

Song of Songs Chapter 8 -- John Karmelich

1. At most weddings one can attend, it usually ends with the pastor or priest presenting the bride and the groom to the audience as a married couple. A common expression to end the ceremony is, "I now present Mr. & Mrs..." It is a way for the audience to know that the ceremony is over and they are now a married couple.
 - a) I bring this up because the main topic of Chapter 8 (in my humble opinion ☺) is the public acceptance of this couple, i.e., King Solomon and his bride.
 - b) Through seven wonderful chapters of Song of Songs we have gone through issues leading up to marriage, the marriage itself, post-marital problems and the restoration of the marriage. Chapter 8 deals with the last issue of public acceptance.
2. Throughout these Bible lessons, I have gone back and forth between describing Song of Songs as a love poem between a happy couple and a description of our relationship with God.
 - a) Song of Songs on the surface is about love in marriage.
 - i) It is a wonderful owner's manual on how to have a happy marriage.
 - b) Underneath the surface, it is an allegory of our relationship with God.
 - i) Back in the first lesson, I discussed how religious Jews see this book as a relationship between the nation of Israel and God. This book was written prior to the coming of Jesus and it is an acceptable view, even among Christian scholars.
 - a) In the book of Hosea, his wife committed harlotry and was sold into slavery. God tells Hosea to purchase his ex-wife at the slave market. God tells Hosea to buy her back as a word-picture of how God still loves Israel as a nation. He refers to Israel as a wife. (See Hosea 1:2 and 3:1-2)
 - ii) Christians are described as the "bride of Christ" in Revelation 19:7
 - iii) The point is one can allegorize Song of Songs as a relationship between God and believers and have biblical support for this view.
3. With that all said, it's time for the bad news. ☹ Let me quote something Jesus said:
 - a) "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." Luke 12:51-53, NIV
 - i) Well now, that it not good. ☹ If you go to a Christian book store and pick up a little topical book called "God's Promises®", I suspect they probably forget to include this little promise by Jesus. ☹ I should add in all fairness say that I happen to own, and like that book, but you get the point I'm trying to make.
 - ii) Why did I mention this? Because the issue at hand here in Song of Songs Chapter 8 is public acceptance of their marriage.
 - iii) That is why I tied this prediction Jesus made with the Song of Songs. There is an issue of public acceptance and often a lack thereof. This will become clearer as we actually get into the text itself.
 - iv) Why is that? Why is it say, when you publicly declare your allegiance to God and publicly declare that you are trusting in Jesus for your salvation, the world does not stand up and applaud? In an indirect way, that is the same question as asking why is there division over Jesus.

- v) The first answer is "spiritual". Remember Satan's purpose is to delay and prevent as long as possible the return of Jesus. There are a fixed number of people who will become believers before Jesus' second coming (See Romans 11:25). Nobody but God the Father knows that specific number. Every new person that declares Jesus as their Savior makes that specific number one person closer to that reality. Therefore, Satan isn't too crazy about new people becoming Christians.
 - a) Therefore, there is spiritual hostility to you becoming a Christian.
 - vi) That spiritual hostility manifests itself with opposition to your faith, often times through family members, thus the "family division" that Jesus spoke about.
 - vii) Further, even without Satan behind it, one of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to convict people of their sins. If others around you see you changing your life to serve Jesus, there is guilt (conviction) within them, often stated aloud as saying, "What's wrong with me?" or "Are you some holier-than-thou person who is now better than me? The correct answer is "No, just forgiven. Out of gratitude of that forgiveness I choose to live my life differently".
4. Let's get back to Song of Songs. As I read through Chapter 8 over and over again, I kept seeing an interpretation of Chapter 8 to fit this biblical truth. One can read this chapter and see how it deals with the issue of public acceptance.
- a) Yes there are other interpretations. Many of them are excellent and biblically supported.
 - b) One thing that one has to remember about bible studies is that one cannot exhaust the Word of God. Each week before I start I ask God to show me the things he wants me to learn and what things he wants me to pass on to the reader. I write about 10-12 pages each week. That is not enough to exhaust every possibility. Therefore, I limit what I write based on that weekly prayer.
 - c) Remember also that Song of Songs is considered one of the toughest books in the Bible to interpret. About 10% of the words used in Song of Songs are not used anywhere else in the Bible. Good biblical expositors vary widely on their views, and usually have other text in the Bible to back up that view.
 - d) Bottom line, take what I say with a grain of salt, and read the Bible for yourself and see if you agree. Now that I've gotten all my disclaimers out of my system, let's start. ☺
5. Chapter 8, Verse 1: If only you were to me like a brother, who was nursed at my mother's breasts! Then, if I found you outside, I would kiss you, and no one would despise me.
- a) The bride is speaking. To understand this verse, you have to understand the culture of that time.
 - i) It was considered unacceptable to kiss your wife or husband in public.
 - ii) Any sort of public affection, even hand holding by a husband and wife is taboo.
 - iii) Yet, public affection between brother and sister was considered acceptable.
 - iv) Part of the reason has to do with the belief that that affection between husband and wife is to be best left in private. If a brother and sister are showing some sort of affection, "That's ok, because nothing will become of it, well, because they're brother and sister."
 - v) The other reason is the importance of family structure. The family or "clan" is considered superior to the individual. Therefore, public display between two family members glorifies that family over the individual.
 - vi) Therefore, when the bride is speaking here, she is saying in effect, "Oh my darling husband, how I want to express my love to you publicly. I wish you were like a brother, where it is culturally acceptable to kiss you publicly."
 - vii) If you reread verses 1 and 2, this should now make more sense.
 - b) Let's go back to my opening theme of public acceptance. She loves her man so much she wants to show publicly how much she loves him. She can't because it is not socially acceptable to show your love.

