

The Maturing of the Marriage

Song of Solomon 7 - 8

Song of Solomon 7:1-5 - *“How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince’s daughter!*

The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman.

² *Your navel is a rounded goblet. It lacks no blended beverage.*

Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies.

³ *Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.*

⁴ *Your neck is like an ivory tower.*

Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim.

Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon that looks toward Damascus.

⁵ *Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple.*

A king is held captive by your tresses.”

Background Notes:

As we’ve mentioned before, a lot of figurative language is used in the Hebrew poetry of the Song of Solomon. Most of this poetry is easy to interpret, especially when we realize it’s descriptive of a beautiful woman or a marital love relationship.

Look back, for example, at Song 6:6, where the woman’s teeth were described: *“Your teeth are like a flock of sheep that have come up from the washing. Every one bears twins, and none is barren among them.”* It’s easy to see that, using figurative language, he was describing her teeth as clean and white, and that no tooth was missing! (Remember, in the days before modern dentistry, if you lost a front tooth – well, I’m so sorry!)

Verse 5 says, *“Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple. A king is held captive by your tresses.”* Does that description mean that the Shulamite bride had a large head, and that her hair was dyed purple? No! Just as Mount Carmel rises majestically from the beautiful Mediterranean seacoast, and purple is a color of royalty, so Solomon described his Shulamite queen as majestic and beautifully awesome in her royal bearing.

Extreme typology sees **every detail** as a “type” (picture or illustration) of New Testament truth. Let me share one example of what **extreme typology** does when interpreting figurative language. Verses 2-3: *“Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage. Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.”* A commentary I read interpreted those verses this way: As a rounded goblet, her navel represents suffering and persecution of the Church (the New Testament teaching about the goblet or cup of suffering). As a heap of wheat surrounded by lilies, her waist represents all members of the true Church feeding on Christ, the true wheat and food for the soul. Her breasts as fawns, twins of a gazelle, represent the Christian’s double breastplate of faith and love.

It's true that the Church does suffer persecution, and it's true that Christ is our spiritual nourishment, and it's true that faith and love are the portions of every believer - so that commentary doesn't teach false doctrine or heresy. However, most likely the Spirit of God did **not** have those things in mind when He inspired Solomon to write the figurative description of the beauties of his wife!

Doctrinal Points

1. Lovemaking is a vital part of a maturing marriage.

Song 7:6-15 - *"How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!*

⁷ This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters.

⁸ I said, "I will go up to the palm tree; I will take hold of its branches."

Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples,

⁹ and the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers.

¹⁰ I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

¹¹ Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field. Let us lodge in the villages. ¹² Let us get up early to the vineyards. Let us see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.

¹³ The mandrakes give off a fragrance, and at our gates are pleasant fruits, all manner, new and old, which I have laid up for you, my beloved."

In Song 8:13-14, Solomon and his Shulamite wife speak to one another.

Solomon to his Shulamite wife in verse 13: *"You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice— Let me hear it!"*

The wife to her husband Solomon in verse 14: *"Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices."*

It doesn't take much insight to realize that this is figurative "love talk." In fact, it's so obviously sensual that some Christians have had problems with the Song of Solomon, saying that the language is too sensual and erotic. But that attitude reveals that a warped view of sex. God created sex! And Titus 1:15 says, *"To the pure, all things are pure."* Within the bonds of marriage, as God intended it, sex is good and beautiful.

And there's nothing "too sensual" about the love talk! The sensual language is certainly one factor that led to adopting a "typical" view of the Song of Solomon. But taking that view really doesn't deliver the interpreter from the supposed "problem" of the sensual language - because you can't have a "type" without the historical reality in the first place!

For example the **"typical"** view interprets Song 8:14 to be the Church's call for the Lord to return: *"Even so, come Lord Jesus" (Revelation 3:20)*. But this interpretation does not erase the fact that **in the context**, Song 8:14 is the request of Solomon's wife to come and make love to her! So the overall point of this very descriptive (and quite easy to interpret) figurative language is that lovemaking is a vital part of a maturing marriage.

When we compare the springtime here in chapter 7 with the springtime of chapter 2, we find that at least a year had gone by since the wedding. Although the honeymoon was over, romance and lovemaking continued to be a normal part of a maturing marriage. There was no holding back in this divinely endorsed marriage.

And that's the way it should be, according to God's Word. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 says, *"Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."*

In Song 8:14, notice that in this particular case the wife initiated the lovemaking. Clearly, from the divine perspective, this was not improper. Lovemaking is a vital part of a maturing marriage.

2. Reminiscing is a vital part of a maturing marriage.

Let's continue reading Song 8:1-7 - *"Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts!*

If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised.

² *I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me.*

I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.

³ *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.*

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.

⁵ *Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?*

I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; there she who bore you brought you forth.

⁶ *Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame.*

⁷ *Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it.*

If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised."

The marriage of Solomon and his Shulamite wife continued to deepen and mature. In verses 1-3, the wife wished she could show her affection for Solomon publicly, as a sister could with her brother. But this was quite impossible, because as a queen she was restricted by all the demands of royalty. But wouldn't it be great if they could get away to the countryside where she grew up, and have a second honeymoon! There they could let their marriage mature more naturally (v4).

It seems that the royal couple was able to get away from the public eye for a little while. The people of the village where the bride grew up asked, *"Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"* (v5). There in the countryside they reminisced about their courtship, demonstrating their deepening friendship and relationship as husband and wife. Reminiscing about how God brought you together with that special person is good for a maturing marriage.

In verses 6-7 we learn that God-given marital love is much more than just physical sex. The closeness of a relationship is a personal treasure. The love that develops is as strong as death. It is a love that is jealously protective. It's a love that is backed by the power of God. It is a love that cannot be quenched. It's a love that money can't buy!

Reminiscing is good for a godly love relationship, and it strengthens a marriage. It goes without saying that looking back and remembering His love for us is a vital part of our love relationship with the Lord. Reminiscing is a vital part of a maturing marriage.

Practical Application

Older brothers, protect your young sisters!

Song 8:8-12 - *“We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for? ⁹ If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar. ¹⁰ I am a wall, and my breasts like towers. Then I became in his eyes as one who found peace.*

¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon. He leased the vineyard to keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver coins. My own vineyard is before me.

¹²You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred.”

In these verses the Shulamite wife remembered how her brothers protected her when she was growing up on the family farm. King Solomon appears to have leased the vineyard to her family, and that’s how the young maiden had met him. Now, because she had been protected and had remained morally pure, she could give herself to Solomon as her “lease payment,” so to speak. In fact, by giving herself, she was giving him her own vineyard (figuratively speaking). And King Solomon could give her brothers payment in return for protecting her as a vineyard.

Her brothers did the right thing in protecting and caring for their young sister, including their concern for her moral purity. Protecting younger ones is an important role for older family members today – in both the natural family and in the church fellowship family.

It is vital for older brothers and sisters to **teach - and model** - high moral standards to their younger brothers and sisters - at home and in the local church. Older brothers, protect your young sisters!