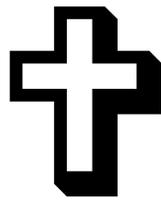


*I Love You With
All My Heart,
Always,
Jesus*



A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS
by Esher Shoshannah

Songofsolomondevotional.com

A BIBLICAL OVERVIEW OF OUR LORD'S BRIDGROOM LOVE FOR US

THE BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF READY - REVELATION 19:7

How much does the Lord love His people? Let the following verses declare it: ***"The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: 'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.'" Jeremiah. 31:3***

"And it shall be, in that day," says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,'" Hosea 2:16. Because of this infinite love for us **John 14:23** proclaims what our love in response to His heart should produce: ***"Jesus said "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...."!***

When **LADIES** read the Word of God they must become accustomed to being called ***"sons of God"***. This has **nothing to do with the masculine gender**, it is about the **FAMILY RELATIONSHIP** with their Abba, Father (**Rom.8:15; Gal.4:6**). Can you imagine being given to Jesus as a bride by His Abba Father? It's absolutely true. Jesus said clearly that we are a gift to Him from His Father in **John 10:29**, ***"My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."***

For **MEN**, they need to understand that being the bride of Christ is **not a gender issue**. It is a heartfelt **SURRENDER** issue. Read **Rom.12:1,2**. It is sad that so few men are able to enter into the glories of the Song of Songs because they think it is feminine. God's Word teaches clearly in **Gal.3:28** ***"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*** Online go to page 12 and see what three well known men and one well known lady had to say. Women and men who have received Christ as their Lord and Savior will be living in that relationship in eternity. Why not now?

Our Bridegroom Jesus asks, ***"And why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?" Luke 6:46.*** Your Bridegroom didn't die simply to be just your Savior. He became your Savior that He might be Lord of your life. ***"For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."*** Romans14:9.

The theme of this wonderful Song is about a believer who desires a deeper more intimate relationship with her Bridegroom through daily **surrendering** her/his will to Him in all the daily issues to Him in whom are ***"hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"*** Colossians 2:3.

All of us in the body of Christ need to be very submissive to our Lord, our Husband. It is an act of being humble before our eternal Husband - wasn't that a characteristic of Jesus as He walked this earth? He declared of Himself in **Matt. 11:29** ***"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*** His yoke is easy and His burden is light because we are drawn so close to Him in that yoke and He is carrying all the weight of that yoke. Isn't that what a real husband is supposed to be like?

Jesus, your Bridegroom humbled Himself for you, His bride (**Phil.2:5-9**) and did this for you, **Eph. 5:25-26**, ***"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word."***

He still is giving Himself for you, **Heb. 7:25**, ***"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*** WHAT A HUSBAND!

Imagine Jesus, with great joy, looking closely at this precious gift of you to Him and saying, ***"Thank You my Father, thank You so much, she looks terrible right now, but I'll die for her! She will become my beautiful, perfect, spotless, glorious bride forever and ever!"*** (Heb.12:2). This is part of the great joy that was set before Jesus causing Him to endure the cross and despising the shame!

Oh the precious oneness you have as a bride with your heavenly Bridegroom who came to live in your heart (Eph.1:13; Col.1:27; John 17:22)! Yes, He lives intimately in you. That is spiritual oneness.

This spiritual oneness is what real marriage is all about. Jesus loves you, His blood-bought bride so much, that at the moment of salvation He had to indwell you immediately by His Spirit. That's oneness! He would not leave His bride alone in this sinful wilderness but would stay with her until He escorts her to their permanent home (John 14:2-3).

The devotional is to be read slowly. Each time it is simply sitting privately with your most intimate spiritual Friend (John 15:15, 17:26), the Lord Jesus Christ, having Him reveal to you the deepest thoughts about you, His blood bought bride. Many, many times you will just sit and savor in your heart the joys of Him who is your Bridegroom/Friend.

May the Holy Spirit touch your heart while reading the following verses:

Isa 54:5; "For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth."

2 Corinthians 11:2; "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."

Hosea 2:19-20; The Lord speaking about His people, "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD."

John the Baptist speaking about Jesus, ***John 3:29, "He who has the bride is the Bridegroom..."***

Revelation 19:7, 9; "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. Then he said to me, 'Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.'"

Revelation 21:9; "Then one of the seven angels...spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.'"

The Lord even uses the analogy of a bride and bridegroom in giving us the garments for salvation. What a gift!!!
Isaiah 61:10; "I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

Always for His Name's sake alone,

Esher Shoshannah Psalms 106:8; 109:21; 143:11

***"I Love You With
All My Heart!
Always,
Jesus"***

**A devotional commentary on the Song of
Solomon**

Author: Esher Shoshannah

DEDICATION

***"To the only wise God
our Savior, be glory
and majesty, dominion
and power, both now
and ever! Amen."***

Jude 1:25

IN MEMORY OF

***The lady Jesus told us to never forget!
He said that wherever the gospel is
preached her story was to be told.***

Mark 14:9

She loved Him no matter
what it cost her!

Mary of Bethany

***"Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is
preached in the whole world, what this woman
has done will also be spoken of in memory of
her."***

Mark 14:9

***The gospel is infinitely and eternally important. The
gospel miraculously transforms people. Mary of Bethany
is a beautiful example of what Jesus desires in us as
believers.***

THREE BOOKS IN ONE!

1. A PRAYER - PRAISE BOOK

The author becomes so moved while meditating upon certain verses that he must stop and pray. The prayer of the writer's heart is written out and he asks you to pray with him. This happens over ninety-five times. There are over 350 praises for our Beloved from A to Z to be used after reading each chapter. They appear at the end of the last chapter.

2. A VERSE BY VERSE DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY

The heart of this study is life application and a love adoration for God. The Holy Spirit will reach into your heart. You will reach up to the Lord and reach out to others. The thoughts presented in each verse are to lead you into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord and His people.

3. A SPIRITUAL SHORT STORY

Woven throughout this book is a hypothetical short story of the bride, her friends and the Lord. The purpose is to spiritually illustrate what a particular verse is teaching. In this short story you will be allowed to hear the Beloved Bridegroom and the Holy Spirit speak to the bride. You will listen to her heart speak through many circumstances.

THIS IS ALL ABOUT SURRENDERED LOVE TO HIM!

You become so completely in love with the Lord causing you to trust your whole being to Him including all your circumstances!

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

Psalm 103:1

Because of this Holy Spirit filling of love for your Bridegroom you will actively believe with your whole heart that He keeps His promises. You will wholeheartedly rest your daily life on Rom. 8:28,32; II Cor.1:20 and Isa.63:9! Without hesitation you will actively do what the Holy Spirit declares in Prov.3:5,6. With that you will completely rest in Phil. 4:6 and experience v.7!

If you find yourself attacked with doubts, then continually be reminded of the above scriptures and rest in your Bridegroom's heart Who will absolutely keep Deut. 31:6,8! Pray for the true filling of your Bridegroom's Spirit where He will develop this private, intimate love relationship between you and He, your heavenly Husband. You will begin to say, "I am consumed with love for You dear Lord, increase my capacity to love You more!"

LORD JESUS, HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU WHEN...

...You looked inside of my heart and saw what was absolutely repulsive to Your pure soul, my sin nature which was dead in trespasses and sins (**Eph.2:1**) - DEAD! DEAD! DEAD? These dead things were spiritually decaying and putrid smelling! Only God could handle that horrible, eternal stench. Jesus, You saw all of my filthy deadness in the cup You were offered by Your Father in the Garden of Gethsemane and in tears began to sweat great drops of blood. You willingly took that horrifying cup and drank it up fully for me! *OH MY SOUL THAT IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE, INFINITE, GLORIOUS LOVE!*

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You saw my sin nature and said *I will be judged and punished for this horrible spiritual filth?* This polluted ocean was filled with things lurking to be fulfilled even though I had not acted on all of them. You saw all of the following swirling around in my heart tempting me, waiting for me to say "yes" to: negative thoughts and desires, critical spirit, unforgiveness, disobedience, hypocrisy, gossip, cursing, strife, slander, bitterness, intolerance, unbelief, resentment, sexual impurity, vanity, uncaring, pouting, manipulation, faultfinding, judging, spite, selfishness, addictions, stubbornness, immorality, malice, coldness and so much more (**Rom.1:28-32**)! *"BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD!"* (**1John 3:1**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

... You actually became my sin and my curse (**Gal.3:13; 2Cor.5:21**)? Jesus, You not only took the above spiritual filth but BECAME IT! You felt inside all that was in that sin nature of mine! Dear God, that overwhelms my heart that on the cross You were completely flooded by what You hated. **Heb.12:2** declares, that You endured the cross and DESPISING THE SHAME! The old hymn says it all; *THE LOVE OF GOD IS GREATER FAR THAN TONGUE OR PEN CAN EVER TELL...*

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You were blamed for what I was and had done? Jesus, You were punished for the guilty me in Your spirit, soul, as well as Your body. You took all my punishment! *"...I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE..."* (**Jer.31:3**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You said, *"My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?"* Jesus, You knew that the judgment for all those who die not receiving Your sacrifice would be separated from You forever. They would confess their own words, *"I DID IT MY WAY!" "I didn't need You or Your sacrifice."* And You, King Jesus must say in response, *"IT WAS NOT ENOUGH!"* You were totally forsaken so that I would not be forever forsaken to a place where only evil exist. *"IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS."* (**1John 4:10**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You made the offer of Your salvation a completely free gift to me so You alone would receive all the glory (**Rom. 6:23; Eph.2:8,9**)? *"BUT WHEN THE KINDNESS AND THE LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US..."* (**Titus 3:4,5**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You live to watch over me (**Heb.7:25**)? You love me so much that You came to live inside of me and will never leave me (**Gal.2:20; Deut.31:6,8**). You actually felt all the pain that I would go through in this life (**Isa.63:9**). You give meaning to the troubles I would go through (**2Cor.1:3-5**) so that I can help others. You give Your promises to limit the temptations (**1Cor.10:13**). *"WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US."* (**1John 4:19**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You love me so much that You discipline me to keep me on the right path of Your plan for me. (**Phil.4:6,7; Heb.12:6**)? You experienced everything I would go through to sympathize & be deeply touched in all my weaknesses (**Heb.4:14,15**). *"AND WALK IN LOVE, JUST AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED US, AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR US..."* (**Eph.5:2**)

PRAY WITH ME: Dear Lord, the choice of my heart is to surrender all things each day to Your loving, caring, guiding and protecting heart. My choice is to have You daily change my life. I do not want to go back to the old life. I want more of Your life Lord seen in me. I don't want to lead my life. I no longer own my life! You have all the rights to it! You died not to just save me but that You would be Lord and Leader of it (**Rom14:9**). As I present myself each day to You (**Rom.12:1-2**), I will proclaim these words, *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. You make me to lie down in green pastures; You lead me beside the still waters. You restore my soul; You lead me in the paths of righteousness for Your Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."* Lord, I love You even more now because of how far You would go to save me! Always, for Your Name's sake alone Lord Jesus, AMEN!

The Holy Spirit now desires to take your heart even deeper into how much His great love endured for you at the cross. He wants you to know just how low God would go to save your soul and make you His bride. The answer, dear bride of Christ, is overwhelming!

HE BECAME A WORM – HE SAID SO!!

"This is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:10

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Abba, Father, what an incomprehensible sacrifice You made by sending us Your heart, the Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son to go through infinite suffering for me. Cause my heart to know just a small portion of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of Jesus' love and suffering for me His bride, that I may become all that He desires in me, from me and for me! Amen!"*

HOW COULD THE LORD SAY, HE BECAME A WORM?

He said in **Psalm 22:6**, *"But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people."* On the cross the Lord spoke verse 1 and what was on His heart continued.

JESUS SAID THAT HELL HAS WORMS THAT WILL NEVER DIE!

He said in **Mark 9:47,48**; *"And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into HELL, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED."*

THE WORM IS RED! THE WORM IS SIN! THE WORM IS CRUSHED!

Isaiah 1:18 states, *"Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet (Hebrew shani), they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson (Hebrew tolaath – worm), they shall be as wool."* The Hebrew word "tolaath" refers to the worm from which the color crimson or red is obtained. The other Hebrew word "shani" is the product (red dye) which comes forth from the crushed eggs of this worm-like creature. So the Hebrew word has two meanings: "scarlet" and "worm". Keep in mind that in **Isaiah 1:18** the color red represents "sin" and it also means "worm"!

THE JOY OF GOD WHO BECAME A WORM

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the JOY set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
Hebrews 12:2

Jesus had just gone into the Garden of Gethsemane, He fell on His face and cried out to the Father, *"My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."* What was in that cup? God's anger and all of our horrible, stinking sin worms! He would drink that cup of sin-worms and His pure soul would become full with our sin worms!

Yet, in Hebrews **12:2** it says that *"who for the joy set before Him endured the cross"*. What joy? Seeing you and me saved, changed and out of the clutches of Satan; seeing the devil defeated and knowing that in the future Satan would be locked up forever never to hurt anyone again; seeing that there would never again be any more death, sorrow, sickness, crying, pain, or curse (**Rev. 21:4; 22:3**)! HALLELUJAH!

Jesus hated the cross but the joy of what the future would hold for all of us sustained Him. All of our sin worms would disappear forever except for those who would reject Him. Those sin worms would live on forever crawling all over them (**Mark 9:44,46,48**). Can you imagine Jesus loving us this much that He would go to such depths to suffer for us? To help us understand this the Holy Spirit uses the illustration that Jesus became an ugly, sin-filled, meaningless, humiliating, powerless worm.

HOW HIGH AND AWESOME IS OUR GOD?

Never forget that our God created the universe! I can't understand that He is greater than that which He created. HE IS BIGGER THAN THE UNIVERSE ITSELF. Think about these words from the old hymn:

"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul my Savior God to Thee How Great Thou Art."

How low would God, the One who created the universe, go to save you and me? From the highest heights of His glorious throne in heaven to an excruciating death on a cross, He became a WORM! Yes, you heard right! Let's begin this amazing journey through the Word of God. After considering these scriptures, ask yourself this question, "Do I love Jesus more?"

THE WORM REPRESENTS OUR SINFUL, WEAK CONDITION

Here are some instances where the Hebrew word "crimson" is also translated in the Bible as "worm" in the following scriptures:

Job 25:6 – *"How much less man, that maggot, and the son of man that worm."*

Isa. 41:14 – *"Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel."*

Worms are lowly and have no power. There is no beauty in them. The worm is ugly. They live, crawling around in the darkness of the earth. Spiritually, God sees our soul in the same condition. Jesus became a human being so that He could have all of our filthy sin worms put in His soul on the cross.

That is what He sees in us! Who would ever want to touch even one of those sickening things? He decided to have all the world's worms placed in His pure holy soul for you and me.

WORMS ARE SEEN AS DESTROYERS OF LIFE

In **Deut.28** the Lord pronounces the curses which come upon God's disobedient children. **Verse 39** states, *"You shall plant and cultivate vineyards but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall devour them."* **Deut.28:39**

From the very beginning of life, the sin nature within us begins to eat away at our soul. Sin destroys relationships, joy, love, peace, unity, life, fullness and so much more! THE VERY THING WHICH DESTROYS US, JESUS HAD TO BECOME! Glory to God! In a few minutes you will see this from the Word of God itself. It says so!

THANK YOU LORD - YOU BECAME OUR SPIRITUAL SIN-WORMS FOR US IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE DEADLY, ETERNAL RESULT OF DYING WITH THEM ON OUR SOULS!

SATAN TRIES TO HIDE IT BUT WORMS ARE HIS TRUE IMAGE

Although Satan is able to transform himself to appear as an angel of light (**II Cor.11:14**), His downfall is revealed in **Isa.14:11-16**. In **v.11** he is described as being covered with "worms" (sin), *"Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you, and worms are your covering."* So Satan is filled with sin (worms)!

Some Bibles in **Isa.14:12** used Satan's former name "*Lucifer*". Other Bibles say "*O star of the morning, son of the dawn!*" Why the difference? The first is his name the other is the definition of Lucifer's name. No matter how Satan tries to hide it or cover it up, underneath are horrible slimy worms that represent the ultimate filth of sin! Without Jesus' blood to cleanse us we look the very same way!

FRIGHTENING! OUR SIN-WORMS WILL NEVER DIE IN THE LAKE OF FIRE

The last verse in **Isa. 66:24** declares, *"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."*

Remember this verse in **Mark 9:48** where Jesus spoke about the eternal place called "Hell" where souls will suffer for eternity and *"...where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."* The spiritual sin "worms" infesting their souls will never die. Jesus had to become the worm in order to defeat Satan and defeat every worm that crawls all over our souls and then give us His righteousness (**2 Cor.5:21**).

Keep in mind that Jesus said hell was made for the devil and His angels (**Mt. 25:41**). Those who die without having Jesus in their soul look just like Satan, and it will be for all eternity. Their bed and covering in the Lake of Fire will be crawling with the worms that will never die just like we found out about Satan in **Isa. 14:11**. Jesus said that those who do not belong to Him have the devil as their father! **John 8:44**.

LET'S REVISIT PSALM 22 - JESUS, GOD THE SON, BECAME A WORM!

Look again at **Psa. 22:1-6,16**. Hundreds of years before Jesus' crucifixion, it was prophesied in **v.16**. This is a Psalm about crucifixion. On the cross Jesus cried out in **Matt.27:46**, *"My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?"* The first six verses tell us about what was on Jesus' heart while dying on the cross.

From this Psalm, the precious Holy Spirit allows us to get a glimpse of what was going on in our Lord's heart while He was dying for our sins. Listen to His heart cry out for help but His Father will not respond! *"O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season (darkness on the cross), and am not silent."* Why? His Father had always heard His cries before (**Heb.5:7**). The answer is in the next verse. **Verse 3** tells us that the Father is holy. Jesus was now unholy because He had become all the putrefying sin-worms of the world.

Keep in mind that **2 Cor. 5:21** says that Jesus became sin for us. He didn't just take it but actually became it. *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* So He became our sin-filled worms. **Gal. 3:13** tells that Jesus didn't just take the curse that was on us but actually became it. *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having BECOME a curse for us..."* He became the curse of our sin-filled infested soul.

He didn't just take the curse HE BECAME IT! Oh the awful stench of His soul! It was the trash heap of our sin! How utterly awful that the pure, holy, righteous Lamb of God became all of our spiritual and soul filth before the eyes of His Holy Father!

No wonder Jesus cried out in **Psa. 22:4,5**; *"Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed."* Then comes the powerful, unimaginable cry of Jesus as the awful realization of what He had become pierced His holy spirit and soul. In utter despair He cries out, **Psa.22:6**, *"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people!"*

He was saying, *"I have become a repulsive, helpless, naked and defenseless worm! I am not even a man whereby You may answer My cry to You, Father. I am all that You hate. I have become worthless! Father, You cannot answer my prayer."* The Worm was about to experience the most agonizing and tormenting pain that ever could be known. As you meditate upon the following paragraph, remember how the red dye was obtained - by crushing the worm!

NEVER FORGET THE CRUSHING OF JESUS, YOUR SAVIOUR AND LORD

Once again, remember that to obtain the redeeming scarlet, crimson dye (His blood) Jesus had to become the sin-worm, in order to be crushed! The Worm, Jesus, now was crushed by God, for it says in **Isa. 53:5** *"...He was crushed for our iniquities...."* (heb. "daka" - means to "crush, beat or break into pieces, destroy, shatter, to be oppressed, to be smitten, to be made humble or contrite").

All of those words describe what was happening to Jesus, the Worm! And who crushed Him? It was His Father! *"But it pleased the Lord to crush Him!"* **Isa.53:10**.

It pleased the Father because Satan would be defeated once and for all. It pleased Him because there would be a new spiritual family that would love God forever! It pleased the Father to crush Him because Adam's race would now be restored to its rightful place of rule (see **Rev.5:9,10**).

FROM FILTHY WORMS TO GLORIOUS NEW GARMENTS

The original garment of our soul is seen as a *"filthy rag"* (**Isa.64:6**). Praise God, that as the Father crushed His Son, the cleansing, saving blood came forth for His people. It would be used in giving her a spotless spiritual garment.

The moment our souls cried out for salvation; the moment we realized just how rotten our sin nature was within us; the moment we turned to Jesus and confessed our sin and received Him, He came rushing in and ripped off the stinking, worm-infested rag which was enwrapping our soul and placed His own glorious, pure and righteous garment on us.

Hear the joyous cry of one who had received this glorious clothing from the hand of God. *"I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness."* (**Isa.61:10**; see **Rev.19:7-9**)!

"And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in - That on the cross my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin! THEN SINGS MY SOUL - 'HOW GREAT THOU ART!' " Oh, dear redeemed one, bow down your heart and soul and simply worship the King who became a worm! As love pours out to Him, you will desire to keep (obey) His word. **John 14:23** *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word....' "*

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear, dear Lord, my heart is full of love for You. I am overwhelmed by Your love that would become so ugly for me who was unlovable. I ask only one thing of You, cause my heart to want to obey Your Word as never before. May that show just how much I do love You. Thank You, thank You, thank You with all of my heart, for Your name's sake, Amen!"

Let's close by meditating on the blessed words from the hymns of the past:

WHO IS HE?

Nailed upon Golgotha's tree, faint and bleeding who is He?
Hands and feet so rudely torn, wreathed with crown of twisted thorn.
Once He lived in heaven above, happy in His Father's love!
SON OF GOD, 'tis He, 'tis He on the cross at Calvary!

Nailed upon Golgotha's tree, mocked and taunted who is He?
Scorners tell Him to come down, claim His kingdom and His crown!
He it was who came to bless, full of love and tenderness!
SON OF MAN, 'tis He, 'tis He on the cross at Calvary!

Nailed upon Golgotha's tree, as a victim, who is He?
Bearing sin, but not His own, suffering agony unknown!
He the promised sacrifice, for our sins has paid the price!
LAMB OF GOD, 'tis He, 'tis He on the Cross at Calvary!

Throned in glorious majesty, Lord triumphant, who is He?
He's the One who came to die, now in heaven, exalted high!
With adoring hearts we now, At His blessed feet now bow!
LORD OF ALL, 'tis He, 'tis He, throned in glorious majesty! *author unknown*

WAS IT FOR ME?

Was it for me, for me He wept and prayed, My load of sin before Him laid;
That night within Gethsemane, was it for me, that agony?
Was it for me He bowed His head, upon the cross and freely shed
His precious blood that crimson tide, was it for me the Savior died?
It was for me, yes, all for me, O love of God, so great so free,
O wondrous love, I'll shout and sing! He died for me my Lord and King! *J.M.Whyte*

WAS IT FOR ME?

Was it for me, the nails, the spear, the cruel thorns, the mocking jeer,
That rugged cross, 'twixt earth and sky—was it for me He came to die?
Was it for me, that opened tomb, dispelling fear and death and gloom?
So vast a truth proclaims to me that I through Him can victor be.
Yes, all for me—the cross, the grave, A risen Lord with power to save!
My joyful heart is filled with praise As songs of happiness I raise.
He loved me so! He loved me so! Dark Calvary He chose to know,
To vanquish sin and death and woe; 'Twas all because He loved me so. *Rose N. Coull*

Child of God, do you really know who you are?
REJOICE, YOU ARE GOD'S BRIDE!

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." II Corinthians 11:2

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready. And He says unto me, 'Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' These are the true sayings of God." Rev. 19:7,9

"For thy Maker is your Husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called." Isaiah 54:5

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying... 'I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.'" Revelation.21:9

The Lord even uses the analogy of a bride and bridegroom in giving us the garments for salvation as seen in the following verse:

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10

Welcome bride of Christ, to a very special devotional study which will draw your heart closer to your Beloved Lord as never before. It is to be read as the Holy Spirit leads you to sit for a time with your Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.

At times you will find yourself so touched in your spirit you will need to set the devotional aside, and sit quietly in His presence, with no words spoken except the love of your heart flowing to His.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord, my heart belongs to You alone! Take me now and let me be the bride who will bring You great joy. Cause me each day of my life to walk so closely to You that I will experience Your intimacy which will begin to change me into Your blessed image forever."*

To get a real glimpse of this bride's heart, turn to chapter 8:6 where her Bridegroom asks her to give Him a very special gift. He says, *"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm..."* With a heart overflowing with love for Him, she gladly obeys knowing this will give Him greatest joy of all! And you too will be asked the same question by your spiritual Bridegroom when you reach chapter eight!

Listen, dear bride of the Lord Jesus, to the following words spoken by Him to you as He looks deep into the eyes of your soul saying with overwhelming love and joy:

"Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of your eyes, with one chain of thy neck." **S of S 4:9**

"How fair (beautiful) is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of your ointments than all spices!" **S of S 4:10**

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah... Turn away your eyes from me, for they have overcome me..." **S of S 6:4,5**

With a great longing in His heart, Jesus desires for you not to know Him just as Savior but as your Bridegroom! You are His eternal joy!

He wrote this wonderful, spiritual Song to reveal the innermost thoughts of His heart to you. Why? So that you may be able to grow deeper in the fullness of His love!

AND NOW A MYSTERY TO BE SOLVED!

?

Consider what the bride declares about her Bridegroom in 2:16:

"My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feeds among the lilies."

Compare the above with what she proclaims in 6:3:

"I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine: He feeds among the lilies."

What caused her to reverse the first declaration? The difference will lead her life into a defining moment of intimacy and service that she had never experienced before.

This most powerful spiritual moment takes place in the 7:10 where she proclaims:

"I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me."

May the Holy Spirit bring you into this same life-changing moment where your heart will never again turn back!

THE SONG OF SOLOMON: WELL KNOWN BELIEVERS TESTIFY

C. H. SPURGEON (the great 19th cent. preacher) on the Song he said,

"The true believer who has lived near to his Master will find this book to be a mass, not of gold merely, for all God's Word is this, but a mass of diamonds sparkling with brightness; and all things thou canst conceive are not to be compared with it for its matchless worth. If I must prefer one book above another, I would prefer some books of the Bible for doctrine, some for experience, some for example, some for teaching, BUT LET ME PREFER THIS BOOK ABOVE ALL OTHERS FOR FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION (my emphasis). When the Christian is nearest to heaven, this is the book he takes with him." (From the book, "The Most Holy Place" – Christian Focus Publications)

CHARLES FINNEY (the great 19th cent. revivalist) shared his heart:

The moment Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) entered into the power of this love relationship with Christ he said, *"...The whole Scripture seemed to be all ablaze with light, and not only light, but it seemed as if God's Word was instinct with the very life of God...At this time it seemed as if my soul was wedded to Christ, in a sense in which I had never had any thought or conception of before. The language of the Song of Solomon was as natural to me as my breath. I thought I could understand well the state of mind he was in, when he wrote that song....I not only had all the freshness of my first love, but a vast accession to it. Indeed, the Lord lifted me so much above anything that I had ever experienced before...."* (From the book, "They Found the Secret" – Zondervan Publications)

HUDSON TAYLOR (famous 19th cent. missionary) wrote a wonderful little book on the Song of Solomon entitled "Union and Communion" dealing with our spiritual relationship with Christ, the Bridegroom.

JOHN GILL (One of the great Puritan theologians of the 18th century preached 122 sermons in 1724 on the Song of Solomon.)

"...The subject of this song...is Christ, the true Solomon, of whom Solomon was an eminent type...the transcendent glories and excellencies of His person; His inexpressible love unto, care of, and concern for His church and people, together with the nearness of access unto and sweet communion and fellowship with Himself, which He indulges them with, are here particularly expressed and set forth, so that it may be called the Song of Songs." (From the book "An Exposition of the Song of Solomon" - Sovereign Grace Publishers)

JONI EARECKSON TADA (well known 20th century Christian writer)

"When I approach the Lord in prayer, I relate to Him in different ways. Occasionally I talk with Him as my elder brother, which He is. If I'm under spiritual attack, I'll go to Him in prayer as the Captain of my soul. He is my friend when I want to pour out my heart. I even have single friends who look up to the Lord as their husband, as it says in Isaiah 54:5. Lately, I've enjoyed relating to my Savior as the lover of my soul. And when I want to tell the Lord how much I adore Him, I use the language of love in the Song of Songs. This beautiful book of the Bible is more than just a love poem; it's a picture of the love relationship between the Bridegroom and His bride. From your heart, tell Jesus that He is the fairest of ten thousand. Praise Him for being altogether lovely. Let Him know that His love is better than wine. He is the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley." (From "Women's Devotional Bible" and "Diamonds in the Dust" – Zondervan Publishers)

THE HEART OF HIS LOVE SONG

- I. The Desire for Intimacy: 1:1 - 2:7**
- II. The Depths of His Power and Desire: 2:8 - 2:15**
- III. The Decision for Self: 2:16 - 3:5**
- IV. The Dream of His Strength and Power: 3:6 - 11**
- V. The Discovery of Full Acceptance: 4:1 - 5:1**
- VI. The Danger of Hesitation When He Calls: 5:2 - 5:6a**
- VII. The Desperation & Depression of Loneliness: 5:6b - 8**
- VIII. The Drawing of Her Heart Back to Him: 5:9 - 6:3**
- IX. The Delights of His Heart Revealed: 6:4 - 7:9**
- X. The Dying to Self: 7:10**
- XI. The Devoted Life: 7:11 - 8:14**

TESTIMONIES FROM THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BLESSED

Shalom Esher – in the name of the Beloved,

This devotional has affected my life so deeply- words cannot say. Thank you – for putting your years of time with Him on paper – so those of us who long to peer into His heart more deeply have access to the revelation He has given you, and in turn us! Hallelujah! Through the S of S my walk with Him has been transformed, and continues to be. No other book has affected me the way this gift has. May the Lord continue to bless you more and more in the reality of His unfailing love.

Shalom in Y'shua,
Brandy

Dear Esher,

What a book, far more appealing, interesting, explanatory, revealing, captivating and stirring than any spiritual book I've read. I've just started to read this book very slowly, **taking time to feel the heart of Jesus for me**, relishing and delighting in that feeling and letting it have its effect on me to make me desire to do His will for His good pleasure. ***I've been teaching men and women little thoughts from the book and they end up staring at me with so much more understanding of the love Jesus has for them. Where it has been difficult to get them to move for evangelism, just sharing the thoughts from this book has caused them to want to move.*** May God bless you abundantly for sending me this book and those that are on the way.

Sold out for Jesus,
Helga

Dear Esher,

Thanks so much for this wonderful devotional! I have been blessed beyond measure! I have been spending time with the Lover of my soul like I have never done before or even knew I could. I have been a believer for over 25 years and have always spent time in discipleship classes and personal studies. I have continually tried to put into practice what I have learned. **This devotional is far more than what I expected. I have been taken to the most intimate relationship with my Lord! It has given me confidence to really know who I am in Christ.** I look forward to sharing this book with my friends and whoever will listen. I am requesting a copy for my daughter-in-law and her mother. I can't wait to hear and see the change in their lives as they pursue Him with this wonderful life changing experience.

Thank you and God bless you,
Linda

Good morning Esher!

I want to take time to let you know how much the Holy Spirit has spoken to me through this devotion guide! I have been hungrily working my way through it since March! I can tell you, I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit as I study and look up each verse!! **I have learned a deeper and deeper understanding of who Jesus is and how MUCH He loves and cherishes me!** I have such a fervency to serve Him as I have never had before. I now want to start having study sessions with my three teenage daughters. They have seen the change in me and they are hungry to learn who Jesus is on a more intimate level.

God Richly Bless You!

Dawna

For Additional Testimonies Please Go To The Website

THE SPIRITUAL VISION OF THIS BOOK

THE GOAL OF THE GOSPEL: JESUS DESIRES FOR EACH BELIEVER TO BECOME A MARY OF BETHANY

"Never forget this Lady!" a lady who only spoke twelve words in the New Testament! Who is this very important, mysterious lady? It's Mary of Bethany. Every time she appears in the Word of God she is at Jesus' feet. First, she listened to His WORD; second, she witnessed in her WOE; third, she quietly poured out WORSHIP on Him. How important is she? So important that Jesus instructed us to speak about her wherever the gospel is preached! Jesus clearly declared it in **Mark 14:9**, "**Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.**" What makes Mary of Bethany so special, so significant to the Lord that He insists she must be mentioned wherever His Gospel is preached? She is extremely important in learning what the truly consecrated, surrendered spiritual life is all about! Do you really want to know what will please the Lord? Learn from this lady!

