

Song of Songs Chapter 6 -- John Karmelich

1. Ever wonder if there is a “biblical way” to restoring a broken relationship?
 - a) In a way, this chapter is about the healing process of a broken relationship.
 - b) The situation can be as serious as the verge-of-divorce, or it can be as simple as making up after an argument. Either way, restoration is needed.
 - i) The lessons in this chapter can apply to:
 - a) Your relationship with your spouse;
 - b) Your relationship with a family member or friend;
 - c) Your relationship with God
 - ii) Sometimes it doesn’t even take an argument to cause separation within a relationship. Sometimes just separation or complacency causes that strain, as you are no longer working on that relationship.
 - a) We talked about this last lesson (Chapter 5), which was the danger of complacency.
 - b) Chapter 5 focuses on the bride procrastinating in her relationship with the one she loves. She spends the rest of the chapter trying to make up for her mistake. It ends beautifully as she stirs up that relationship by describing her love for her man.
 - iii) That theme continues in Chapter 6. The focus changes from “how” to “where”.
 - a) One of the interesting comparisons of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 is to compare what the “choir” of this play is asking. (Remember Song of Songs is a musical poem.) Most of your study bibles title these verses “The Daughters of Jerusalem”. Notice the comparison of these two verses:
 - (1) How is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your beloved better than others, that you charge us so? (Song of Songs 5:9, NIV)
 - (2) Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your lover turn, that we may look for him with you? (Song of Songs 6:1, NIV)
 - (3) Remember in Chapter 5 the bride “charged” the Daughters of Jerusalem to help her find her man.
 - (a) They responded with the “how” question in Chapter 5.
 - (b) The bride gave her answer over the rest of the chapter.
 - (c) Now Chapter 6 opens with the Daughters of Jerusalem asking a “where is he?” question.
 - (i) The next two verses is her response to that question.
 - (ii) The groom then chimes in. The dialogue in this chapter is about relationship restoration.
 2. There are only 13 verses in Chapter 6. This gives me room to deviate a little from Song of Songs. Believe it or not, I want to talk about the Book of Revelation. (Bet you didn’t see that coming! ☺)
 - a) When most people think of the Book of Revelation they think about all the weird stuff, the doom-and-destruction that takes place over most of the book. (Chapters 4-18).
 - b) What people forget is that the most important chapters in Revelation (in my humble opinion ☺) are Chapters 2 and 3.
 - i) These two chapters are seven letters written by Jesus himself.
 - ii) They are best thought of as “report cards”.
 - c) Each letter is written to a specific church in Asia Minor.

- d) Each letter gives what that church is doing right and wrong, and then give some further instructions for that church.
- e) None of the letters are written to the major churches of that day (e.g., Jerusalem, Rome, or Paul's home base of Antioch). The point is that the letters are not just to those specific churches, but there are applications for all of us as individuals as well as our home church. One can read those seven report cards and see how it applies to the church we attend on Sundays.
- f) The first of those seven report cards actually ties in very well to Song of Songs, Chapter 6.
 - i) This is the letter to the church in Ephesus. It is in Revelation, Chap. 2, Verses 1-7.
 - ii) To paraphrase verses 3-5, Jesus is saying in effect, "I am familiar with your church, you work very hard at keeping the church going, and well, you work hard. The only problem is forgot about me!"
 - a) It is as if Jesus is saying, "Hey guys, you get an "A" for effort, but an "F" for the thing that is the most important!"
 - (1) Jesus doesn't threaten to take away their salvation for this problem, only to take away their church unless they collectively repent.
 - b) The actual quote by Jesus is, "That you have left your first love" (Revelation 2:5b, NKJV).
 - c) I heard a quote that ties into this idea. It says, "You were so busy being in service to the king, you have forgotten about the king".
 - d) So how does a Christian "forget his or her first love?" Here are some examples:
 - (1) You are so busy working on church functions you begin to lack in time in prayer and devotional time.
 - (2) You are so busy taking care of your family (a function God calls us to do!) that again, you give up time alone with God.
 - (3) You are busy with work supporting your family or you are busy working on plans for your husband, or some charity event. All of those are good things. The problem is we do them at the expense of time with God.
 - (4) That is what Revelation Chapter 2 is warning against. It is about having great effort, but at the price of ignoring the relationship our relationship with God.
 - (5) One can apply this to our family life or our martial life as well. We can be so busy doing things for our spouse or for our family that we forget to spend time with that person(s).
 - iii) I heard an analogy of Christian love that I liked. We are like moonlight.
 - a) The moon itself does not have any light. It just reflects the light of the sun.
 - b) That is our source of light. The light of the son (pun intended)!
 - c) We reflect the light Jesus gives us. That is our source.
 - d) We need to draw upon that source in order to be a light to others.
 - e) The apostle John taught on this principle: "But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 'Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.'" (1st John 2:5-6, NIV)
- g) Believe it or not, all of this does tie back to Song of Songs, Chapter 6.
 - i) I titled this chapter "restoration".
 - a) It is all about taking steps to restoring a broken relationship.
 - b) Just like Jesus' report card to the Church of Ephesus in Rev. Chapter 2, Song of Songs Chapter 6 is a call to return to that first love.

