremony that those initial conflicts of growth appear. One writer has put it this way:

Softly fell the raindrops from the roses. Gently fell the teardrops from her cheeks.  
(Source?)

The KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE is to be able to maintain the joy of the wedding day throughout the years of marriage together.

In order to do that, everyone who enters into marriage must realize it takes a:

1. SOLDIER to fight the culture,
2. STUDENT to understand the needs of one's mate,
3. STATESMAN to make the right decisions in crucial situation, and
4. SERVANT who will sacrificial give of himself to the one that he loves.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . marriages are crumbling because of the lack of love, commitment, and devotion. . . .  
p. 1010

The words of Shulamith in the FINAL CHAPTER of this song help us understand what is involved in a commitment that lasts a lifetime.

Song of Solomon 8:6, 7

Put me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. For strong as death is love. Relentless as Sheol is jealousy. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the flame of Yahweh. Many waters cannot extinguish this love and the rivers will not drown it. If a man were to give all the possessions of his house for love, he would be utterly despised.

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

Shulamith continues her reflections on love by making this request of her man, “Put me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm (8:6).” Her desire is to be Solomon’s permanent possession, his eternal lover. She wants to be assured of his affection, sealed in him forever. And it is God’s plan that their love would endure.

Why? As Shulamith says next, “For strong as death is love. Relentless as Sheol is jealousy. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the flame of Yahweh” (8:6). Love possesses with a supernatural strength. It seals two lovers together even as the grave seals its dead. It is jealous, but with the healthy jealousy of rightful ownership: two who truly love each other also truly belong to each other. Love’s jealous flashes of fire come from Yahweh, the Lord Himself, for He is the giver of love.

Love is designed by God to be strong. In Shulamith’s words, “Many waters cannot [quench] this love and rivers will not drown it”(8:7). She is saying that their love will never be quenched; it will never surrender; it will never desert; it will never depart. It is the essence of commitment, as they have pledged themselves to each other and saved themselves for each other.

p. 179

You could say of this love that is described in this final chapter of the song, It is:

PAINFUL,

POSSESSIVE,

PERSEVERING, and

PRICELESS

(A 3rd Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 More Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit compiled by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)

### A Trucker's Last Letter

Steamboat Mountain is a man-killer, and truckers who haul the Alaska Highway treat it with respect, particularly in the winter. The road curves and twists over the mountain and sheer cliffs drop away sharply from the icy road. Countless trucks and truckers have been lost there and many more will follow their last tracks.

On one trip up the highway, I came upon the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and several wreckers winching the remains of a semi up the steep cliff. I parked my rig and went over to the quiet group of truckers who were watching the wreckage slowly come into sight.

One of the Mounties walked over to us and spoke quietly.

"I'm sorry," he said, "the driver was dead when we found him. He must have gone over the side two days ago when we had a bad snowstorm. There weren't many tracks. It was just a fluke that we noticed the sun shining off some chrome."

He shook his head slowly and reached into his parka pocket.

"Here, maybe you guys should read this. I guess he lived for a couple of hours until the cold got to him."

I'd never seen tears in a cop's eyes before—I always figured they'd seen so much death and despair they were immune to it, but he wiped tears away as he handed me the letter. As I read it, I began to weep. Each driver silently read the words, then quietly walked back to his rig. The words were burned into my memory and now, years later, that letter is still as vivid as if I were holding it before me. I want to share that letter with you and your families.

December, 1974

My Darling Wife,

This is a letter that no man ever wants to write, but I'm lucky enough to have some time to say what I've forgotten to say so many times. I love you, sweetheart.

You used to kid me that I loved the truck more than you because I spent more time with her. I do love this piece of iron—she's been good to me. She's seen me through tough times and tough places. I could always count on her in a long haul and she was speedy in the stretches. She never let me down.

But you want to know something? I love you for the same reasons. You've seen me through the tough times and places, too.