PRAY WITH ME: "*Dear Abba Father, cause my spiritual eyes to observe the actions of this precious lady's heart. May her desires be my desires. May my heart please You as much as her heart did so many years ago. 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law'* (Your Word – **Psa. 119:18**), in Jesus precious name, amen!"

I. SITTING AT JESUS' FEET TO HEAR HIS WORD

Please read **Luke 10:38-42**. Martha desires to do something very good. She invites Jesus into her home to make Him a meal. Martha wants Jesus to feel special. However, it would be on her own terms. Nothing was to get in the way of her plans, not even Jesus! Martha represents the busy believer, always doing and seldom pausing just to sit quietly, with undivided attention, listening to the Lord speak through His Word to the heart. Mary had been helping but chose to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to Him. To be a Mary of Bethany is a choice. Under enormous emotional pressure, Mary chose between her sister and Jesus. She had counted the cost (**Luke 14:26-28**). She took advantage of the moment! Mary is teaching us that it is necessary to drop all activities and sit at Jesus' feet and have our spirit fed, comforted and strengthened by His Word. By stopping all activities Mary was saying, "*Lord, You and Your Word are much more important than my activities.*"

Martha had an inflexible agenda. There would be a meal and it would be served when she planned it to be served. Why didn't Martha ask Jesus if He wanted to eat at that moment? What began as a heartfelt, loving act turned into an emotional nightmare for the whole household! Martha became distracted on the task itself. In **Luke 10:40** the Greek word for "*distracted*" carries with it the idea of being drawn in different directions; going around in circles! This verb is passive, meaning that she is controlled by the circumstances.

Satan approaches Martha in the kitchen and whispers to her, "*Look at all you have to do and nobody cares!*" In verse 40 of the text, the Greek word "*left*" is a strong word meaning "*to abandon; to utterly forsake*"! Evil seeds of irritation are planted in Martha's heart which turn into anger. Infuriated and outraged, a root of bitterness is implanted in her heart (**Heb. 12:15**) and would attempt to defile the very act of service meant to bless. Martha waits impatiently for Mary to come and help her. You can hear Martha thinking, "*She hates me, look at her there sitting with Jesus as if I don't exist!*" Mary was fulfilling a requirement of a true disciple of Jesus, to be so in love with Him that it looks as if she hates her sister (**Luke 14:26**).

Having had enough of Mary's seeming lack of concern, Martha bursts in on them in anger, questions whether Jesus cares for her, scolds Mary to Jesus and commands Him to do something about it. Wuest's translation gives us a true picture of Martha's demeanor in approaching Jesus. "*And bursting upon Jesus she assumed a stance over Him and said....*" She is so aggravated that she cannot speak to Mary directly. Martha had welcomed Jesus into the heart of her home but not into the heart of her activities. So many welcome Jesus into their soul for salvation but few welcome Jesus into the circumstances of their life.

Through Martha, Satan is attempting to rob Mary of receiving precious truth from her Lord and robbing Jesus of the joy of her fellowship. Martha allowed the enemy to bring in a tense, angry, negative, hatefully charged atmosphere into the home. The word "*troubled*" or "*bothered*" used by the Lord is another very strong Greek word meaning, *to: "disturb; throw into a tumult; set in an uproar; make a noise or disturbance, especially the noise made in lamenting the dead."*

What can we learn from Mary? She sits quietly and does not respond. There was no angry reaction from her! She was completely focused on her Lord. Mary allowed Jesus to take care of this very volatile situation. Jesus said that, "**...Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.**" What Mary received at Jesus' feet

(**Luke 10**) will give her strength when her brother tragically dies in (**John 11**). When death comes to Lazarus, Martha will be crushed but Mary will be comforted.

Martha was into service alone. Mary was into the Lord Himself. Mary's heart is summed up in these words, "**The Lord is my portion, says my soul....**" (**Lam. 3:24**). Sacrificing time for Jesus alone opens to us precious revelation from God's Word. Precious to His heart is this very real act of love!

What was it that Mary had which would not be taken away? It was her absolute confidence in the Lord, her love for Jesus, faith in Him, and the emotional and spiritual strength that would remain in her heart when the family tragedy would strike. Mary had no idea that her brother would die in the not too distant future. When Lazarus died Martha would have none of those qualities. Mary will handle it in total faith and trust. Martha will lose her peace and will let fly an accusing attitude to the Lord in **John 11**. Do you want to please the Lord? Be a Mary of Bethany by sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to His Word.

II. FALLING DOWN AT JESUS' FEET IN YOUR WOE

Please read **John 11:1-45**. The word comes to Jesus that His very close friend Lazarus is deathly ill. So important is Mary that the Holy Spirit mentions what she will be doing in **John 12:1-3** before it actually takes place in the narrative (**11:2**). The Lord sends a message back to Mary and Martha giving them the distinct feeling that their brother would not die. The emotional shockwave hits them. Each hour he grows worse. "*Jesus will get here in time*" they whisper to their dying brother. Then Lazarus dies! And Jesus is still outside the town making no move to help! Martha thinks that Jesus really didn't care about His friend. Instead of rushing to Lazarus' side, which was expected, the Lord waits two more days and then shows up.

Martha runs out in anger, and with an accusing tone says, "*Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.*" She tells Jesus she knew that when He prays the Father answers Him. But implied in that statement is, "*but You didn't pray for my brother did You!*" (**John 11:21,22**)

Then Martha returns secretly to Mary, she calls Him "**master**" or "**teacher**". Notice carefully that she calls Jesus, "**Lord**" to His face but now it is only "**teacher**". So many of us sing songs and hymns about Jesus being Lord, but when the circumstances of life turn sour, our heart is exposed and we find out that He really is not our Lord at all (**Rom.14:9**). He just taught us some nice Bible scriptural that have no real power in our lives.

In the deep trial of life, Martha had nothing. Why? She was so busy "*servicing*" Jesus that she had no time to receive from Him! What Mary had received in **Luke 10** was still there when the tragedy struck! She did not turn on the Lord. So many of us, deep in our heart, blame the Lord for not stepping in and turning things around when everything goes wrong. When the dark clouds of life sweep over our souls there is nothing to lean upon to carry us through. Having had no intimate time with Him, they fail to put into practice the promises in **I Cor. 10:13** and **II Cor. 4:7-9**.

So important is Mary's heart that the Holy Spirit, while talking about Martha, interrupts the train of thought and directs our focus to Mary. He wants us to see her sitting still in the house while Martha was acting in haste (**John 11:20**). Mary had formed a spiritual habit when all was going well and now she would apply it to the deep valley of her soul. Mary was doing what Jesus had taught in **Luke 21:19**, "**In your patience possess ye your souls.**" Her emotions were under control. Her actions fulfill **Psa. 37:4-5**, "**Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.**"

What Mary learned at Jesus' feet in **Luke 10** would be enough to get her through this ordeal of death and still love Jesus. The moment finally comes when Jesus calls for Mary. Only when Jesus gives the OK does she move, quickly and without a word. Do you wait for the Lord or do you rush out in the flesh to solve every problem? Those who were there to comfort her followed, not knowing where she was going. She kneels in front of the Lord.

Mary's body language speaks to all around and to the heart of the Lord. It was saying, "*I don't understand why You didn't come but I still love You. I know You could have healed him but that didn't happen. I will not blame You. I have faith in You even though I am confused. I truly am submitted and committed to You with all of my heart.*" The Holy Spirit makes note of all those weeping there. But Martha is not mentioned. At that moment I believe she was too angry to cry!

In **Luke 10** Mary surrendered her heart to hear His Word. Here, she is at Jesus' feet witnessing. Later, she is given the credit for having won the group to the Lord. The Holy Spirit says, "**Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him (John 11:45).**" He specifically singled her out. The Holy Spirit could have said, "*those who had attended Lazarus' funeral*" or "*those who were with Martha and Mary.*" But He didn't!

A surrendered Mary, consumed with Jesus, was used to lead the others to the Lord. She had surrendered to Him in her woe.

III. **KNEELING AT JESUS' FEET TO WORSHIP**

We now come to the most precious moment in Mary of Bethany's life. Read **John 12:1-6** and **Mark 14:3-9**. Mary is at Jesus' feet but now it is for worship. Here again was a choice made by her. Of all those there, she alone proved to be a real, true disciple by giving up her best (perfume) in worship (**Luke 14:33**).

Mary had saved the perfume for anointing His body, revealing that Jesus was on her heart and mind way before this act of worship. Had Jesus revealed to her, while sitting at His feet in **Luke 10**, that very soon He was going to die but would rise from the dead in three days? Here in **John 12**, she gave that which cost her something (sacrifice of time, energy, thought, substance - see **II Sam. 24:24**). What love! What devotion! What humbleness! That's worship!

She anoints Jesus' head and feet with a very, very costly perfume (worth 300 denarii). Her heart was saying, "*I am submitted to Your thoughts* (head) and *I am submitted to Your ways and authority* (feet)." Notice that Mary breaks it. It cannot be retrieved! She didn't save any of it! It was all for Him. The value could be at least \$16,800 in today's money (**Matt. 20:2** - a denarius is a day's wage, in our day it would be - 300 x 8(hrs./day x \$7.00/hr.). Here she is consumed in worship for Jesus. She is giving the Lord what He desires most (**John 4:23,24**). The fragrance permeates the house. As you break over His feet what is most valuable to you, your will, the fragrant, spiritual aroma of this living sacrifice will fill the place where you are and then follow you wherever you go that day!

What a blessing! Mary carried Jesus' fragrance with her all that day and so with us, when we surrender to Him. Then she is attacked by Judas with a biblical principle - the feeding of the poor. He says, "*What a waste Mary! Many could truly be helped who are in need. Look at you. You don't care about those who are perishing because of hunger.*" Judas wants all the attention placed on the poor. Mary directs all the attention onto Jesus! The disciples picked up on Judas' "*righteous*" thought and actually began to scold her. Today, we would say, "*Aren't there young girls in your neighborhood who would love to have just a little of that costly perfume? You then could witness to these girls and lead them to Christ.*" Why didn't the disciples notice that Jesus was not upset about the costly perfume being poured out on Him?

The disciples were angry with her for wasting the costly perfume. However, Mary is so focused on Jesus that she does not retaliate against them with angry words. As with the situation with Martha, Mary simply looks to Jesus to solve the problem. Mary was totally surrendered and dependent on Jesus in every circumstance. That is exactly what He wants you to do. Surrender all to Him, all the rights to your life.

Can you imagine what this extravagant gift must have meant to Jesus as He was about to be unfairly tried, scourged and crucified? Within two days He would be taken from the Garden of Gethsemane and crucified. That powerful fragrance from the anointing on His head would still remain. As the false accusations were hurled at Him, and the whip of evil came crashing down on His back, and the hellish nails pierced His hands and feet, the sweet aroma of that precious fragrance still on His head spoke volumes to His heart - "*There are those who deeply love Me! There will be others down through the ages who will love Me with the fragrance of their sacrificed wills to Me!*" In the midst of the excruciating pain in His spirit, soul and body - love and joy were in the air! "*...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame....*" (**Heb. 12:2**).

MARY WALKED IN HOLINESS (separated to Jesus)! THE RESULT WAS A LIFE FILLED WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

1. **LOVE** – In every aspect of Mary's life Jesus was always the reason for living. Her heart was completely captivated by Jesus.
2. **JOY** - She knew how to spiritually humble herself and thus, she was highly exalted by Jesus resulting in unspeakable joy.
3. **FAITHFULNESS** - Mary counted the cost (being criticized, etc.) and always chose Him above everything and everyone else.
4. **PATIENCE** - She never lost her faith and trust in the Lord even during one of life's severest trials - death of a dear family member.

- 5. **KINDNESS** - Mary sought to worship Jesus with her precious gift of kindness and Jesus made sure she would be remembered!
- 6. **GOODNESS** - She was filled with Jesus and His word and the goodness of her spirit is still ministering today 2000 years later!
- 7. **PEACE** - With the eyes of her heart focused on Jesus, Mary was not emotionally rattled by difficult circumstances.
- 8. **GENTLENESS** – In all circumstances Mary's body language witnesses to us clearly about her beautiful gentleness.
- 9. **SELF-CONTROL** - Although her character and motives were severely questioned, she remained silent and did not retaliate.

THE SACRIFICE OF SUFFERING IN SILENCE

Mary of Bethany suffered the pain of silence in not reacting to her sister's outburst of anger and the disciples scolding her in front of Jesus. It would have been so easy and seemingly so right but she didn't. Jesus suffered in silence, so at times He calls on us to do the same and wait for Him to work. **Isa 53:7 "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth."** (see I Pet. 2:23; Matt. 27:12,14). Have you been wronged, yet God is asking you to remain silent and wait? Pray **Psa. 62:5 (NKJV) "My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him."**

WHAT ABOUT YOU DEAR BELIEVER? Mary of Bethany surrendered every circumstance to her Lord whom she loved with all of her heart. Right now, why don't you do the same? Pray this prayer, *"Dear Abba Father, It is no longer my will but Your will that I desire in my life. I surrender every person and every circumstance to You, now and for the rest of my life. I will totally depend upon You. In Your precious name Lord Jesus, amen!"* (**Rom. 12:1-2; Phil. 1:6**).

MARY'S HEART IS SUMMARIZED IN THE SPIRITUAL SONG **"AT YOUR FEET"**:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>At Your feet, praising You, At Your feet, loving You, At Your feet, hearing You, At Your feet, at Your feet, anointing You!</i></p> | <p>2. <i>Take my heart, at Your feet, Take my tears, at Your feet, Take my will, at Your feet, At Your feet, at Your feet, breaking me!</i></p> | <p>3. <i>Sanctified! set apart, Sacrificed! was Your part, Satisfied! is my heart, At Your feet, at Your feet, adoring You!</i></p> |
|---|--|--|

Esher Shoshannah

The vision of this book is to have you curl up in the arms of your Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, and become more and more like Mary of Bethany, totally consumed with Him alone! This love letter was personally written to you from the heart of Jesus, your heavenly Bridegroom!

INTRODUCTION

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, I give You praise from a heart full of thanksgiving; You gave me to your Son to be His bride (John 10:29). I desire to be more than just an ordinary believer. My soul pants after Thee! There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. I long for a deeper, more intimate relationship with You, my God. Holy Spirit, fill me continually so that my heart will overflow in rivers of living waters. In the name which I adore and cherish - the Lord Jesus Christ!"*

The Holy Spirit teaches that there is nothing more important than love (**I Cor. 13:13**)! True love bears and endures any difficulty and never fails (**I Cor. 13:7,8**). Love fulfills God's law (**Rom. 13:10**). Love for God causes us to obey and keep His Word (**John 14:23**). It is through a love for Him that we are granted to know the secrets of His heart (**I Cor. 2:9,10**). All things, no matter how good or bad in your life, will turn out for good if you are in love with the Lord (**Rom. 8:28**)! The Song of Songs exposes the Lord's heart in all of its full, tender affection for you, His bride. It is a Spirit filled book on true surrendered love for the Lord Jesus Christ, your Bridegroom!

Do you need the Lord's encouragement and reassurance? You have heard from others how the Lord desires to be spiritually intimate with you, but doubts sweep over your mind. You think, *"I can understand Him desiring to be intimate with others, but surely not with me."* Get ready to have the Holy Spirit personally reveal to you just how loving, joyful, peaceful, kind, tenderhearted, good and gentle He truly is, even when Jesus, our Bridegroom, must correct you and me.

This book is filled with the Lord's tender affection for you. In the Word of God, the Holy Spirit speaks of *"agape"* love and *"phileo"* love. *"Agape"* has been defined as *"a love committed to the highest good"*. It is a love not dependent on the emotions. Praise God for that kind of love. Without it none of us would be saved (**John 3:16**). With *"agape"* God set aside His wrath against us and instead, poured it out on His dear Beloved Son. It was a love that could look at our dead, sin-sick, spiritually putrefying soul and actually become our sin and die for it! (**Eph.2:1-5**).

"Phileo" love is best defined as *"tender affection, love from the emotions in a person's soul"*. It is the love of true friends; love of a child for his parents or for another child; love between a husband and wife. This kind of love can be casual or intense. So often we relegate *"phileo"* love to only the human level. To the surprise of many, this word is used by the Lord Jesus in describing His Father's love for Him. **"For the Father loves"** (*"phileo"* = tender affection) **the Son...(John 5:20)**.

"Phileo" is used by the Holy Spirit in describing the Father's feelings toward His Son's disciples in **John 16:27**. The disciples had a deep, tender affection for the Lord Jesus and because of that very special kind of love, the Father Himself had a deep, tender affection for them. Read **John 16:27**, it is a *"because of"* love! Most frequently the word *"agape"* is used when describing love. **I John 4:16** teaches that **"...God is love..."**. Here the word for love is *"agape"*.

Within *"agape"* is God's *"phileo"*! It is a very special love found within the all encompassing *"agape"*. For example, *"agape"* can reach out to anyone in spite of circumstances or how negative a person has been. *"Phileo"* is the kind of love which responds to love from another. Again, it is a because of love! There are times in this book that the Lord Jesus, your Bridegroom, pours out His *"phileo"* love to you, His bride. Praise God, we have a Maker who is emotional over us! He is a God of jealousy and a God of joy (**Exo. 34:14; Ezk. 36:6; Zeph. 3:17; John 17:13**).

How serious is *"phileo"* love to the Lord? Read **I Cor. 16:22**. *Phileo* shows the Lord that we truly *Agape*. *Phileo* touches our soul's emotions and we, with great fervor of love commit to serve and love Him. It is the sign that we truly *Agape* Him and are committed to the highest good no matter what the cost. That is what **Rev. 12:11b** is all about, **"and they loved not their lives unto the death"**. It was *"phileo"* love that drove them to give up their lives. Do you understand now why *"phileo"* is so important? **I Cor. 16:22!** YOU CAN COMMAND AGAPE BUT YOU CANNOT COMMAND PHILEO!

Let me illustrate the difference between *"agape"* and *"phileo"*. If my wife asked me, *"Do you 'agape' me?"* She is asking me if I am committed to her highest good. I would say to her with intense emotion, *"How could you ever doubt that I 'agape' you, look at me, I 'phileo' you!!!!"* My intense *"phileo"* indicates that I strongly *"agape"* my dear wife. **Read John 21:15-17**. The same is true with Peter when the Lord asks him twice, *"Do you 'agape' me?"* In response, twice Peter answered, *"Lord, You know that I 'phileo' You!"* The third time Jesus asked Peter if he had *"phileo"* for Him. Peter was emotionally grieved and said, *"Lord...You know that I 'phileo' You."* Let me put myself in Peter's shoes and say it this way, with intense emotion, **LOOK AT ME! I PHILEO YOU WITH EVERYTHING THAT IS IN ME! I PHILEO YOU! I AM COMMITTED TO THE HIGHEST GOOD WHEREEVER YOU WILL SEND ME! LORD, I SAY IT ONCE AGAIN WITH ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME - I PHILEO YOU!"**

It was said by scholarly rabbis that all the scriptures are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies. They symbolically saw God's people married to the Lord (**Isa. 54:5** and **Jer. 31:32**). On the surface this book is just a love song written by a young King Solomon to a young foreign lady. Hidden underneath the surface of this love song is the heart of the Lord Jesus for His bride. When the Holy Spirit unlocks this precious, spiritual love letter to you, you will never be the same!

The Lord Jesus taught us that there are hidden meanings (types and shadows) behind Old Testament characters and circumstances. He did this by using the story of Jonah as an illustration (sign) of His own resurrection in **Matt. 12:39-40**. **I Cor. 10:1-4** will further illustrate the point. The Holy Spirit taught the writer to the Hebrews precious symbolism found in the Old Testament. He unlocks the secret types and shadows concerning the Lord's Tabernacle in the wilderness (**Heb. 9:1-28; 10:1,19,20**).

By allowing us to see the above examples, the Holy Spirit is encouraging us to go hunting throughout His Word for these wonderful spiritual nuggets (**I Cor. 2:9,10**). This will encourage us and cause us to love Him even more! Get ready!

This Holy Spirit inspired Song, into which you are about to venture, is filled with very spiritual secrets from the heart of your Bridegroom, Jesus, to us His bride. In it your Bridegroom reveals the innermost thoughts of His love for you.

These thoughts are very private, as all love letters are intended to be. Little by little the Holy Spirit will open up each passage to your heart. You will fall deeper in love with Jesus, the Beloved Bridegroom of your heart, as He whispers in your spirit. Your heart will burst forth from the deep well of Holy Spirit love poured out into your heart at salvation (**Rom. 5:5**).

Enter now into the deep love of your Heavenly Bridegroom. Why wait, since your relationship will be that of a bride to the Bridegroom the Lord Jesus Christ? What Jesus yearns for most from you is a bride's love for Him. Why not give Him that kind of love now? Most believers will give Him a child's love (**Matt. 18:3,4**); a servant's love (**Luke 16:13; John 14:21**) or a friend's love (**Prov. 17:17; John 15:15**). Praise God for these three important relationships of love. When you came to Him as a child He saved and delivered you. With a child's loving trust you begin to stand on His promises by faith and your loving Father meets all of your needs. As you learn of His heart from the Word a servant's love arises from within. You now see the wisdom of following all of His commands, for you know in your heart they are right and good.

One day you hear Him calling you "**friend**" from **John 15:13-15**! The Holy Spirit begins to give you revelation knowledge from the mind of your Friend, Jesus. The Lord's mind becomes your mind; His thoughts become your thoughts (**Rom. 12:2; Phil. 2:5**). From your heart a friend's love pours forth to this One who calls you His friend! He is preparing your heart to enter into a realm of love that few believers ever experience - His Bridegroom's love for you and your bride's love for Him! This is what He desires most to give you and to receive from you.

I will call this kind of love, "**first love**" love. Read **Rev. 2:1-5** and you will see just how important this kind of love is to your Lord. When a young couple fall in love they become consumed with each other. Nothing else seems to matter. What is thrilling to realize is that your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus still has a fresh, "**first love**" love for you, His bride. He is consumed with love for you dear bride (**Jer.31:3**). Think of how deep it is! He continually looks out for your welfare and intercedes for you (**Heb. 7:25**). He sent the dear Holy Spirit to live inside of you to take care of His bride (**Rom. 8:26-27**); you have every spiritual blessing at your fingertips (**Eph. 1:3**).

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear caring Shepherd, cause my heart to have a bride's love for You the Bridegroom of my heart. As I read this love letter from my heavenly Spouse, Holy Spirit open up the deep thoughts of His heart to me. I long to love Him as I have never loved Him before. Only You are able to teach me about it and empower me to give it back to my Beloved. 'No good thing will You withhold from those who walk uprightly.' (Psa.84:11). By faith I know that it has begun to happen while praying this prayer (Mark 11:24; Isa.65:24). In the glorious name of Jesus my Bridegroom I pray. Amen and Amen!"*

Allow His Word to reveal just how this bride - Bridegroom relationship is so important to the Lord: **John 3:29; II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9; 22:17; Isa. 54:5; 61:10; Jer. 31:32**. The Hebrews, God's people, saw themselves married to the Lord. The Holy Spirit tells us that we are the bride of the Lamb. Praise God!

The Holy Spirit proclaims this book to be the "**The Song of songs**". In other words, it is the best song ever written in the Word of God. Many would say **Psalm 23** is the best song, yet that is not what the Holy Spirit declares. For the Holy Spirit to make such a statement, then this book must be very, very spiritually important!

To understand the symbols and secret words written to His bride, you must know who the individuals are in this song. The girl represents you, the bride of Christ. King Solomon (called the beloved) represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is called "**the Beloved**" in **Matt. 17:5** and in **Eph. 1:6-7**. Solomon's name means "*peaceable*". Jesus is the Prince of Peace (**Isa.9:6**). Jesus alone gives peace (**John 14:27; Eph. 2:14**). Solomon was the wisest person who had ever lived (**I Kings 4:29-34; Matt. 12:42**). Jesus is wisdom itself (**I Cor.1:30; Col. 2:3**). Solomon was Israel's most glorious king. Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords (**I Tim. 6:14-16; Rev. 19:16**). There was no one richer than Solomon. Christ is the epitome of true riches (**Eph. 1:7,10; 2:4,7; Phil. 4:19**).

Why did Solomon have so many wives? These ladies were family members of rulers from other countries. By giving a powerful nation a member of your family you were trying to insure peace between the two nations. These ladies were called "*treaty wives*". This would tend to discourage war between the countries.

When Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh, the daughter of Pharaoh was sent along as part of the treaty agreement (**I Kings 3:1**). Since God blessed Solomon with great wisdom, his kingdom expanded and so did the number of treaty wives. The fact that we read of only 60 queens and 80 concubines in **Song of Solomon 6:8** strongly indicates that the events of the book took place very early in Solomon's reign. The number of wives reached one thousand late in his reign according to **I Kings 11:3**. When this Song was penned by Solomon through the leading of the Holy Spirit he was very young and tender toward God (**I Kings 3:5-14**).

Some might complain that Solomon cannot represent Jesus since he fell so miserably toward the end of his reign as king. Then you must reject Jonah as representative of Jesus because he failed miserably as a prophet in action and attitude (see **Matt. 12:39-41; Jonah 4**). Jesus Himself refers to Solomon in **Matt. 12:42** in a good way.

The Heavenly Father speaks of the eternal Sonship of Jesus in **Heb. 1:5** by using **II Sam. 7:14** where God speaks about King David's son, Solomon. Even David was called "**a man after God's own heart**" in **I Sam. 13:14** and **Acts 13:22**, yet David certainly failed the Lord by committing adultery with Bathsheba. No biblical type, shadow, or illustration of Jesus could ever be perfect!

As the Holy Spirit pulls back the veil, step into the wonders of your Beloved's "**first love**" heart. He is ready to lavish upon you the secrets of His heart concerning you! You are now abiding on holy ground. Not all believers are able to receive this revelation knowledge because they are not surrendered to Jesus as Lord of their life.

Surrender simply means that you have taken your hands off the controls of your life and given permission to the Lord to do anything He wants to do with you because He has a specific plan for your life (**Jer.29:11**). What He plans, the Lord Himself will do it through you (**Isa.46:11; Phil. 1:6; 2:13**).

You are allowing Him to touch any area of your life because God is good and God is love (**Psa. 106:1; I John 4:16,18**), knowing that no matter what the devil puts against you it will always end in a glorious blessing (**Rom. 8:28**)! Right now will you simply say to the Lord in prayer that you not only trust Him with your eternal life but also with your daily life? Will you surrender it all to Him?

PRAY WITH ME: "*Dear, dear, God of my heart, I gladly turn over my will to You. Take my heart and may it be filled up with Your Word and Holy Spirit love! Take my mind and let me begin to think the way You desire me to think. Take my eyes and cause them to see only what You want them to see! Take my ears and let them hear only what You want them to hear! Take my mouth and cause it to speak words that will be in agreement with Your Holy Word! Take my hands and cause them to do the work You have planned for my life! Take my feet and may they walk in total obedience in surrender to Your Holy will! I completely belong to You now. I give to You all the rights to my life: my talents, gifts, money, finances, desires, friends, family, social relationships, job, habits, hobbies, and anything else. Use them for Your glory. I know You have given them all back on loan to me. They are no longer my possessions. I am now only a manager (steward) of Your property. They all belong to You. You are in total control of them. Lead me in Your Word so I will know what You want to do with each one of them! As I read make me sensitive to hear in my spirit what Your Word is saying so that I may freely and lovingly obey it. Since my heart and will are surrendered to You, I absolutely know I'm in Your will, even though I do not know exactly what it is! Thank You Lord for that assurance in my heart. Your Word declares it so and You cannot lie! You are the truth! I stand on Your Word! Thank you dear Bridegroom of my life for it is in Your wonderful and mighty Name I pray, amen!"*

PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STORY

(Keep in mind as you read that Jesus is the Bridegroom (Beloved) and you are the bride in this precious Song)

CHAPTER ONE: The bride desires to be more than an ordinary believer always caught up in all sorts of religious activities. She longs to have a personal, intimate fellowship with her Beloved King. He shares His innermost thoughts about how wonderful she is to Him. She responds by revealing secret thoughts concerning her love for Him. The Bridegroom had touched her spirit and for the first time she felt a freedom to pour her heart out completely to Him.

CHAPTER TWO: The bride cannot understand why the Beloved considers her to be so special since she is a very common person. He continues to reveal lovely thoughts about her from His heart. He demonstrates to His bride that He has conquered all problems she would ever face. The Beloved Bridegroom now asks her to go with Him but she hesitates; she only wants to have Him all to herself in private fellowship. He pleads with her, but she will not go with Him. There is now a division between them. This severing of fellowship will cause her great spiritual pain.

CHAPTER THREE: The division (mountains of Bether) has caused great emotional pain to sweep over her soul. She lost what she desired most, continued loving fellowship with her Beloved. However, after many sleepless nights of depression, she searches for "*Him whom her soul loves*". The watchmen of the city tell where her Beloved may be found. Joyous fellowship is restored. The bride takes Him to her family. She is emotionally exhausted and her Beloved beckons her to go to sleep and find needed rest. While sleeping the bride is given a vision of her Beloved in all His power and glory. This Holy Spirit given vision is the answer to victory over any temptation which would attempt to entice her to go it alone again.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Beloved describes His bride in detail reassuring her that His love has not diminished one degree because of her sin. Jesus declares that her love for Him overwhelms His heart. The Spirit leads her to the Mt. of Crucifixion in order to deal with areas of her life which are holding her back. After that, to her amazement, He begins to describe her as a garden possessing different kinds of fruits and spices. She prays that He will come into the garden of her life and enjoy the fruits and spices for Himself. Her Beloved Bridegroom first takes for Himself what He desires from this garden and then shares it with others.

CHAPTER FIVE: Time now passes since He came into the lovely garden of His bride. The Beloved has been busy out ministering and fellowshiping with other surrendered believers (lilies). He comes to the place where she lives and knocks on the door. At first she hesitates to answer. The bride finally decides to go to the door, but to her great dismay, He has departed. Desperate, she attempts to find Him. She searches in the streets of Jerusalem for Him asking the daughters of Jerusalem if they have seen Him. Not knowing who she is talking about, they ask her to describe Him. As a result, something wonderful happens to her and to them. Immediate deliverance is at hand! She is just a few moments away from His loving arms.

CHAPTER SIX: So overcome were the daughters of Jerusalem by the description of the Beloved that their hearts were drawn to Him also. Immediately after the bride had gloriously described her Beloved, the Holy Spirit reveals just where He's having fellowship. After finding Him, the bride is filled with shame and guilt. Gazing directly in her eyes, He reassures her that the fervency of His love for her has not changed one iota. The bride declares His lordship over her life. All the ladies in the King's court have a new, deep appreciation for her. Days of joy and blessed fellowship fill all and for the first time she willingly leaves with her Beloved.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The bride is now ready for service. With His heart filled with joyful anticipation the Beloved describes features of His bride which had not been considered before. The Bride is completely convinced that His desire is for her good only. She acts upon that revelation and suggests they both go out into the villages and country and minister. What He had so desired from her in **chapter two** ("*come away*"), she initiates! She has the mind of her Beloved - the mind of Christ!

CHAPTER EIGHT: The bride in blessed union and communion with her Beloved, ministers to her younger, spiritually immature sister. As the bride and her Beloved come up out of the wilderness, she leans completely on Him for strength and guidance. One of the most sacred moments in the life of the bride comes when the Beloved asks her to set Him as a seal upon her heart and her arm. The Beloved entrusts her with His vineyard, her personal one, as He leaves to minister in other vineyards. There is no hurt but just a longing for Him to return to her very quickly. The Song ends with the Mountain of spices instead of the mountains of Bether (division). There is wonderful harmony between the Beloved and His wonderful bride.

THE DESIRE FOR INTIMACY - (1:1 - 2:7)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER ONE: The bride desires to be more than an ordinary believer always caught up in all sorts of religious activities. She longs to have a personal, intimate fellowship with her Beloved King. He shares His innermost thoughts about how wonderful she is to Him. She responds by revealing secret, loving thoughts concerning her love for Him. The Bridegroom had touched her spirit and for the first time she felt a freedom to pour her heart out completely to Him.

To spiritually receive all the love intended for you from this love song, ALWAYS see yourself as the lady. As she converses with the Beloved, it will be you talking to Him. When He responds to her it will be your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to you personally! And now allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the fullness of God's loving heart to your heart. Get ready for a spiritual intimacy you never thought possible with Him who sees you as everything His heart needs! Wow! What a blessed thought!