- c) We can read the dialogue in this chapter about restoration and learn:
 - (1) A model on how to help restore that relationship with our spouse.
 - (2) A model of how God helps us restore our relationship with Him.
 - ii) With that said, I'll break down and take on Verse 1. ☺
 - 3. Chapter 6, Verse 1: Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your lover turn, that we may look for him with you?
 - a) I talked about this verse in the introduction.
 - b) Most believe it is spoken of by the "Daughters of Jerusalem" in this poetic play.
 - c) This is the second response by the Daughters of Jerusalem to the "charge" of the bride to help her find her man. The first response was in Verse 9 of Chapter 5.
 - d) Some commentators read this as being cynical or sarcastic.
 - i) They see both responses by this choir as saying in effect "why should we help you? Who is this guy that we should bother? Just where is he anyway?
 - a) When the Daughters of Jerusalem call her "most beautiful of women", many people see this as a sarcastic put-down.
 - ii) Others see them in a more positive light. They see the Daughters of Jerusalem as a "type" of the Holy Spirit guiding this girl in her response.
 - iii) Either way, the response is what is important, not their collective attitude.
 - iv) What you should notice (hint hint! ☺) is that the bride takes the lead role in restoring the relationship.
 - a) The point is that God is calling you (yes, you and me!) to take the lead in restoring that relationship.
 - (1) Once you take that step, God is more than willing to not only meet you halfway, but run down the road to greet you again!
 - (2) The bride gives a two-verse response about the restoration.
 - (3) The groom then spends the next 6 verses declaring His love for her!
 - (4) That is a beautiful model of restoration.
 - (a) We tell and confess to God how and why we've been away.
 - (b) God in His love for us can't wait to restore it again!
 - b) Remember God is perfect. A perfect God does not change. When things go wrong, it is not God's fault it is ours. We often blame God for our circumstances, but the truth is God allows those circumstances to occur for some reason. We don't always know that reason, but God wants us to use that circumstance as an opportunity to grow in our relationship with Him.
 - (1) Chuck Swindoll once said, "When we get to heaven, the only words we'll get out of our mouth is "oh". Hey God why did you allow this happen?...oh"; Hey God, what about?...oh; Lord, how did?...oh".
 - (2) To use another famous Christian saying, "If you don't feel close to God, who moved?"
 - c) Now lets take talk about our relationship with our spouse.
 - (1) (You can also apply this to a family member or friend).
 - d) This is why the bride is in focus.
 - (1) Part of our maturity as Christians is to be above the argument, and prayfully forgive, ask for forgiveness and work in love with your partner. It is easy to state how you are hurting your spouse or friend. It is "human" to want to hurt the other person back. God is asking us to be above that.
 - (a) Christian love is letting the Spirit of God work through you to restore that relationship to a better level.