Remember the first truck? That run down 'ol' cornbinder' that kept us broke all the time but always made just enough money to keep us eating? You went out and got a job so that we could pay the rent and the bills. Every cent I made went into the truck while your money kept us in food with a roof over our heads.

I remember that I complained about the truck, but I don't remember you ever complaining when you came home tired from work and I asked you for money to go on the road again. If you did complain, I guess I didn't hear you. I was too wrapped up with my problems to think of yours.

I think now of all the things you gave up for me. The clothes, the holidays, the parties, the friends. You never complained and somehow I never remembered to thank you for being you.

When I sat having coffee with the boys, I always talked about my truck, my rig, my payments. I guess I forgot you were my partner even if you weren't in the cab with me. It was your sacrifices and determination as much as mine that finally got the new truck.

I was so proud of that truck I was bursting. I was proud of you too, but I never told you that. I took it for granted you knew, but if I had spent as much time talking with you as I did polishing chrome, perhaps I would have.

In all the years I've pounded the pavement, I always knew your prayers rode with me. But this time they weren't enough.

I'm hurt and it's bad. I've made my last mile and I want to say the things that should have been said so many times before. The things that were forgotten because I was too concerned about the truck and the job.

I'm thinking about the missed anniversaries and birthdays. The school plays and hockey games that you went to alone because I was on the road.

I'm thinking about the lonely nights you spent alone, wondering where I was and how things were going. I'm thinking of all the times I thought of calling you just to say hello and somehow didn't get around to. I'm thinking of the peace of mind I had knowing that you were at home with the kids, waiting for me.

The family dinners where you spent all your time telling your folks why I couldn't make it. I was busy changing oil; I was busy looking for parts; I was sleeping because I was leaving early the next morning. There was always a reason, but somehow they don't seem very important to me right now.

When we were married, you didn't know how to change a light bulb. Within a couple of years, you were fixing the furnace during a blizzard while I was waiting for a load in Florida. You became a pretty good mechanic, helping me with repairs, and I was mighty proud of you when you jumped into the cab and backed up over the rose bushes.

I was proud of you when I pulled into the yard and saw you sleeping in the car waiting for me. Whether it was two in the morning or two in the afternoon you always looked like a movie star to me. You're beautiful, you know. I guess I haven't told you that lately, but you are.

I made lots of mistakes in my life, but if I only ever made one good decision, it was when I asked you to marry me. You never could understand what it was that kept me trucking. I couldn't either, but it was my way of life and you stuck with me. Good times, bad times, you were always there. I love you, sweetheart, and I love the kids.

My body hurts but my heart hurts even more. You won't be there when I end this trip. For the first time since we've been together, I'm really alone and it scares me. I need you so badly, and I know it's too late.

It's funny I guess, but what I have now is the truck. This damned truck that ruled our lives for so long. This twisted hunk of steel that I lived in and with for so many years. But it can't return my love. Only you can do that.

You're a thousand miles away but I feel you here with me. I can see your face and feel your love and I'm scared to make the final run alone.

Tell the kids that I love them very much and don't let the boys drive any truck for a living.

I guess that's about it, honey. My God, but I love you very much. Take care of yourself and always remember that I loved you more than anything in life. I just forgot to tell you.

I love you,  
Bill

Rud Kendall  
Submitted by Valerie Teshima

## CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Painful partings and the deep desire to be together is an indication of the growth of love in a relationship.

LESSON #2: Solomon is sensitive to the needs of his bride. He builds her self-image and sense of security. He makes her feel valuable and loved and important.

LESSON #3: Patience and purity are the two major ingredients of a growing relationship.

LESSON #4: We must promise ourselves “not to awaken love until love is pleased to awaken itself.”

LESSON #5: A good marriage involves the grand, the grind, the groan, and the growth.

LESSON #6: A good marriage partner must be a soldier, a student, a statesman, and a servant.

LESSON #7: Solomon offered his bride the best he had and his love for her brought out the best in him.