V.1 *"The song of songs, which is Solomon's."*

This is the greatest song ever written, for the Holy Spirit, Himself, testifies that this is, **"The song of songs..."**, and rightly so for it is directly from the heart of Jesus the Bridegroom for His bride. May you, dear reader, allow the Spirit of Christ to play the melody of this song upon the strings of your heart and soul. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon writes that he had explored every kind of thing possible which claimed would give satisfaction and meaning to life (**Ecc. 2:1-11**).

Without the Lord as the purpose for living, then at the end of it all you will come to the terrifying conclusion with Solomon calling your life the **"vanity of vanities"**. Solomon by the Holy Spirit repeated the word **"vanity"** as a conclusion to life without God over 23 times!

The Lord Jesus Christ said, **"Without me you can do nothing."** (**John 15:5**). That is, nothing of value! To please Jesus as the sole purpose of living, your life will go from the **"vanity of vanities"** to becoming **"the song of songs"**! The Song of Solomon portrays the heart seeking Jesus the Bridegroom alone for satisfaction.

The Holy Spirit, through Solomon, warns us that seeking after things can never, never satisfy. At the conclusion of Ecclesiastes the Holy Spirit writes, **"...fear God and keep His commandments...."** I might hear an objection from someone saying, *"It is impossible to keep the law!"*

Trying to keep the law to merit salvation is absolutely futile (**Gal. 2:16; 3:10-13**). However, when you are filled with the love of Christ (**Rom. 5:5**) the **"righteousness of the law"** will be fulfilled in you by being controlled by the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 8:4**). The Holy Spirit declares that **"love is the fulfilling of the law"** in **Rom. 13:10**. By love we keep His laws!

It is obviously no accident that Ecclesiastes precedes the Song of Solomon! Fearing God is the beginning of true wisdom in the spiritual life. In you, godly fear will increase spiritual obedience! In you Godly fear will expand your spiritual love for God. I like to express it this way, *"I fear to hurt the One I love."* TRUE FEAR OF GOD PREPARES YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE SURRENDERED LIFE OF LOVE FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Meditate on this wonderful subject of **"fear"** which includes in it worshipful awe or reverence: **Prov. 16:6; 19:23; Acts 5:11-12; 10:1-4; Eph. 5:21; I Pet. 1:16-20; 2:17; Rev. 19:2,5,6.**

Being filled with a surrendered heart, we are to be imitators of how our God walked on this earth (**Eph. 5:1-2**). Did you know that Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord? Read **Isa. 11:1-4** which speaks about the coming Messiah. Note especially **v. 3**. Jesus had to grow in wisdom and stature (**Luke 2:52**). How did that happen? Read **Psa.111:10**.

Relying on temporal relationships and things will never truly fulfill you. For a moment you are satisfied but the emptiness within returns. God compares that kind of life to a **"broken cistern that holds no water"** (**Jer.2:13**). But when you cry out to God in your emptiness He will fill you! Out of sheer love for Him you will desire to keep His commands - love God and love one another (**Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18**). It will lead you into the fullness of God's love found in this Song.

Dear believer, are you ready to go from the **"vanity of vanities"** and have Jesus' love in the Song of Songs played all through your heart? Our wonderful Lord is not looking for perfect believers but a pliable bride who is willing to grow and be changed by Him through His infinite love. Does it not say, **"the love of Christ constrains us"** (**II Cor. 5:14**)? My heart is so full right now that I must pray. Join in and...

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Abba Father, I worship You. Thank You! Thank You! Thank You for bringing me to an end of myself. You broke me and allowed me to see the emptiness of my life as a lukewarm believer. I tried so many other things to find joy, even as Your blood-bought child! Thank You Holy Spirit for not giving up on me. Thank You for filling me with Godly fear. Thank You for Your patience, grace and mercy. The moment I cried out in my emptiness You filled me with a longing for intimacy as I had never experienced before. In these last many years You have transformed me. That yearning for more of You in my life burns more passionately than ever. Even in these last years some deep, deep valleys of suffering have come trying to extinguish it. At times I thought it had happened. But praise Your holy name at those moments there was one set of footprints with a nail scar in each carrying this child of Yours to new heights! Praise You, praise You, praise You dear Lord Jesus for taking this little child through it all and intensifying love's flame. Abba Father, dear Bridegroom, gentle Holy Spirit I am ready to travel once again through this Song. Fill me Lord! We are going to start walking together with loving hearts bursting with heavenly anticipation and expectation. Make us more like You dear Lord, in Jesus' wonderful name, amen!"*

True love is a lifelong growing experience. The surrendered life is best illustrated in this way, when you first fall in love it is all consuming. All you want is to be with that person. You talk about, dream about, write about him/her! The more you get to know him/her, the deeper that love grows. I can truly say this about the relationship I have had with my wife these many years.

I love her so much more now than at the beginning. What I thought was so full in the beginning I now see was only a small drop of love. The same is true with lifelong best friends. The love for them grows deeper and richer as the years pass. So also in the surrendered life to Jesus, as you begin to truly know Him year after year this love will grow and expand as you never dreamed possible! Just be patient and let the Holy Spirit have His way!

Accept circumstances and leave them in the Lord's hand. His love for you will bring you through every time! And your love for Him will absolutely increase! The Spirit of your Bridegroom is now going to sing this love song to your heart! It is one thing for you to sing to the Lord but it is unimaginable that He is going to personally sing this Song to you! Praise God for the wonderment of it all! Join me in asking Him for the full blessing of this Song.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord I want this song, Your song, to be the only music of my heart. I open my heart in full surrender to You so that it may be permanently etched on my soul. Let this Song of Songs be the melody which You said I would make in my heart as You fill me with the precious Holy Spirit! This will be the beginning of many spiritual melodies placed in my spirit which I will sing unto You my dear Savior (Eph.5:18-19)! Thank You Lord, that You **'...put a new song in my mouth, even praise...'** (Psa.40:3). Lord, You are my song! Make this song, which is so special to You, real to me. Thank You dear Bridegroom of my heart for the deeper experiencing of Your love which is to come. I now sit beside You to read Your love letter written just for Me. I wait with a holy, intensive expectation to have Your deep thoughts of Your passionate heart revealed to me. In Your name which is above all names, the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen and amen!"*

*"I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, and it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith, and be closer drawn to Thee." Fanny Crosby*

The Meeting:

What could be wrong with the young lady who was such a blessing? She came to know the Lord when she was quite young and became faithful in doing what her spiritual leaders asked of her. I'll call her Ruth in order to identify her in this story. One thing everyone knew, you could count on her!

There were others with her, intimate believers who were loyal to the fellowship. These young ladies (virgins in the Song) became best of friends. They would meet together each week and have a home bible study. There was always the singing, praying, Bible study and then fellowship afterwards. This evening's meeting would never be forgotten. It would be life changing.

Come with me dear reader and eavesdrop on the quiet work of the Holy Spirit in this young lady's life. Little did she know what lay ahead for her and the spiritual transformation yet to come. Unbeknownst to her closest friends, deep unanswered, very troubling questions filled her heart this particular evening.

After a time of talking to one another about all that had been going on in their lives since they last met, it was time to have their weekly devotional bible study. They had been considering Ephesians. The lady of our story displayed an uncharacteristic somber mood. Some of her friends thought that the Lord would use the Bible study to lift her spirit. One of the young ladies chosen the week before to lead the discussion said, *"Let's read aloud the passage for study tonight."*

"...And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Eph. 5:18-21).

The discussion leader made a few comments about the passage. Others followed with thoughts gleaned while studying it at home. Normally Ruth would offer an occasional comment during sharing time, but tonight, strangely, not a word. Her eyes were riveted on each one who spoke, intently listening to every word.

She was looking for an answer. Then it happened, it all poured out of her at once. *"As all of you have studied this passage from Ephesians ahead of time so did I. I read it over and over and realized, to my dismay, I know very little about this filling of the Holy Spirit. I have been troubled in my spirit all week. It won't leave me, it plagues my mind. When I fellowship with other believers I rarely talk about the scriptures. I really don't know anything about making melody in my heart to the Lord. Oh I love Him alright but I know it's not that deep or intense."*

"Why is it that unless we are in a Bible study we seldom talk about our Lord? I don't have an answer for that. I've been thinking about this all week. I don't even come close to what this passage is describing about a person filled with the Holy Spirit. I have examined my life the last few days and I don't like what I see. O yes, I go to church. I enjoy the sermons. I find pleasure working with the younger kids in Bible school. The mission trips have been special. And who couldn't enjoy the conferences? But none of these religious activities cause me to experience what is described here in Ephesians."

One of the believers interjected glibly, *"Maybe you need to spend more time in prayer? I have some great tapes entitled, 'The Spiritual Woman: Working Harder - Accomplishing More!' I'd be glad to share them with you."* Ruth retorted, *"I have been faithful to pray almost everyday. I have listened to spiritual tapes periodically about how to be a godly woman. I'm not meaning to be rude at all, you know me better than that, but I don't need another tape, another book, another ministry. All I know is that what is written here in our Bible study tonight, I truly don't have, but I desperately want it. I long for it but I don't know how to receive it. I have never felt this way before."* One of her friends replied, *"I have to admit that your spiritual experience sounds like mine and probably, if the truth were known, that's exactly how we all feel right now. I want what this passage is saying too."* All silently nodded their heads in agreement.

Then a stranger in their midst, a relative of one of the young ladies, who was visiting from out of town, was asked what she thought. Everybody in the group had fallen in love with her right away during the fellowship time just before Bible study. There was a quiet joy about her. Her name, well I'll call her Marybeth. She said, *"I don't want to intrude, I'm only a visitor, but I will share my heart for a moment."* The discussion leader responded, *"Feel free to speak, concerning our dilemma."* Marybeth said politely, *"You're very gracious, thank you so much. At one time I struggled as all of you are tonight. Then one day the Holy Spirit revealed to me the simple way in which He would fill me. I too used to look at this passage in Ephesians and longed for what it said was possible. The Holy Spirit is commanding us here to be continually filled with Him. I realized that this was not talking about the time when He came into my spirit at salvation. That was forever. However, I was puzzled with these verses. How can I be continually filled with Him as this scripture teaches?"*

Marybeth paused, slightly bowing her head as if she were listening to someone prompting her. Everybody in that room was on the edge of their seats. Something was happening. There was a holy presence, an expectancy so strong that it felt as if the Lord Himself was speaking, and He was! Marybeth lifted her head and looked at each one. There was a far away look as if she were thinking about someone very, very special. She spoke gently, *"What you are looking for is not in more ministries, programs, prayer, Bible studies or church meetings. All of these are absolutely important but when you enter into what the Holy Spirit is talking about it will make all those things greater than you ever imagined. Look at that passage again, it says, '...making melody in your heart to the Lord....' Doesn't this sound like cherished intimacy with someone?"*

Ruth broke in excitedly, *"Yes, yes, that's right! I want to be more intimate with Jesus but I don't know how!"* Marybeth was as excited as Ruth. *"You know, it's as fresh today as it was the very moment when I learned the simple secret. Actually it's fresher. It's so precious. O my dear friends, you need a melody! God's song!"* A bewildered Ruth asked, *"But what song Marybeth? I sing beautiful hymns and chorus' here and at church but I don't have that intimacy you are talking about. What song? Tell me, please!"*

Marybeth chuckled, *"Pardon me for being tickled, but I see the Holy Spirit working all over you. He's making you spiritually hungry. That happened to me and it's grown deeper ever since! Ruth, it's not a song like you mentioned. And they are all wonderful. When you have God's special song all these others will have meaning you were never aware of! God's going to give it to you. Can you imagine that? It's given to you! You don't have to do a thing except deeply long for it and you certainly have that. Look at **Psa. 40:3, 'And he has put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God....'**"*

"Ruth, what you and everyone here longs for cannot be achieved. It is like salvation, given to us. You're not the only ones who have sought this wondrous filling. Men and women of spiritual renown who were already in ministry found this secret and it dramatically changed them. They finally heard His song, missionaries such as Hudson Taylor the missionary to China, Dwight L. Moody the great evangelist, Charles Finney the amazing revivalist, Amy Carmichael, Oswald Chambers, Eugenia Price, John Bunyon of 'Pilgrim's Progress' fame and others to name a few. The filling came, their ministries overflowed with power and a personal strength for endurance."

Marybeth paused and then asked, *"Before a container can be filled, what must first take place?"* All of them answered at the same moment, *"It has to be empty!"* She responded excitedly, *"Yes, yes, that's it, that's the secret! There's an old hymn which some of you might remember, it expresses it so beautifully."*

*'Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, a clean vessel in Thy hand;
With no power but as Thou givest graciously with each command.
Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water from our inner man may flow.'*

Isn't that the cry of your hearts?" In an almost imperceptible holy whisper Ruth spoke for everyone, *"Yes, Marybeth, that is the hunger of our hearts. By giving Him all the rights to your life your loving Bridegroom will draw closer to you revealing His song of intimacy to your heart. Why don't you ask Him? It's obviously His will for you. Didn't He say, 'Ask and it will be given to you'? Ask, then wait. Let me tell you a little secret, the Song is already in His Book. Why don't you read it? Ask Him to spiritually kiss you and He will."* At that very moment everyone in that room felt completely overpowered by a heavenly love flowing into the depths of their souls. Ruth thought she would burst. The presence of God filled the room as they all began to quietly praise the One who was baptizing them in His **first love, love!** Time stood still in their adoration of Him. Then Ruth (now the bride of the Song) spoke quietly and asked...

V.2 "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine."

Tired of seeking after fleeting joys in everything else, this bride of the Lord hears the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit deep within her heart saying, *"Give yourself completely to the One who is your Savior and allow Him to have full rights to your life. You will begin to experience the joy and satisfaction you have so long sought after. You will be filled with Me and as you walk deeper and deeper in surrender, this glorious filling will grow and grow."* She knew, positively knew, that in one brief moment giving everything concerning her life to Him would begin a new spiritual walk never experienced before.

A holy, intensive expectation filled her soul 'till she thought she was going to burst just as the Psalmist himself had experienced (**Psa. 42:1,2**). Her lips opened and from the depths of her heart she declared to her Lord, *"I am ready, Oh I am ready dear Lord Jesus. Take all the rights to my life. Do what You must! For You are what matters to me now!"* Then she asks...

"Let him..."

Here is the true beginning of the surrendered life; she requests, He is to fulfill. She longs for approval. A spiritual kiss from Him will do just that. She wants to be filled with Him alone and no longer is satisfied with just religious activities anymore. Notice that she does not make a move toward Him to initiate the relationship. She invites Him. He must be satisfied that she is ready for this kind of spiritual intimacy. Are you dear believer? A truly surrendered heart always waits for Him to move in whatever circumstances. She asked and with great joy of assurance she knew He would answer!

Listen to her pray: *"Lord, I am ready to surrender my heart to You! I have been focused on things, thinking they would give me happiness. Even ministries Lord have not satisfied but now I know the secret, it is Your love that is so much better than those things. O how I long to be in total communion with You alone! A spiritual kiss from You will assure my heart that You consider me ready for this surrendered relationship!"* Is this your prayer request? He will come and spiritually kiss your heart and soul. How can you know when you have been kissed by Your Heavenly Beloved? The answer is coming.

"...with the kisses of his mouth..."

What does it mean to be spiritually kissed by the Lord? Your Beloved Jesus is the living Word itself. He spoke and the heavens and the earth were created (**John 1:1,10,14; Gen. 1:3,6,9**). The very Bible you hold in your hands is the mouth of the living God. Your Bridegroom said, ***"...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"*** (**John 6:63**). His mouth is the Word; ***"And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword..."*** (**Rev. 19:15; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12**). As He ***"kisses"*** you with His Word you will receive it in your spirit.

But how can you know a **"kiss"** has been given to you? As you meditate upon His holy Word, the Holy Spirit will reveal some special truth to you, some beautiful word of revelation about your Beloved. It will instantly fill you with His joy! Your response should be, "Wow! I never saw that before!" or *"Lord that was so wonderful, let me have more! O how I long after Your heart and all of its secrets."*

Your response will be the same as the Psalmist who said, **"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great the sum of them!" (Psa. 139:17)**. A kiss from your Bridegroom is having Him open your eyes and seeing wonderful things from His Word! (Psa. 119:18; See also Psa. 40:5).

That very moment, when something new has been revealed to you, is the moment He places a heavenly spiritual kiss of His love on your heart. You then must respond. Your Beloved beckons to you saying, *"Let me have your love once again! My heart longs for your 'first love' love. I kissed your heart with My Word. Will you respond to Me? Take a spiritual journey with Me into My heart, filled with love that you never dreamed possible, greater than your greatest thought about Me. We will be gloriously one!"*

PRAY WITH ME: *"O my Beloved, Your mouth is life; Your words melt my heart with full satisfaction; O to be kissed by You; to have Your Word of love permeate my whole being; to feel at complete rest; complete peace; complete protection; O how good it is to be complete in You (Col. 2:10)! I open my heart totally to You. In Your glorious name Lord Jesus, amen."*

That wonderful kiss assures you of His total approval! Emptying out all of your rights to Him gives you the filling for which you have so longed. You ask, *"How may I know that I am totally surrendered to Jesus?"*

Surrender is simply saying to the Lord, *"I trust You completely and I give You the right to do whatever You want with my life."* Surrender is not giving up things but giving up your rights to Him alone. It is doing what **Prov. 3:5,6** instructs, **"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."**

Little does this bride realize what spiritual changes will begin to take place throughout her life because she asked to be kissed by Him. She will be spiritually kissed throughout the journey of her surrendered life in this Song, even in the dark, difficult valleys when it seemed her Beloved was far distant.

When she reached true spiritual maturity in this journey toward the end of this Song, the Holy Spirit will reveal to her heart all the spiritual kisses she had experienced in her blessed walk with Jesus. Worship and adoration for her Beloved will cause her heart to burst in glorious praise! It all begins with surrender.

"...for thy love is better than wine."

The Hebrew word for **"love"** in this verse is pluralized. It was their way of making it a superlative! In other words, the Holy Spirit is telling you that no amount of words can describe it. His **"loves"** far surpass any earthly love to be found. O what a love it is: a forgiving love, a healing love, a providing love, a protecting love, a tender love, a peaceful love, an assuring love, a guiding love, a comforting love, a strengthening love, an overcoming love, a sanctifying love, a bridegroom's love! It is His love alone!

"Wine" in the scriptures represents earthly joy (Psa. 104:15). She is saying that even legitimate earthly joys cannot be compared with His love! Can you say with her, ***"...for thy love is better than"*** Everything else in your life should be placed in that blank. Only those who are totally surrendered to the King can truly know this in their heart; O how wonderful it is when the Holy Spirit reveals it to you! I keep repeating myself, it begins with total surrender and then you will grow in this wonderful relationship.

V.3 "Because of the savor (pleasant fragrance) of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee."

The bride had asked to be spiritually kissed and immediately she was blessed with revelation concerning Jesus' name! Listen to her speak, *"Your name is everything to me. The perfume of Your name is being poured forth into my heart. I am filled! I am filled! I am ready to have You take me into that deeper relationship. Here I am my Beloved, take my spirit and move on me as never before. I love You alone. I only ask that You increase the capacity of my heart to be able to love You more!"*

PRAY WITH ME: "Each blessed characteristic and glorious attribute of Yours, my dear Beloved Bridegroom, is thrilling for my heart to meditate upon. O yes, You alone, fill me with unspeakable wonder and love. You are love itself and I know that You alone can satisfy the longings of my heart (**Lam. 3:24**). May your spiritual fragrances flow through me to others (**Gal. 5:22-23**). May they be attracted to You through me! Let Your Name be written all over my daily activities and attitudes."

"...thy name is as ointment poured forth..."

This ointment is costly, perfumed oil. Oil was used on sheep to keep parasites from causing them extreme agony and irritation. Also there were oils used for the healing process. The Holy Spirit speaks of the "oil of joy" in **Isa.61:3**. His spiritual oil gives light to the lamp of our life. Praise God for the name of Jesus! In His name are all the blessed spiritual characteristics for our eternal and temporal needs. It saves (**Mt. 1:21**), heals (**Acts 3:6**), gives authority to deliver (**Acts 16:18**), leads (**Psa. 31:3**), protects (**Psa. 124:8**) and forgives (**Psa. 79:9**)! O what precious spiritual oil is the Name of our Bridegroom!

PRAY WITH ME: "I praise Your Name, my Bridegroom: You are my Jehovah Savior (**1 John 5:13; John 1:12**); my Healer (**Acts 3:6**); my Lord (**Phil. 2:9-10**); You are my Wonderful Counselor; my Mighty God; my Everlasting Father; my Prince of Peace (**Isa.9:6**)! You have given to me Your name and Your name is my name (**Rev. 22:4**)! **JESUS! JESUS! JESUS! JESUS!** Purify me now with the ointment of Your Name poured out in my spirit! Your Name dispels demons and activates angels on my behalf. It is the authority I pray in! May Your Name and all its provision be poured forth from my life to others, causing them to praise You!"

"...therefore do the virgins love thee."

Spiritual virgins are those who have a single, pure desire, to please the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not perfect in their walk but they are perfect in their commitment to Him. All the Lord ever wants from us is that longing desire in our heart for more of Him (**Psa. 42:1,2; 73:25**). Paul himself, late in life, stated that he had not reached a perfect (totally mature) walk, but he had a perfect commitment to press on (**Phil. 3:12-14**). Do you have a virgin heart, a heart with pure motives which yearns to truly please the Lord? That is all our Beloved Bridegroom is looking for! Then He will take you by the hand and you will begin to walk, little by little, in an amazing deeper relationship with Him as you never thought possible. It is all about love for Him!

A spiritual virgin is one who thirsts for holiness to be worked in her heart and walk. She will pursue love (**1 Cor.14:1**) and holiness (**Heb. 12:14**). A spiritual virgin has no desire to read or watch those things she knows would displease her Beloved. Is that your attitude? If it is, get ready for the inner chamber (**v.4**). But you might be burdened with the guilt of having given up your spiritual virginity, the enemy of your mind says it's too late! O my friend let your Bridegroom do a miracle here. There is second virginity! He declares it in Jeremiah! Israel, His wife, had committed spiritual adultery with other gods (**Jer. 30:15-17**). The Lord pours out His heart to her (**v.17**). Read now **Jer. 31:2-4**. If she repents she will become His "virgin" again!

Wow! He did not have to use the term "virgin". He could have said, "**O my people, Israel**" since they had lost their spiritual virginity! Praise God He can remake us over anew! Only our Bridegroom can do that! He is our miracle worker Husband! Glory to God!

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Father, there is still so much of me in my daily walk; such impurity that I often become discouraged. Dear Bridegroom of my heart, I now cease trying to deal with the impurities. I humbly ask You to do the purifying as only Your Holy Spirit can do. Work **Ezk. 36:27** into my walk. May the power, peace, and presence of Your name be poured forth in and through my life. May You see me as a pure virgin bringing joy and love to You. May You see me as Your virgin wife! Lead me to other spiritual virgins who have only hearts for You. We will love and serve You together! Praise Your Holy Name Lord Jesus."

V.4 "Draw me..."

Here is the secret to a life filled with Jesus, filled with His Holy Spirit. I have no power to literally draw myself to the Lord. As in salvation (**John 6:44**) so also in surrender! My part is asking and then presenting myself! He must fulfill it and He will! He then receives all the glory for it is done not with my might or power but by His Spirit alone (**Zech. 4:6**)! O my dear bride, look with me and see what happens. Observe carefully the pronoun changes from "me" to "we"!

"...we will run after thee..."

What a blessing it is to have others, who are filled up with Jesus to overflowing, share in this wonderful intimacy. O the joy of pursuing Him together with others through praise, worship and adoration. They are proclaiming their heart's longing to Him (**Heb. 12:1-2; Phil. 3:11-14**). They are saying, *"We are not pursuing anything else in life but Thee."*

Only after this declaration of desire will He draw her into His chamber of spiritual revelation. What are you running after in this life? What is your consuming passion? Love loves to be pursued and to pursue. When two people are deeply in love they pursue each other with a fervency that knows no bounds! They pursue to bless each other. They can't do enough to demonstrate their deep love for each other's heart! As you pursue your Bridegroom He is pursuing you! Glory to God!

The excitement of **"first love"**, love is the driving force. After each pursuit there comes that very special spiritual embrace. O how powerful, O how fulfilling when you and your Bridegroom **"find"** each other. You share the gift with each other – a thought, an item, an embrace. O dear Lord, how many times have you pursued to bless in those **"little"** things for me. Notice **"we will run"** and **"the King hath brought"**! They both are pursuing each other!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Jesus, I will run toward You with a Holy Spirit fervency. I will not run alone but with those who love You as deeply as I do! My fellowship will be with them. I choose now to fellowship with Your surrendered friends!"*

"...the king hath brought me into his chambers;..."

It is only when Jesus is King of your life that He will bring you into His secret chamber; the chamber where the Holy Spirit begins to reveal Jesus' heart to You in ways you never thought possible. What an awesome privilege, to be taken into the secret chamber of the King. He knows when you are ready and at the precise moment He will draw you into a deeper experience with Him. Does it not say that the Beloved brought her into the chambers?

It describes Him as the King. If He is King of my life then I will love to keep His commands. In loving the King, the Holy Spirit will reveal the secrets of the King's heart to you! So marvelous is this experience that no words could describe your inner joy. Jesus died that He might be your Lord (**Rom. 14:9**).

The key to the secret chamber is His lordship. O surrendered one, when you taste the joys of your Beloved in His chamber, you will want absolutely nothing else except more of Him. May **Psa. 73:25** be true of your heart.

"...we will be glad and rejoice in thee..."

The only real joy and gladness is **"in"** Him. All true spiritual blessings are found **"in Him"**. Stop and read the **"in"** references and meditate on them. Let Him bless your heart through them (**Eph. 1:4,10,11,13; 2:18; 3:6; Col. 1:19; 2:6; 2:7; 2:9-11; I John 2:5**). David the Psalmist said it so well in **Psa. 16:8,9**. In setting the Lord before us in all we do; making Him our sole purpose for living, then our heart will be made glad and rejoice! Being drawn into His chamber gives us the time to meditate quietly upon Him and the result is **Psa. 104:34**! O what gladness it is to be with others in His chamber pouring out their hearts to Him. Observing God's joy on the countenance of another surrendered believer multiplies your own joy.

"...we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee."

The pursuers had tasted the Beloved King's special love in the chamber of His heart. Once you taste your Bridegroom's love you will only want to talk about Him with others who have experienced the same. You will relive it over and over again with them as you share together. Everything that is truly unnecessary fades into insignificance. He loves to be remembered (**Isa. 43:25,26**). That is why He instituted the Lord's supper. He will never allow the precious moments of remembrance concerning Him to be forgotten (**Mal. 3:16**)! Your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, will not allow one word spoken in heartfelt prayer and praise to be forgotten. They are being kept for a very special moment in eternity (**Rev. 5:8**). Only those who have an upright (surrendered) heart will be granted this intimacy. **"...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. (I Cor. 2:9,10)."** Don't you feel the holy determination in the words **"we will"**?

Overwhelmed with awe and knowing they were changed forever, these ladies found a private place where they could share all that had transpired between them and their Beloved King. Upon entering they sensed an awesome presence of the Holy Spirit filling the room just the same as it had been when they gathered round the Beloved. Some

quietly sang praises, a few wept from overflowing hearts, others raised their hands in worship. It seemed like only minutes had passed by but it was more than an hour. Then there was a moment of absolute quietness.

Filled 'till they thought they would burst, all began trying to share at the same time, then they broke out in laughter! Each one glowed as children do when unwrapping presents at birthday parties. Something had happened to them and they knew they would never be the same. This beautiful group of ladies shared all that was on their hearts. Everything was new and fresh. With a joy filled countenance, the bride spoke excitedly, *"Did you see the joy in His eyes as we walked into the room? I have never seen Him so happy! Remember how He had us all sit close around Him? The moment I sat down I felt a burst of love flow all through my soul. I have never experienced anything like that before! I have been in many meetings with other believers but this was different. It was as if I had been transported to Heaven itself."*

One of the ladies said, *"You know, I have been in Bible studies all my life. I have heard much shared concerning the meaning of passages. It was enjoyable and instructive! But this, this far surpasses those times. Talking about Jesus with others who are in love with Him is indescribable joy! Praise His holy Name that I am with you all! You understand how I feel. Only you can. You were there!"* They hung breathlessly on every word, wanting to relive over and over again the deep experience with Jesus.

All of a sudden the bride remarked, *"Do you realize what has happened? Have you heard what we have been saying to each other? It's a miracle my sisters!"* Some looked puzzled not understanding, but with intensive expectation they knew they were in for a blessing. The bride continued, *"Each one of us has shared something very different, yet infinitely precious about our Beloved King. He didn't speak individually with us. We all heard the same words from His lips. He kissed each one of us individually. Yet He gave each one of us a different and very personal revelation from His heart!"* They sat there stunned! A holy presence fell all over the room. One remarked very quietly, *"This must be the filling of the wonderful Holy Spirit. I have heard others talk about it but I had no idea what it truly meant."*

They began to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord (**Eph. 5:18-21**). Having poured out their hearts in praise and thanksgiving to the Lover of their souls, the bride exclaimed, *"I have never, never experienced anything like this. My heart was so full to overflowing! You felt it ladies. Look what happened when we came together. We were compelled to worship or we would have burst. This must be the springs of living water flowing from our innermost being by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit."* (**John 7:38;39**). Another asked, *"What caused Him to choose us for this unspeakable joy? Why us?"* At the very same moment, the Holy Spirit spoke the answer in their hearts. Then at the exact same moment they whispered one word, *"Surrender!"* The bride said, *"Yes, yes that is exactly what we all have in common. We surrendered our all to Him before He invited us into His chamber! Every one of us in this room is gloriously in love with our King!"* Hours which seemed minutes passed by. Filled with unspeakable joy they departed.

Surrendered love activates faith! His love for me and my love for Him is the catalyst for all spiritual blessing and strength. **Gal. 5:6** teaches us that it is, *"...faith which works by love."* Is not our Beloved King love itself (**I John 4:8,16**)? Look at how important love is: **Deut. 23:5; Psalms. 145:20; I John 3:1; I Cor. 13:1-13; I John 4:7-21; Rom. 5:5; 8:26; I Cor. 2:9,10; II Cor. 5:14; Eph. 3:17; John 14:21!** The enemy came to ruin this holy experience. A group of the daughters of Jerusalem meet her. She is hated because of ethnic pride. To them she is not pure! She is not a Hebrew. In a demeaning tone and with a look that could kill, they ask, *"Who do you think you are? Your blood is not pure! You are an unclean Gentile. We are Hebrew daughters! How dare you even think that the King would give you the time of day."* It was as if knives had pierced her heart. The enemy had done his work. **"Persecuted but not forsaken. Cast down, but not destroyed"** (**II Cor. 4:7-9**), filled with the Spirit of Christ, she looked up with the power of her Beloved all over her and said...

V.5 "I am black, but comely (lovely), O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon."

When the daughters heard this they became indignant. This woman before them was not an Israelite but simply a treaty wife given to the King. She is **"black"** - a Gentile without the rights which a daughter of Jerusalem possesses because of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This lady is a foreigner, yet the king had singled her out above all the others and had given her his heart. She mentions **"the tents of Kedar"; "Kedar"** means **"dark"**. These tents were black because of the color of the goats hair used in making them. These were the tents of the second son of Ishmael (**Gen. 25:13**). The Jews would not come near those tents (**Psa. 120:5**)! This is the same attitude the Jews displayed in Jesus' day concerning foreigners. He told His very own people that salvation was not only for the Jews, but for the whole world (**John 3:16**). The hated Samaritans (half Hebrew/half Gentile) understood this in **John 4:9,39-42; 8:48!** How appropriate and exact is this depiction of us! She is a Gentile and Solomon's Gentile bride who had no rights and we are His spiritual Gentile bride and we had no rights according to **Eph. 2:8-22**. It's all of grace! Hallelujah!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Abba Father, I praise Your Holy name! You gave me to Your Son as a gift to be His bride (John 10:28,29; 6:37)! I had no rights and I was dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1)! Lord Jesus, You accepted me as a gift from Your Father's hands (John 10:29), and then You died for me. O dear Bridegroom, You gave me life so I could love You. You washed me with Your blood so that You could reside inside of me (Gal. 2:20). Thank You dear Father for giving me the most wonderful gifts ever, salvation and Your dear Holy Spirit, because I am the bride of Your Son. How could I ever love You, my Bridegroom without Your Holy Spirit? He alone makes You real to me. I love You Father! I love You my dear Bridegroom! I love You dear Holy Spirit! Hallelujah! In Jesus' name, amen!"*

"...(lovely) as the curtains of Solomon."