- i) Boy, does that ever describe our Christian life.
 - ii) I can't tell you how many times I have heard the expression, "Well, its ok to love Jesus, just don't go around telling people. It's not polite you know. It's not socially acceptable." At this verse she is hoping it was possible to be socially acceptable.
 - iii) You can see how this verse is not only about publicly showing love for your husband in a culture that is not socially acceptable, but to publicly show your love for Jesus in a world that does not want more people to accept Jesus.
6. Verse 2: I would lead you and bring you to my mother's house-- she who has taught me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the nectar of my pomegranates.
- a) In Verse 2, the bride is still describing her desire to want to show public affection for her man. She is describing her desire to bring Solomon back to the house she grew up and make love to him there. (It sounds somewhat creepy in our culture, but I'll explain further. ☺)
 - i) Remember from Chapter 7 that she is making love somewhere with Solomon and she is describing her desire to go away with him on some romantic adventure.
 - ii) The thought continues into Chapter 8. Remember that she is a farm girl who grew up working in the vineyards. To paraphrase the end of Chapter 7 and these two verses, she is saying in effect "Hey Solomon, let's get away from the royal palaces and have a romantic trip out to the country. Let's go to the vineyards and see if the grapes are blooming and the pomegranates are budding. While the fruit is blooming, we can make our love bloom too! In fact, let's go back to my parents house. There I wish I could show public affection like I could for my brothers".
 - b) Remember that for a Jewish girl, one's education comes from two sources: First, from her mother, and then from her husband.
 - i) A woman grows and matures by an education from her family and then her husband.
 - ii) In Verse 2 she describes her mother as "one who has taught her".
 - a) She is now asking Solomon to pick up where her mother left off.
 - b) There is the possibility that we are talking about lovemaking itself. Perhaps her mother trained her in how to please her man. Now she is ready to take that training on to the next step! ☺
 - c) Maybe that's why she wants to go back to the house of her parents. That's the area where she was trained in this area and it is a place of comfort to her to make love to her man.
 - d) Again it is important to emphasize that this sounds a little disgusting to our modern western culture, but you have to remember the eastern style and culture of which this story takes place.
 - c) The last part of this verse says that she will give Solomon "spiced wine to drink, the nectar of my pomegranates".
 - i) "Spiced wine" is a reference to hardened liquor.
 - ii) The topic of Christians and drinking is a long, open discussion.
 - a) There are many Christians who can argue from the Bible it is never right for a Christian to drink wine ever.
 - b) There are many Christians who can argue from the Bible that is ok to drink, but not to get drunk. The question is where to draw the line.