- (2) Next time an argument starts to heat up, try some “grace” and say something positive and wonderful to your spouse. Ask God to help you put into words something over and above the argument. The results will amaze you!
 - (3) One of the things to notice as you read Song of Songs is the lack of criticism by the bride or the groom. They restore their relationships by building each other up and not criticizing.
 - (a) To quote a friend and profession Christian marriage counselor: “Criticism is poison to a marriage.”
 - e) Let’s get back to the Verse 1: “Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your lover turn, that we may look for him with you?”
 - i) Remember that this is probably a dream sequence as stated in Chapter 5 Verse 2.
 - ii) I don’t believe it is a physical search for Solomon, as much as a charge to the bride to know where to look.
 - a) She spends the next two verses describing a garden where Solomon was.
 - b) A question to ponder is: If she actually knew where Solomon was, why would she be asking the Daughters of Jerusalem where to find him?
 - (1) This is a reason I believe all of this is a dream sequence.
 - c) I believe when the Daughters of Jerusalem ask the bride where to look, it is a request to “mentally” go back to the last place and time when the memory of the relationship was positive
 - (1) When you lose something and ask a friend to help you find it, the first question they ask is usually “Where did you last see it?”
 - (2) In that sense, what the Daughters of Jerusalem are doing is requesting the bride to restore the relationship by going back to a pleasant memory when the relationship was strong.
 - (a) If you think I’m reading too much into this verse, read it in context of the rest of the text and that will make more sense.
 - (b) We’ll take this up more in Verse 2. Speaking of which.... 😊
- 4. Verse 2: My lover has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens and to gather lilies. ³ I am my lover's and my lover is mine; he browses among the lilies.
 - a) For those of you who have read all of my lessons to date, this verse sound familiar.
 - b) The early chapters of Song of Songs spent a lot of time describing garden pictures.
 - c) The bride and groom both complimented each other and used garden word-pictures to describe their love for each other.
 - d) I believe what we are reading here is a recollection from her mind.
 - e) That is important, because she is recalling the early part of their relationship.
 - i) She recalls their early days of the relationship when they courted each other in the garden.
 - ii) Remember that the theme of this chapter is restoration.
 - iii) Restoration of a relationship starts with remembering what first brought you together.
 - a) Remember Jesus’ words from Revelation when he said, “That you have left your first love” (Revelation 2:7). Here the bride is restoring that relationship by remembering the times of the early courtship.
 - b) Christian counselors will often use this technique in the restoration of a marriage in counseling.
 - (1) They will start by asking the couple to describe the early part of their relationship. To recall the positive aspects that brought the couple together.
 - (2) This is a method of “stirring up” those early passions.

- (3) We see the bride doing the same thing by recalling the early days of their courtship. That is how the healing process in a relationship begins, by going back (in memory) to your commitment. The point is to recall why and how you made that commitment and bring back that passion. Again, it is about restoring “that first love”.
- f) With all that said, let me point out some particulars of the verses: Verse 2: My lover has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens and to gather lilies. ³I am my lover's and my lover is mine; he browses among the lilies.
- i) Remember that in Chapter 4 the groom refers to the bride as “his garden” (4:12).
 - ii) In Verse 16 of Chapter 4, the bride asks the winds to stir up the scent of her “garden” to arouse her man.
 - iii) Those references in Chapter 4 are very sexual.
 - a) I'll leave the rest to your imagination. ☺
 - b) Think about the garden references of Chapter 4 in context to “My lover has gone down to his garden...” That is why I see this as recalling their early sexual passion.
 - iv) Next notice the first phrase of Verse 3: “I am my lover's and my lover is mine”.
 - a) In Chapter 2, Verse 16, she says, “My beloved is mine, and I am his;”
 - b) She is saying in effect, “I belong to him and he belongs to me.”
 - c) The order is important. In Chapter 2, that was prior to the wedding:
 - (1) In Chapter 2 it starts by saying in effect “He first, then me”.
 - (2) In Chapter 6 (here), it is saying, “I belong to him and him to me”.
 - (3) In Chapter 2, it is a model of God first calling us, and then we respond in God's love to Him, (i.e., “He first, then me”).
 - (4) In Chapter 6, it is about restoration. It says, “I am my lovers (restoration) and (then) my lover is mine.” This is a picture of God responding to our confession and restoring that relationship.
 - v) The next phrase of Verse 3 says, “He browses among the lilies”.
 - a) Remember in Chapter 2, the bride says, “I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys”. That was a self-put down as to say she is just “one of the girls among many”. That is why I underlined the “a's” in that sentence.
 - (1) Solomon responds in the next verse of Chapter 2 by saying, “Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens.”
 - (a) The point is he sees her as something special. He says she is a lily among thorns.
 - (2) I believe she is recalling that memory here in Chapter 6 by saying “He browses among the lilies”. She is remembering that compliment how he thought she was the most special woman in the world when she thought of herself as plain.
 - (a) She is remembering the time where she thought she was just a plain farm girl, but Solomon saw her as something special.
 - (i) Guys, take note. When your wife is having a “pity-party” it is time to build her up, not agree with her!
 - (b) Remember that God believes you are very special and picked you among the millions of people in the world to spend with Him for eternity. (I'm focusing on the pre-destined aspect of our relationship.) Not all are chosen. The love of God has called you and you have responded.
 - (i) “But you are not like that, for you have been chosen by God himself—you are priests of the King, you are holy and pure, you are God's very own—all this so