What makes you lovely in the sight of your Bridegroom? The beautiful curtains of Solomon represent the veil in Solomon's Temple dividing the holy place from the holy of holies. What did this veil represent? It represented Christ's flesh (Heb. 10:19-20)! He took all of your sins and bore them in His own body on the cross making you clean (1 Pet. 2:24)! Not only that, you are now His body (1 Cor. 12:27). The Beloved looks at your spirit and sees that you are as beautiful and lovely as He! How can this be? It is because He dressed your spirit up with His garment of salvation and His robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10)!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, Your veil, that is Your flesh, was torn from top to bottom when You were on the cross (Matt.27:51). Your body was torn by the whip, the beatings and the nails! You became ugly to make me Your beautiful bride. I am beautiful because I am dressed up in You! Thank You dear Lord Jesus! Thank You for giving me the beautiful "garment of salvation" and the glorious "robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10). O how I love You! In Your name Lord, amen!"*

Satan will try to tell you how unworthy you are! Yes, in myself I am unworthy! But I am a new creation (II Cor. 5:17)! The Holy Spirit indwells me. I am the bride of the King and a child of Abba Father. I have been made worthy because of His grace and mercy; because I am in a blood relationship to my Lord!

Everything that belongs to my Bridegroom belongs to me. ***"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed (me) with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."*** (Eph. 1:3). I am as lovely as the curtains of Solomon! That spiritual curtain drapes my heart! I am lovely as Jesus, my Lord and my God! *"Enemy of my soul, I cast your thoughts out of my mind in the name of Jesus, who is my Lord!"*

V.6 "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me..."

When you have surrendered all to your wonderful Bridegroom, expect to be misunderstood and misrepresented. Others will still see the old you, they will remember your past and bring it up in gossip. Satan will try to distract your loving gaze from Jesus onto yourself or others. When this happens speak to your mountain and pray for them (Luke 6:27-28), then return your gaze back to the eyes of your Beloved! People will look on the outward appearance but remember, God looks on the heart (1 Sam. 16:7)! Don't get focused on what others think. Remember Mary of Bethany? She kept her eyes upon the Love of her heart!

The very presence of a fully surrendered believers, filled with the Spirit, brings conviction to those who are lukewarm. Because Jesus has become your all consuming reason for living, you will find those who used to be close to you, seldom seeking your fellowship. You are really not the problem but it is the Lord shining through you who disturbs them! Pray for them. The following statement is a description of her spiritual walk before entering into the joys of the surrendered life!

"...my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

The Holy Spirit reminds her of a problem imbedded deep in her soul. O how gentle He is with us. He doesn't expose everything all at once. It will be little by little throughout our lifetime. She has had all kinds of trouble with her brothers. They care not one bit about her obligations in the home or how tired she gets just trying to keep up. They just want an extra hand to do chores that they themselves should be doing. There were times when they ridiculed or mocked her in "fun".

And out of sheer frustration, she said cutting things to them in return. Then she would bury these unkind words in her heart and they seemed to "go away"! Sometime she is going to have to deal with these hurts when she has grown in her surrender. The Holy Spirit will choose the perfect time. Later you will see how this happens.

When your heart is totally surrendered to the Lord you will want to get involved in various kinds of "good" activities. Be careful that you do not get involved in that which was not intended for you. When asked by others in the church to volunteer you may be the first to do so. You may feel spiritually obligated to do anything and everything.

The enemy loves to get us so busy in legitimate projects that we find no time for the inner chamber; no time for intimate fellowship with the Bridegroom of your heart. He particularly likes to do this to new believers. After a while you grow tired and weary, wondering what happened to the joy you experienced before!

Don't be afraid to give up some of those duties in order to get back to the chamber. Some will show their disappointment and criticize you as being unspiritual, when, in reality you want to do only that which your Beloved intended for you. Remember, God was not in a hurry to put Moses, Elijah and Paul into the work He had planned for them. The Lord knew they needed time with Him before they were thrust into their life's work. Be patient!

May I lovingly counsel you again? Be careful about becoming involved in so many activities ("**vineyards**") so that the vineyard of your heart cannot be cultivated by the Holy Spirit. Don't be a Martha, but a Mary (**Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-5; Mark 14:3-9**). You need quiet, meditative time alone with your Beloved. Don't fill your time up with so many religious activities and miss giving Him your adoring heart for which He so yearns! Give your Beloved what He desires most - "**first love**" love (**Rev. 2:1-5**)! Don't ever forget, you are His portion of joy. **Deut. 32:9** declares it!

Now for the question, will she ever be able to truly minister in the vineyard her Lord had chosen for her? Before there would be a vineyard to harvest, the garden of her heart would need to be developed. Preparations for her to actually be allowed to minister in her vineyard have begun with this initial surrender. However, not until **chapter 8** will the Holy Spirit answer that question.

V.7 "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loves, where thou feedest, where thou makes thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turns aside by the flocks of thy companions?"

After recognizing that she is an undeserving foreigner; after receiving demeaning stares from others; after the hurt of misunderstanding inflicted upon her by her own family; after realizing the emptiness of busyness; will she give up in utter despair? With such an onslaught of discouragement will she cease in her quest for an intimate relationship with her Beloved?

No, praise God! This truly surrendered bride runs to her Beloved. Hesitating before approaching Him, she ponders, "*Is He deeply disappointed since He allowed me to have intimate fellowship with Him, then I got focused off into many other things and had little time for Him?*" The bride sets these nagging doubts aside. She thinks within herself, "*He alone knows my hurt; my frustration; my weariness; the longing of my heart to have time with Him.*"

"O how I love Him only, He will lead me to where I can be fed. He knows exactly what I need! I just want to be with those who thirst for what I desire - listening to the voice of His Word feeding my soul. O how blessed they must be in His gentle Shepherd's care!" With these burdens upon her heart she sees Him and then with a longing tone inquires:

"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loves, where thou feedest, where thou makes thy flock to rest at noon?"

Why don't you ask Your Beloved the same question as the bride did in this verse? The Holy Spirit will then lead you to a place of quiet rest with your Beloved. Before you will be set everything you need - His wisdom, discernment, love, faith, intimacy, immutable promises and so much more. He will lead you into joyful fellowship with other sheep who dearly love Him as you do. Your Beloved will ask you to sit next to Him and He will personally feed you and give you His rest. Her stress concerning the vineyard problem will be answered in **Phil. 4:6,7; John 14:27** and **Matt. 11:28**.

"...at noon..."

This is symbolical of the hottest part of the day. Satan will try to burn you out and dry you up spiritually. Only your dear Bridegroom is able to protect you from the attacks of the enemy. He alone has the right to decide what is needed for your healing and recovery. Be careful about deciding for yourself how to find rest for your soul (hobbies, TV, worldly activities, movies). Go to Him first!

Listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit from the Word and then you will say, "***He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.***" (**Psa. 23:2,3**). You will receive what you thought impossible: a refreshing renewal flowing down over your tired soul.

"...For why should I be as one that turns aside as one who is veiled by the flocks of thy companions?"

She desires **"rest"** above everything else. Now that she has given herself over completely to Him, the Holy Spirit leads this Bride into what is truly important. Too many in God's family keep so busy they miss Him! Her soul longs for that **"rest"** which can only come from Him alone. Apparently the enemy is attempting to focus her attention off of Jesus onto His people. He would have you look at the **"flocks"** and not the Shepherd! The **"flocks of thy companions"** are separate ministries of those who are actively serving Him in their God-given ministry. What a trick of the enemy, to rob her of peace and rest and rob Jesus of her intimate love. Catch this truth and the danger of this **"turning aside"** in **John 21:19-22**. Peter, after being restored by the Lord, was simply told by Him to **"follow Me"**! In **v. 20** it says, **"Peter, turning around...."** Immediately after following Jesus he began to wonder about John. The Lord basically said, **"that's none of your business Peter, you follow Me. I'll take care of John, you take care of simply following Me."** She immediately recognizes what is happening and so asked the very pointed question in the above verse.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Bridegroom of my heart, may I never make You ashamed of me. May You never find me in the arms of another seeking momentary pleasures which will never satisfy. Keep me from wandering. I submit my mind, heart and body to You, dear Lord. I will not turn aside to find rest in any other place. I have tried all of that emptiness. I want You alone! 'Order my steps in Thy Word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' (Psa. 119:133). In Jesus' blessed name!"*

The Beloved responds:

V.8 "If thou know not, O thou fairest (most beautiful) among women...."

With joy He immediately answers the longing of her heart. He is not bothered at all that she **"knows not"**. She **"knows not"** and runs immediately to Him who absolutely knows! With His eyes focused on her, He tenderly and lovingly declares to her heart, **"to Me you are the most beautiful among all others. Why? Because you will not allow anything to distract you from Me!"** This is said to you, dear reader! Is it hard to accept? Yes! But do it! See yourself as He sees you. You are most beautiful in your Bridegroom's eyes because of the fervor of your desire towards Him. It's the Mary of Bethany heart He sees in you. Can you imagine what it does to His heart seeing your love-filled eyes? Be assured He will direct you to the food of **"rest"**! He must. It is His will (**I John 5:14,15**). Praise God! Hallelujah!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Beloved Lord Jesus, my heart is overwhelmed by such thoughts. I overflow with joy and adoration for You. Cause me to see more and more of what You see in me. Cause me to grow in my surrender to You. Take out all things that do not please You. I love You too much to have anything knowingly come between us and disappoint Your heart! Thank You Father for having set me in Your plan for my life. (Psa. 139:16; Isa. 46:11). Consider O my soul the Beloved's Word, 'For I know the thoughts (plans) that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts (plans) of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' (Jer. 29:11). May I walk in it by the power of the Holy Spirit alone. In Jesus' name, amen."*

"...go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids (young goats) besides the shepherd's tents."

He now answers her. She wants the younger ones to know what she knows. Why should they have to wait as she did? She had been kept busy in church programs and missed the filling. She had never been taught about it until a stranger, Marybeth, was sent to their Bible study. She is not going to let that happen to those young ones who love her. **"Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock"** those who follow in surrender to the Lord (**John 10:27**). They are the ones who stick close to THE SHEPHERD'S TENT! Lead them to the Mary's of Bethany! You'll find them always waiting patiently at His tent. There you will find rest. They are those who consistently have the fruit of the Spirit in their daily walk. Fellowship with them and follow their footsteps.

Learn His secrets from them. He will share Himself with you through them. (**Eph. 3:14-19; 4:15-16**). **"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end (result) of their conversation (behavior)."** (**Heb.13:7**). Feed **"the kids"** by your example through a life of surrender. Take them under your wing and watch-care. The Holy Spirit will cause them to desire what you have - that glow and joy of love for Him whom your soul loves.

The early church knew where the power came from (**Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4, 42,46; I Cor. 10:16,17; Heb. 10:25; Luke 14:33**). O what unspeakable joy when Spirit filled (truly surrendered believers) meet to love, worship and exalt the Lord! These **"kids"** will be fed in their spirit by observing the Lord flowing all through their mentors' manner of living.

The young need to see how important real, true spiritual fellowship is to the life of the believer. It's not just talking about everyday things such as: clothes, sports etc., and that's ok, but that is believers having fellowship. Spirit-filled fellowship is when Jesus is the center, focus and purpose of the gathering together.

Yes, Jesus is always with us but His very special presence comes when two or three are gathered together in His name (**Mt. 18:20**). When the "**kids**" see a deep exchange of "**first love**" love between you and Your Bridegroom then they will rise to a level of fullness which was previously beyond their comprehension! It is not enough to have the "**kids**" memorize scripture. They must see the image of a living Jesus in us, then their lives will be transformed (**Rom. 8:29**).

V.9 "I have compared thee, O my love (dearest one), to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."

The word "**love**" here is not the usual Hebrew word. The form of this Hebrew word is only found in the Song of Solomon. It comes from a Hebrew root word meaning "**to associate with**" or "**dearest companion**". It is a word just for her. You, dear surrendered bride, are His special companion, not just an ordinary friend but the one and only choice of His "**first love**" heart.

Listen to the heart of Jesus speak to you, "I love you, O how I love being with you. You are the dear companion of my heart! There are so few of you who have given Me complete control. You are My joy. Many whom I indwell bring Me much sorrow. They do not consider My heart when they go to places which are against what has been revealed to them from My word. They belong to Me and know better, but they drag Me into their sin anyway. They watch things that mock My name. I died and rose again that My purity would flow through them. These that belong to Me listen to the whispers and enticements of the enemy much more than they do Me. I lay down at night with them and I hear their innermost thoughts of emptiness. All that they have experienced has been unsatisfying and unfulfilling.

They come away from their worldly videos, music and magazines feeling so empty. My Spirit cries out to them, yet their ears are so dull of hearing. O how sad it is for Me to know the fulfilled life I have already planned for them to experience, yet they do not hear. They will not respond for their old nature has dulled them to any sense of what sin really is. These that I speak of are not truly in love with Me. My Father has had the plan ready since eternity past when the first thought of them came into His Abba Father's heart.

I remember how excited I became when My Father revealed He was giving them to Me for a bride. They would love Me and I would love them. My Holy Spirit would actually live in their spirit. With their free will they would choose to love Me. But I live in sadness with many of them.

However, You My love are very different. I have compared you with the best. I prefer you over angels, seraphim and the cherubim! You bring so much joy to my heart. You don't even realize it now, but your joy and love for Me is going to grow deeper than you could have ever imagined. O My love, dearest companion of My heart, thank you for opening yourself up to Me in surrender! You are not perfect yet, but your heart responds to anything that would displease Me. Hear My heart, I love you!"

When the Lord drew you into His family, you were like the huge marble stone brought to Michelangelo. The stone had no shape. It was for all intents and purposes ugly! Yet the great sculptor saw the magnificent statue of David in it. He saw the final results before he had actually begun. Your Bridegroom thinks the same way about you! You will notice as you go through this love song that when the bride goes against what her Bridegroom desires, He never gets angry with her. She sins out of weakness but not wickedness, much like Peter of whom we will deal with later.

You may not see a thing in yourself that is desirable at this moment, but Praise God, He does and that is only what matters! Do you feel unwanted, unloved and unattractive because of ugly words said to you in the past? It's the enemy whispering in your ear, "*You are worthless, no good! Why don't you give up! Nobody really loves you!*" Reject all of that. With His arms around you, hear the God of the universe, Jesus the Bridegroom saying right now, "*Dearest companion of My heart, you are beautiful to Me beyond description. I love you!*"

"...to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."

To you, surrendered one, He says that you are like the most excellent horses purchased for Pharaoh. These horses were considered the best in the world. Solomon purchased them from Egypt for his special service and pleasure (**I Kings 10:28-29**). These horses were: chosen by and for the King alone (**so were you-I Pet. 2:4-9; Eph. 1:4-5**); costly (**so were you-I Cor. 6:19-20**); swift to obey every command (**so are you-Col. 1:18; I Pet. 2:11**); not distracted by other things for you have the mind of Christ (**I Cor. 2:16; Heb. 12:2,3**).

What a glorious compliment. But you say, *"These horses were perfect, I'm not!"* It took time and training for those horses to become special. This bride will grow in surrender from **chapter one** through **chapter eight**. In **v. 9** He sees a perfect commitment not a perfect walk. He sees her heart and her desire! She is surrendered and that makes her "choice". Isn't it wonderful to see how much you mean to Him; how much joy you bring to His heart through simple surrender? Praise His holy name! Knowing this should defeat the enemy who would cause you to see yourself as unworthy, a nobody, useless!

This verse is a description of sanctification (separated unto). These superb horses were separated for the King's pleasure only. This is what true holiness is all about. So many believers "force" themselves to go to more than one meeting a week, read the Word, pray and praise consistently. But with consumed love there is no forcing but a fire of desire. "**First love**" love can't wait to please!

This is why He is so glowing in His description of her for there is nothing more important in her life than her Beloved. The Beloved takes her by the hand and says, *"My lovely bride, let Me have the joy of sitting next to you. There is so much more I want you to know about how I feel."*

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, thank You so much for revealing what Your heart sees in me. I receive those loving words of Your grace! Knowing Your heart is changing me, I yearn to please You. Whatever good or beauty You see in me is a reflection of Yourself. I want others to see more of You in me. Keep me separated unto Yourself like the horses in Pharaoh's chariots! I am at Your beck and call, for I know this brings joy to You completely! Dear Holy Spirit cause the image of my Bridegroom to ever increase in me. I love You my Savior, my Lord, my Delight! In Your Holy name Lord Jesus, Amen!"*

With infinite love flowing from His heart to her heart He says,

V.10 *"Thy cheeks are comely (lovely) with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold."*

In the regular KJV the words, *"of jewels"* and *"of gold"* are in italics. This means that they are supplied by the translators and not in the original text. The first word *"rows"* is the Hebrew word for *"plait"* or *"turn"* (**Esther 2:15**). In other words, her cheeks are lovely especially with plaits of beautifully braided hair offsetting them. The important thing to notice is that her cheeks and neck are beautiful in His eyes.

She sits there as if mesmerized, glowing with delight and adoration. Those cheeks radiate love for Him. Think about it dear reader, a heart full of surrender to Him causes your Beloved Bridegroom to take notice of the beautiful spiritual expression radiating from your inward countenance!

The second word *"chains"* is the Hebrew word for *"ornaments"*. The neck represents the human will (**Acts 7:51; Exo. 33:3; Prov. 3:3; 29:1**). What is it about her neck that He finds so arresting to His gaze? She has relinquished her will to His will alone! A yielded heart makes for a beautiful neck. No wonder He is thrilled with her. What adorns your neck: obedience, praise, love, prayer, a spirit-filled Word of God directed walk or an unbending, stiff-necked will?

This is the first of four times that the neck is mentioned by the Bridegroom. It is very important to Him (**1:10; 4:4,9; 7:4**)! Was not Jesus' will lovingly submitted to the Father's will (**Mark 14:34-36**)? Oh, but what was the cost for us to have a countenance which would ever please Him? His cheeks were disfigured by the plucking out of all of His hair (**Isa. 50:6**)! His countenance was made ugly (**Mark 14:65**) so that your spiritual countenance could be made beautiful by Him! Does this not cause you to love Him more?

Hear Him speak gently from His heart to her, *"I love to look at your countenance. It says so much to My heart without you saying one word. I look on the heart not on the outward appearance (I Sam. 16:7). Only I can look deep within your soul and see your love filled heart. It's only for Me. What a gift you are to Me! I can never thank My Father enough for giving you to Me."*

PRAY WITH ME: *"Abba Father, may my will always be submerged in Your perfect will by the power of the Holy Spirit through Your Word. Lord, words cannot express the overflowing Spirit-filled love I have for You. May I always demonstrate my love for You, dear Bridegroom of my heart, in willing obedience to Your Words (John 14:23). In Your name Lord Jesus, amen."*

V.11 "We will make thee...."

The word "**we**" indicates that more than one person is involved with the bride and Bridegroom of this love song. In the immediate circumstances they are ladies-in-waiting. They are there to serve the bride. However, as we look beyond the immediate to the spiritual, we see God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit continually at work in us to cause more of Jesus' image to be seen in our lives (**Rom. 8:29**). Never forget that "**we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...**" (**Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6; 2:13**)! Here is a very small list of what our glorious triunity God is doing: The Father (**Eph. 1:3; I John 3:1**); The Son (**John 10:28; Heb. 7:25**); The Holy Spirit (**Rom. 8:26; John 14:26**). They bestow upon us the "**garment of salvation**" and the "**robe of righteousness**" to be seen (**Isa. 61:10**). As practical surrender to Him increases (**John 3:30**) more and more the jewels of His character, "**gold, silver and precious stones**" (**I Cor. 3:11-14**) will be displayed in our walk (**Gal. 5:22,23**)! He does it - we don't! He then receives all the glory!

"...borders of gold..."

God wants "**gold**" displayed on her neck. Gold represents the character, glory and person of God and also value, purity, truth, and honor. In the Tabernacle, the golden table, the golden lamp stand, the golden altar of incense are all made of pure gold and the ark of the covenant was overlaid with gold. All of these holy items in type have the Lord. (**Consider Job 23:10; Psa. 19:7-11; Psa. 45:13; Prov. 25:11; Zech. 4:2-6; I Cor. 3:12; II Tim. 2:20; Rev. 21:18-21**). O what a joy it is for the Beloved to feast His eyes on His lovely bride displaying and reflecting "**gold**" - the beauty of the Lord Himself. Then, He allows the gold in us to be seen by others so that they might be attracted to Himself through us!

"with studs of silver."

The Lord also wants to adorn us with "**silver**". Silver represents atonement, redemption (**Ex. 36:24 and 30:15**). The boards that surrounded the Tabernacle had an enormous amount of silver as the foundation. Think of the eternal weight of our sin and the indescribable cost of our redemption our Beloved had to pay! The boards are representative of believers. Our foundation is Christ (**I Cor. 3:11**). It is His redemption upon which we stand. What a joy it is for Him to see the silver of redemption a reality in our life: habits broken; deliverance from bondages; new attitudes and desires displayed. The order here is interesting, "**gold**" then "**silver**". The eternal, infinite, glorious God (**gold**) bought and redeemed us from our deadness to be His forever (**silver**)!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Bridegroom of my heart, may You alone be seen in my life. Holy Spirit I submit to You and to Your sword of transforming power so that Jesus may increase and I may decrease (**John 3:30**). May the gold and silver of Your character shine through me! Take my life and continue to transform it, especially the thoughts of my mind. As I submit my life to You in light of **Rom.12:1**, make **Rom. 12:2** and **II Cor.3:17,18** real in me as only You can. When I am called to stand before You may there be plenty of gold, silver, and precious stones found in the gift of life You implanted in me. I love You and thank You for revealing so much already to my heart from this love letter to me. I am looking forward to great changes in me as You allow me to experience Your blessed heart! In Your honored name Lord Jesus, amen!"*

The Bride responds:

V.12 "While the king sits at his table, my spikenard (perfume) sends forth the smell (fragrance) thereof."

The "**table**" represents fellowship and provision. Sitting implies a ceasing from all activities. If Jesus is your King in reality, then He will invite you to His table. Just you and Jesus together: talking, caring, and sharing. As you adore Him in spirit and through His Word, He, in turn, feeds your spirit with spiritual food from His Word that is too wonderful for description. You are so taken up with Him that a beautiful fragrance emanates from your innermost being. It is the presence of God on your life - the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The story about Mephibosheth and King David in **II Sam. 9:1-13** is a beautiful example of what it means to eat at the King's table. We who are spiritual cripples and grovel in fear in our own strength (Mephibosheth) have been made to sit with King Jesus at His table! His food, His intimate fellowship strengthen us (**John 12:3; II Cor. 2:15** and **Eph. 5:2**).

Let me strongly suggest for you to begin to practice the presence of God, with your Beloved. It is not difficult. Say with the Psalmist, "**I will meditate also of all thy work....**" (**Psa. 77:12**). "**Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.**" (**Psa. 19:14**). Read **Phil. 4:8**. Begin by planning a 5 minute time of silence. Make **Psa. 16:8** a daily reality, "**I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.**" Look at a verse about your Lord. Just sit in His presence thinking about it. Savor it. Practice His presence in light of **Prov. 3:6**.

Take out a poem or a hymn and just reflect and ponder on the words - maybe just on one stanza only. Sit quietly and in the silence of your heart tell Him, *"I love You with all of my heart!"* Speak to Him as the Lover of your soul. When couples are in love, many times they sit in quietness, snuggled up close to each other. Why? They are savoring the enjoyment of each other's presence! Love Him with a **"first love"**, love of silent quietness (**Psa. 62:5-8**).

"...sends forth the smell..."

We were never meant to only enjoy Jesus alone. He gives that others may see and know Him. When you are filled with Jesus the atmosphere around you will be filled with His fragrances. Can you imagine the glory of combined fragrances as we Mary's of Bethany worship Him together? Heaven must be filled with a joyful aroma filled with the love of God!

Again, go to Mary of Bethany's home (**John 12:1-7; Mark 14:1-9**). Mary lavished all of her love upon the Lord by giving Him what was most prized by her, spikenard worth ten months wages, about \$12,000 in modern value! She anointed His head and His feet. She wiped His feet with her hair, her glory. The fragrance filled the house. When you adore and worship your Bridegroom, that anointing fragrance will permeate the very place you live. No matter where Mary went that day, she carried the same fragrance Jesus now had. **Psa. 23:6** tells us what fragrances will follow us as we anoint Jesus' feet in loving submission to Him, ***"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."***

This is the goal of the gospel, to become a Mary of Bethany. Read **Mark 14:9**. It was so, so important that the Lord said this act of Mary's must be mentioned every time the gospel is preached. Why? A true salvation experience is to lead the believer in an all consuming love for Jesus no matter what others may say. We are to give Him the spikenard of our will - that which is most costly to us.

It is very important to see the order in this verse. Before the **"sending"** there must be the **"sitting"**! **"Sitting"** implies rest, peace, fellowship, and trust. Do you give Him what He wants? O how He loves this! When you sit at His table you cannot help but be changed and the fragrance of His presence will go with you the rest of the day!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, I will continually make available to You my body, soul, spirit and my time. Actually Lord they have been given to me on loan from You. I place them at Your complete disposal. My will is Your will dear Bridegroom of my heart! Take it all, I want it no other way! I will make time to sit with You at Your table, to have time together in loving fellowship around Your Word, in Your most wonderful name, Lord Jesus. Amen!"*

V.13 "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he (actually "it") shall lie all night betwixt my breasts."

When her Beloved had to leave on a journey, He gave her the myrrh, a part of Himself, so that sweet perpetual thoughts of His **"first love"** love for her would be close to her heart until He returned! She kept it **"between her breasts"**, so that the **"myrrh"** would be right next to her heart. She never wanted to forget the cost of the fragrance! She went to sleep enjoying the fragrance that spoke of Him; a constant reminder that *"He loves me and I can hear His quiet voice even now speaking it to my heart"*. She would wake up in the middle of the night and smell that fragrance; a reminder that He will be back soon to hold her.

But why **"myrrh"**, what's so special about it? **"Myrrh"** is obtained by crushing (or piercing)! Read **Isa. 53:5,10**. Think about it, Jesus, your Bridegroom, was **"crushed"** (Heb. word for **"bruised"**) for His bride's iniquities. **"Myrrh"** was used as part of the ceremonial purification of the women in the King's court (**Esther 2:12**).

Thus, it is symbolical of being set apart for your King (the meaning of sanctification, holiness). O to be set apart for Jesus so that your daily activities have true meaning (**Col. 3:23,24**). **"Myrrh"**, also, was used as a beauty aid. Is that not the glorious work of the Holy Spirit in your life while you sojourn down here, to change you into the image of Christ (**Rom. 8:29; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 2:20**)? Why? So that He could enjoy looking at your heart, that new creation, reflecting His beauty in those intimate, private times with Him alone. God, who is all beautiful, imparts His eternal beauty to you. It is being all dressed up in Jesus (**Gal.3:27**). **"Myrrh"** was used by royalty as a perfume for their garments (**Psa. 45:8**) and we are royal priests (**I Pet. 2:9**)! Praise God, He not only makes us His bride but also a holy priest to offer up Spirit-filled sacrifices of love, joy, praise, adoration and worship to our Abba Father! It also was used to alleviate pain (**Mk. 15:23**). Glory to God, He took all your eternal pain due your soul, ***"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows..."*** (**Isa. 53:4**). And He still carries our daily emotional and spiritual pain and sorrow even now (**I Pet. 5:7; I Cor. 10:13; Heb. 4:14-16**). Glory to God, the **"myrrh"** is complete for everything we need! How appropriate the Holy Spirit chooses **"myrrh"**

(Col. 2:10). What is the secret of having the **"myrrh"** spiritually placed nearest our heart? Simply surrender each situation to Him. It's all about surrender. When you surrender, the dear Holy Spirit places the bag of Jesus' **"myrrh"** around your neck! He saw this happening to you while He was on the cross. This is the joy which was set before Him (Heb.12:2).

What about you dear believer, do you have a spiritual bundle of **"myrrh"** next to your heart? Jesus is physically away right now, but O to wake up in the middle of the night and realize, *"He's coming soon to get me and take me home."* You smell the wonderful fragrance as thankful thoughts from the Holy Spirit flood through your soul. A precious pouch of **"myrrh"** has been given to you to remind you that He will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5)! He still speaks softly to you through His powerful anointed Word! Just one verse in the middle of the night brings peace! Thoughts of thankfulness pass through your Spirit-filled mind such as: your Beloved's death for you; the pure heart He has given to you; the healing of painful memories and sicknesses; the beauty of peace He has brought into your life! Praise Your Holy name Lord Jesus!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Holy Spirit, stir up the fragrance of His 'myrrh' over my heart so that I'll always be faithful to keep my eyes on Him alone. Cause the voice of the 'myrrh' to speak to my heart! May all know Lord that You alone are the satisfaction of my life. Lord, the night is almost over. I anxiously await Your coming! In Jesus' name, amen."*

V.14 "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of Camphire (henna blossoms) in the vineyards of Engedi."

Henna was a plant that grew to a height of seven to ten feet and was very valuable in the making of an orange-red dye. It produced beautiful white fragrant flowers which the ladies loved to wear and to use in decorating their homes. This same Hebrew word also has the meaning, *"the price of a life or ransom"*. What a cost for us to be resurrected in spirit and soul! We were ugly, dead weeds owned by another! Then our Beloved paid the price and planted us in His garden where He, the water of life and the nutrients of His living Word, turned our life from a barren wilderness into a resurrected garden.

Flowers speak of new life, beauty, testimony, resurrection. It is interesting that Jesus prayed in a garden (Mt. 26:36); was crucified in a garden, was buried and rose in a garden (John 19:41) so that our heart would become His garden. What kind of garden will it become? The Holy Spirit will reveal all the glorious details to you in 4:12-15; 5:1!

Praise God, Jesus is the *"henna blossoms"* of your heart! You, who loved darkness, now have been transformed into His lovely bride! Hallelujah! The **"myrrh"** in v. 13 was hidden, representing that intimate private devotional life you have with the Beloved. The henna flowers were worn to be seen!

Do you only think of Him in secret or is the resurrected Bridegroom seen in your daily walk and talk through the power of a submissive, spirit-filled life? (Prov. 3:5) O how the world needs to see the Henna flowers in your life (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27).

Think about this for a moment, in your speech and in your manner of living, how much attention do you bring to yourself? How much attention is brought to Jesus? In other words, is your lifestyle such that the manner in actions and attitudes reflect Him? You won't even be aware of it but others will! They will know there is something very different, very beautiful about you which they themselves do not possess. It's the henna blossoms being observed in your life.

The Holy Spirit will begin to draw them to the Lord who is inside of you. Does His Holy Spirit life flow through you automatically (John 7:38,39) to refresh Him first then to others around you? It happens most of the time without you realizing it because you are simply surrendered to Him!

"...in the vineyards of Engedi."

Engedi was on the edge of the Wilderness of Judah. A hot spring there provided an abundance of fresh water. It was a place where God defeated the enemies of Judah (II Chr. 20:2). This was a place of plentiful grapes and fruits in the wilderness. Jesus, the Beloved, is your Engedi in the wilderness! (John 10:10; Eph. 3:20).

He is peace for the angry; love for the hated; joy for the sad; healing for the wounded; fulfillment for the empty and so much more! He is the vine of Engedi (John 15:5)! Dear reader, daily surrendering in heart to the Lord causes His Holy Spirit fruit to produce heavenly fruit on your branch. Your vineyard (the responsibilities of life God has chosen you to be part of - family, school, marriage, work place, church, etc.) will be fruitful (Col. 3:12-17, 23-24)! Meditate and be thankful for the following spiritual absolutes: Eph. 1:3; Phil. 4:13,19; Col. 1:17; 2:19; 3:11; Heb. 1:3.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, engrave the adorning of Your Son upon my heart. Your spiritual vineyards are so plentiful, I ask You to adorn me with my Beloved's henna flowers so all can see that I truly love Him only."*

"My beloved is to me a cluster..."