- iii) The problem is that Solomon himself that that it is not appropriate for kings to drink hard liquor:
 - a) "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, (a nickname for Solomon), It is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted."
(Proverbs 31:4-5, NKJV)
 - b) This verse was given as advice from Solomon's mother to Solomon and written by Solomon in Chapter 31 of Proverbs.
 - c) It argues that kings shouldn't get drunk because it impairs their judgment as a king.
 - d) So how does one reconcile that fact with Solomon, the author of Song of Songs describing through the girl in effect, "Hey honey, let's go over to mom and dad's and I'll pour you a strong one"? ☺
 - e) The answer is I don't believe she is talking about alcohol here, but her love. Notice the last part of Verse 2 says "nectar of my pomegranates".
 - (1) She is comparing her love as sweet and joyful.
 - (2) The love between a husband and wife should be as intoxicating as strong drink. It is to say, "Honey, I'm drunk with love over you!"
 - (3) Remember Song of Songs Chapter 1, Verse 2:
 - (a) "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth – for your love is more delightful than wine." (Songs 1:2, NIV)
7. Verse 3: His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me.
- a) This is a word-for-word repeat of Chapter 2, Verse 6.
 - i) In fact, Verse 4 is a word-for-word repeat of Chapter 2 Verse 7. We'll get to that one in a minute. ☺
 - b) In Verse 3, this is a sexual desire by the bride. It is a desire for Solomon's arm to be under her head while his other arm sexually embraces her.
 - i) Guys, take note here. Women love this stuff. ☺
 - ii) Remember to read this in context of the surrounding verses. In Verses 1 and 2 she is describing her desire to be with her man at her parents house.
 - iii) I believe in Verse 3 she is visualizing (desiring) the actual embrace of Solomon.
 - iv) She is telling Solomon of her love by him by telling him how she desires to be held and fondled.
 - a) Girls, this verse is a reminder that men need a clue. ☺
 - b) Gently, and lovingly tell them how you like to make love prior to starting. It is important and essentially to share your needs and desires with your spouse so they can fulfill those needs. We as men, are not mind readers. We need to be told over and over again until it sinks in. ☺
 - c) Going back to our analogy of us and God, tell God your desires. Yes God can read your mind and He knows your thoughts. Still, He desires that you express those desires to Him. This way, it glorifies God when those prayers are fulfilled.
8. Verse 4: Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.
- a) Not only is this verse a word-for-word repeat of Songs 2:7, but also of Songs 3:5.
 - b) So the big question is why is it repeated?
 - c) The text doesn't give answers, so we are free to speculate. ☺

- d) In Chapter 2, this is about the courtship leading up to the marriage.
- i) I believe that reference is a warning about pre-martial sex. The bible is real clear on this. If one surveys couples who have been married a long time, you will find that couples who waited to be married are far happier sexually than those who don't. Yes there are exceptions, but they are just that. Those exceptions usually stem from other problems that can be worked out through good biblical counseling. The point is that the bride is the one charging to the other maidens in this play to wait for the proper time.
 - ii) The reason she is making this statement is that she is talking with sexual overtones and it is arousing those around her. Therefore, the necessity of making this charge before them.
- e) In Chapter 3, we are dealing with the pre-martial relationship, shortly before the wedding.
- i) Thus, with all the talk of wedding night and lovemaking, the "charge" is repeated to not stir up the desire for lovemaking before the proper time.
 - ii) It is saying in effect, "Just hang in there a little while longer. Don't ruin the wedding night".
- f) Now here in Chapter 8, close to the end of the book, we have the charge repeated again.
- i) A lot of opinions are given, so I'll just add mine to the collection. ☺
 - ii) A common view is that it is a warning against adultery. Here is this couple, already married and now in the post-martial relationship, with a now-completed long discussion on restoration of the marriage. Some see this charge in this view to keep the relationship fresh by not being tempted into adultery at this time.
 - a) As one can imagine, this is a biblical view. To not commit adultery is one of the 10 commandments. The problem is (in my humble opinion), while it is a good point, that concept doesn't fit into the surrounding text. So with that, let me throw a more wild idea at you. ☺
 - iii) When you read chapter 8 as a whole, you can see it as a desire for public acceptance of this relationship.
 - a) In direct context, it is about a simple farm girl marrying a king. A lot of people, including those of the royal court would think she doesn't deserve to marry a king. Thus, there is difficulty in public acceptance.
 - (1) The same could be said about our relationship with Jesus. Why would a perfect God want to "marry" a sinful person like us? Think of the non-believers telling us, "You call yourself a Christian, look at what a messed up person you are!"
 - (2) God sees us and loves us in a perfected state. He sees us through "cross-filtered lenses". Although we and others may see our faults, God has already forgiven all of our faults and defects, past, present and future. While we may understand this, the world does not. Thus the cry for public acceptance.
- g) Which leads back to my theory of the charge to "don't stir up love until the proper time".
- i) Consider the possibility that this may refer to the second coming of Jesus.
 - a) Revelation Chapters 19:7-9 describe the marriage of Jesus to her church.
 - (1) The actual marriage supper banquet is described in these verses.
 - b) In Revelation Chapters 19, Verses 11-16 describe Jesus 2nd coming.
 - (1) I believe that we, as believers come along with Him.
 - (2) "The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean." (Revelation 19:14 NIV)
 - (a) Fine linen is the clothes of the priests. We as described as priests of God in Revelation 5:10 and 20:6