LESSON #8: A common commitment must be made on the part of each partner to catch the foxes of sloth, sex, silver, selfishness, and Satan in order for a marriage to accomplish its goals.

LESSON #9: Marital love is painful, possessive, persevering, and priceless.

LESSON #10: God’s desire for each marriage is that it might be the most joyful day of your life.

J. Vernon McGee says:

This last part of the chapter is a little gem in itself. It depicts the return of the king for his bride, this little Shulammite girl had waited a long time for the return of the shepherd to whom she had given her heart. One day she is out in the vineyard working, down the road there comes a pillar of smoke and the cry is passed along from one group of pheasants to another, "Behold, King Solomon is coming." But she has work to do. Then someone comes to her excitedly, "Oh, King Solomon is asking for you." Mystified she says, "Asking for me? I don't know King Solomon." But when she is brought into his presence she recognizes that he is her shepherd lover who has come for her. He places her at his side in the royal chariot and their procession sweeps on, leaving the amazed country folks speechless at the sudden change in the position of her who had been just one of themselves.

How beautifully this pictures the glorious reality of the return of Christ, our beloved. "When He comes for His own, for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. But the voice of the Ark Angel with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

p. ?

(No More Excuses: Be the Man God Made You to Be by Tony Evans)

One reason many of our wives are so unfulfilled, so emotionally dry and withered instead of flourishing, is because the "thermostat" is set so low in the home. When it comes to your home, my brother, you are the thermostat. You determine the emotional and spiritual temperature in the house.

Don't expect to have nice grapes if the thermostat is turned down low. Don't expect the juice to flow if it's cold inside. Don't expect exuberant sexual response from your wife if the temperature isn't set right. Don't expect a warm, summer woman if you're providing winter temperature.

What we do determines what our wives become. You don't find the right wife, you develop the right wife. One way you do that is by serving her. Jesus said, "The greatest among you will be your servant." (Matthew 23:11) So as the leader, you should be doing more for your wife than your wife is doing for you.

p. 260

(Stories for the Heart by Alice Gray)

## *The Wall*

*Author unknown*

Their wedding picture mocked them from the  
table, these two whose minds no longer touched each other.

They lived with such a heavy barricade between them  
that neither battering ram of words  
nor artilleries of touch could break it down.

Somewhere, between the oldest child's first tooth  
and the youngest daughter's graduation,  
they lost each other.

Throughout the years each slowly unraveled  
that tangled ball of string called self,  
and as they tugged at stubborn knots,  
each hid his searching from the other.

Sometimes she cried at night and begged  
the whispering darkness to tell her who she was.  
He lay beside her, snoring like a hibernating bear,  
unaware of her winter.

Once, after they had made love,  
he wanted to tell her how afraid he was of dying,  
but, fearful to show his naked soul,  
he spoke instead of the beauty of her breasts.

She took a course on modern art,  
trying to find herself in colors splashed upon  
a canvas, complaining to the other women about men  
who are insensitive.

He climbed into a tomb called "The Office,"  
wrapped his mind in a shroud of paper figures,  
and buried himself in customers.

Slowly, the wall between them rose, cemented by the mortar of indifference.

One day, reaching out to touch each other, they found a barrier they could not penetrate,  
and recoiling from the coldness of the stone,  
each retreated from the stranger on the other side.

For when love dies, it is not in a moment of  
angry battle, not when fiery bodies lose their heat. It lies panting, exhausted  
expiring at the bottom of a wall it could not scale.  
pp. 166-67

(Marriage 911 by Becky Freeman)

A song by Michael Martin Murphy filled the air. I'd always loved the melody,  
but this time the words held even greater impact.