There is nothing boring about your God and never will be! Your Beloved is your multifaceted Bridegroom. He is so many things for so many situations and needs: the Image of God; the Word; the Creator; Judge; Prince of Peace; Healer; Counselor; Sustainer; Shepherd; Bread; Life; Savior; Lord; King of kings and Lord of lords; Husband; Jehovah; Omnipresent; Prince of Peace; Rock; Wonderful; Sacrifice; Truth and on and on. The "**cluster**" is endless and you will be given an eternity to pick, taste and have revealed to your heart His glorious attributes. There will be "**clusters**" of secrets revealed that not even the heavenly hosts will be privy to. Why? Because we are His bride, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, (a new body), mind of His mind (we have the mind of Christ **I Cor. 2:16**) and spirit of His Spirit (He indwells us)! Wow!

Have you noticed the "**cluster**" of descriptions springing forth from her innermost being concerning Him in all of these verses (**12-14,16**)? Visualize a cluster of grapes with me. Consider how close they are to each other and to the vine. They are so close together that they must rub up against each other. May we have pure relationships with each other so that the cluster may be pure. There is a sad thought here of warning. As we remove rotten or unattractive grapes from a cluster, so also the Lord must do the same (**I Cor. 11:30**). Think for a moment what it must mean to Him when the Holy Spirit gathers together only Mary's of Bethany. O what a pure, heavenly cluster it must be to Him and all the angels He brings with Him so they may look in wonder at His glorious new redeemed who are in love with Him, His bride!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Thank You Abba Father for filling me with Your Spirit. You have already given to me intimate revelation knowledge concerning the Lord Jesus Who is the joy of my life. I have barely begun this love letter and You have already opened my spirit to things too wonderful to describe. Abba Father, I give You all the praise!"*

She has touched the deepest recesses of His "**first love**" loving heart with the "**cluster**" of the full, heartfelt love pouring forth from her lips! The bride had responded to His words (**vs. 9-11**). For a moment He is speechless. He just looks into her eyes and sees a spiritual brightness in them that He had never seen before. Dear reader, do you realize that you do the same to Him when you pour your heart out in worship to Him and acknowledge Him in all things (**Prov. 3:5-6**)? He takes both of her hands in His and with love filled words says,

V.15 "Behold, thou art fair (beautiful), my love (precious companion), behold, thou art fair (beautiful); thou hast dove's eyes."

His heart is so full of love for her. Dear bride of His heart, He is saying these words to you! Did you ever imagine that your heavenly Bridegroom could feel this deeply about you? Think about it, just her words have such a great effect on Him. So much so that all He can say, over and over again, is "*You are beautiful, you are beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful!*" He pauses and again He says in a quiet, very contemplative tone, "*Yes...beautiful.*" Do you find it too difficult to believe? Listen to these words from **Isa. 62:5**, "**...and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.**"

So many believers take and take of His love and seldom give it back to Him. They take the Lover of their souls, Who has provided everything for them, for granted! These believers have gotten "used to" the Lord. He no longer is fresh and vibrant in their thinking and meditation. O the sad condition of the Lord's bride today.

Her hands are so busy with temporal things and her eyes so easily distracted by the meaningless (hours of TV, videos, games etc.)! Spending so much time even on what is considered legitimate, yet it crowds out the best time for fellowship with her heavenly Husband.

The Beloved Jesus longs for that special, sustained look from His bride's eyes. But alas, He only receives a quick glance on the weekend when she goes to hear a sermon. It is then He hears her saying in passing, "*Hi*" and "*goodbye*" or "*I'll catch you later in an emergency.*" That's why His soul cries out for "**first love**" love from you and me!

Earlier I spoke of you being His joy because of what this verse says, "**...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...**" (**Heb. 12:2**). What joy is this? It is you dear bride, loving Him with an all-consuming "**first love**" love. What joy this brings to His loving heart! The lady in **v.15** is so special to Him that He uses the form of a Hebrew word nine times which is exclusive to the Song of Solomon ("**rayah**" - "**my love**" and not the usual word for "**love**" - "**aheb**" **1:9,15; 2:1,10,13; 4:1,7; 5:2; 6:4**). It has a meaning of "*intimate companion*". It is a word for her alone, much like those words shared between husband and wife that only they understand. Think of it, we have the closest relationship possible with God Almighty; closer than the angels, cherubim and seraphim! The Beloved is so filled with emotion for her that He has to repeat it "**my love**", "**my love**" ("**darling, precious companion**")! Praise God that a surrendered heart so affects your Bridegroom's heart! He now looks into her eyes and says,

"...thou hast doves eyes."

She is beautiful because she has "**dove's eyes**". Dove's eyes are mentioned six times in the Song of Solomon. They mean so much to your Beloved. These are eyes that only concentrate on one thing at a time. He was all of her vision! Her eyes never moved off of Him. In her daily life, with a myriad of decisions, she would filter all of them through His eyes. The more she looked into His eyes the more she began to read His heart. She just knew what to do after looking at them. Listen to Him, "**I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.**" (Psa. 32:8). How do you gaze into His eyes? When you gaze into His holy Word then you will hear the voice of His Spirit within your heart and mind!

O the fullness of the spiritual application of the dove. It was considered clean and could be used in sacrifice (Lev.1:14). Are you a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1,2)? Some doves have a mourning sound when their mate is away (Isa. 38:14; Nah. 2:7). Do you mourn when you know you are not in His will? Do you mourn over this old sinful earth because it has rejected your Beloved? Do you long for His return to rule this world?

It was a dove that brought back good news to Noah in the ark (Gen. 8:8-12). Is faith and love your good news (I Thes.3:6)? Do people see Jesus, the Good News, in your eyes, in your countenance? The Holy Spirit is likened to a dove (John 1:32). Are the characteristics of one who is Spirit-filled evident in your life (Eph. 5:18-21)? O how He loves to see His Holy Spirit in your eyes! Having your spiritual eyes focused on Him is simply being surrendered in heart to His word! (Heb. 12:2)

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, cause the eyes of my heart to be fixed on the only love of my heart, Jesus, my Bridegroom! O Holy Spirit I want so much to please Him alone! May You Lord always be able to look into my eyes and see a reflection of Yourself! May You see doves in my gaze. In Your glorious name Lord Jesus, amen."*

The Bride responds:

V.16 "Behold, thou art fair (beautiful) my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed (couch) is green."

Notice that she does not get taken up with what He sees in her. She doesn't say, "You know, He is right, I really do look pretty good." O how easy it is to fall into the trap of pride after the Lord has blessed us and spiritually dressed us up in Him (Gal. 3:26,27)! May it never be so (Rom. 12:3)! May you never be taken up with the gifts and talents He has given to you. Never get your eyes on the ministry the Holy Spirit has led you into. Spiritual success is never achieved because you are something but because He is everything in it (Zech. 4:6; Isa. 6:3; John 15:5).

As He looked into her eyes, the Beloved keenly observed that her eyes were truly dove's eyes! This verse proves it to Him. She does not see herself but only His beauty. Whatever spiritual beauty she possesses she knows it came from His hand only - the gold and silver ornaments, jewels and various fragrances, were all given to her by the Holy Spirit from the Father (v.11). Our God is to receive all the glory! (Jude 1:25).

"...our bed is green."

The Hebrew word for "**green**" here gives forth the idea of "*luxuriant or fresh*". O to have a fresh relationship with Him each day. "**Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.**" (Lam. 3:22,23)

Notice it is "**our**" couch, not "*mine*" or "*your*". May it always be "**our**" _____ and you fill in the blank. O the uniting of two hearts as one! There is nothing more beautiful than being one with our Lord (John 17:21-23). This is having the mind of Christ. His will is your will. The couch speaks of rest, contentment, peace and fellowship (Phil. 4:6,7, 11; Psa. 23). What a wonderful scene, the Bridegroom and the bride are quietly sitting together enjoying one another in the Holy Spirit. Do you have this dear believer? Can you hear the bride saying to herself, with His arms around her? "O how I love to be with Him here; resting with Him; secure in Him. My heart is filled with love for Him and O He knows it without me saying one word to Him." These private times are times of unspeakable joy. Can you say, "Our couch is luxuriant."? Or do you ever take much time to sit quietly with Him and rest awhile? (Mk. 6:31).

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, may I never be so busy that my mind is occupied with everything but You. Cause my mind to be focused on You all day long even in the activities that I must complete! I long to sit with You on our couch! I love You alone. May my eyes be dove's eyes for You forever! In Jesus' name, amen!"*

V.17 "The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir (cypress)."

Both of these trees are evergreen trees. Even in the winter they exude a very pleasant fragrance! Praise God for those believers who constantly have their Beloved's fragrance in all kinds of spiritual weather! Evergreens do not change!

The surrendered bride can count on her Beloved to never change (**Heb. 13:8**). Can He count on us to never change in our deep love for Him? Cedars grow to over one hundred feet tall. They are strong and stately, rot-resistant and knot-free.

What a picture of our Beloved who is eternal and without sin (**Heb. 13:7**). He indwells our temple (house - (**I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 3:20-21**). His strength is our strength (**Phil. 4:13**). His purity is our purity (**I John 3:3**). His royalty is our royalty (**I Pet. 2:9**). His authority is our authority (**Eph. 2:6; James 4:7**). The cypress is a hard and durable wood. Our Beloved is our Rock on which the spiritual foundation of this house stands (**Mt. 7:24; Isa. 44:8; I Cor. 3:11**). What a spiritual house! Hallelujah! Read **Eph. 2:19-22**! Notice again, the word "**our**" is used! He is such a sharing Husband. Without Jesus none of the above would be found in our soul or spirit! It is all given to us. It is all of grace. Praise God for **Eph. 1:3**!

But it is only "**our house**" because He takes us as His bride. Without my Bridegroom there would be no house! Without Jesus all I have in myself is an empty, worthless, dirty, run down, old shanty! Think of it, when the Holy Spirit comes in a transformation begins to take place – from a miserable shack to a magnificent temple! Think about His house (**I Cor. 6:19** -temple). It is a place of: beauty (**Psa. 27:4**), abundance (**Psa. 36:8**), sweet fellowship (**Psa. 55:14**), goodness and satisfaction (**Psa. 65:4**), planting and flourishing (**Psa. 92:12,13**), blessing (**Psa. 118:26**), gladness (**Psa. 122:1**), prayer (**Lk.19:46**) and spiritual sacrifices (**I Pet. 2:5**), Jesus, our High Priest, is over God's house (**Heb. 10:21**). We are so precious to Him that He takes up residence in us and we become His house! Wow!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Bridegroom, thank You for the spiritual house You have made of my spirit! You were repulsed by the condition of my house when You prayed in the garden. You despised the shame of my house when You were on the cross, yet You came in and cleaned up the filth and made it fit so You and I could have intimate fellowship! You took a completely worthless spirit unfit for even the lowest of Your angels to inhabit and by Your blood, the power of Your Spirit and the washing of the water of Your Word a beautiful, spiritual mansion has been created in me. I worship! I adore! I bow down! I surrender to You, O my Abba, O my Beloved! In Jesus, the name of the high priest over the house of my heart (**Heb.10:19-21**)!"*

Over and over and over it is "**our**"! He could have easily said, "**My**" and rightly so. It is all of Him – we had nothing to do with it at all. It is a gift of His infinite love and grace for us His bride! But no, He says "**our**". Doesn't that speak to your heart of what kind of Husband He is? He wants to provide everything for the bride He loves to be with. He just wants to love on us all the time in the midst of a cruel and wicked world. The "**rafters**" speak of strength, safety, security. They hold the house together and give it stability. It protects us from the outside elements such as rain, snow, heat, dust, hail, lightning etc. **Col. 1:17** says, "**...and by Him all things consist (hold together).**" Glory to God! The surrendered life makes Him "**...our rafters...**". He is the Bride's protection from the enemy!

Overwhelmed with unspeakable joy, she rushes to put her arms around her Beloved and says, "**My heart is so full of love for You My dear Beloved Bridegroom! You have provided everything for me (Eph. 1:3). O my Love You really have made me a dwelling place where You can reside forever. And You have made Your heart so big that I can live in there forever. O I love you so much, I feel as if I am going to burst!**" Yes, the enemy will battle us and he will bring hurt because he hates Jesus inside of your house, but it will not do ultimate damage (**Isa. 54:17**). Decorate your house with the armor of God (**Eph. 6:10-17**), then when the enemy comes, sit at your Bridegroom's table (**Psa. 23:5**) and pray **Eph. 6:18** that the armor is activated.

With her head leaning on His breast, He holds her tightly and responds... "**Yes, My beautiful bride, I love to be with you, and you are absolutely right for I have built a new house (heart) inside of you so I can live in you! That means I'll always be with you (Ezk. 36:25-27; Deut. 31:6,8)! I am consumed with love for you My bride. I desire intimate fellowship with you now and throughout eternity. I really love you with all of My heart. Never, never doubt it. Just look at My hands and there will be no question in your soul about My love (Isa. 49:15-16)!"** As the Beloved gets ready to step into this special dwelling place, He pauses and with a look of pride on His face says to angels observing in wonderment, "**This is OUR house!**"

PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK, THERE ARE SOME WONDERFUL SPIRITUAL CLUSTERS FROM WHICH TO PICK. YOUR BRIDEGROOM IS ANXIOUSLY WAITING. SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

CHAPTER 2 - THE DESIRE FOR INTIMACY (cont.)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER TWO: The bride cannot understand why the Beloved considers her to be so special since she is a very common person. He continues to reveal lovely thoughts about her from His heart. He demonstrates to His bride that He has conquered all problems she would ever face. The Beloved Bridegroom now asks her to go with Him but she hesitates; she only wants to have Him all to herself in private fellowship. He pleads with her, but she will not go with Him. There is now a division between them. This severing of fellowship will cause her great spiritual pain.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Abba Father, thank You for giving me to Your Beloved Son (John 10:29). Thank You my Beloved for drawing me into the inner chamber of Your heart! What a wonder You are! What a joy to my heart! What a glorious revelation to my soul - this infinite "first love" love You have for me! My heart is filled to overflowing with these thoughts. I praise You! I worship You! I adore You! Take me! Mold me! Use me! Change me! Let Yourself alone be engraved in my spirit, soul and body! Transform me Holy Spirit so I am no longer seen, but rather the glorious image of my Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen and Amen!"*

At first, the bride becomes overwhelmed with this high and intimate position she possesses with her Bridegroom King! Then, deep, hurtful thoughts pierce her mind, *"My brothers told me over and over again how worthless I am. I hated their constant taunts!"* All those horrible memories returned racing through her mind. She began to believe her brothers mocking words that kill the spirit. A darkness invaded her mind, *"He will tire of me. I have nothing to offer Him. There are so many more like me. I am common. This is too good to be true. It cannot last!"* Looking within, dejection and disappointment attacked her mind. She emotionally girded herself for the perceived coming rejection. Resigned to the fact of her worthlessness and with her eyes closed, a tear falls from her cheek to the ground. In a sad whisper she declares to the Beloved the low estimation of herself.

V.1 "I am the rose of Sharon (Heb. "the plain"), and the lily of the valleys."

The rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys are very common flowers. Thousands of these flowers bloomed in the valleys. Knowing who she is the bride says to her Beloved, *"I am like an ordinary flower, how is it that You love me as You do? I am common. There is nothing special about me at all. I am a foreigner unworthy of any consideration from You my King."*

As His proclaimed bride, you also look at yourself and exclaim to Him, *"Why, why do You love me? Look at me! I am a rose of Sharon and a lily of the valleys, a wild flower with no special cultivation. Why do You gaze at me as if I were a rare, costly jewel?"* Dear believer, do you see yourself in the same way as this bride? The same feelings are spoken by Paul as he bowed His heart in deep humility and proclaimed, ***"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."*** (Eph. 3:8). He repeats similar, heartfelt cries in I Cor. 15:9-10, ***"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet (worthy) to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am...!"***

So many individual believers see themselves as common nobodies with little worth. Because of this commonness they think that the Lord can't accomplish much in their lives. They see themselves as having little talent or gifts. All of His lovely roses and lilies have some gift; encouragement, mercy, helps, faith, and discernment to name a few. The enemy loves to focus us onto ourselves and miss the infinitely, costly value living in us - for it is not I but Christ who lives inside of me **(Gal.2:20)!**

PRAY WITH ME: *"You my Beloved died for me, a nothing at best. You lifted me up when I was dead (Eph. 2:1). You washed me white as snow in Your most precious blood when my filthy soul was filled with the stench of sin. You clothed me with a robe of righteousness and a garment of salvation. How beautiful You have made me. I deserve only to be prostrate at Your feet and yet You place Your nail scarred hands on each side of my face and look me in the eyes and say, 'You belong to Me my love, forever and ever.' You cause my heart to melt because of that look of infinite, all-consuming love for me! Praise Your holy Name my glorious Bridegroom."*

O dear surrendered lily, precious, precious rose of the plain, listen carefully and see yourself as your Bridegroom sees you. He takes you, this common, seemingly worthless wild flower and reveals what He truly sees in you by saying...

V.2 "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

The "**thorn**" represents the curse brought on by Adam and Eve through sin (**Gen. 3:17-18; Matt. 13:7; Heb. 6:8**). This poor old earth has been cursed ever since. There is very little that is beautiful to the Lord. Sin has marred even creation itself. However, He bore the entire curse by wearing the crown of thorns. The earth itself will be changed one day to the perfect place it was intended to be. Praise God! He looks down and sees you dear surrendered believer that you are His lily in the midst of this cursed earth. You are the sweet, fragrant flower of His heart!

He says, "*Take a good long look around you. You used to be like one of these ugly thorns (I Cor. 6:9-11)! You are beautiful now and I made you that way. More and more of My beauty is coming forth from you, My little lily, My delicate rose! You are no longer one of the thorns. Thorns bring Me pain but you have been transformed - and O how I love to look at you! This world that I created has turned into a great sorrow to Me. Spiritual, soul and material pollution have swept over all of this planet that at one time I declared to be good (Gen. 1:31)! It deeply hurts and saddens Me, My beautiful lily. But then I see you amidst all of these thorns, possessing a spiritual loveliness that touches My heart so deeply. It is seen when you are praising Me, adoring Me, trusting Me, walking with Me filled with My Spirit. Don't ever think of yourself as a common lily or rose again. Look at yourself in contrast with the ugliness and darkness of the thorns! I love you so much, let Me wipe away that tear from your eye; those doubts from your spirit; the discouragement from your mind!*"

You, dear bride are to think highly of yourself! It says so in **Rom. 12:3** that a believer is, "**...not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.**" You are to think highly of yourself without letting it become a thing where you would attempt to get the glory that rightly belongs to Him alone. Who are we? We are an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus (**Rom.8:17**). We are the bride of Christ (**Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9**). We are a holy, royal priest (**I Pet. 2:5,9**). We have been given authority to rule (**Eph. 2:6; Rev. 5:10**)! Rejoice, you are somebody very, very special in His eyes!

PRAY WITH ME: "*Dear, dear Abba Father, I am overwhelmed by Your estimation of me. I fall in worship before You and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lover of my soul! I am so thankful to You for what I never dreamed possible. Because You have proclaimed it to my spirit from Your Word, then I am able to accept it! O what an amazing God You are. Thank You dear Lord that I will have an eternity to say thanks! In Your wonderful name Lord Jesus, amen!*"

Praise God, among all the thorns there are lilies. These are true believers who dearly love their Bridegroom - Redeemer. O what joy they bring to Him; set apart for Him; submissive to Him; surrendered to His will; singing His praises. They are part of the "**joy that was set before Him**" as He endured the cross (**Heb. 12:3**).

Thank God that He became the curse itself ("**thorns**") (**Gal. 3:13**). He didn't just take it, HE BECAME IT! He became everything which His Abba Father abhorred! All the world's wickedness and evil was compressed into every fiber of His spirit, soul and body! He cried out, "**...My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?**" (**Matt. 27:46**) The lake of fire is a place where God does not exist. Our Bridegroom, who bore the whole curse, suffered on the cross without the helping power and presence of His Father and the Holy Spirit. No one on this earth has ever been without the presence of Almighty God, Who Himself is Omnipresent; no one but Jesus, the Son of Man, your Bridegroom, the Beloved of His Father!

The Bride was sickened at the sight of the thorns. She knew that her Beloved had endured all His Father's stored up hate and wrath. He once again whispered to her, "*Remember My love, I became all of those thorns! That is what My Father saw in Me as I hung on the cross. You were one of those thorns My beautiful bride! I willingly became all of your thorns (wicked sin nature) because I saw how that ugly thorn would become transformed into My beautiful little lily and rose! I became your hideous image so that you could become My beautiful image (Rom. 8:29)! I took your crown of thorns (John 3:36; Mt. 27:29) so that I might crown you with My lovingkindness (Psa. 103:4). Is there any reason why you should ever doubt My love for you? It hurts Me to see you doubt My love. The hurt that pierces My heart is for you. I can't stand to see you suffering that kind of emotional pain of doubt! I truly love you My precious one. My perfect love for you will always cast out your fear (I John 4:18)!*"

How often we believers beat ourselves over the head because we think we are very little in the mind of the Lord. We see ourselves defeated; we focus on our "**lack**" of talents or gifts because we see so much in others. You have the greatest gift! It is everything that He desires from you. You have had the Holy Spirit pour out all of God's love into your heart (**Rom. 5:6**). In **I Cor. 14:1** He tells you to "**pursue it!**" Pursue using that gift for His heart and for others!

O my dear Christian friend, let the words of your Beloved sink deep into your heart! You are everything He wants you to be at this moment if your heart is surrendered to Him! You are beautiful to Him! Don't let the enemy crush your spirit with discouragement! Get your eyes off others! Get your eyes off self! Look at His eyes! Your Beloved's eyes are transfixed in love on you. He is extremely pleased with the decision of your heart! Walk with your head high giving Him all the glory knowing you are the special bride of the King of kings!

The Lord not only wants you to enjoy the beauty of the new life He has bestowed upon you, but also wants the world (the cursed thorns) to see Him in you (**John 17:21,23**)! Think about it, dear lily, the thorns can choke out potential spiritual beauty (**Matt. 13:7**). But she had such a love for Him while amid the thorns that they could have no effect upon her. And when the supreme moment came for her heart to surrender, there was no thorn on earth that could blur the image of His beauty in her. Can it be said of you that you are a **"...lily among thorns..."**?

PRAY WITH ME: *"I love You; I love You; I love You my wonderful Bridegroom. I deserve only to be prostrate at Your feet, yet You gently lift me up and cause me to look into Your love-filled eyes. My heart melts. I am overwhelmed. You became my curse (**Gal. 3:13**) and freely gave me all the blessings of Abraham (**Gal. 3:14,26,28**). Instead of the curse of the law, Your blessings are all mine (**Deut. 28:1-14; Eph. 1:3**). I am complete in You my Love (**Col. 2:10**). Praise be to Your holy name! I worship You! I adore You! In Your powerful name Lord Jesus, amen."*

The Bride Replies:

V.3 "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

The bride's eyes are riveted on the One who has captivated her heart. She whispers to Him, *"My Beloved, I care not what I am but O how You stand out above all others. You are my purpose for living! You are the unique One, all of my needs are met in You. You are like an apple tree among all the other trees; You refresh me; You sustain me; You feed my heart with the wonder of Your **"first love"** love. In the past I searched for fulfillment in worldly philosophies, material things, friends, activities, family, and position, but alas, they all failed me and left me in a desperate condition. You came where I was and gently picked me up and gave me life from the tree of Calvary. Yes, my Beloved, the tree of Your suffering will always stand out from among all others. I love You with all of my heart!"*

She compares her Beloved to a tree in the forest that stands out above all others. There was a tree in the Garden of Eden that also stood out above all others, the tree of life in the middle of the Garden of Eden. Our foreparents did not take of that beautiful tree (**Gen. 2:9**). Glory to God, there was another tree that stood in the midst of a garden (**John 19:18,41**), the tree of Calvary. Praise God for crucifixion! What was a deadly poison to my Lord, became a sweet taste to me when I received the fruit from Calvary's tree!

PRAY WITH ME: *"I bow my heart to You, O God of Calvary's cross! I humble myself before You, dear Lord Jesus, for You constantly sustain my spirit with the fruit I receive from that tree. I am Your adoring, eternal bride! There has never been anyone like You and never will be!"*

"...I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

The bride so pleased His heart because she took time to sit under His shadow. She gave up other things to learn of Him and be changed by Him. As a believer she surrendered to **"His shadow"** and willingly placed herself under it. This is what two of John the Baptist's disciples did when they stood and watched Jesus. John the Baptist instructed them to **"Behold the Lamb"** and that is exactly what they did. Because of what John's followers observed they went to Jesus and **"sat down under His shadow"**. These two disciples were changed men after that (**John 1:35-43**).

What was there about His shadow which brought her great delight? She experienced His blessed abiding shelter protecting her (**Psa. 91:1**) and being hidden in His hand (**Isa. 49:2**). His help directed her and caused her to rejoice and sing (**Psa. 63:7**).

With joyous excitement she declares, *"Lord, in my heart and spirit I sit next to You and I feel so unafraid and peaceful. O my loving Husband what utter delight You bring to the deep recesses of my heart. Nothing has ever satisfied me before, until I surrendered to Your loving, protecting, reassuring arms. The fruit from Your tree meets my every need, every minute of my life: the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. It is sweet tasting! You have never given me fruit that has a bitter taste. I worship You dear Lord Jesus. Get all the glory from my heart! You alone are the delight of my heart! You make life worth living! I feel so secure enwrapped in Your shadow."*

The enemy would try to wear you down, as he did with her, by the oppressive heat of the noon day (**1:7**). She followed the Lord and met with others in His flock. She found His shadow. The closer she drew to Him, the less effective were the weapons of the wicked one (**Eph. 6:16**). It is the **"shield of faith"** that stops all the fiery missiles. A shield shadows you from the attack! Praise God for His shadow protecting against the fiery heat of the enemy's missiles!

Do you ever sit under His shadow? It happens as you read the Word in faith and love; pray, praise and walk in faith and love! When this bride sat under His shadow it totally engulfed her. She was possessed by His shadow! So are you, dear Christian, when you surrender to Him. O my friend, just sit under the shadow of the Word. Sitting implies a resting, quiet meditating upon Him and His instructive Words. His followers were admonished to wait until the power came (**Luke 24:49**). They waited in the upper room, praying together (**Acts 1:4,14**)! And after the wait, the power came (**Acts 2:1-4,41-43**)! Sit! Sit my dear bride! Sit still (**Psa. 37:7**) and then His power will be manifest in your spirit!

V.4 "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love."

Our Bridegroom loves to help us and do unexpected, special things for us. That's what someone who has that fresh "**first love**" love thrives on. In **v.3** His shadow is over us. He first protects and nurtures us "**under His shadow**" that is the intimate, private side of our relationship with Him. Now in public He wants all the creation of the universe to know His heart concerning the love of His life. What does He do? He prepares a glorious banquet! Do you realize just how important you are to the Lord? Have you ever read in the Word, that God held a banquet for the angelic beings? No! But for you, dear bride of His heart, a glorious banquet awaits (**Rev. 19:1-9**). He wants to display you to all!

A banquet implies that there are others present. O how He loves for us to be with other lilies who deeply love Him. What a glory it is to worship and praise Him together in the unity of the Spirit. When we worship Him with a heart like Mary of Bethany (**John 12:1-6**), the presence of God is felt and He is marvelously glorified by the living water of adoration pouring from our hearts.

The Hebrew word translated "**banquet**" is literally the word for "**wine**" and is translated "**wine**" over one hundred and thirty times. Wine is a symbol for joy (**Psa. 104:15**). Praise God. He fills us with joy as only His presence can do. "**...For the joy of the Lord is your strength.**" (**Neh. 8:10**) And just what is His joy? None other than the anointed presence of the Lord Himself.

Pause for a moment and reflect back with me to chapter **1:4** where the Bride compared all the legitimate joys of life belonging to her not worthy to be compared to His love. Earth's wine could not compare with His love. She chooses rather His love and in return her Beloved Bridegroom gave her His wine, the eternal wine of His love, a whole house full! "**Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart (Psa. 37:4).**" God is so good! The enemy will cause you to think you are giving up too much! However, your Bridegroom simply gives you **Eph.1:3** and **2Pet.1:3,4**!

"...his banner over me was love."

He proudly unfurls a heavenly banner over her which declares, "**this one is the true love of My heart.**" He is so proud of the miracle of Calvary and what she has become. Envision with me the very banquet itself. The doors open to the great banqueting hall, there is a hushed silence. Then the Archangels blow the heavenly trumpets announcing the arrival of His Majesty.

The Beloved's countenance is filled with joy as He escorts His beautiful bride to the platform where there are two thrones. He politely pulls out one of them from the head table and bids her to sit. Once she is seated He unfurls a banner, holding it over her for all to see. It says, "**This is My love! My one and only love!**" The whole banqueting house of angels, archangels, cherubim, and seraphim break out in thunderous applause! The bride turns, looks at the banner, sees the nail scarred hands holding it. Filled with tears of thankfulness, her eyes meet His. With each gaze an eternity of love flows between them! O what spiritual wine! Who can fathom its taste? The bride will have an eternity to drink from the length, breadth, depth and height of it (**Eph.3:17-19**)! Glory to God!

PRAY WITH ME: "O my dear Husband, when I surrender all the circumstances of my life to You; when I allow You to have full say in my daily walk; when I say, 'not my will but Your will be accomplished in my life'; You take me into Your banqueting hall! You make me feel so special! Thank You, dear Bridegroom of my heart, for all the love-filled attention You give to me, Your blood-bought bride! Your very presence in my life is a banquet of pleasure and joy; of strength and stability. What a glorious banner You have unfurled over me - a banner of EVERLASTING, PERSONAL, HEARTFELT, REDEEMING, CARING LOVE! What a revelation to my heart: Your sacrificial love; Abba Father's love; and the love of the dear Holy Spirit! Cause me to always see that banner over me in every circumstance of my life. Each time I will know that all things do work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose (**Rom. 8:28**). I'll know that nothing can separate me from Your love (**Rom. 8:35**) and You will constantly love me unto the end (**John 13:1**)! I will know that Your love has been poured out within my spirit (**Rom. 5:5**) and that You Yourself are the banner over me (**Ex.17:15; 1 John 4:8**)! Praise, praise, praise Your holy name my glorious Husband!"

V.5 "Stay me (sustain me) with flagons (cakes made with raisins), comfort me with apples: for I am sick (faint) of love (lovesick)."

Raisin cakes were given by David to the people after the joyful return of the Ark of the Lord. Apples would remind her of Him (2:3) for He is the living Ark. What a way to go off to sleep enjoying the aroma that represents the Love of her life!

The bride lays her head on His shoulder and confesses, *"My Beloved, I am overwhelmed; I am weak and faint with these amazing revelations of Your heart concerning Your love for me. Let me lie down in blissful silence, adoring You with inexpressible love. Then refresh me so I am able to bear more, for without Your enablement (Col. 1:11) I will remain in this weakened condition. You are sheer joy to my heart my Beloved Bridegroom!"*

Notice that she asks Him to sustain her. She doesn't attempt to strengthen herself. The bride yearns to be strengthened by His fruit! His fruit will always uphold and sustain you: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self control. The Hebrew word for **"stay"** means to uphold, give support or to lean upon. She leaves the sustaining and refreshing entirely to Him! Praise God for the empowering of the Holy Spirit who makes Jesus our strength. She is weak! He is strong! What she needs now are strong arms to support her. At that very instant He draws her to Himself into the peacefulness of His embrace.

As He draws the love of His heart ever so gently to Himself, He kisses her with the Word. It is His word that will sustain her! **"...upholding all things by the word of his power."** (Heb. 1:3). She needs the food of the Word, **"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts."** (Jer. 15:16).