that you may show to others how God called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.”

(1st Peter 2:9, The Living Bible)

- (c) Part of the restoration is to occasionally recall that fact, just as the bride is recalling Solomon's love for her.
- (d) Restoration of a marriage or a family relationship often starts with a similar set of memory recollections. This helps you to focus on what is important as compared to present circumstances.

5. Verse 4: You are beautiful, my darling, as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, majestic as troops with banners.

- a) Now it is the groom's (Solomon's) turn to speak.
 - i) All it took was the bride's willingness to want to restore the relationship to get him stirred up.
 - ii) The fact that he is responding is further proof that all of this is a dream sequence, but I've beaten that point to death by now. ☺
- b) Let's start with the fact that he compares her to "Tizrah", to Jerusalem, and then to troops.
 - i) In our day, that doesn't sound like much of a compliment, so I better explain.
 - a) "Gee, honey, you are as beautiful as Glendale on a summer day". ☺
 - ii) Tizrah was a town in Northern Israel.
 - a) It is mentioned several times in 1st Kings Chapter's 14-16.
 - b) Remember that after Solomon died, Israel split into two kingdoms.
 - (1) The original capital of the Northern Kingdom was Tizrah. (1st Kings 15:33). Later, it became Samaria.
 - (a) (If you ever wonder where the word "Samaritans" came from, now you know. ☺)
 - c) Tizrah was an oasis. It was known for its natural beauty and plentiful water supply. It was probably one of the most beautiful locations in Northern Israel at the time Solomon wrote this.
 - d) Remember that this was a "farm-girl" who didn't live that far away.
 - e) Guys, try to remember a romantic spot where you took your wife on a vacation. If you haven't done this, work on it! ☺ You can stir up your romance by reminiscing about a favorite romantic spot you both love.
 - iii) Next, he compares her to Jerusalem.
 - a) First, you have to think Jewish.
 - b) God who created the heavens and earth, picked one little spot on the planet earth (Israel) and said in effect, "This is my land, don't mess with it".
 - (1) Of all the places in Israel, the City of Jerusalem is considered the most special. Here is a sample from the Psalms
 - (a) "May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy." Psalm 137:6 NIV)
 - (b) In fact, God specially calls us to pray for peace for Jerusalem: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you." (Psalm 122:6 NIV)
 - (2) Therefore, in a Jewish mind, to love your bride as much as Jerusalem is a great compliment to those who love and seek God.
 - (3) It can also be read how much God loves us as much as he loves His Holy City (Jerusalem).

- c) There is another application I would like to share with you:
 - (1) Remember what Solomon did for a living: He was a king. ☺
 - (2) Solomon the king ruled from Jerusalem.
 - (3) He maybe saying in effect, “I love you as much as I love being king”. “You mean as much to me as Jerusalem does”.
 - (4) OK guys, can you honestly say to your wives that you love your wife more than you love your job? Girls, do you love your husbands more than your job or love your homes or children?
 - (5) Now that guilt has set in, let’s finish the verse: ☺
 - iv) He then says she is, “As majestic as troops with banners.”
 - a) Again, in our culture, it’s not much of a compliment.
 - (1) “Honey, you’re as beautiful as an army in a military parade”. ☺
 - b) A paraphrase for today might be, “oh honey, I love your self-confidence. I love the way you carry yourself. I as a king, I see armies lined up for a parade, but you are even more majestic than that parade.
 - c) To summarize, not only is he complimenting her natural beauty by comparing her to physical locations, but also her “aura” of self-confidence.
 - d) The application is to build-up your spouse. Compliment them in a way to build their belief in themselves as well as you!
- 6. Verse 5: Turn your eyes from me; they overwhelm me.
 - a) This is only the first half of the verse.
 - b) It is a powerful statement. It is saying in effect, “I love you so much, I can barely stand to look at you. It is too much for me!” “One look of your eyes and I go “gaa-gaa”!”
 - c) I bet you didn’t think I would ever use the term “gaa-gaa” in a Bible study lesson! ☺
- 7. Let’s finish Verse 5 and onward: Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Gilead.