- (3) By the way, this is another reason why I believe the rapture of the church happens prior to the 7-year tribulation, commonly known as the pre-tribulation view. In that view, the church is in heaven during the whole period of wrath. In the post-tribulation view, the church is not taken into heaven until right before Jesus comes back to wipe out the earth. In the post-tribulation view, we are taken to heaven for the wedding banquet, then right back to earth for Jesus 2nd coming. In that view, the wedding supper would have to be a snack lunch as Jesus has post wedding business to attend. ☺
- ii) Sorry about that deviation. ☺ Back to Song of Songs. Now consider the possibility that the bride's charge to "not stir up love before its time" to refer to Jesus coming back with his "bride" along with him.
- a) Here is this bride. She made the statement in Chapter 7: "I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me." (Song 7:10 NIV)
 - b) She now realizes that her love is bonded with Solomon and nothing can break it. She now desires public acceptance.
 - c) Due to the truth of spiritual warfare, that acceptance won't happen as long as Satan rules this world. Therefore the charge to don't stir up love before its time refers to the time when God can publicly show his love for the church after Jesus second coming.
- h) Remember that this is John's theory. ☺ I can't prove that this is the correct application of this verse, but at least I can support it with good Christian end-time theology.
9. Verse 5: Who is this coming up from the desert leaning on her lover?
- a) Verse 5 is given by a "chorus". Some study bibles have this as the "Daughters of Jerusalem" speaking again. Others say it is somebody else. The point is whoever is talking, it is neither Solomon nor the bride. Somebody else is describing them together.
 - b) In our little play of Song of Songs, I see this as the public seeing Solomon leaning on her bride. In this post-wedding period, it is the public acknowledgement of the bride and groom walking together.
 - c) Remember a few verses back how she was saying, "I wish you were like a brother so I could be openly affectionate with you?"
 - i) This verse is an answer. To paraphrase, "Wow, look, its Solomon and his bride. I know its not appropriate for couples to show affection, but here is the king doing it anyway!"
 - a) Guys, take the lead. Show your woman how proud you are of her. Even if she is shy and nervous and blaming it on her culture, she wants to feel comfortable with you in public. Let the "chorus of your world" see you with your arm around your girl. Grant it, you can overboard on this. ☺ Like Solomon leaning on his bride in this verse, I believe it is ok to show a simple sign of affection like holding her hand or putting your arm around her as if to say, "You are mine and I want the world to know that."
 - d) There is a whole other level at which one can read this verse.
 - i) Remember that one can see Chapter 8 as a model of the second coming of Christ.
 - a) When I described Revelation Chapter 19 earlier, there is the wedding ceremony of Christ and his bride, and then is Jesus 2nd coming to earth.
 - b) Imagine the world seeing Jesus coming back and saying "Who is this, and who is this "bride of Christ" with Him? Compare that to Verse 5 that says, "Who is this coming up from the desert leaning on her lover?"
 - c) If you think I'm taking this verse too far, hang in there, because there are more analogies to come. ☺ You can also "just" see this verse in the application of publicly supporting the one you love and be fine with it.

10. Verse 5, Part 2: Under the apple tree I roused you; there your mother conceived you, there she who was in labor gave you birth.
- a) Now in the middle of the verse, we have Solomon speaking again.
 - i) We know it changes because the pronouns change from the impersonal "you" to the personal "I" in this part of the verse.
 - b) Most commentators believe that Solomon is either describing an apple tree near the bride's home, or they are actually at this place. The text says this apple tree is where the bride was first conceived and born.
 - i) There are many theories on this one. The bride may have described a particular tree where she was first conceived and Solomon was saying "let's go there". (Again, it sounds a little creepy to our Western culture.)
 - ii) Remember the big-theme of this section is about getting away from the king's castle in Jerusalem and getting back to the country. Solomon may be using this phrase to reminisce about her home and a particular place that is special to her.
 - a) She probably thinks of that apple tree as something special. That is the place where she was conceived. Maybe it arouses her to think about it.
(The more I think about it, the more I think this girl is a little strange. ☺)
 - c) The application to us guys is to find that romantic place that our girls love as a getaway. It may be a fond memory from our past. It may be a dream place that a young couple desire to be. The talk of going to that place can cause arousal as much as being there.
 - i) Guys, you want to stimulate and excite your girls? Just talk about a romantic trip or reminisce about a favorite spot. That association is telling the one you love of your desire to be with her.
 - d) On the "God and Us" application, consider this passage from the Book of Jeremiah:
 - i) Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:4-5, NIV).
 - i i) God is saying to Jeremiah in effect, "I (God) have perfect knowledge and I cannot learn. Before you were ever born Jeremiah, I knew the exact day of your birth. I have pre-destined you to be a great prophet."
 - iii) Jeremiah of course, had the free will to say no to God. God, in his perfect knowledge also knew that Jeremiah would accept that task.
 - iv) With that in mind, let me repeat Solomon's statement again: "Under the apple tree I roused you; there your mother conceived you, there she who was in labor gave you birth.
 - v) It is almost as if Solomon is saying, "I was there when you were conceived. My love for you is eternal. I know of that apple tree. Since the beginning of time, my perfect and eternal love has existed for you. It is only now in this time in history that I have revealed that love to you and you have become aware of that love!"
 - vi) That is what happens as we discover God's love for us. This is not news to God. It is only news to us.
11. Verse 6, Part 1: Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm;
- a) For the next few verses, we are going to describe what love is like.
 - b) For those of you who know your Bible, this is the Old Testament "equivalent" of Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13.
 - i) That chapter is known as the "love" chapter. Paul describes in that chapter what God's love is like, and how we can manifest it through our lives.
 - ii) This section of Song of Songs, is a parallel passage. It is describing God's love for us with an emphasis on love in marriage. I've pounded the point all through these Song of Songs studies how marriage is a model for us to study on the ideal love relationship between God and ourselves.