Why was she so tired? After the banquet the daughters of Jerusalem visited with her. The conversation was all about His glorious banner of love. It seemed like an endless stream of joyous reflection. The bride listened with joy. She loved hearing others speak about the only Love of her heart and how He had changed their lives also. The bride exclaimed, *"You know, dear friends, this is the happiest day of my life and I'm sure yours also. I don't believe anything could ever come in and spoil what I and all of you have been given. Isn't it wonderful?"* It was such a glorious time of praise. All were aglow with joy. One of them noticed the time, *"Ladies, I don't believe it, do you realize that we have been talking for two hours?"* The bride replied, *"Are you sure, it seems as if it were just a few minutes?"* After that intense spiritual high the bride felt a tiredness come over her.

When you are tired, dear Christian, do you ever just sit in His presence, briefly read a Word from His lips such as **Psalms 23** then lay back and rest in those promises right there and then? He will refresh you! It is not a time for study but just a quiet snuggling up to His heart for a refreshing of the soul (emotions, mind, will). He will do it. He longs to be asked. It is a special way for Him to show you His gentle, renewing love. You must ask! She asked and He responds in **V. 6...**

V.6 "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me."

Listen again to her innermost thoughts: *"My Beloved, You alone are able to give strength in my weakness. All I need is Your nail-pierced hands enwrapping me for I am emotionally exhausted with Your joy and wonder! Thank You, my loving Husband, glorious King of my heart, for placing Your 'left hand' under my head to control my thoughts (Isa. 26:3). Praise You dear Lord for the peace that is keeping my heart and mind (Phil. 4:7)! You are transforming my life by the renewing of my mind (Rom. 12:2). You do it all and I give You all the glory and all of my love! How wonderful it is to have the strength of Your 'right hand' embracing me (Psa.18:35), always drawing me closer to Your heart by the Holy Spirit. I surrender to Your arms, Your leading, Your thoughts, Your plans, Your holy pathway! All fear and doubt are gone when You embrace my spirit and soul!"*

Meditate upon these thoughts from the Holy Word of God. Jesus represents the right hand of God in position and purpose. Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of power (**Mark 14:62; Heb. 1:3; 12:2**)! Do you, dear surrendered saint, know what is in Jesus' right hand? It is all yours (**Eph. 1:3**): Pleasures - **Psa. 16:11**; Salvation and deliverance - **Psa. 17:7**; long life - **Prov. 3:13-16**; support - **Psa. 18:35**. The right hand of God (Jesus) continually does valiantly (**Psa. 118:15,16**) and must be exalted (**Psa. 118:16**)! Pause right now and exalt Him. Pray in the Spirit and love Him. Now consider the wonderful left hand of our Bridegroom Jesus. In it are riches and honor (**Prov. 3:13-16**). He Himself is the treasure of wisdom and knowledge (**Col. 2:3**)! All you have to do is ask for what already belongs to you. The asking is an act of love and faith. It is allowing Him to have the inestimable joy of giving to you, His bride. Don't rob Him of that joy (**Acts 20:35**).

PRAY WITH ME: *"How secure I feel in Your arms dear Lord Jesus. My mind is at rest and my soul feels protected by Your strong embrace! Thank You for enwrapping me with Your Word, encompassing me with Your Spirit, enclosing me with Abba Father's heart! I feel so complete in You! In Your blessed name Lord Jesus, amen."*

Dear bride, do you sense His presence and arms around you by faith? Step out in faith and believe His Word and His promises, then you will feel those loving arms embracing you in all situations. The daughters are there to help and minister to the bride but the Bridegroom wants to make sure she is not disturbed and gets plenty of spiritual rest (**Heb. 4:10**). He says...

V.7 "I charge you, O ye daughters of Yerushalayim, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he ("she") please."

The Hebrew word "**he**" in this verse may be translated "**she**" or "**it**". The NAS uses "**she**" referring back to the bride. The NIV uses "**it**" referring to love itself.

The Bridegroom is teaching us that there must be a time of rest for His bride. We need time to be led by the Good Shepherd beside the still waters in order to have our souls renewed, refreshed and restored! Don't feel guilty about taking a rest. Remember, He wants it for us so that we can be spiritually more effective.

The Bridegroom Jesus tells those who serve her in the court to allow His bride to sleep peacefully. How gentle He is with her. He knows that there is still much for her to experience. Pause and praise Him that He knows the exact amount of progress we need at any given time. There is never, never, a valid reason to become uneasy about the supposed "unknown" future when He is in control of our lives. He has all our future planned (**Jer. 29:11; Psa. 139:15,16**). Enjoy His presence and leading in this moment! Don't be anxious or speculate about the future (**James 4:13-16; Prov. 27:1**). Rest in Him, He has it all taken care of! Praise His holy name!

The "**roes**" are gazelles and "**hinds**" are deer. Gazelles are known for their swiftness (**I Chron. 12:8**). **Prov. 5:19** speaks of a "**loving hind**". When our Lord speaks we are to obey His commands and requests with a loving swiftness.

The bride is now resting. The Lord has revealed wondrous things about His love for her. He is preparing her for a deeper work of surrender. With all that her heart has now experienced, surely she will respond with loving swiftness to anything He may request of her!

Dear surrendered saint, how often has the Lord allowed you to experience a deep anointing of His presence? After that, He asked you to go with Him in a work He had prepared for you to do (to visit someone, to sing, to give help, teach, become involved with a specific ministry: nursing home, children's, youth, prison, outreach, one on one discipleship, etc.). Did you respond? Keep these thoughts in mind as we come to the next section.

Time now passes between verses **7** and **8**. As she awakens she sees her Beloved coming to her in a marvelous manner. He has been out ministering, blessing, caring, saving and delivering. He cannot wait to see her and invite His bride to go out with Him. What joy it would be for her to be part of His ministry and fellowship with Him in it.

THE DEPTH OF HIS POWER AND DESIRE - 2:8-15

V.8 "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."

Understanding this vision is of paramount importance if she is to step out in faith with her Beloved. In just a few moments He will ask her to move out of her comfort zone and go with Him. Great spiritual and emotional pain looms over the horizon if she does not stop and allow this vision to forever be riveted upon her will!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Holy Spirit, reveal this important truth to my heart. You are the Spirit of truth and Jesus told me that You would disclose all truth to me (**John 16:13**). Without Your work in my spirit this will just become biblical knowledge without power. When my Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, speaks to me about my life or habits I want to respond with loving swiftness! Thank You Father for granting my request. Yours is a throne of grace where I can always find help in time of need. I desire Your revelation knowledge right now. In the name of my Beloved and Your Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!"*

There is such a longing in His heart for you to know just what the leaping and skipping mean. Your Bridegroom comes near and explains, *"My love, My bride, look at Me, look into My eyes. Listen to My voice! No matter what the enemy will bring against you; no matter how intense the problems and difficulties may be, look My darling bride, I have already conquered them! Every hill and every mountain - I have leaped over them all. My resurrection power is greater than all of them and I have put that power inside of you (the Spirit of God). I have given you all of My precious promises (**II Cor. 1:20**;*

II Cor. 7:1; II Pet. 1:3,4! *I have given you My Word! I love you with all of My heart and I'll be there with you when you face the mountains of fear, doubt, depression, failure and loss which will try to rob you of peace, joy and contentment. Just speak to the mountain in faith believing and it will be removed in My timing (Mark 11:23,24)! When you speak to that mountain, stand on My promises and see the miracle of I Corinthians 10:13 fulfilled in you. You will know that I am alive in your heart as never before!"*

With great intensity in His voice He continues, *"I will be with you on the hills of irritation, mental tiredness, physical weakness, and family difficulties! I will be your Healer in sickness (Psa. 103:3; Isa. 53:5; Matt. 8:14-18). I have broken the power of sin, poverty, disease and lack (Gal. 3:13,14,26,29). I have given you My blessings (Eph. 1:3). I have given you faith (Rom. 12:3), strength (Psa. 27:1), wisdom (I Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3; James 1:5), everything (Phil. 4:19). My Father and My Spirit, through My word and My power, will bring you out victorious each time. I will always cause you to triumph in Me (II Cor. 2:14)! Just be patient and wait. My Bridegroom's love will sustain you through the storms."*

In this vision she saw Her Beloved leap upon Mt. Calvary! As He came down, both feet sank in the mire of her sin and the sins of the whole world! What greater mountain is there than the eternal mountain of humanity's sin? Praise God it was but a leap.

He was not on that awful mountain for weeks, months or even years. He was there a few horrible hours. In other words it was a leap. He went down and then rose up triumphantly ascending into heaven seated on the throne of God. Is there any mountain in your life He has not already conquered? Rejoice, dear reader, and lean upon Him by faith as He brings you over your mountains! Bride, get your eyes fixed on the victory. He has triumphed over the little hills as well as the big mountains in your life. These little hills at first seem to be very little trouble. When the *"little"* hills appear (irritation, disappointment, hurt, etc.) put your hand in His and skip over them. If you are not careful you will get weighed down Oh so very slowly. Don't allow the *"little"* hills to develop into big mountains. Recognize them and then speak to the hills by faith with a promise from His Word then simply wait.

V.9 "My beloved is like a roe (gazelle) or a young hart (deer or stag)..."

Praise God, dear reader, your Beloved comes to you swiftly (gazelle); He comes to you with great desire and longing for you (deer - **Psa. 42:1**). He cannot help Himself for He is deeply in love with you. He has never lost His **"first love"** love for you. It remains intense. How do you respond to this intense, longing love of your Beloved? Is there a responsive **"first love"** love for His heart to enjoy from you?

She makes all of these wonderful comments about Him. Isn't it amazing how much we can spiritually see and know about our Beloved Lord Jesus? The Bride knows He is like a **"gazelle"** and **"young deer"**. She knows the intensity of His love for her. Knowing these very special thoughts is one thing but acting on them is a whole different matter. Will she respond to Him?

"...behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice."

He stands just outside the place where they always had sweet fellowship together, anxiously awaiting her response. Instead of opening to her Beloved she just stands there. She hesitates. How strange. There is a partition (**lattice**) between them. She does not realize that a little hill has just appeared which could become a mountain of separation later.

The Beloved speaks:

V.10 "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair (beautiful) one, and come away."

With words such as **"my love"** and **"my beautiful one"**, why does she hesitate? She is being taught the importance of trusting her Beloved and His ways. He does not tell her where they would be going, that is not important. She needs to understand that all will be well no matter where they travel. Why? He has already leaped over the mountains of problems and skipped over the hills of difficulties. He knows the beginning from the ending. May we have the faith of Abraham (**Heb. 10:8**) and go at His prompting. He will always be guiding your steps because they will be planned by Him (**Psa. 143:8**). Does He not say that what He plans He will do (**Isa. 46:11**)? The Bride is filled with love for Him, but now her faith (**Rom.12:3**) will be tested. She has been passively surrendered in her spirit. But there must come an active submissiveness in her soul to Him (her will, mind, emotions). He wants to lead her on this planned path from **"...faith to faith..."** (**Rom.1:17**) and **"...glory to glory..."** (**II Cor. 3:18**), so that she may enter into all that belongs to her and the joys awaiting in chapters 6,7 and 8.

The Beloved is asking her to step out in faith! O how this would please Him! Faith says, *"I love You so much that I trust You no matter where You are taking me!"* The Beloved is not asking her to go it alone. She will be with Him! He will never leave her side (**Heb. 13:5**)! But alas, she hesitates because she prefers to have fellowship with the Lover of her heart on her own terms. She is thinking, *"Why don't we just stay home, its more convenient and comfortable? I'll pray to You, listen to You, meditate upon Your word. We can watch Christian television together. I'll even let You choose what Christian teaching tape or music tape to listen to. We don't need to go out and be with other lilies. Let's keep it just the same with no changes. Why spoil something that is so good? It will be just You and me together only, my Love."*

Where is He going to take her? Her Beloved wants to meet her family. She needs to forgive her brothers for all that they did to her (**1:6**). She had retaliated with harsh words of bitterness and she needs to ask them to forgive her. The Beloved also longed to take His beautiful bride to fellowship with other surrendered lilies (**6:3**)! What joy she will experience! What fellowship! What an amazing presence of His that will be felt! There are attacks and great spiritual battles coming, especially because of her love and surrender to Jesus. She needs the other lilies! She needs other members of the body of Christ (**Eph.4:15,16**). This will only come through unity with other surrendered believers. Satan will do anything to keep us divided in heart and from other members of the body of Christ. He doesn't mind us being faithful to church so long as we are at odds with something, someone or some group in the body of Christ. THERE IS TREMENDOUS POWER IN UNITY and the enemy knows it!

The Bridegroom wants to take her to be in unity with other believers. How do I know that this is where He desires to take her? Look at **6:2**. She finds Him feeding among the lilies. If she would only go with Him, then all of the pain and suffering of chapters three and five would be avoided! O how unnecessary! If only we would simply step out in full love for Him and walk in faith with Him. Did she not ask Him in **1:7** *"...where thou feedest...?"*

How often we ask the Lord to fulfill a need and then we do not recognize the way He is answering the request due to our lack of faith to step out into some area into which He is leading! Listen in your heart as the Bridegroom speaks to you O so gently, O so longingly, O so patiently!

The Lord works through His body. He gives each member gifts in order to minister to one another. The Holy Spirit declares to us, *"...know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."* (read **I Thess.5:12-18**).

There was power over the enemy in the Book of Acts. Why? Because they were unified! Then Satan began to attack the church to divide and conquer to render them powerless over him and his evil army. God hates disunity! *"These six things does the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination unto him...he that soweth discord (division, strife) among brethren."* (**Prov. 6:16,19**). If the bride does not go with Him, then she is causing an unintentional but dangerous division in the body.

Concerning how important unity is to the Lord's heart read **Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 8:6; 15:25; Eph.4:3; Phil. 2:2**! The Lord teaches us that we are His body. The body must function together properly or it will be weak failing in the tests and battles to come. Please take time to read **I Cor. 12:4-31** to get the big picture of the body of Christ. Then read **I Cor.13:1-7** to see the individual bride's responsibility to the body of Christ. Read **Eph. 4:14-16; Col. 3:14-17**!

Knowing her thoughts the Beloved responds, *"You must fellowship with other lilies so you can experience the joy of sharing and giving with each other (Gal. 6:10)! I have given you spiritual gifts to help them grow. Likewise you will grow because of their gifts shared with you! My joy is to live and minister through each member of my body fulfilling Eph. 4:15,16. My beautiful one, this is how you will grow into spiritual maturity and experience Me in ways you never dreamed of before. My love, only in this way will you experience the breadth, length, depth and height of My love (Eph.3:14-21). Here, take My hand and come."*

"...Rise up..."

Here is the first test of practical surrender. How sad that there is no response. Again, He draws her heart...

V.11 "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;"

To activate her faith the Lord now reminds her of the transformation that has taken place in her since that first cry of her heart in chapter 1. It was almost always winter in her Christian walk before total surrender. There is no more winter or rain to be feared. They are past. The devil has been defeated (**Heb. 2:14; I John 3:8**)! There is no place for gray clouds of gloom anymore. Continual resurrection victory can be hers (**II Cor. 2:14**).

The Beloved speaks to her, "O My darling, do you not realize that the past frustrations in struggling and failing to quit bad habits in your own strength are over? Gone is the chill of your unsatisfied soul thinking you never do enough for Me. The cold, cold wind of religious burnout is over! The winter storms flooding your soul with doubt and fear are past! The enemy will attack but be encouraged, I have overcome him and the world (**I John 3:8; John 16:33**)! I will be fighting your battles. As you lift up the sword and speak it (**Eph. 6:17,18**), it will be My strength and My voice! Come My special one, rest and be content with the other lilies whom I love so deeply. You think the love you have experienced now is great, it is only a trickle compared to the flood you will experience together with other lilies. You will fight the battles together. You will be given glorious revelations of My heart together. Rise up My beautiful bride and come with Me!" Surely there will be an immediate response to these new revelations, but alas, there is none! O how patient is the Bridegroom. He continues to woo her heart by directing her attention to a scene of refreshment, renewal and new life:

V.12 "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle (turtledove) is heard in our land."

Flowers are signs of the resurrected life! Jesus prayed in a garden (**John 18:1**); He died in a garden; was buried in a garden; and rose in a garden (**John 19:41**). Mary Magdalene mistook the resurrected Jesus for a gardener. In reality, He is a spiritual gardener of our heart (in **chapter 4** you will see the beauty of His garden in detail). He wants to have produced in us, from His Abba Father and the Holy Spirit, spiritual flowers that will display to the world various facets of His character! Will His resurrected flowers appear in her manner of living? In yours? The answer will be a resounding "yes" if you rise up and come away with Him! You will, little by little, "appear" more like Him in your manner of living (**Gal.5:22,23**).

Listen to your Beloved, "O my love, put your hand in Mine. Allow My heart to make the beauty I have placed within you more visible. I want others to see you by My side. O first love of My heart, '**The flowers appear...**' and it is time for beauty. Don't you realize, My precious bride, that you are one of those flowers, one of those very, very special lilies? O come walk with Me so that My fragrance may permeate your life. Others will be touched as they see how beautiful your submission to Me has made you! You will be continually filled with the Holy Spirit's voice (**turtledove or dove**), '**...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**' (**Eph.5:18,19**). The voice of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Dove, will be heard from you throughout the land. Come with Me, come my darling bride! I'm not asking you to go alone. You will be with me all the way. Trust Me My bride!"

He waits expectantly! She bows her head in silence. He then whispers in a sad tone, "Why do you hesitate? Do you not trust Me? Is My full love for you not enough? Pleading and urging her (**Rom. 12:1-2**) He says, "Just take one step and I will do the rest. Experience my good and perfect will for your life! I will do the leading and you will do the leaning! Come with Me my love!"

"...the time of the singing of birds is come..."

As the birds sing out their joyful songs near where they are, Jesus speaks through the lattice work, "My Father cares about all the birds and watches over them. No wonder they sing. They know they are protected and bring joy to His heart (**Luke 12:6**). O My beautiful bride, My Abba Father and the Holy Spirit love you the same way as I do. Don't hesitate, most intimate companion of My heart, if you wait upon Me as we travel together, when tiredness sweeps over your body and soul, I will make sure your strength is renewed like the eagles! (**Isa.40:31**) Come, take My hand, and become more like Me."

He pauses for a moment waiting for any kind of positive response. There is only silence as she keeps her head bowed looking down at the green grass. The Beloved continues to pull at her heart strings, "Both the sparrow and the swallow have found a place near My Father's altar (**Psa. 84:3**). You, My dove, have found a place right inside His heart and My heart. How can you hesitate? Think of this My love, My Father did not spare Me, His only Son, but delivered Me up to be crucified for you. Since He went that far, don't you know that your Abba Father will provide everything for Our journey together until you meet Him in glory (**Rom. 8:32**)?" Here, take My hand and walk in the resurrected life with Me!"

PRAY WITH ME: "O my loving Lord, may my heart always hear the voice of Your Dove. May the eyes of my heart be fixed upon You alone. I now respond to Your loving invitation to walk with You arm in arm into a deeper move of Your Spirit; into deeper revelations of Your wonder filled person. O may I be in such a spiritual condition that I am able to receive what You so much want for me to have! I love You Lord Jesus! Dear Bridegroom, I love Your voice! I love Your Word! O Lord, may I not be like this bride who does not initially respond to Your pleadings! Wonderful Lord, I do see the flowers; I do hear the birds; I do hear the voice of Your Spirit! Thank You for taking me by the hand! I am truly ready! In Your Holy name Lord Jesus, Amen!"

The Bridegroom continues to tug at her heart:

V.13 "The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair (beautiful) one, and come away."

What is the significance of the fig tree's fruit and fragrance? The fig tree is unusual in that it seems to have no flower, yet **within** each fruit there are hundreds of tiny flowers. As a believer, when we surrender all to Him, spiritual fruit is produced in us for others to be blessed by. Within that spiritual fruit are inwardly hidden, very lovely flowers of holiness known only by us and totally enjoyed by our King. There are the precious first fruits for Him alone and then the other blessed fruit of His fullness for us and others to enjoy. Praise God for the abundance within.

The world and the nominal Christian cannot in any measure understand or appreciate these hidden spiritual flowers. The world looks at the surrendered, separated believer and on the surface sees no real special value. They think the Gospel of the Beloved, so cherished by the bride of Christ, is utter foolishness, exclusive and narrow minded (**I Cor. 1:23-30**). They cannot see for they are spiritually blind (**I Corinthians 2:14; II Cor. 4:3,4**).

You are the fruit of Calvary. Within your spirit resides God's holy power to produce all manner of beautiful flowers that will give forth Holy Spirit fragrances in your life. The Father (husbandman) through the precious Holy Spirit will first have **"fruit"**, **"more fruit"** and then **"much fruit"** produced in you (the significance of the fig tree's two crops) (**John 15:1-14**). It is the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-23**)! Make an ironclad decision to yield your will to the Lord, yield your eyes to His Word, yield your mind to a private quiet time where you can just meditate on Him (a **Phil. 4:8** experience), yield your hands and feet to do service for a saint or sinner, yield your spirit to fellowship with those who love Him. Fruit will be on the way!

The resurrection life of Jesus permeates her spirit. Listen to His gentle words once again pulling at her heart. He takes her by the hand and speaks so gently, *"My dove, look at you. Look how you have already changed since I gave a kiss of approval to you (1:2)."*

"There are so few that have a thirst for Me as you My beautiful bride. You surrendered to Me because you desired intimate fellowship and wanted to know more about My heart. Others that belong to Me are more interested in the things I have given them to do than in Me. But you, you are the delight of My life. You are like the green figs and tender grapes - ready to grow into all the fullness of ripened fruit. Already the beauty of My holiness is evident in you (flowers). And the fragrance of My Spirit emanates from you. Now, take the next step with Me. Come with Me, I will introduce you to other surrendered lilies. Together with them the combined spiritual fragrance will bring unspeakable joy to Me and to Abba Father (II Cor. 2:1-16; Phil. 4:18)."

Active faith is the ultimate act of love for Him. Without faith it is impossible to please Him (**Heb. 11:6**). He is saying, take the first step of faith and then I will take over from there! Praise God! Your willingness is the step of love-faith that so pleases Him. It is love intertwined with faith that creates the most exquisite spiritual fruit and fragrance possible.

He waits, the moment feels like an eternity. There is no response. Tears in her eyes, yes. Love still radiating from her heart for Him, yes. But taking that step of faith and going with Him is absent. All of a sudden a slight chill in the air is felt and a small dark cloud appears on the horizon of her soul.

Dear reader, the Holy Spirit wants so much to be given the right to further change you into the image of the Beloved (**Rom. 8:29**)! How is this change to be effected in you? By walking with the Beloved! Step out in faith and obey the prompting of the Spirit of the Bridegroom from His Holy Word. The power of God will flow through you and wonderful changes will progressively take place in your habits and attitude. It begins when you hear His voice say, **"Arise my love and come away with me!"** Let two words be forever engraved in your spirit and you will not hesitate to go - Jesus said it would be, **"WITH ME!" "WITH ME!" "WITH ME!"** You will come through everything if you realize He means what He declares! Yet a small hill of sin is rising in her heart. So subtle is all of this, so imperceptible that it will soon turn into a horrible, foreboding mountain (**2:17**)!

"...the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell..."

The Beloved of her heart speaks yet again, *"My love, look around and see the abundant supply purchased for you by My blood. Behold the vines and all the grapes. Fruit is already being produced in your life because of this initial surrender. You must allow me to bring others into your life so that they may pick the tender, sweet fruit from your branch. They will grow in love. Will you come with Me and have more glorious, spiritual fruit produced in you? My beautiful one why do you hesitate? What else do I need to do to woo your heart to Me so as to have you walk by My side in intimate, fruit-bearing fellowship?"*

She had spoken earlier of her fervent love for Him. Yet there is no response to His simple request, how sad! What had happened? She wanted the Lord on her own terms. She wanted Him all to herself. She didn't want to leave the security of the walls. This is likened to so many believers who have never dedicated their lives to Him.

They gladly give the Lord praise and worship every time the church door is opened. But when He calls them to move out from those four walls and exercise their proclaimed praise, love and faith in the daily battles of life - they hesitate. Unfortunately they don't really mean what they are singing and declaring. Remember, it is one thing to call Him "Lord" in church (Martha) but it is quite another thing to clearly live out the Lordship of Jesus in the trials and tribulations of life (Mary). The Beloved Bridegroom never asks them to go out alone, He will always be with them (**Heb. 13:5**)! They fail to exercise the only thing that pleases their Bridegroom - faith (**Heb. 11:6**) which is the true response of love!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, how many times do You have to say it to my heart before I will actually act upon Your promises? Fill me with Your Spirit! Fill me with Your wisdom! Fill me with Your humility! Fill me with Your love! I am stepping out right now. Take over dear Lord Jesus. I want to walk step by step with You my King! In the authority of Jesus' name, amen!"*

Will you dear reader say "yes" to the Beloved Lord of your soul? Will you respond to Him and say, *"Whatever You want for my life I accept it gladly? You have shown me the fig tree and Your tender grapes, I am ready. Thank You dear Bridegroom for letting me see the results of the resurrected life in other lilies. Take me, lead me and show me Your wondrous plan as we walk hand in hand!"*

It is so incomprehensible that Jesus' bride does not run quickly into His loving, secure arms! But alas, that is the sad testimony of nominal believers who give little time to Him! I look in amazement at her, yet I see me in her. For so long I knew Jesus as my Savior ignoring the prompting of His right of Lordship in my life. I look back at the first twenty-three years as a believer and wonder, *"How could I have hesitated so many times?"* I was so taken up with the ministry of the Lord and missed the Lord of the ministry. Now, since the moment of absolute surrender to my Beloved's arms I can say that the last nineteen years have been spiritually indescribable. He raised me up higher than I could have ever imagined.

Since that first step of full surrender to Him, **I Cor. 2:9-10** is progressively being fulfilled in me. ***"...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."*** From year to year it is like going ***"...from glory to glory..."*** (**II Cor. 3:18**). I took the first step and then the Holy Spirit took over (**Isa. 46:11; Phil. 2:13**). At the time it all began I had no idea what was taking place. He was breaking me. Before surrender it had always been my plans for Him. I decided how I was going to serve Him. The breaking was painful, but my will had to be broken. I was a Martha. Jesus wanted me to be a Mary of Bethany.

He allowed everything in my life to be taken away. He exposed my heart's sin, in all of its debilitating subtleties and shameful nakedness. But oh what grace, oh what compassion, oh what mercy is found in His heart! He picked me up and set my feet on a glorious path of which at the time I was completely unaware of what glories were in store for this most undeserving bride of His. Four years later came the experience of this Song. I sat down early one morning before dawn to have devotions in the Song of Songs. And for one year the Holy Spirit overwhelmed me with devotional revelations in each verse. The result, an unintended book filled with Jesus' love for His bride.

Now back to the ominous scene before us, Jesus pleads again with His bride...

V.14 "O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs (steep place) , let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."

A brief amount of time has passed. The Beloved returns having given her time to think about His request. Close by He finds her in a meadow, where they would walk and share spiritually intimate thoughts with each other. But her heart has changed. She does not invite Him to fellowship. There was a chill in the atmosphere.

Jesus bares His heart to her once again! O the intensity! O the emotional longing! Listen to His voice pleading with her, *"Remember My love, My bride, you are a dove and as a dove I remember that you had eyes only for Me. O my dove you desperately need Me! I alone am your protection! How can you hesitate one moment? My loving, nail-scarred hands are stretched out to you. With Me you will experience unspeakable joy, but you must first take My hand and, step by step, I will lead you to walk in the wonderful plan My Father has laid out for your life. You look so beautiful there in the cleft of the rock! I am your Rock and I was cleft for you at Calvary! Remember how you would sing?"*

*'Rock of ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.
Let the water and the blood from Thy riven side which flowed.
Be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.'* Augustus M. Toplady

"It brought Me much joy as you sang it as a love song to Me. I don't hear your sweet voice anymore. O how I listen so intently but there is just silence. O My bride, My love I miss hearing your voice of love. Do you realize, My bride, that I am that Rock (Exo. 33:22; Isa. 43:1)? Why are you hiding yourself from Me in the secret place of the stairs? That lovely image of Me which is in you, I cannot see! What's wrong My lovely bride? I do not hear your sweet voice that praised, worshiped, and adored Me so often each day. My heart aches to see you wearing those exquisite garments which I gave to you not long ago (Isa. 61:10). O My bride, My only love, where are you? What have you allowed to come between us? O My bride I miss you so deeply."

"...in the secret places of the stairs..."

"O My lovely bride, I know how you love this secret place. It is still special to My heart also. This is the place where we had fellowship, away from the rush and pressures of life. I loved the intimate talks we had here. What joy just to sit with you and say nothing. I could feel your spiritual heart beat in full love for Me. But now I want to take you to a higher plane, where you will be with others who love Me just as deeply as you do. You will be filled to overflowing as never before. Trust Me My love; take My hand and let's go together. There are other lilies who know all about you and long to have you share with them. They can't wait to hear the special revelations about Me which only you know. I have also revealed to each of them precious thoughts about Myself. You will be so blessed as you begin to share with each other! Come on, don't toy with My feelings anymore. Take My hand, let's walk together where they are anxiously awaiting to meet you!"

"...let me see thy countenance (form), let me hear thy voice..."

What an amazing scene we have here. The Bridegroom does not coerce and demand submission from her! He who has the Cherubim and Seraphim continually worshiping Him; He who commands innumerable hosts of angels who obey His slightest order, deals with His bride in loving, pleading tones! He says, **"...let me see..."** and **"...let me hear..."**! It is much the same as the Holy Spirit **"beseeches"** (begs) us to give our bodies totally to the Lord (Rom. 12:1). Does the God who saved me have to ask me over and over again **"...let me see..."** and **"...let me hear..."**?

Notice the order here. When He said, **"...let me see..."**, He was indicating that she must take the first step. He then said, **"...let me hear..."**, He was expecting her to speak. Actions speak louder than words! If she moves out of the secret place and shows herself to Him, it would indicate a loving, submissive heart in response to His request. Nothing is more prized than a loving step of faith to Him. But alas, her form does not appear!

His heart aches. Her voice is silent, O so silent! Can it be that the bride could treat her wonderful Bridegroom in such a rude and hurtful way? Are you guilty of this dear reader? How sad that our self-will silences the voice of our heart and soul which belong to Him by the terrible cost of redemption!

Let's digress for a minute dear believer. If you are a husband, then you are the high priest of your family. Don't miss how your heavenly Husband the Lord Jesus Christ handles His bride! The Holy Spirit declares in **Eph. 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church (bride), and gave himself for it."** Our Heavenly Husband is still serving, caring and making intercession for her today (**Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:26,27,34**).

Listen to the tone of His voice. He doesn't brow beat her. He presents Himself as the problem solver (**v.8**); the positive encourager (**vs.11-14**); the One who yearns for her fellowship (**vs.10,13**); the One who has eyes only for her (**v.14**). He does not demand that she go! He does not remind her of all that she previously had said concerning Him, how that He was her bundle of myrrh, the special tree among all other trees, her delight! Here is patient, enduring, longsuffering love. He will wait! Watch Him as she is eventually restored! Will you allow the Holy Spirit to cause you to be like your Bridegroom?

O dear bride, what rock do you hide behind? Do you hide yourself in knowing Bible doctrines and into doing, doing, doing, feeling spiritually self-satisfied that you do everything correctly according to the Book, yet fail to hear His voice, **"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love...Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent..."** (Rev. 2:2-5). The burning question - are you filled with His Spirit (**Eph. 5:18**)? Consider the characteristics of a Holy Spirit filled believer in **vs.19-21**, do they describe you?

Again I ask, what rock are you hiding behind? Maybe the problem is found in Jesus' words when He speaks in a warning voice...

V.15 "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

Little foxes are known for their crafty, devious natures, hence the expression, "sly as a fox"! They love grapes and by nipping away at the tender shoots they can destroy whole vineyards. O the ugliness that little foxes bring into our lives. How it hurts the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave us everything necessary to keep our life lovely, pure and holy before Him (**I Cor. 7:1 and II Pet. 1:3,4**)! Then our sinful nature rises up and wants its way. This opens the door for a demonic little fox to come into our life and distract our vision of Him.

Is there a little fox in your life robbing you of the awareness of His consuming "**first love**" love for you and robbing Him of your once, all-consuming, "**first love**" love for Him? Is there an unconfessed sin in your walk: a habit, anger, bitterness, divorce, envy, fear, gossip, jealousy, lies, lust, impatience, worry, depression, discouragement, doubt, swearing or unforgiveness, etc.? Right now confess it and repent of it so that the vine and grapes will not be destroyed. O do not let the tender grape and its wonderful fragrance be spoiled (**v.13**)! How ready He is to forgive and restore you (**I John 1:1-10**).