⁶ Your teeth are like a flock of sheep coming up from the washing. Each has its twin, not one of them is alone. ⁷ Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.

 - a) For those of you who were with me with in Chapter 4, these are the exact same compliments. As paid in Chapter 4, Verses 1 and 2. It is word-for word.
 - b) The interesting thing to notice is where Solomon stops quoting Chapter 4:
 - i) Back in Chapter 4, Solomon complimented six “body parts” and gave a 7th all-over compliment. This is a Hebrew style of poetry based on six-plus-one equals seven, and seven is associated with completeness.
 - ii) Solomon did not repeat the compliments to her lips, necks and breasts. So the big question is why?
 - a) Remember the theme of this lesson. This is about restoration of the relationship.
 - b) The quotes are about her looks, but it is just on her face and hair.
 - c) I’m not going to go into detail on these compliments, as I already discussed that in Chapter 4.
 - d) What is interesting to me is why did Solomon only repeat these three?
 - e) A common interpretation among the commentators is because Solomon wanted to show that he loved her for who she is and not just for her sexual beauty. He wanted to leave out the sexual references for now.
 - (1) The three compliments he left out were the most sexual.
 - (2) To use modern slang, “honey, I love you and I want to be with you, and it’s not just because I’m horny right now”. ☺
 - (3) (I warned you Song of Songs was for adults only!)
 - (4) Remember the theme of this chapter is about restoration of the relationship. Solomon only complimented the facial features. Solomon is looking at her face and describing her beauty.

- (5) Guys, this also shows that it is ok to repeat the same compliment. You don't have to be original every time. If your girl likes something you said about her before, its ok to repeat it, just don't abuse it! ☺
8. Verse 8: Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number;⁹ but my dove, my perfect one, is unique,
- a) Well, that doesn't sound like much of a compliment. "Honey, I have an army of women at my disposal and you are the general of my army." Guys, don't try this one. ☺
 - b) The key to understand this verse is to realize he is not talking about his women, just women in general.
 - i) Notice there is a lack of the word "my" in verse 8. Let me show you the New King James Version of this verse with my addition in parenthesis:
 - ii) "There are (not I have) sixty queens and eighty (not I have) concubines, and (not I have) virgins without number." (Song of Songs 6:8, NKJV)
 - c) This verse is designed to be poetry. A style of Hebrew poetry is to give a description in increasing number and then "infinity".
 - i) The verse says 1) 60 queens 2) 80 concubines and 3) virgins without number.
 - ii) The "60, 80, without number" is a poetic progression.
 - iii) Notice that the women decrease in importance with each number. A queen is greater than a concubine, which is greater than a virgin (maiden). A concubine is an ancient name for a live-in girlfriend who is also a servant. A concubine gets all the duties of a wife without any of the privileges. (Gee, what a deal, huh? ☺)
 - iv) In his latter years, Solomon was guilty of multiple marriages.
 - a) I don't think that is the picture here. At this point, Solomon's only true love is this girl. This is a poetic way of saying, "There are lots of women out there, but you are the only one I love."
9. The 2nd phrase of Verse 9: The only daughter of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her.
- a) To understand this compliment, you have to read both parts of this sentence together.
 - i) If you remember from the early lessons, she had half-brothers who didn't treat her very well (Chapter 1, Verse 6).
 - ii) Now we learn she is the only daughter of this relationship.
 - b) Solomon was aware that this girl was the favorite of her mother.
 - i) There is an important subtle message here on the topic of courtship:
 - a) When dating, get to know the parents (or the people who raised your spouse). Most of our personality traits and habits come from our parents.
 - b) Many naïve people say, "I'm not like my mother or my father."
 - (1) Which of course, we as long-term married partners, think, but don't say out loud, "yeah right".
 - (2) Let's face it, the way we raise our children is usually based on the way we were raised.
 - (3) The way we treat our spouses is usually based on the way our parents treated each other.
 - (4) Whether we like it or not, we consciously or subconsciously treat our spouses or our children based on our own family life because that is the main model we are familiar with.
 - (5) That is why it is so important in pre-marital counseling and during the dating years to describe your upbringing to your mate.
 - (6) That is why it is equally important when dating to meet and get to know the parents because much of that behavior will be seen in your spouse.
 - (7) Which leads us back to Solomon.