- c) Let's get back to the verse itself. The bride is speaking in this verse and the next verse.
- d) The girl is describing a seal over her heart, like a seal on the arm, signaling ownership.
 - i) In the same way we "brand" animals for ownership, there was a seal placed on objects signifying ownership.
 - ii) In this culture, the concept of a seal means everything that person owns is mine and everything I have belongs to that person. That is the desire of the bride.
 - a) It is not about wanting all of King Solomon's stuff, but all of his love.
 - b) The desire of the bride is to want all of the love of her man focuses on her.
 - c) One can see the parallel with God's love. The first commandment of the Ten Commandments is to "Not have any other God before me!" (Exodus 20:3). It is about having a loving desire for God and no one else. This is manifested in marriage when you desire your spouse and no one else.
- e) In the Book of Revelation, one of the most famous "seal's" is the one associated with the Antichrist. The end of Chapter 13 says that this mark adds up to 666. For two thousand years, people have wondered what that meant. I don't know either. ☺
 - i) My point here is that there is also a good kind of seal associated with some (or all) Christians during the tribulation (depending upon your particular view).
 - a) "They (destroying angels) were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads." (Revelation 9:4, NIV)
 - b) The point is that God sees believers with a big seal stamped on our foreheads. It may not be visible to us, but it is to God. It is as if this seal says, "Property of God, don't mess with it or else". ☺
- f) Let's get back to the text. Notice that the bride voluntarily commits to want this "seal" placed on her. It says, "Place me like a seal over your heart".
 - i) This is the "free-will" part of our salvation. God offers this perfect, unconditional love to us. He desires that everything we have is ours, and everything that is ours is His. The point is that we need to respond to that love offer. If God loves us perfectly, he can't force that love upon us. We must choose to accept that offer upon our own free will.
 - ii) This also applies to the commitment aspect of marriage. Historically, some marriages are arranged. In our culture, we get to choose our spouses. It is the commitment that God is concerned about. In either case, that non-conditional commitment must come from our heart.
 - iii) Remember that this whole chapter has to do with the public acceptance and public acknowledgement of this commitment. The girl is volunteering to say, "all I have belongs to you." She is publicly acknowledging her love for Solomon.
 - iv) That is also part of our love-relationship with God. God gives freely to us, and we give back to Him. In our love-relationship with our spouses, the goal is to try to out-do each other. Without God, this is practically impossible. I have yet to meet anyone who does something for God (voluntarily, not expecting something in return). In those cases, God returns the favor in greater proportion. You cannot out-give God.
 - a) I find that works in marriage in well. When you "give of yourself" to your partner not expecting any favors in return, the spouse will also respond accordingly. Because we are human, it doesn't always happen this way, but that model is the desired goal in any marriage.