"Right in their hands is a dying romance  
and they're not even trying to keep it alive.  
What's the glory of living?  
Doesn't anybody ever stay together anymore?  
And if nothing ever lasts forever--tell me,  
What's forever for?"<sup>1</sup>

1. Rafe VanHoy, "What's Forever For?" © 1978 Sony Tree Publishing Co., Inc.; all rights administered by Sony Music Publishing, 8 Music Square West, Nashville, TN 37203; all rights reserved and used by permission.  
p. 44

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

We certainly had a long way to go! We were so much like the young lovers  
pictures in Ruth Harms Calkin's poem, "Help Lord!"

On our beautiful sunlit wedding day  
I said "I do" with all the devotion  
Of my ecstatic heart.  
If I had known that day  
All that I know now  
I would have said "I do"  
Just as eagerly, just as joyfully.  
But I would have added  
One quick secret plea: "Help, Lord!"

pp. 20-21

(Song of Solomon: Make Full My Joy)

Sheldon "Van" Vanauken and his wife Davy well understood such dangers as those represented by the little foxes. In the earliest dawning of their radiant love, they raised what they called the "Shining Barrier" to protect it. The Shining Barrier—a shield guarding their affection—was created to stand against all selfishness and separateness. As Vanauken writes in *A Severe Mercy*, the story of his life with Davy:

We raise the Shining Barrier against creeping separateness, which was, in the last analysis, self. We also raised it against a world of indecencies and decaying standards, the decline of courtesy, the whispering mockers of love. We would have our own standards. And, above all, we would be *us*-centred not self-centred (Vanauken 1981, 29).

The decision to be *us*-centered rather than self-centered is one which all lovers should make early on in their relationship. It is a method of trapping the little foxes which might attempt to wreak havoc. The Vanauken's Shining Barrier held firm in their years together. Only Davy's untimely and tragic death would separate the couple—in this world, at least. Eventually they will be together again in eternity for both Van and Davy were privileged to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

In a poignantly beautifully poem, the Vanaukens capture the essence of their definition of love and commitment.

This present glory, love, once-given grace,  
The sum of blessing in a sure embrace,  
Must not in creeping separateness decline  
But be the centre of our whole design.

We know it's love that keeps a love secure,  
And only by love of love can love endure,  
For self's a killer, reckless of the cost,  
And loves a liltime unloved or lost.

We build our altar, then, to love and keep  
The holy flame alight and never sleep:  
This darling love shall deepen year by year,  
And dearer shall we grow who are so dear.

The magic word is *sharing*: every stream  
Of beauty, every faith and grief and dream;  
Go hand in hand in gay companionship—  
And sober death no sundering of the grip.

And into love all other loveliness  
That we can tease from time we shall impress:  
Slow dawns and lilacs, tracteries of the trees,  
The spring and poems, stars and ancient seas.

The splendour is upon us, high and pure  
As heaven: and we swear it shall endure:  
Swear fortitude for pain and faith for tears  
To hold our shining barrier down the years.

(Vanauken 1981, 47-48)

pp. 100-01

(31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew by Ruth Myers)

Thank You, Lord, for each specific strong point and admirable quality in my life partner.\* Thank You for bringing us together, and for the way Your love sweetens our earthly love! I bless You, Lord, for the many benefits You have given me through this dear one.

Here are some special reasons I want to thank You for this relationship:

Yet, Lord, I praise You that You far surpass even the best person in my life. You are distinguished above all, "the most winsome of all beings" (Tozer). You are my share in life, my reward, my inheritance.

Who can compare with You? You are my perfect Life Partner, my dearest, most-delightful Loved One, my always-present Companion. You are the strength of my life, and my portion forever. Only my relationship with You is sure to be lifelong and more, with never a goodbye!

Thank You that "You are so vastly wonderful, so utterly and completely delightful, that You can meet and overflow the deepest demands of my total nature, mysterious and deep as that nature is" (Tozer).

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.

Psalm 73:25

\* If you are married, make your partner the topic of your praise. If you are not married, choose another person who is close to you: a family member, roommate, or friend. Give thanks for that person's good qualities--even if right now you find it difficult to focus on those good points.

pp. 90-91