- ii) Solomon said to his bride “you are the favorite of your mothers”.
 - a) I suspect, but can’t prove that her half-brothers contributed to her lack of self-confidence.
 - b) Remember Verse 6 of Chapter 1 said, “My mother’s sons (i.e., half-brothers) were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I have neglected.” (Song of Songs 1:6b NIV)
 - c) Solomon, knowing her mother complimented her and helped her build her self-confidence by saying “she is the favorite of her mother”.
 - d) I may be reading too much in the text, but I do see the important application here, and that is to compliment and build up your spouse.
 - (1) There are times, especially in the restoration of a relationship where our spouses don’t see themselves in a very positive light. This is where building of self-confidence and compliments are important.
 - (2) Arguments make us feel guilty and ashamed. After the emotions calm down, we don’t see ourselves in a positive light. Solomon praised her to restore the love of the relationship.
 - (3) This is also what I meant earlier about having grace to your partner. If you (ok, we! ☺) can learn to rise above our anger and feelings, and compliment our spouse in love, the restoration of the relationship happens quicker and it glorifies God through our marriage.
10. The rest of Verse 9: The maidens saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her.
- a) Solomon started verse 8 by saying this girl is greater than all the available women in the world, despite their rank of queen, concubine or maiden.
 - b) This verse can be read one of two ways:
 - i) Solomon is still complimenting her by saying in effect “all of those girls are praising you as you are better than any of them”.
 - ii) The other way is to remember that this is a musical drama. A chorus of women is now singing the praises of this bride.
 - c) Guys, women want to be cherished. They want to be put on a pedestal and made to feel special. They look at other women who may be more beautiful or have more “whatever” and feel a lack of self-confidence. It is up to the guy (remember Solomon is speaking) to take the lead in keeping the relationship alive and fresh and telling your women just how more special she is than any other women.
 - i) I quoted this proverb in an earlier lesson, but it bears repeating: “may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹ A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. (Proverbs 5:18b-19, NIV)
11. Verse 10: Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?
- a) Solomon is finishing this complimentary section by comparing her to the beauty of nature.
 - i) He started by complimenting her looks.
 - ii) He then said she is better than any beautiful geographical location (as in Tizrah).
 - iii) He moved on to say how much better she is than other women.
 - iv) Now he is saying she is better than the beauty of the dawn, the moon, the sun and the stars.
 - v) To paraphrase this whole section, “oh my darling, look how beautiful you are. You are better than any place, any person and better than anything God has created. My love for you is greater than my love for these cities, those women, and even my love of God’s creation.