The difficulty lies in that the foxes are "**little**"! Little foxes are cute and deceptively innocent but very, very dangerous!! Those secular books you waste so much time over; the hours watching "*just slightly bad*" programs on TV, the decision to stay home when you really could go to be with other lilies; what harm could come from a "**little**" questionable program, pleasure or amusement?

We get used to them. After awhile we think we have to have them. They have become a habit, yet they are slowly destroying us spiritually. How could they be so destructive? So often we do not even recognize that sin has crept in and severed precious fellowship with our Beloved Jesus! Slowly, ever so slowly the "**little**" sin eats away at our soul like a slow-growing cancer. Read **II Tim. 2:16,17** where Paul warns Timothy about what seems to be unimportant, such as "**profane and vain babblings**" which could eventually lead to a desperately fatal spiritual disease!

Then one day your whole world caves in! You desperately seek the answers as to why and how it all happened. Despair and coldness set in. It all began with that "**little**" fox, that "**little**" leaven, that seemingly harmless "**little**" sin. "**...Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**" (**I Cor. 5:6**). You look at spiritual leaven and ask yourself, "*what harm can a little sin be?*" DEAR READER, BEWARE, TAKE HEED, get rid of the foxes before your usefulness for the Lord will be destroyed!

Most of us will never miss a day at work, especially if we make an hourly wage. We are committed! Money is needed to sustain our lives: food, utilities, clothes, gasoline for the car, etc. Do we ever feel that committed to what sustains us spiritually and emotionally, the Lord and His Word (**John 6:63; Psa. 119:105**)?

Notice that Jesus says, "**...our vines have tender grapes**". It is "**our**" vine. He does not leave us by ourselves. His life was planted as a seed in death at Calvary (**John 12:23,24**) to rise up and produce fruit, His Father watches out for the vine (**John 15:1**)! His Spirit is the power behind the life in the branches! Praise God, all we have to do is allow Him to prune and cultivate us. We are workers together with Jesus. Don't rip yourself away from this beautiful, fruitful, all encompassing love relationship by some subtle "**little fox**" which has crept into your life unawares. You are not responsible to get rid of the "**little foxes**" alone. Your Bridegroom is with you all the way. His wonderful Holy Spirit is ready to do battle for you. Your responsibility is to let go and give permission to Him to exercise His power against these "**little foxes**" as you use the spiritual armor of God! It is not your battle (**I Sam. 17:47; II Chron. 20:15-17**)!

You might say, "*Are we not to take the whole armor of God and fight?*" Yes, but look carefully at **Eph. 6:10-18**. In verse ten you are saying, I have no strength to fight the battle. That verse is in the passive voice so the strength must be given to you. Verses **11** through **17** command us to take up the whole armor of God. How is all that accomplished? The answer is in **V.19**. All of the armor is activated when we simply pray in faith, truth, peace, the Word, the mind of Christ, righteousness! We pray and He does the fighting! Praying is setting our mind on the things above (**Col. 3:2-4**). We just say "**no**" to the sinful nature attracted to the fox and the Holy Spirit steps in and does the rest. Different foxes will return, the enemy is relentless. Each time stand on (**Isa.54:17; 2Cor.1:20**) speaking it out against the attack victory will be yours.

Holy Spirit fruit is so needed in our life. He produces it and our responsibility is to bear it. The Lord will bring people into your life who desperately have need of His fruit, fruit you are bearing - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Don't let a little fox rob you of fruit others need!

THE DECISION FOR SELF - 2:16 - 3:5

She now responds with words that will disappoint her Lord...

V.16 "My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies."

The bride finally speaks to Him, but O the sharp sword of pain that pierces through His tender heart with these words. She has not listened at all to Him. She sees no danger. Her lips speak forth very self-centered words, "**My beloved is mine....**" He's mine and I'll decide where and when we meet and have fellowship. She's well aware of how important the lilies are to Him in light of her statement, "**He feedeth among the lilies.**" Notice carefully she did not obey the Lord's request. "**Let me see thy countenance....**" He wanted her to first look into His loving eyes before saying a word. The Bride is not interested in what pleases Him, only what pleases her. She fails the first test of practical surrender. There is no question about her deep love for Him but at this point it is not strong enough to move her feet in faith.

"He feedeth among the lilies."

He feeds the lilies. This is where she will be fed also. He also is fed in His spirit. Remember, lilies are surrendered believers (2:1-3)! O how He loves to fellowship with them. She knows that this is where Jesus loves to dwell and be nourished in His heart with the praises of His people. He loves to lean close to His bride and hear her speak words of adoration, appreciation and deep love for Him! It is the joy and reward of the cross for Him! When lilies gather together to love and praise Him, His heart and their hearts are satisfied with a joy unspeakable (Heb.12:2)! If only she would go with her Beloved and experience full, true Spirit-filled fellowship with other lilies!

Has she forgotten the joy of fellowship with the other lilies when together they experienced His wonderful love and secrets of His heart (1:4)? What she does not understand is that as she goes with Him and the other lilies a greater intimacy will be experienced as never before! She is so distracted with the fox that the blessing of chapter 1:4 is blocked from allowing the Holy Spirit to bring it up to her remembrance.

O dear bride of His heart, RUN! RUN! RUN! INTO HIS ARMS. DON'T WAIT! RUSH! YOU HAVE NO IDEA OF THE PAIN THAT IS AWAITING YOU IF YOU DON'T RUN INTO HIS SPIRITUAL EMBRACE.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, I confess to You the sin of spiritual selfishness. I have wanted to walk the Christian life on my own terms. I am sorry for being so deaf to Your voice gently calling me to step out and trust You in circumstances You allowed into my life. I robbed You of spiritually feeding me and my love satisfying Your heart. I run to Your side to follow You in action and attitude. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit! Fill me with Your wisdom! Fill me with Your love! I humble myself under Your mighty hand knowing You will exalt me in due time (1 Pet.5:6). Dear, dear Lord Jesus, may I never hesitate to fellowship with others who love You so deeply! May I give to You the all consuming love of my heart and soul! My satisfaction is You Lord (Lam. 3:24)! Holy Spirit I surrender my will to You. Change me into the image that pleases my God, my Lord, my Savior, my Beloved! In Jesus' name, amen."*

I hear the refrain of that old hymn and Lord I sing it in my heart to You:

"Where He leads me I will follow. Where He leads me I will follow. Where He leads me I will follow, and go with Him, with Him all the way." E. W. Blandy

The Bride continues:

V.17 "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

All of a sudden there are disturbing shadows creeping slowly onto the horizon of her life. They keep her feet from moving. Shadows now move into the place where only light had resided and guided. The little foxes of self are on the throne - "**MY beloved is MINE....**"! As her eyes are transfixed upon the "*cute*" foxes of self, shadows are dimming her view of Him! She sees Him but ever so faintly. A strange, unwanted chill spills over her soul as the shadows gather.

If not dealt with immediately, these "**shadows**" will become stark darkness! She wants Him to run to her. But safety is running to and obeying Him. The word "**Bether**" means "*separation*" or "*division*"! Her Beloved begins to walk away glancing back to see if she will come. Instead of obeying and keeping her eyes upon Him ("**let me see thy countenance**") the eyes of her heart are distracted looking at the "*cute*" little foxes. Unknown to her before, a strange fear sweeps over her soul. The light of her Beloved is fading as the shadows slowly turn into an ominous darkness!

The bride now has a divided heart: wanting Her Lord to stay with her, yet at the same time watching the little foxes. She blames the Lord for the difficulty! How could He leave her at a time like this? Doesn't He care at all? She thinks, *"All He has to do is turn to me and all will be well."* How blind she is. Does she not realize that the decision not to go with Him (the Light of the world) brought on the shadows? She refused to let Him who has victorious power deal with the little foxes.

Has she so quickly forgotten that her Beloved has already dealt with the mountains (2:8)? He has skipped on the hills and leaped upon the mountains. The mountains of division (*meaning of "Bethel"*) have already been defeated by Him. This is the crucial moment when she should run to Him and by His power defeat these little foxes. In a commanding voice she says to Him...

"turn...and be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel." (Hebrew separation or division).

Isn't it amazing that she is asking the Lord to turn? It is as if she is saying, ***"I know what is best for us. You, my Beloved need to turn and change Your mind. These shadows are but a small thing."*** That is not what He wants to hear! In the distance, for one last time, Jesus lifts up His nail pierced hands and beckons to her in a loud voice, *"Come with Me My love."* She refuses to even acknowledge Him in any way. She's upset that He did not pay attention to her and do what she had asked. Pride keeps her from responding.

She wants to have His fellowship while entertaining the ***"little foxes"*** in her life. How often believers want to have the fullness of Jesus' Spirit in their lives plus compromising sin! Don't kid yourself, you can't have your Bridegroom's blessing and protection if you continue to entertain those ***"little foxes"*** that seem to be so innocent but will deeply dull your spiritual life. All believers will sin, but spiritual growth is sinning less and less and that happens when we surrender our will to our Bridegroom each day. We will grow in our intimacy with Him and sin will become less frequent. The closer you walk with your Bridegroom the more and more you will hate it when you do sin. You will rush to **1John1:9** and lean on Him even more and more. You will keep your eyes on Him (**Heb.12:1-3**).

This decision to not go with Him unreservedly will cost her dearly. There will be much emotional pain before she is restored to Him. Remember what she had stated to the virgins after the banquet? She just knew nothing could ever come in and spoil all of that perfect joy. It has happened!

A final question: Why didn't the Beloved make her go? He had every right to do so! The Lord could have argued that she had declared her surrender to Him and now she can't even obey a special request of His, thus shaming her into going. If He had coerced her the ***"little fox"*** of selfishness would still remain, hidden for awhile but then rise again in another circumstance. Even though she began to walk in the surrendered life, she had things buried deep within her heart that needed to be dealt with. The Lord will allow her to languish in the hurt and let her see all the ugliness and damage caused by a ***"little"*** bit of her will mixed into the surrendered life. It's going to be very painful but when it is all over she will be another step further in His goal for her life! She is seemingly all alone. True, He will never leave us. But we will not be allowed to sense the Lord's presence until what needs to be dealt with is accomplished.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear God, cause Your Holy Spirit conviction to come on me so strongly that I will rush to repent of the **"little foxes"** before they ravage the garden of **"our"** heart! Take over, my Bridegroom! I bow at Your feet and relinquish the rights to any pleasurable **"little foxes"**! Correct and discipline me so that I may walk with You higher and higher on the path that You have planned for my life! In Your holy name, Lord Jesus, amen!"*

COME APART AND REST FOR A WHILE. GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK AND SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

CHAPTER 3 - THE DECISION FOR SELF (cont.)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER THREE: The division (mountains of Bether) has caused great emotional pain to sweep over her soul. She lost what she desired most, continued, loving fellowship with her Beloved. However, after many sleepless nights of depression, she searches for *"Him whom her soul loveth"*. The watchmen of the city tell where her Beloved may be found. Joyous fellowship is restored. The bride takes Him to her family. Hidden sin is uncovered. She is emotionally exhausted and her Beloved beckons her to go to sleep and find needed rest. While sleeping the bride is given a vision of her Beloved in all His power and glory. This Holy Spirit given vision is the answer to victory over any temptation that would attempt to entice her to go it alone again.

Deeply concerned, The bride's intimate friends, the virgins, pay her a visit:

One of them spoke, *"We have missed being with you. Remember all those wonderful times we had with the Beloved? Then, later we would get together and share just how special He had been to us. We have been real worried about you because you haven't been coming to fellowship with us. You always had so much to tell us about Him."* Another very concerned friend said, *"And then, we noticed that our Beloved King left on a mission a few weeks ago but we did not see you with Him. We couldn't believe it knowing how deep your relationship with Him had developed. We thought possibly you might be very ill."* What they saw in their friend was disturbing to say the least. *"What has happened to you? We have never seen you in this condition! What can we do to help you? You know how much we love you."* Standing before them was their friend in deep depression, pale and disheveled in appearance. She began to sob uncontrollably. A couple of the virgins just held on to her tightly until she could speak. After a few moments, sobbing intermittently between words, she shared, *"I have lost the One I love with all my heart. There is no hope!"* Some quietly gasped in disbelief. This was much worse than they could have imagined.

Unable to make eye contact she bowed her head in shame and said, *"I will never again have what I had before with Him. I will never forget His eyes, the hurt, the deep disappointment when I wouldn't respond."* One of the virgins interrupted. *"What do you mean you wouldn't respond to Him? You can't mean that! Tell us what happened."* The bride looked as if someone had died and she knew it was her heart. *She continued, "He had just shown me His power over every kind of mountain of trouble and hill of difficulty. He explained how it was time for a new work to be done. Oh He was so excited when He asked me to go. He did everything to persuade me to come with Him. However, a little fox of selfishness appeared and I focused on it instead of responding to Him. I finally told Him that I wanted Him just for myself, no one else. I asked Him, 'Why do we have to leave?'"* Her friends were in tears seeing the enormous spiritual and emotional pain engulfing her. *"Can you believe that?"*

"It would have meant that none of you could have had fellowship with Him. You know I would never want that. Then there was this awful silence. He quietly stood there waiting with longing eyes. In my stubbornness I refused to look at Him anymore. He left so hurt. If I had only said 'yes' I would be serving with Him. It's all over! How can He love me now? To think I did that to Him, the One who was always kind, caring, and never had a harsh word for me! Oh the pain of my heart! I must have been insane!"

Her friends gathered 'round to lay hands on her and pray. She told them, *"It won't do any good. Nothing can change the enormity of my sin. There is no way He can forgive me. If I were in His shoes I know I wouldn't forgive."*

One of the virgins interrupted, *"Stop it and just listen to me! Maybe you wouldn't forgive but apparently you don't know the Beloved's heart or you wouldn't say these things. With all the love He has shared with you, do you think for one moment He is through with you?"*

A glimmer of hope returned to her eyes as she listened. *"Do you not remember when we were in His chamber and He told us that nothing could separate us from His love? That included trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and sword. Don't you remember, He even went further and said that neither death nor life, angels nor demons, the present nor the future, nor any power, height nor depth, nor anything else could separate us from the wonderful love of our God in our Beloved King" (Rom. 8:35-39)?*

"Not only that, He said He loved us with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). "Yes, what you did was terrible! But He is bigger than your sin. You were the Father's gift to Him (John 10:29), do you think He would insult His Father and discard His precious gift?"

It seemed to help a little. They each prayed for her and hugged her. As they were about to leave, one of them spoke a word over her, *"Seek Him dear bride and wonderful friend, seek Him! Did He not tell us that if we would only seek we would find? You know how He always keeps His promises. Don't ever give up! We are with you! Learn a valuable lesson from all of this. Let me say it again, seek Him! Seek! Seek! Seek! Don't give up! He will be found by you."* She responded to all their love, *"Keep praying for me dear sisters! I love you so much. Thank you for so deeply caring."*

Time passes and she is told that the King had secretly returned to town. She waited and waited, but no call, no note, nothing! The anguish intensified. Guilt ridden, accusing thoughts raced through her mind continually. The dear Holy Spirit kept reminding her of what the virgins had advised - seek Him! The enemy continued planting deadly questions in her thought life, *"What are you going to say to Him when you find Him? And you probably won't find Him anyway. What will you say to explain away how terrible you are? Come on it's hopeless. Don't you know He must hate you by now? Forget it. Give up!"* With what little spiritual strength was left, she just spoke these words, *"Jesus, I love You, I miss You, if there is any way You can be found help me."* For the moment the attacks ceased.

Why did the Beloved not come seeking her? He did it in salvation (**Luke 19:10**) but this was different. He wanted to give time for the Holy Spirit to impress on her heart just how essential the surrendered relationship is. He is giving her time to reflect on all the glorious moments of joy they had together. As the gross darkness of emptiness enshrouded her soul, the memories of His love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness she had continually experienced before, now sent a painful arrow of loss to her heart. She had taken Him for granted and had forgotten the greatness and power of His intimate fellowship. Days turn into weeks. A faint memory of the words, *"Seek Him!"* pierce through her hopeless despair. That was the needed answer.

V.1 "By night on my bed I sought him who my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

Oh, if only we could learn the lesson of faith and simply trust the words of our Beloved Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus. We would keep our hearts from so much unnecessary pain. We Christians are a strange lot, much like the lady in this song. She dearly loves Him and thirsts for His presence more than anything else, yet she refuses to deal with the **"little foxes"** that have brought on this separation. She loved the private, personal relationship but was unwilling to step out on His Word alone. Her love was not deep enough yet to move out in faith. She had begun a life of surrender in chapter one. But now she is experiencing how much she truly needs Him every minute of the day and that her surrender needed to be more complete.

So many of us can worship but when it comes to really listening to His word and making it a practical reality in our daily walk by the power of the Holy Spirit we miss the mark. What value is our worship for Him without a corresponding deep, active love for His word? Isn't real, true, heartfelt worship from us saying, *"I am wholly Yours! My burning desire is to obey Your Word?"* What is love without trust (faith)? She now must suffer excruciating, emotional aloneness. I say *"alone"* for she says, *"...on my bed..."*; it used to be *"...our bed..."* (**1:16**). He never leaves us (**Heb. 13:5**) but He does remove the feeling of His presence (no peace or joy).

Praise God, this abject emptiness will lead her back to fullness only found in Him! She will find out the hard way that what she thought was important to her, those **"little foxes"**, were really a trick of the enemy. What she thought she needed turned out to bring horrible separation from the One who alone truly satisfied her. Abba Father loved her so much that He was willing to *"hurt"* her with tough love. For her good and restoration she is experiencing **Heb. 12:6-11!**

How long did she suffer the loss of this intimate fellowship? The indication is many, many nights! Oh how she could have avoided this misery of heart and soul! But we, like this bride, think we know best. What He had requested from her (to go with Him) was not unclear nor was He asking her to step out into the unknown in blind faith. He had already been there before (hills and mountains **2:8**).

The trap set by the enemy has been sprung and she's caught in it. One moment of willful, deliberate selfishness is costing her dearly!

If she had only kept her eyes on Him who is the Light, then she would never have noticed the shadows! He allows her to live out the consequences of her decision until she cries out for Him in desperation once again! She could not find any spiritual rest. The joy, peace and contentment of chapters one and two have fled. Oh what an unhappy, unsatisfying existence. Her heart is still surrendered to Him but not her walk. Listen to the desperation of her heart's cry.

"...I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found Him not."

All those wonderful memories are now used to torture her mind. Her soul cries out, *"Even now I could be walking close to Him arm in arm. It didn't have to end! Oh what have I done? I have exchanged His abundance for fleshly emptiness. Why did I not go with my Beloved? Why, why, why? Oh the anguish! Oh the pain! Oh the fear of the night - will I ever see Him again?"* With a loud cry that trails off into desperate whisper she says, *"Won't someone help me please! Help me! Help me! I miss Him so much!"*

"By night..."

What was joyful before, now is viewed through the backdrop of night. The shadows of the enemy could have been dispelled by placing them under His victorious, protecting shadow (2:3). There would have been no night to suffer! Put those little foxes and shadows under the shadow of His authority. Take them to the place of crucifixion where they have already been dealt a death blow (Rom. 6:6,11,14). Speak His Word of promise over the foxes and watch them disappear (Psa. 57:1; 91:1)!

The needless suffering continues. Horrifying nights engulf her spirit and soul. She sought Him on her bed. She was searching her heart and looking for that former warmth of safety and security that she had experienced close to Him! In the depths of her heart she strains and cries out for Him, praying she will experience His presence again. Exhausted, sleep finally comes but the morning always returns waking to find Him not there and the emptiness started all over again!

He is still everything to her. She wants no one else or anything else but Him. Praise God she had not become spiritually dulled and then continue on with that *"little"* questionable pleasure she thought she needed. It is not her heart but her will that is the problem. Godly sorrow has come and is doing an amazing work in her! Thank God she at least acts on the Holy Spirit prompting and continues to seek Him. So many believers wallow in self-pity and do not actively seek restoration. They listen to the enemy of their minds saying, *"Your Bridegroom will never want you back after all He gave to you. Look how stupid you were, you threw it all away!"*

However, that is not the bride here. It is true that she sought Him and failed to find Him, but her earnestness was being tested! So many give up seeking after a half-hearted effort.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Holy Spirit preserve me from hurting my Beloved and myself by stepping out of the path my Abba Father has set for me to walk in with my wonderful Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Himself."*

V.2 "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

Here we see the answer to her deep depression. She got up out of her hopelessness and began to actively search for Him! There was a spark of hope and she acted upon it! When we have hurt the Lord deeply don't ever entertain the demonic thoughts of quitting. If you pause and listen intently for that Inner Voice, the Holy Spirit witnessing with your spirit, you will hear these words quietly spoken to your heart, **"Seek and ye shall find..."**! O how sweet those words sound and what needed assurance they bring - the little drop of spiritual water in a dry and depressing time will bring the living waters from your innermost being to your Beloved once again!

Why did the Bridegroom allow her to suffer so long? Those lonely days and nights of searching caused her to remember just how awesome the fellowship with Him was. Absence is truly making the heart ache and yearn more deeply for Him.

Heartrending thoughts pierce the soul of her mind, *"I will never, never take my Beloved nor His love for granted again! I didn't realize how important His every word is to my well being. I had proclaimed in no uncertain terms that I was in total surrender to His heart of love, yet I would not go with Him when He pleaded with me."* She cries out in her spirit, *"Dear Bridegroom of my heart, please, please let me find You once again. I am going to go out into the streets! I don't care what others will think. Whatever the humiliation, whatever the coldness, whatever it takes, I need You and You alone, there is no life without You!"*

There is only one thing important to a surrendered believer and that is Jesus alone. Nothing else! There is repentance in her heart already. She now puts feet to her repentance and begins to search for Him whom her soul loves so deeply. He does not make Himself readily available (Psa. 30:7). This does not deter her. Her heart is absolutely focused on restoring **"first love"** love. The promise kept coming back to her from Jer. 29:13,14, if she would keep seeking He would allow Himself to be found.

The Holy Spirit knew just how long it would take to strengthen her spirit and see her stubborn will defeated. The lesson would be learned once and for all, never to take her eyes off the Beloved (**Heb. 12:1-3**).

So many Christians refuse to believe that the *"little foxes"* or *"shadows"* in their lives are a result of their own doing. They justify and rationalize their condition. These are those who seek other things to substitute what they had formerly experienced with the Lord. However, nothing really satisfies! They must return to the One whom their soul loves. Some will blame the church and leave. This only covers the emptiness for a short time. Until she faces the fact that the problem was her refusal to listen to His word and turn to go with Him she will never have true peace again.

The answer is to pray **Psalm 139:23,24!** Let God do the searching and put His finger on the problem. Confess and repent and blessed restoration to His intimacy will be experienced. The fact that she is going about the city streets and the broad ways indicates how much she is willing to risk in order to find Him. Her pride is being dealt with. What an embarrassment! So many people are acquainted with the intimate position given to her (**1:3,4,5,6; 2:4**) and now they will see her humiliated!

Can't you hear the critical remarks as she roams the streets in search of her Beloved: *"How could you have allowed this shameful thing to happen?"*; *"You don't deserve to find Him."*; *"I'll never understand why the king didn't pick one of His own kind (1:5)."*; *"I knew it would never last between you two."*; *"I don't blame Him for hiding Himself from someone like you."*; *"I said all along that He was too good for you."*

But a wonderful, still small voice inside of her continues to remind her, *"...seek and you will find (Him)."* (**Matt. 7:7**). She dismisses the rude, accusing and piercing comments meant to crush her spirit. Instead of quitting in despair the bride obeys the voice of the Comforter (Helper)! With a new vigor she continues looking.

What are you willing to risk dear Christian in order to find full fellowship with Him again? Are you willing to risk godly repentance and confession in order to be fully restored? Is there a hurt from long ago that needs your forgiveness? This humbling time seems so grievous (**Heb. 12:11**) but Oh the refreshing peace it brings. The restoration of His intimate presence and *"first love"* love will be worth it all and so much more! The time of separation will soon be forgotten in the presence of His joy!

V.3 *"The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"*

In her despair she goes out in the darkness of the city not realizing how dangerous that can be. Who knows what evil plan the enemy had devised to trap her in that darkness and destroy her (**I Pet. 5:8**). But the Lord has His watchman. They are the ones who were charged with the protection of the city. They were the *"early warning system"* of Yerushalayim against anyone coming against God's people.

The word *"watchmen"* is translated *"keep"* the majority of the time. In her desperation she spills out her heart, *"Help me, help me, please, I must find my Love, have you seen Him?"* They pointed in the right direction.

Spiritual watchmen have a deep, Spirit-filled understanding of the Word of God, warning us of impending danger. We live in a night season on this earth where the Prince of darkness temporarily rules. No matter how dark it gets we have the Lord's light in us (**John 8:12; Col. 1:13**). Thank God she paused to hear instructive counsel! How important it is to listen to those who guard us and warn us (**Heb. 13:17**). Pray for them as they carry out their God-given gift and responsibility in the power of the Holy Spirit! Glory to God for those who truly care for the sheep's welfare!

V.4 *"It was but a little (distance) that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."*

Praise His Holy Name, her searching was for, *"...but a little..."* Remember how the Lord Jesus dropped a heavy emotional bomb on His disciples just before He went to be crucified? They were in despair. He was leaving them and said that they all would forsake Him, one would deny Him three times and another would betray Him (**Mt. 26:21, 31-34; Jn. 13:33**)! Their hearts sank. But, praise God, Jesus took time to tell them how they could have peace in the midst of their emotional crisis (**John 14:27**). He told them this trouble which they must endure would be just *"a little while"*; that their *"sorrow shall be turned into joy."* (**John 16:16-20**). The first *"little while"* seems like an eternity but when we see Him it seems as if it were but a moment.

Are you encouraged dear Christian? **"...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning (Psa. 30:5).**" Your troubles are but for **"a little while"** if we earnestly seek Him and rest upon His promises.

There could be no contentment of heart until she was basking in the light of His presence and pouring out, once again, her heart-filled **"first love"** upon Him. Nothing but that could satisfy. As she resumed searching for Him, all of a sudden He was there! Relief comes over her frustrated soul and tears of joy well up in her eyes. She runs to Him and He puts His arms out to her. She becomes totally enwrapped in His embrace. For a while nothing is said - without a word, forgiving love passes from His heart to her heart.

The Bride doesn't need to ask for forgiveness. It is implied by the heart-wrenching hurt of her searching that she had already expressed confession of it on her bed. Much like Peter, when the Lord meets him in **John 21** at the seashore and then asks Peter, **"Do you love Me?"** three times (**John 21:15-17**). The Lord knew Peter loved Him. He wanted him to confess it publicly and His disciple would be totally restored. Guilt would be removed. He had already wept bitterly concerning his sin and must have cried out in confession concerning it (**Mark 14:17**). The bride had suffered and in her grief confessed her sin while agonizing on her bed in those lonely nights of separation.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Abba Father, thank You so much for making me see my deep foolishness; for letting me hurt that I might know just how desperately I need You and how infinitely valuable You are to my soul. Thank You for those You have placed into my spiritual pathway to draw me back to Your loving arms again. My heart is full and I can feel the streams of living water beginning to flow out of my heart over Your feet. I love You so much! In Jesus' name, amen!"*

"...but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go..."

There can be no question about the fervency of her "first love, love" for Him. Four times in the first four verses she states in clear, urgent tones that He is the one **"whom my soul loveth."**

Holding tightly to Him, with tears running down her cheeks in thankfulness, she, in whispered tones said, *"O my Beloved I am so ashamed that I did not go with You! The emptiness has been excruciating. You alone are my reason for living!"* He says nothing to her; He doesn't need to; He just presses her closer to Himself with His strong arm around her shoulder. She somehow knew He had already forgiven her and that He was not angry at all with her. The bride had entered into a new knowledge of the depth of His love. It was a love so great that nothing could separate her from it (**Rom. 8:35-39**). The bride had never experienced this level of unconditional love before.

Take heart, dear surrendered believer! Have you failed your Bridegroom, and yet, you still feel that overwhelming love for Him? Observe very carefully here how He deals with her. He will not be any different with you! Remember, the more you love Him, the more intense you will feel your failure. Get your eyes off the failure and place the eyes of your heart back on Him. He will be found! As they walk together she takes Him to her mother's house. It was there that she had had difficulties with her brothers (**1:6**). Listen to her, *"O my Beloved Bridegroom, come in and meet my family. I want them to know Your heart. May they see how wonderful You really are - my Counselor, my Eternal Father, my Mighty God, my Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). O may they be granted to see You as I see You!"* But there still was a problem in her life that needed to be dealt with.

There had been a deep seeded bitterness concerning her brothers who had forced her to take care of many vineyards that were not her responsibility. The result? She was unable to take care of her own vineyard (**1:6**). Every time something reminded her of them the burning resentment rose up in her soul. Lying deep in her soul was a seething, angry spirit of unforgiveness. Now that she has found her Beloved, the bride takes Him to meet the family. He had forgiven her, would she be able to forgive them (**Eph. 4:31-32**)? Dear Christian, let Jesus, who lives inside of you, go to the door of bitterness and allow Him to forgive that hurt through you, just as He allowed the Father to forgive His enemies while being crucified (**Luke 23:34**). He could have easily said, *"I forgive them..."* but He didn't. So pray for that offending person, *"Lord I ask You to forgive _____ through me."* If it comes back up remind your soul each time that You have allowed the Lord to forgive through you. His forgiveness will become yours. You will begin to feel the wound healing.

"...until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."

As they approached the front door, the bride whispered to her Beloved, *"My Love, wait a moment outside here until I go in and make sure everything is O.K. They do not know we are coming and my brothers can be very rude. Give me just a minute."* The Beloved quietly took one of her hands and "patted" it with reassurance that it would be all right with Him. He knew though, by her body language that there was an underlying anger toward her brothers that had not been dealt with.

As the bride entered, standing there were her brothers each wondering what this intrusion was all about. They still had no respect for their little sister. One brother whispered sarcastically, *"I thought we got rid of her for good! She was nothing but a waste around here."* She could feel the coldness and disdain in their looks. It brought back so many hurtful memories. She was able to crack a smile but bitter anger rose up within her trying to intrude on this special moment. Something inside of her said, *"Here's your chance to tell them what you really think of them! Go ahead!"* She glanced back at the door and remembered her Beloved was just outside! She quickly buried the rage seething inside of her and forced a smile again.

The bride's mother ran up and embraced her. With tears of joy she said, *"I have missed you so much. There has not been a day go by that something good you did or said hasn't crossed my mind. It's been such a long time since I saw you last. You'll have to tell me all about this wonderful Person you've fallen so in love with. Welcome home my daughter."* And gave her another big hug. With a glimmer in her eye she said, *"Well Mother, I have brought my Beloved to especially meet you. He's standing right outside the door!"* With a quizzical look her mother said, *"Hurry up and invite Him in my daughter! Why is He waiting outside?"*

As He entered, a hushed silence fell over the room. The brothers all of a sudden felt very uneasy in His presence. They were no longer the tough guys who had belittled their younger sister. The brothers' hearts began to melt in shame and conviction as the Beloved came and embraced each one with a holy kiss on each cheek. They could say nothing.

It seemed that this magnificent stranger was in full control, yet He said not a word. The bride's mother bid Him to sit and make Himself comfortable. As the Beloved sat reclining He paused for a moment gazing downward. From His innermost being flowed springs of living joy as He began to share how much in love He was with His bride and the plans He had for her happiness and joy.

There was a pause as the mother excused herself for a moment to get some food and refreshment. She asked the brothers to help. At that moment the bride leaned over and whispered, *"Thank You for not saying anything about the separation which I caused to happen between us!"* He smiled and squeezed her hand and responded, *"You know how much I love you and My love covers a multitude of sins!" (1 Pet. 4:8).*

They returned and He thanked them for the wonderful refreshments. He turned to them and said, *"You know I am the King!"* They gasped, *"We thought it was only a 'story' she was telling everybody after she had moved out! Forgive us, we didn't know! You really are the King!"* All of them bowed with their faces to the ground. He touched each one of them and said, *"Fear not, I am not only your King, I am your Kinsman, the Husband of your sister. I have come to bless all of you."*

With a great sigh of relief they received their wonderful King into the family. *"Surely"*, they thought, *"our sister has told Him how terribly we treated her."* But in His eyes they only saw an intense love for them. In all their lives they had never felt so loved before. Without hesitation they received Him into their hearts.