12. Let's finish Verse 6: for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.
- a) The girl is saying that her love is as strong as death.
 - i) Death affects everyone. It is a powerful force that won't go away.
 - ii) So is God's love. It is being compared to the permanency of death.
 - b) The second comparison is to jealousy.
 - i) God describes himself as a "jealous God" in the 10 commandments (Exodus 20:5).
 - ii) There is a bad kind of jealousy when you desire or envy something that does not belong to you. There is also a bad kind of jealousy when you are trying to control something you are not meant to control.
 - iii) There is also a good kind of jealousy when you desire to protect what is yours.
 - a) That is the type of jealousy in love being described here.
 - c) Finally, it is compared to a "blazing fire".
 - i) Some translations call the last part "The *very* flame of the LORD" (NKJV)
 - ii) It is reminiscent of the "burning bush" that Moses saw.
 - iii) The concept is simply that this love is as strong as any fire created by God himself.
 - d) All three of these word pictures (death, jealousy, fire of God) are describing the power of this love that the girl is describing for Solomon.
 - i) To paraphrase, "my love for you is unyielding and as powerful as..."
 - e) They also tie back to God's love for us and His purpose for us.
 - i) It does not end with the grave. We are resurrected for the purpose of spending eternity with God. (See Ephesians 3:9-12, and Revelation 21:3)
13. Verse 7: Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.
- a) The bride's thoughts continue in Verse 7.
 - i) She is saying her love cannot be washed away by any river (or flood), nor can it be bought at any price ("all the wealth of his house").
 - b) True love, the type desired by God, is not purchased. We can not earn that love by being a "good person". I consider Satan's greatest lie to be "I am acceptable to God because I am a good person"....Nonsense! We are saved only because of God's love for us and the price of our sin paid by Jesus' sacrifice.
 - c) Here, the bride is describing the perfection of that love. She is saying it is greater than death, guarded jealously by God, has all of God's power (all in Verse 6), and now in Verse 7 it says we can not lose that love ("rivers cannot wash it away") and it cannot be bought.
 - d) Those two verses are a great summary of God's love for us and what He desires of our response to that love, both in our relationship with Him and in our marriages.
14. Verse 8: We have a young sister, and her breasts are not yet grown. What shall we do for our sister for the day she is spoken for? ⁹ If she is a wall, we will build towers of silver on her. If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar.
- a) OK, it is time for Song of Songs to get strange again. ☺
 - b) In Verse 8, we have another "choir" speaking in these two verses.
 - i) Most study bibles have this part spoken by the bride's older brothers. Whoever is talking, the word "we" is used. It is neither Solomon nor the bride.
 - c) There are two popular theories on this:
 - i) The first is that the bride had a younger sister, and her brothers are now asking for advice on how to raise her in this love.
 - a) I disagree with this theory as it does not fit into context of the surrounding verses. Some do argue for a "literal little sister", so I mention this view.
 - i.i) The second theory is that the brothers are describing the bride herself as being a "little girl". It is sort of a flashback.

- a) It may be a colorful way of saying, "I can't believe our little sister is getting married to Solomon. We still see her as just a little girl".
 - b) These two verses in context to Verse 10, make more sense.
 - (1) Verse 8 says, "and her breasts are not yet grown".
 - (2) In Verse 10, the bride says, "my breasts are like towers".
 - (3) This is not a sexual reference, but has to do with physical growth.
 - d) I lean toward the view that this is her brothers talking her. Despite their bad treatment of her in Chapter 1, they still understand their obligation to protect her as part of the family.
 - i) The word-pictures being painted here are that of protection. They are saying it is their job and function to protect her until she is grown and married.
 - e) There is the possibility that these verses are written in contrast to the love between Solomon and his bride. It is almost like a temptation saying "You don't need Solomon, we'll protect you and guide you." She is describing her love for him in contrast to their protection.
 - i) Remember one of the big themes is about public acceptance and public acknowledgement of this couples' love for each other. The declaration by the brothers by saying in effect, "What shall we do for you? We will protect you like a tower." The bride responds in verse 10 by declaring her love for Solomon over her love for her family. Not that she is anti-sibling, but simply arguing for priority.
 - a) Jesus said, "Anyone who wants to be my follower must love me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters – yes, more than his own life – otherwise he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26, The Living Bible)
15. Verse 10: I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. Thus, I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment.
- a) This verse has to be read in contrast to the two previous verses.
 - b) Her brothers were saying in Verse 9 (paraphrasing), "We'll protect you like a wall, and put cedar around you". (Cedar wood is a strong and durable type of wood).
 - c) She is saying with this "breast" comment in Verse 10 in effect, "I'm grown up now. I am old enough to make own decision". I choose to be with Solomon". He loves me unconditionally and I choose to respond to that love".
 - d) This is that time of commitment in our life. When we say to our family, "I love and appreciate all you have done to raise me. It is time for me to take a stand on my feet and commit to the one I love more than you. It is that public confession that I am part of a new family now. I still acknowledge the "old" family as part of my life, but I am now married and committed to a new and greater love.
 - e) She describes this decision as "bringing contentment to his eyes".
 - i) That is an important principal as Christians.
 - ii) That decision to accept Jesus in our heart and commit our lives to Him "brings contentment to His eyes".
 - a) Remember this whole scene is post wedding, post struggles and after the sexual reunion and the realization that her love for him exists because of His desire for her. She is reflecting his love back to Him.
 - (1) That is the contentment and joy desired by God in our lives in a simple statement.
16. Verse 11: Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon; he let out his vineyard to tenants. Each was to bring for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver. ¹² But my own vineyard is mine to give; the thousand shekels are for you, O Solomon, and two hundred are for those who tend its fruit.