- b) An interesting thing to think about in the bible is how much text-space is dedicated to the subject of God's creation. Only a small percentage of the Bible talks about creation.
 - i) There are a few chapters in Genesis about creation.
 - ii) There are some references in Job and in the Psalms to creation.
 - iii) There are a handful of verses in the New Testament that refer to creation.
- c) Now think about how much text is dedicated to our redemption. Think about how much space is dedicated to God's plan to redeem us so He could spend eternity with us.
 - i) Most of Genesis is focuses on the initial family that forms the nation of Israel. It is about the start of the redemption plan for mankind.
 - ii) Exodus is about redemption of God's chosen people from Egypt.
 - iii) Leviticus is about the rituals of forgiveness of sin so we could grow in our relationship with God. It is about the redemption and restoration from sin.
 - iv) The Book Numbers is about the maturity as believers as we rid our selves of our old sinful nature. It is about our "redeemed" natures growing into maturity.
 - v) Deuteronomy is about preparing ourselves against the world and its battle against God and our souls. The issues help us to grow in our maturity as believers.
 - vi) The rest of the Old Testament is about man's failure to live up to God's standard of righteousness on our own efforts.
 - vii) The Gospel messages center upon a perfect sacrifice being made on our behalf for our sins. The key message is about redemption through Jesus' sacrifice.
 - viii) The rest of the New Testament primarily focuses on how to grow in maturity as we rely upon that perfect sacrifice.
 - ix) My point of all of this is to show that most of the bible focuses on redemption and our maturity as believers. Relatively little of the bible focuses on the creation.
 - x) God went to incredible time and trouble to prove how much He loves you. That is far greater than the time and trouble he spent on creation.
 - xi) Which, surprisingly, leads us back to Solomon and Song of Songs. ☺
- d) Here is Solomon saying how much he loves his bride *just the way she is*.
 - i) He then says how much he loves her *more* than any place in the world.
 - ii) He then says how much he loves her *more* than other girls.
 - iii) Finally, he says he loves her more than creation itself.
 - iv) That is a model of how much God loves us. That is what we need to keep in perspective as we read and study our Bible.
 - v) Gee, I'm on such a roll, it would be a great place to end the study. Unfortunately, I still have three verses to go. ☺

12. Verse 11: I went down to the grove of nut trees to look at the new growth in the valley, to see if the vines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom.
- a) Most study bibles believe the bride is now talking again at Verse 11.
 - i) Remember that this whole section could be seen as a dream sequence from the bride's point of view.
 - b) Here was Solomon, paying her all of these compliments, and now we have a picture of her walking by herself in this valley.
 - c) Notice the emphasis on Verse 11 is on new growth.
 - i) The verse talks about new growth in the nut trees, new growth in the valley and to see if the (grape) vines have budded or if the pomegranates have bloomed.
 - ii) I'll repress my strong temptation to make at least one "garden of nuts" joke. ☺
 - d) What I suspect is happening is she needs time to "digest" all that Solomon has said.
 - e) That chapter is about restoration of a relationship. Solomon just gave her a bunch of wonderful compliments and now she needs time to think about it.
 - f) The analogy of "new growth" is about their relationship budding again.

- g) Remember that this is a farm-girl. She needed time to think. She went to a place where she was comfortable and familiar. She went back to the farms and think about it.
13. Verse 12: Before I realized it, my desire set me among the royal chariots of my people.
- a) Verses 12-13 are considered among the toughest to translate and explain in the Bible.
- i) Very good scholars disagree on the meaning. Therefore, if you disagree with my interpretation of these verses that's ok. ☺
 - ii) As best I can tell, her wanderings have taken her far away. She is saying in effect "I thought about what Solomon was saying, and I kept walking and thinking, kept walking and thinking to a point where ended up near the royal chariots".
 - iii) The royal chariots were probably located near or at the palace of the king. She being a Jew realized that the chariots belonged to her ("my") people.
 - iv) She may have realized that her home was with Solomon. She wandered around and ended up near King Solomon's palace. Thus the reference of her desire to be by her man lead her to where King Solomon lived.
 - v) One can see this verse as part of our model of restoration of our relationship with God. There is a biblical principal that if you seek God, you will find him. In her case, she searched for Solomon and found herself near or at his palace.
 - a) "But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 4:29, NIV).
- b) There is a point in our separation where there is a desire to return. When we truly love someone, that love calls us back despite the hurts and separation. Our commitment to the one we love needs to be stronger than the circumstances that separated us.
- i) This verse is a strange-to-our-ear, poetic way of making that claim.
14. Verse 13: Come back, come back, O Shulamite; come back, come back, that we may gaze on you!
- a) Notice the "we" in Verse 13. Somebody else is speaking here.
- b) Study bibles will label this verse as either "Solomon and his friends" or "Daughters of Jerusalem". Either way, we have a choir making a statement here.
- c) Personally, I lean toward the view that it is Solomon and his friends in this verse.
- d) Remember that the word "Shulamite" is the same Hebrew letters that form the word "Solomon" in its feminine form.
- i) It is as if to say, "Come back Mrs. Solomon, you belong here!"
 - ii) Some commentaries believe that the bride was a girl named "Abishag" from the town of "Shunammite" (1st Kings 1:3).
 - a) Abishag was used to keep David warm during his dying days. There was no sexual relationship. She became part of David's household. Remember Solomon is one of David's sons. In Chapter 2 of 1st Kings, Solomon's half-brother Adonijah asks King Solomon for this girl in marriage. To paraphrase, Solomon "goes berserk" and has Adonijah killed.
 - b) Thus many believe Solomon loved Abishag and she is this girl in Songs.
 - c) Of course, it is just interesting speculation, but you can't prove it.
 - d) The point is "Shulammite" is one letter different than "Shunammite" the hometown of Abishag. Some believe it is either a typo or a pun.
 - e) None of the early manuscripts use Shunammite in Song of Songs, so I don't believe it is a typo. Again, it may just be a play on words.
 - f) It's just an interesting theory to think about! Don't worry, you don't have to memorize this bit of trivia! ☺
- e) The main point is that Solomon like God is always calling you back during times of separation. Personally, I like to compare these "choir" verses as a type of the Holy Spirit calling us back into a healthy relationship with God.