- a) At this time, farmers were hired to work in the king's vineyards.
 - i) For every 1,200 shekels they collected in proceeds, their pay was "200 for the workers and a 1,000 for the king". Their job was to harvest the grapes for wine.
 - b) The exact location of this vineyard of Baal Hamon is debated among the scholars. Personally, I don't see any application to discussing where it could be, so I'll let it go. ☺
 - c) The main point to see is her attitude about her share of the profits.
 - i) Remember the "seal" reference, where "everything I have is yours and everything you have is mine"?
 - ii) She is saying that her 1,000 shekels are for you oh king".
 - d) A key principal to grasp from these verses that everything we have belongs to God.
 - i) This leads to a quick discussion about the topic of financially giving to God.
 - a) Many Jews and Christians believe in the concept of "tithing".
 - b) This is where you give 10 percent of your earnings (or net profit if self-employed) to God. "Tithing" is the only concept I know in the Bible where God dares you to test him and see if you can "out-give" God.
 - c) "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:10, NIV)
 - ii) What I want you to understand is 100% of what we make belongs to God, not just 10%. The purpose of giving 10% is a way of maturing our faith by trusting God for our daily provision.
 - a) That is what the bride is trying to say in these two verses. She is saying "Solomon, I'm giving you all of my 1,000 shekels, even though I don't have to, in my love for you I am giving you all that I have and all that I am."
 - b) Practically, this does not mean for you to give 100% of your income to charity. The principal here is that all we earn is God-given, and we need to glorify God in however we use the talents, gifts and financial rewards God has given us.
17. Verse 13: You who dwell in the gardens with friends in attendance, let me hear your voice!
- a) This is the final verse given by Solomon. The woman gets the last word in Song of Songs .
 - i) I'll move on from here and not post any jokes on that topic. ☺
 - b) Remember that Chapter 8 is about the public acknowledgement of the wedding.
 - i) Here is Solomon talking to the bride in the presence of those in attendance, saying "Let me hear your voice".
 - ii) I stated in the beginning of this lesson that the "world" is not going to accept your commitment to God. God himself wants you to think past public acceptance and return His love for you, as it is the greatest thing one can do with his or her life.
 - iii) Here is Solomon calling out, "Hey honey, in front of all our friends, in front of your brothers who didn't always treat you well, in front of the other women of the court, let me hear your voice, because it is sweet to me, it is the one I love".
 - iv) That is what the calling of God is all about. It is not an exclusive club. God loves all the people world individually, and calls out to see who is going to respond to that love. Some choose to respond, others do not. That is what is being asked for here in this verse.
 - a) Notice what Jesus says here, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33, NIV).

- b) Jesus is looking for those who are going to publicly confess Him before men. That is what he is calling out for. A "model" of that picture is being spoken of by Solomon here in this verse.
18. Verse 14: Come away, my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains.
- a) The bride, getting in the last word, gives her public response to Solomon's love.
- b) The gazelle is one of the fastest animals on earth. It can run speedily from a dead stop. That word-picture is how she wants Solomon to run to here.
- c) The last reference is a "young stag on the spice-laden mountains."
- i) Other translations call this last phrase "a mountain of spices".
- ii) That seems like a strange way to end Song of Songs.
- iii) If you remember from earlier chapters, this girl is big on scents. King Solomon had a specific aroma that she associated with him. She also spiced up her life with aromas to sexually attract Solomon.
- iv) It's a colorful way of expressing the joy and anticipation of their future relationship together.
- d) The final words of this love poem are the response of the girl to Solomon's love. She is responding to the call of his love for him.
- i) In her own colorful way, she is saying "Yes, come to me quickly. I want your love". I realize now that your desire is for me and I want to return that desire to you. Come as quick as a gazelle
19. Its time for some wrap up thoughts.
- a) Many of the individual words are difficult to translate and some of the meanings are obscure to our culture. Commentators speculate as the actual meanings of things as the original intent of the author is difficult to comprehend.
- b) The big-picture ideas of love in marriage and the love between God and ourselves are not obscure. These ideas are expressed all through the Bible, and manifested in this love poem between King Solomon and his one true bride.
- c) Song of Songs is a marriage manual. The descriptions of love, problems, restoration, and desire for your spouse are wonderful applications for a biblical and joyful marriage.
- i) Song of Songs is a great book to study with your spouse. I am convinced God blesses that study in our marriages.
- ii) Song of Songs is a set of compliments between a groom and his bride. You never read of complaints and putdowns between them. Yes, they have their faults, but their love for each other overlooks their faults. They forgive each other as they both expect God to forgive them. They both desire that God's love shine through them and glorify God by serving and ministering to each other in God's love.
- d) On the deeper level, the book is full of word-pictures of God's perfect love for us, and His desire to return that love back to Him. I've tried in these lessons to give examples and prophecy from other books of the Bible to support these principals.
- i) My goal was to help all of us comprehend just how much God loves us unconditionally.
- i i) A goal of this study is to help us comprehend more and more, like the bride of this story that "I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me".
- a) The period at the end of that sentence is important.
- b) The realization of that love should draw us closer to God. Like the bride in the last verse, we should want God to run to us "like a gazelle" to enjoy that love relationship.

20. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, the Great God who desires and cherishes us. May we comprehend how great is that love you have for us. Through the power of that love is how we can love you back as well as show your love to those around us. The Bible teaches us that people will know we are Christians by our love for one another (John 13:35). Strengthen us with your love as we minister to our spouses, our family and the world around us. May you be glorified by our lives. We ask all of this in Jesus name, Amen.
21. On the next page is a bibliography of my sources for this study. It is optional reading. ☺

Supplement: Bibliography

"If I have seen further, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants."
(Isaac Newton)

Without prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all these commentaries are useless. My weekly prayer was for God to show me the things He wanted *me* to learn, and second, the lessons He wanted me to pass on in my writings. I have quoted many sources throughout these lessons. If any of these writers appeal to you, I invite you to read or listen to further commentaries as listed below. I have also quoted other sources not listed, and those names are usually listed in the lessons. These other authors were usually quoted from the materials listed below and taken from those sources.

First and foremost, the greatest commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. I mostly quote The New International Version (NIV), The New King James Version (NKJV), The King James Version (KJV) and the paraphrased-translations: The Living Bible (TLB) and the Good News Bible (GNB). The Bible text used is from the NIV. I use the NIV in my text, as it is currently the most popular. I don't have a particular favorite translation and I reference many of them.

Here are the commentaries I have referenced over the past lessons, (in no particular order). The reference to "audio" commentary means the information was gathered via the Internet in Real Audio® or MP3® Format, unless otherwise stated. They are listed in no particular order, alphabetically by author.

1. Commentary on Song of Songs by Jon Curson. It is in book form from Harvest House Publishing. It is also available via Real Audio® at <http://firefighters.org/index.htm>
2. The Expositor's Bible Encyclopedia, Zondervan Publications, (via CD-ROM 1998 release). This is a multi-volume encyclopedia with notes on every verse of the Bible. (It is available at Christian bookstores.) Paperback books are published on individual Bible books from this source.
3. The Message of the Song of Songs By Tom Gledhill, Edited by J.A. Motyer, Copyright © 1994, Tom Gledhill, Intervarsity Press (Part of "The Bible Speaks Today" series.)
4. Hocking, David: Finding Romance for a Lifetime: Studies in the Song of Solomon. Biola Publishing 1988; Dr. Hocking's studies on Song of Songs is also available on audio tape and can be purchased or heard via his web site at <http://hopefortoday.org>
5. Commentary on the Old Testament Vol. 6: Proverbs-Song of Solomon by C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch; Warren Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 2000, Parsons Church Group, a Division of Findex.Com. All rights reserved., Parsons Publishing The Life Application Bible, Copyright © 1997 Zondervan Publishing Tyndale House Publishing;
6. Exodus by J. Vernon McGee. Nelson Publishing, 1982. Copyright 1981 by J. Vernon McGee; Part of the J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, this is available in book and computer software formats.
7. Song of Songs by Chuck Missler an audio commentary, available at K-House Ministries 1-800-KHOUSE1. The web address is <http://www.khouse.org/> It is also available through Real Audio® <http://firefighters.org/html/library.cfm>
8. Song of Songs by Chuck Smith an audio commentary on, from the "6,000 series" lectures. It is available at Chapel Store, at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA. Other sermons by Chuck Smith are available online at <http://www.thewordfortoday.org/>
9. The Union and Communion By J. Hudson Taylor; Subtitled "A Devotional Study of How the Song of Solomon reveals a Believers' Union with Jesus Christ. Copyright © 2000 Bethany House Publishers.