15. Last half of Verse 13: Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, as at the dance of the two companies?
- a) Let's start by giving some different translations:
 - i) Why would you gaze on the Shulammitte as on the dance of Mahanaim? (NIV)
 - ii) What would you see in the Shulammitte as it were, the dance of the two camps? (NKJV)
 - iii) Why should you look upon the Shulammitte, as upon a dance before two armies? (NRSV)
 - iv) As you can see, different translations don't make thing any easier! ☺
 - b) Most study bibles see this part as spoken of by the bride.
 - i) The Living Bible has the first half as by the bride and the second by Solomon.
 - ii) Others see it as the choir continuing as it is in "third person".
 - c) I think what we have is a repeat of the question asking, "Why is this girl so special? That is what is meant by, "Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte?"
 - d) Next, we have this reference to a dance.
 - i) It was common in that culture for a bride to sexually dance for her man in order to entice him. In fact, Chapter 7 describes Solomon complimenting her dancing as she dances for him sexually (stay tuned for the next lesson!).
 - e) Finally, we have this reference to "dance of two companies".
 - i) The Hebrew word means "double-camp", as in there are two "camps" of ideas happening in one place.
 - ii) The opinions on the meaning of the "double company" vary widely.
 - iii) Personally, I see this verse as a question. Whoever is speaking is asking, "What is so special about this girl? The "double camp" may mean she has both positive and negative aspects about her, and they (whoever is speaking) don't see her as all that special.
 - a) If you see this verse as the bride speaking, or the bride dreaming, you can read this as her doubts about herself coming forth. The "double-view" maybe Solomon seeing her as altogether perfect and lovely and she sees herself with her faults.
 - b) The comparison of course, is to understand how perfectly God loves us with all our faults. At the same time, we self-inflict punishment upon ourselves as we obsess on our faults.
 - c) Thus, the "double camp" is a poetic reminder of how imperfectly she sees herself and how perfectly Solomon sees her.
 - f) In the big picture, this whole scene is about the restoration of the relationship.
 - i) Chapter 5 asks the question, "What is so special about the bride?"
 - ii) Chapter 6 asks the question "Where has she gone?"
 - iii) Chapter 7 will ask, "Who is she anyway?"
 - iv) I see this verse as an introduction to Chapter 7. The speaker, be it the bride doubting herself or a "chorus" asking the question.
 - v) Solomon gives a great response in chapter 7 as we get into the sexual bond of relationship next lesson. It's good stuff, so don't miss it. ☺
16. On that enticing note, let's pray: Father, your word teaches us just how much you love us. Your love for us is perfect and beyond comprehension. We see ourselves with our faults, but you see us through cross-filtered lenses in our perfected state. May that love shine upon us, and we reflect that love on those around us. We especially ask that your love be reflected in our marriages and in our families. May the grace that you show us be equally as strong in our martial relationships, as we glorify you through our love for others. For we ask this in Jesus name, amen.