As the King continued to share, the brothers became filled with a strange conviction concerning their sinful attitude. Their hearts melted realizing the immensity of deep hurt they had caused their little sister. Godly sorrow swept over their souls. Each confessed to Him and asked for forgiveness. Deeply moved in heart the Beloved embraced and forgave each one of them as tears of joy flowed. They asked the King, *"Would You allow us to talk privately to our little sister?"* He smiled, nodding His head in agreement knowing what was about to happen. In the other room one of them took their sister by the hand and said, *"All of us realize how terrible we have hurt you. We don't know how you can forgive us but we are asking you to find it in your heart."* In a joyful release, she gave each one a forgiving hug.

The Holy Spirit was not through with His work concerning this matter and the bride herself, in a tearful emotional release, asked them to forgive her for the harsh and unkind words that had been uttered in frustration against them. She confessed, *"I have held a root of bitterness against all of you. It has emotionally eaten me alive. It was as if the Lord's grace had departed from me. I was so alone with my anger toward you. I could not see the Lord leading me or guiding me. It was awful and it kept getting worse over time. I began to hurt others and didn't understand it. Then I surrendered to the Lord thinking that I didn't have to deal with you all anymore. However, I know better now. Please forgive me, dear brothers. I renounce all that I felt toward you." (Heb. 12:15).*

She could feel a heavy burden lifted off of her soul. The bitterness and anger were gone. Peace and purity of mind replaced the darkness. All sat there amazed, each one thinking about the powerful presence of this wonderful King and how a healing joy had been brought to their home. The brothers had never experienced such tenderness in their heart before.

The bride glanced toward her Beloved and noticed a gleam of pleasure in His eyes. The thought raced through her mind, *"This must have been one of the 'little foxes' spoiling my soul."* Again she glanced toward the Beloved and she knew in her spirit He was in agreement with that thought! It felt so good to have His approval again!

Excitement filled the house! Like a fast flowing stream, question after question poured out for their new Kinsman to answer. All could see how much He loved the sharing time with them. For the first time they truly felt special. They had passed from darkness into light (**1 Pet. 2:9**). Old things passed away. It was as if they were a completely new creation (**II Cor. 5:17**).

When there were no more questions left the Beloved reassured them, *"I promise to meet all of your needs according to My riches in glory."* (**Phil. 4:19**). *"Remember, just ask Me and I will take care of all them."* The King rose from the table and said, *"It has been a blessed time with all of you. I'm so glad you have lovingly and willingly received Me into your home. But we are going to have to get back to the palace. I have some pressing business to take care of."* And with a twinkle in His eye said to the love of His heart, *"my bride has close friends waiting anxiously to see her. I believe she has some important things to share with them, the virgins."* Embracing each one of them He said, *"Please come to the palace any time. Think of My throne as a throne of grace (**Heb. 4:16**). You will never need a special invitation! Remember, you're royal family now. I'm going to leave you a book I've written, it will guide you for the rest of your life!"* They laughed shaking their heads in amazement of what had transpired this day!

O to have the forgiving spirit of Joseph upon us in dealing with crushing past hurts (**Gen. 44,45**). If you, dear child of the Lord, are ever to grow in your relationship with the Bridegroom, you must take care of any past hurts at home first. Is there unforgiveness in your heart for something a grandparent, parent, brother, sister, spouse or child did a long time ago? Maybe it took place way back in your early childhood days. I repeat, let the Lord forgive them through you as He allowed the Father to forgive His enemies while being tortured and crucified. It's for your healing.

Do those closest to you see that your attitudes, actions, and activities are controlled by a deep love for Him? How about your children (maybe spiritual children-friends), have you brought them near the Shepherd's tent (**1:8**)? Do they see the results of your professed surrender when you said to your Beloved, *"I have eyes of love for You only my King, my Spouse."*? Do they see a wonderful, loving holiness of obedience to His Word flowing from you in your daily walk?

The Beloved and His bride returned to the palace. Her close friends, the virgins, had heard they were coming and all were anxiously waiting to meet them. When the great door opened, they all rushed to her and gave her many hugs. They knew there had been a great victory in her life. All began to say excitedly, *"Tell us all that has happened! We can't wait to hear about it! It's so wonderful having you back with us. It just hasn't been the same."* The Beloved broke in during all of this excitement and said, *"Ladies, words are not adequate to tell you how I feel concerning all of you, with all of My heart I thank you for caring so deeply, especially when My love was away. I know how much you want to share right now but she has had a very, very exhausting, full day."* Then He addressed those court ladies who served and waited on His bride...

V.5 "I charge you, O ye daughters of Yerushalayim, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he (she) pleases."

They were told by the Beloved to be quick and be gentle in obeying His command to let her sleep. The Lord loves for us to meditate on all that He does for us. ***"My soul shall be satisfied...and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."*** (**Psa. 63:5,6**).

Oh how loving her Beloved is, how caring, how gentle, so understanding! She now can sleep, peacefully with true rest of soul and spirit. How horrible were those sleepless nights (**3:1**). How beautifully exhausting was this day in finding Him. All her spiritual energy was poured out upon Him through His anointed presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. It is now time to rest.

If only we could realize that loving Him, following Him, obeying Him, serving Him, brings us true rest. As she lay back to sleep she said, *"I love You, my Beloved with all of my heart."* She squeezed His hand and with a grieved look started to say, *"I'm so, so sorry I..."* But He placed His finger gently over her lips. She knew all was well. In a moment His bride was fast asleep, in a heavenly slumber, with a glow of perfect peace.

The Beloved sits next to her stroking her hair saying in a whisper as she drops off into a sweet sleep, *"You know I love you with all My heart, My Bride; rest My love and enjoy the dream I have prepared for you. May your heart be thrilled in this glorious revelation and vision of Myself as you sleep!"* He heard her whisper quietly to her soul, ***"Return unto thy rest,***

O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee (Psa. 116:7)." The Beloved watched her go off to sleep and joy swept over His soul. O how He loved being with her again! He too had been hurt very deeply by her refusal to go. She was the joy of His heart. O how He missed her fellowship while He was out ministering to the needs of others. Listen! The Holy Spirit is speaking to you, *"Come, dear reader, and enter into this glorious dream! Have your spiritual eyes opened to the secrets for victorious living."*

And now, here is the bride's glorious dream-vision described in detail...

THE DREAM OF HIS STRENGTH AND POWER 3:6 – 11

V.6 "Who is this that cometh (up) out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?"

Why does she need a dream or a vision of her Beloved in His strength and power? To reveal in her how to have victory over any problem that she will face whether they be little foxes, shadows or major hurts. She had failed in the first test. Without a Holy Spirit revelation of the greatness of the Beloved King she will fall in this wilderness journey. To be a victorious bride, she must have her eyes fixed on Jesus alone (**Heb. 12:2,3**)!

The problem is always a problem of spiritual vision and unity with other believers in the body of Christ! Her vision of Him had been obscured by the **"shadows"** of the **"little foxes"**. Everything was fine until her eyes focused on something that seemed of **"trivial"** importance! The result was devastating. The Beloved asked her to go with Him in **2:10** to be with other lilies (as you will see in **6:3**). She needs to be instructed in the things that will give victory in her daily walk. This comes to us as the Holy Spirit brings other gifted members of Christ's body into our lives to instruct and pray for us. Read **John 17:21; Eph. 4:3,4,14-16**.

She will be given a dream concerning those who walk in unity with the King. She will see His power and observe it in them. She will see the importance of the sword they carry. This Holy Spirit vision of Jesus and His body will dramatically show her what joy it is to walk close to the King. He is leading her into this blessed relationship of which she will definitely experience later (**8:5**). REMEMBER IT IS NOT JUST A VISION OF HIM BUT OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE UP HIS BODY. **"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (a sharing in) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (a sharing in) of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."** (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

PRAY WITH ME: "O Lord, let me see Jesus as all I need. May You be the **"I am"** of every circumstance that invades my life. Let me see the true picture of this wilderness I must live and walk in. Holy Spirit cause my spirit to have a fresh vision of Him whom my soul loveth! **'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law (Psa. 119:18)**. Your Word proclaims this wilderness is a place of wandering without direction (**Ex. 14:3**), a terrible place (**Deut. 1:19**), a howling waste (**Deut. 32:10**), a dry, barren land (**Psa. 107:35**), a place where one can die of thirst (**Isa. 50:2**), a place of desolation (**Ezk. 6:14**), and a place of wild beasts (**Mk. 1:13**)! Dear Father, let me see the utter waste and danger the world is to my soul. Without a clear Holy Spirit vision of my all powerful, conquering King I will fall in the wilderness! In my Beloved Jesus' name, amen."

"...cometh out of the wilderness..."

How sad it is that so many Christians get used to the wilderness. They begin to see very little danger in it. We are to be a pilgrim passing through this land (**Heb. 11:13,16**) which is ruled by the powers of darkness (**Eph. 6:10-18**)! So often the Christian settles down in the wilderness as if it were a permanent place. They become desensitized to the dangerous subtleties of the enemy. In this wilderness journey of ours, by faith we must see our Lord as the victor Who has overcome all obstacles Satan will place in the pathway (**John 16:33; Rom. 8:37; I John 4:4; 5:4**). What many Christians fail to realize is that this wilderness (the world) still temporarily belongs to the enemy.

The enemy knows that what he stole from Adam and Eve, the right to rule (have dominion) is only for a specific time. Jesus has already won the right to rule this earth because of Calvary. In this present time the victory is for us, His people, on an individual basis. He will take over entirely what is rightfully His one day (in the chapters of **Rev. 5,19, 20, 21**). If we stay close to Him through His Word, praising and praying in the Spirit, discernment will be ours! His bride should always be seen as coming up out of the wilderness. It is to be a progressive, upward walk with Him. Always keep in mind it is an **"upward"** experience! This whole Song written by the Spirit is leading you and me to **8:5**. **"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?...."** Did you catch the word **"up"**?

Notice that there is movement in the wilderness. The Christian life is not static but active, moving forward and upward! **"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."** (Isa.40:31). Meditate on these scriptures: **Psa. 23:4; 119:45; Rom. 8:4; Eph. 5:2; 5:8; Col. 1:10; I John 1:7; II John 1:6.** In the previous chapter she wanted things to remain status quo. There was no vision of going so there would be no growing with Him. He was saying in **chapter 2**, *"If you are to grow in your surrender to Me then it is imperative that we walk together! I can't share with you the secrets of My heart unless you allow yourself to be intimate with My Spirit!"*

Let the Word of God unlock the meaning of the symbols in this vision. **"Smoke"** represents God's glory and power (**Isa. 6:4; Rev. 15:8**); an acceptable sacrifice to God (**Lev. 1:9**); God's wrath (**II Sam. 22:9; Psa. 74:1; Isa. 30:27**); judgment of the wicked (**Rev. 14:11; Gen. 19:28**). As she sleeps, the eyes of her spirit are opened to see the Bridegroom filled with glory and power. In the power of His wrath alone, wickedness will be dealt with. She has nothing to fear! To Him alone she is to offer the sacrifice of praise and joy. Why? Because she now knows that the battle is not hers but His! He is the conqueror, the glorious One, the only worthy One! He is her victory! There will be a terrible judgment of the wicked one day. Dear reader, is this your vision?

Her spiritual eye focuses on the **"myrrh"**. Had she so quickly forgotten its deep significance? She had apparently taken the little bag of remembrance from between her breasts. Is that why she was so easily moved by the foxes? It represents the crushing sacrifice of crucifixion (His blood) which alleviates our sinful pain and makes us beautiful. (See comments on **1:13**) She is never to forget the great price her Beloved paid for her to be His bride! The **"myrrh"** would have helped her to focus back on her Beloved when the **"little foxes"** showed up. The old hymn told us to, *"Turn our eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face."* Is this not what her dream is all about?

PRAY WITH ME: *"O Lord, may I never forget Your sacrifice and the blood that flowed down from Calvary for my sin. May it always remain fresh and gloriously real to me. So that when the sinful 'little foxes' come I will immediately deal with them by crushing them through Your crucifixion and sacrifice."*

What she did in refusing to go with her Beloved was to pour impurity all over the throne of her heart. The Holy Spirit now directs her to notice the **"frankincense"** which comes from a Hebrew word meaning *"to be white"*. The gum is extracted from the Boswellia tree by cutting into the bark and collecting the resin. O what the Beloved went through for her at Calvary - the bruising, the battering, the beatings, the crushing, the cutting so that purity would be given to His bride! Frankincense was offered in worship to God (**Mt. 2:11**). Jesus Himself is the **"frankincense"**. A beautiful example of the value of the frankincense is seen in the Tabernacle. The showbread or *"bread of presence"* used in the Holy Place, representing God's people, had frankincense placed on it (**Lev. 24:7; Col. 1:27**). He alone, Who is the frankincense, gives value to His people.

O the beautiful frankincense of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. O the holiness and purity the Holy Spirit brings into our surrendered lives. Frankincense was also burned as incense in worship to Jehovah (**Ex. 30:34-38; Lev. 2:1,2; Mt. 2:11**). That is exactly what happens within us when we are filled with spiritual frankincense! When we are filled with Jesus, the Holy Spirit ignites it for worship in our spirit giving glory to the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All of this caused her to see how truly repugnant she was. How terrible her sin had been! She is told to apply the **"myrrh"** and **"frankincense"**! In this vision her soul cries out, *"O Lord give the "myrrh" of forgiveness for my sinful heart of independence. I confess my sin to You my Beloved."* He placed the bag of **"myrrh"** around her neck. She could feel the beginning healing sweep over her soul. Then the frankincense of purity appeared within! The order is perfect.

As the dream unfolded, this thought burned in her mind, *"My soul is so impure, can it ever be clean again?"* She speaks to Him in the dream, *"My wonderful Lord, my beautiful Savior, Lover of my soul, apply the frankincense to my soul that I may be cleansed of my sin of unresponsiveness and independence. Oh I feel so clean again, that fragrance is so wonderful."* At that very moment the precious Holy Spirit applies the frankincense to the throne of her heart. *"O how clean, how pure, how fresh my soul feels. Thank You, thank You, thank You my blessed Husband. I love You for Your infinite patience with me and drawing me back to Yourself!"* In the vision she places her arms around Him whom her soul loves and says, *"Thank You my Love, thank You with all of my heart that You love me so infinitely! Oh how very, very special I feel! I love You, I love You, I love You!"*

The Holy Spirit brought to her remembrance **Psalm 119:140**, **"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it."** **"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."** **John 15:3.** **"...he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul..."** **Psa. 23:2,3.** She confessed her sin of independence in the dream (**I John 1:9**)

and a refreshing and renewing purity swept over her soul! Worship filled her spirit. She began to sing and make melody in her heart for she was filled with holiness! O the exhilarating surety of being filled with Him (**Eph. 5:18,19**)!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Holy Father, pour the spiritual frankincense over my soul and may Your holy fire ignite it in worship to my Beloved! Jesus, You are the frankincense and myrrh of my soul. May the sweet aroma of my surrendered heart bring joy to You (**II Cor. 2:14-15**). May the fruit of the Spirit flow from my life! Praise Your Holy name! The wilderness has no attraction for me anymore. You alone fill my soul, my heart, and my vision!"*

In this incredible vision the Holy Spirit now directs her spiritual eyes to the **"powders of the merchant"**. They were used to bring a pleasant scent to the air. Some were used to beautify. They all were costly because of the tedious work of pulverizing the various substances into fine powders. He was **"crushed"** for our iniquities (**Isa. 53:5,10**)! It pleased Lord to crush His Son! O what glorious powders were brought forth from the crushed heart of our God and King! As a result, indescribable scents of victory came forth from that crushing and God's heart was pleased. With her eyes ablaze with glory she spoke, *"O my Beloved Bridegroom, I do not need things of the wilderness to make me attractive or to give me pleasure and joy. I only need to be Spirit-filled with Your wonderful fragrances of holiness, obtained through the crushing of Your heart. These will beautify my life as You live through me in the power of Your Word and Spirit (**Gal. 2:20; 5:23,24; Eph.5:18-21**)!"*

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, refine my life. May my stubborn will be continually crushed in crucifixion (**Gal. 2:20**). Make me sensitive to Your promptings! Thank You for Your Word of cleansing and restoration! In Jesus' name, amen."*

Vs. 7,8 "Behold his (litter or carriage to travel upon) bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night."

"Behold..."

O what a vision! O how each one of us needs to see Jesus lifted up! This is exactly what the bride of Christ needs. The bride refused to go with Him when He called. Why? Because of the shadows; because of the heat at noon; because of a divided heart (**Mts. of Bethel**)! Here is the answer for her fears and anxious moments, it is to simply **"Behold"** Him, high and lifted up coming out of the wilderness (**Heb. 12;1-3; I John 3:1-4; John 1:35-37**).

"...his bed, which is Solomon's..."

She also sees Him seated. He is at rest. Much like Jesus, sleeping in the boat. This is a scene of confident triumph. He has everything under control. Had she gone with Him she would have been right next to Him enjoying every minute of the fellowship as they come up out of the wilderness. She would be seated with Christ, her Beloved and that is where we receive our authority to overpower the enemy's attacks (**Eph. 2:6**). The bride is to never forget that the **"bed"** (carriage) is her Beloved's alone! He is to get all the attention, praise and glory!

At this moment the Holy Spirit invites her to be seated with the King. She could feel His power and authority flow through her spirit. O how safe and secure it felt seated so close to Him. The King revealed to her that there would be fierce attacks from the enemy. He put His strong arm around her as they traveled alone in the wilderness and said, *"You now have all of My authority."* It was the authority of victory of which He had over the enemy at Calvary. The proclamation of His Lordship and His blood would be all the authority she needed (**Rev. 12:11**). He explained that it would come through using the Word. The only requirement was for her to walk in holiness. He told her, *"Continue to apply the crucifixion ("**myrrh**") and holiness ("**frankincense**") daily to your will and you will walk in joy and victory each step of the way."*

"...threescore valiant men..."

In this wonderful dream she sees the Beloved as her dynamic King with sixty men carrying swords (**"6"** the number of man - **Gen. 1:27,31**, **"10"** the number of responsibility - **Exo. 20:1-17 - 6 x 10**). Her King has those in His service who are led by the Holy Spirit and are able to skillfully use the sword of the Spirit against anything that would harm her in the wilderness journey (**Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12**). Praise God for His holy sword, His immutable Word! The word **"valiant"** means to be strong or mighty. May each one of us be skilled in standing on and claiming with active faith the promises of His Word!

"...they are about it..." (around it)

Notice that the King is the central focal point of the sixty valiant men with swords. Your purpose in any study must be with the Lord as the center. Without the Lord Jesus as our leader, as the central purpose of our walk and as the One lifted up to get all the glory all will be meaningless. Keep in mind He is being carried so He is lifted up. The Bridegroom-King is to be lifted up in our life. Our purpose is for Jesus to be seen in us by all those who come into our pathway along this wilderness journey: family, friends, unbelievers, angels and demons. Because these warriors were close to the Lord's carriage then they were able to hear His instructions on how and when to use the sword if necessary. How close do you stay to the Lord? Do you talk to Him during the busyness of the day? Do you praise Him in your mind when you are not required to concentrate on other things? Do you meditate upon a very special Word He has given to you?

"...They all hold swords..."

You are to **"hold"** the sword! Too many of God's children put their sword aside only to pick it up once a week when the Lord's troops gather together for further instructions. Spiritually we must **"hold"** the sword close to our heart and mind as we walk through the activities of daily life, ready to use it at a moments notice since the enemy will attack at the most unexpected times. Isn't that what **Psa. 119:11** means - hiding it in our hearts; is that not holding it spiritually close? What did it take for the Son of Man to stop the enemy in the wilderness (**Matt. 4:1-11**)? Jesus, our Lord spoke the Word three times. Whether it is in warfare or in worship, use His word! Actually praising Him during spiritual conflict will bring victory. **"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has thou ordained strength (praise - Matt. 21:16) because of thine enemies, that thou mightiest still the enemy and the avenger."** (Psa. 8:2) Read **II Chron. 20:20-22!**

As you read ask, "Lord, what are You desiring to say to me in this passage? I want You to feed my spirit (**John 6:63**). I am reading Lord because I love to hear Your voice! I want to know what pleases You. Your heart is Your Word, cause it to be revealed to me. Thank You Holy Spirit for making it real to me."

"...expert in war..."

When are we ever going to become expert in the Word of God so that we can **"...endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"** (**II Tim. 2:3**)? It will take: reflective study, a time commitment, a deep love for the Bridegroom, loving worship and quiet listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying in the heart! **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** (**II Tim. 2:15**). We become experts in spiritual warfare by continually applying His word to each circumstance. **Heb.5:14 teaches, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."**

Loving His word and applying it will be worth it all, for in her life's journey she will be seen as more than a conqueror (**Rom.8:37**). This miserable earth is a wilderness! As we lovingly submit to His Word and actively use it we will walk with our Beloved King in victory! Praise God! Dear bride, keep the sword near your side as those in **Neh. 4:18** so that the Kingdom of God may be advanced for His glory! Her Beloved Bridegroom has provided everything so that she can become an expert in spiritual warfare: the Holy Spirit to reveal life changing and life directing truths (**John 16:13**), pastors and teachers to help train and equip us (**Eph. 4:11,12; Tit. 2:11-15**) and other surrendered believers for true Christian fellowship.

Actively identify yourself with those who are truly skillful in using God's word. Watch their walk not just their talk in actions, attitudes, reactions and responses. Be cautious, some have a great gift in teaching biblical information but their walk leaves much to be desired.

"...every man hath his sword upon his thigh"

The **"thigh"** speaks of strength and the ability to stand. It was the placing of the hand upon another's **"thigh"** where personal covenants of commitment were made between men (**Gen. 24:2,9; 47:29**). The Holy Spirit admonishes us to **"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...."** (**Eph. 6:14**). Never forget to humble yourself and allow the grace given to you to be dispensed through you to others. A humble heart before God and His people will cause you to become a Holy Spirit-filled expert in the use of God's ultimate weapon - His Word! You will be a protector of the little lambs of the flock!

"...for fear in the night."

As the vision continued a foreboding chill enshrouded her soul. She screamed for a chilling, fearful, depressive darkness pressed in upon. There had been the terrors of the night, the moment when her Beloved had left and she was all

alone! Night after night fear had filled her emotions. It was as if she were reliving the terrible sin of separation and the fear of never seeing Him again. This time a holy sword came out of her mouth, "*Jesus is my Lord and I have overcome by the blood of the Lamb!*" (Rev. 12:11). Instantaneously the night fled away - she found herself next to her Beloved King. She had used the sword! Her eyes were opened and there were heavenly warriors surrounding her. Dear Christian we live in a night scene (Rom. 13:12; John 3:19,20)! The workers and rulers of darkness will attack us with hellish fears as we travel through this "*valley of the shadow of death*" (Psa. 23:4)!

Literally it is "*the valley of darkness*". It speaks of our journey here on this earth and not really about dying. The death of a child of God will be full of light. We can say with full confidence that, "*even though I walk through that dark valley I will fear no evil!*" If He is the center, as we see Him here, then there is nothing to fear! We must truly make the study of our Bridegroom's Word a top priority so that its light will emanate from us to illuminate the path leading us to glory. "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" (Psa. 119:105). Don't miss reading Psa. 34:7!

Thanks be unto God, for in each wilderness difficulty she now knows that her Beloved King has His valiant, mighty warriors ready to minister to her needs. Who are these valiant ones? Some are His angels, appearing as humans at times, who minister and do battle for us (Heb. 1:13,14; Psa. 91:11). When you speak the Word of God out of your mouth, angels are activated to minister to you and against the enemy (Psa. 103:20)!

These valiant ones are also the prayer warriors in the body of Christ who do battle with the sword of the Spirit for the bride! Thank you Jesus! We don't have to fight our battles in the energy of the flesh (I Sam. 17:47; II Chron. 20:15; 32:8). Praise God for the One Who always causes us to triumph (II Cor. 2:14)!

PRAY WITH ME: "*O my dear Husband, eternal King of my heart, I praise Your name for all the provisions of blessing and protection given to me by Your loving Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:3). Dear Jesus, how could I have hesitated in going with You? My entire welfare is in Your hand. You are in control! You have the power! You have the strength! You love me with all of Your heart. And so why have I been concerned about the shadows? Forgive me for having focused my eyes on the wilderness shadows instead of on the light of Your face. I will fear the night no more! Praise Your holy name Lord Jesus!*"

V.9 "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon."

As you know "**Solomon**" means "*peaceable*". Jesus is our King Peaceable! When He is truly King of our desires then all fear must flee before Him! O this is what our resting bride needs in order to go with Him when He calls. Seeing Him in total control gives us absolute spiritual confidence to step out in faith with Him. It will happen in chapter seven.

The word "**chariot**" is not the usual Hebrew word. This Hebrew word is only found here in the Song of Solomon and it is a covered couch (palanquin) carried by two poles on the shoulders of two or more men. We see King Jesus resting as He is being carried. There is no battle scene here. The real battle was won at Calvary. All we need to do is appropriate it by faith. The wilderness may bring fear with its real dangers lurking about but our Bridegroom is resting on His couch. He is not worried! He is not concerned! He is the victor!

Take a careful look again at this vision. The King is being carried. In the surrendered life we carry our victorious King wherever He is leading us. We must take Him in all our circumstances. His character is to flow out of us to those in our lives.

"**Lebanon**" means "*white*" or "*pure*". Dear bride, why are you so fearful? Your Bridegroom's plans, purposes and power are pure. Praise God, His will is pure and He is riding in the center of it. This vision shows His will at the center of the entourage walking with Him. Is the desire to do His will at the center of all of your activities dear reader? He is the power behind His will. Nothing to fear! Cedars of Lebanon were evergreen, tall, stately, the best! There is no one greater than our Beloved King. No evil, no enemy, no hurt or pain can conquer Him. He has already won!

The Holy Spirit declares, "**King Solomon made himself a chariot** (covered couch)". He designed it. He will inhabit it. He will receive all the glory. Are you not designed by the Lord for His habitation (I Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21,22)? Praise His holy name - He will receive all the glory! This couch, carried in the wilderness, is a place of exaltation, authority and rest. Your heart is His "**couch**" today. For the Lord to be exalted, have authority and rest on the throne of your heart, He had to make a new one for you (Ezek. 36:26,27). Isn't He wonderful?

My friend, carry Him all through your life in the exalted position He rightly deserves. Let all see Who really is the Love and Lord of your life! It will be accomplished in all humility. This principle is taught in **Philippians 2:3**. "**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.**" Then the Holy Spirit gives us the ultimate illustration of humility.

In **Phil. 2:5-8** He explains to us how our God, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave up all His power and became a humble servant. How did Jesus, the Son of Man, exalt God the Father? By humbling Himself. Do you yearn to exalt Jesus? What will be the spiritual result? Jesus was exalted by the Father (**Phil. 2:9-11**) so also you will be exalted in the way it was meant for you. **I Peter 5:6** says so!

V.10 "He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for (by) the daughters of Yerushalayim."

It was stated in **1:11** that "**silver**" represented atonement or redemption. "**Gold**" represented the character, glory and person of God, as well as His infinite value, purity, truth and honor. What a vision! What a dream! We are to never, never forget His person. You can hear Jesus, the Bridegroom saying to her, "*Dear bride there is no reason for you to ever fear again. Remember, My will is sealed in My blood! I redeemed you so that the Holy Spirit could fulfill My glorious purposes in you. My character is the guarantee that all will turn out right if you completely humble yourself in surrender to Me. I am your God, your Redeemer in truth and purity.*"

"...the covering of it of purple..."

The couch was covered in purple, the most costly of all the colors. It took over 200,000 mollusk shellfish to make an ounce of purple dye! It was used by royalty (**Judges 8:26**) and by those who were rich (**Prov. 31:22; Luke 16:19**). In this vision she sees her Beloved as the King of her life. She sees Him as possessing all that she will ever need. He is rich in glory, mercy and grace (**Eph. 1:7,18; 2:4,7; 3:8**). His riches are unsearchable! They are unfathomable! They are yours! They are mine! Do you see Him as all you need (**Phil. 4:19**)? O to be covered spiritually by the purple: His royalty, His authority and His complete protection!

The order here is very interesting: silver, gold and then the purple. We first must be redeemed and never forget the cost with which our soul was purchased. He then must be worshiped as our God in all His power. Finally, He must be given the right to rule us without question (**Rom. 14:9**). Jesus died not just to be your Savior but to be your Lord! He died and rose again that He might be King of your life. Have you willingly given Him the rights to everything in your life? If not, do it now!

*"Royal robes do now invest Thee, Royal splendors crown Thy brow;
Christ of God, our souls confess Thee - King and Sovereign even now!
Thee we reverence, Thee obey - Own Thee Lord and Christ alway.*

*Anointed King, with glory crowned, Rightful heir and Lord of all!
Once rejected, scorned, disowned, E'en by those Thou cam'st to call:
Thee we honor, Thee adore, Glorious now and evermore." R. Holden*

"...the midst thereof paved (fitted, inlaid) with love..."

Remember her sin, she would not go with Him to be with other lilies. She wanted Him all to herself on her own terms. She had forgotten there were many others who were in love with this great King. The Holy Spirit rivets her attention on those who are involved in demonstrating their love for Him by gracious loving acts. They themselves had part in building the traveling couch. The King had the plans and the materials. Now He asks His people to be part of what He is building. They lovingly placed prepared materials on it. Is this not true concerning those who are filled with love for Him? (Read carefully **II Pet. 1:3-11**).

Imagine what it must have been like for these ladies as they sewed the various fabrics into this traveling couch of their King. In working together through a loving unity of purpose, they were brought close to the King Himself. Not many in His Kingdom ever got this close to Him. Up close, while working, they heard His wisdom and intimate thoughts for only His own. They so enjoyed watching Him. He was so special! He was God's anointed. "*I can't believe I am so close to Him!*" each thought. There were moments that He would have a special word (rhema) for each individual worker. They would then share these revelations with each other as they fitted out the couch with their love!

Do you understand dear reader just how important it is to be unified in love for Him with other lilies? Something wonderful happens each time you are together. "**...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**" (**I Cor. 2:9**). Read **I Cor. 10:16,17**. The more you walk in humility with other lilies, the more you obey the Lord, the more the Spirit will cause springs of living love to flow to Him and from Him.

Love must permeate everything - our faith and all our activities (**Gal. 5:6; I Cor. 13**). We are God's glorious building that is still growing. What do we have to do with this temple, this building of which we are a part? We supply love to the joint next to us (**Eph. 4:16**). We become rooted and grounded in His love (**Eph. 3:17**); we speak the truth in love (**Eph. 4:15**); we walk in love as He did (**Eph. 5:2**)! The result? By His Holy Spirit we cause this glorious building to grow in love (**Eph. 4:16**). Do you **"pave"** everything around you with love, especially your relationships with the other lilies in the church fellowship, at home and at work?

If the study of God's word, the listening to anointed tapes and Christian radio and television, the reading of Godly books, going to conferences and seminars do not cause you to love God more and love God's family more than all of the above was wasted time and in vain. Jesus declared it in **Matt. 22:37-40**, **"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."**

With the addition of the New Testament books we could put it this way, **"On these two commandments rest the whole purpose for the study of Genesis through Revelation."** Our purpose is not to just get wonderful Bible knowledge but through our Bible study we are to **"...grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...."** (**II Pet. 3:18**). Since He is the embodiment of love then that is exactly what we will grow in and experience.

All of the above (**vs. 9-10**) belonging to our Beloved has been given to us, the bride and love of His heart: His stability - **"pillars"** (**Eph. 6:10**), His redemption - **"silver"** (**Gal. 3:13**), His glory - **"gold"** (**John 17:22**), His authority to rule - **"purple"** (**Rev. 5:10**), His heart - **"love"** (**Rom. 5:5**). What a perfect, complete Husband we have! What an infinitely blessed bride we are! Hallelujah! It is one thing to know that we possess His possessions (**Eph. 1:3**). It is quite another thing to be spiritually possessed by Him - Holy Spirit filled and empowered. What a gift from the Lord! Her surrendered heart is maturing.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, may the dear Holy Spirit cause me to keep my eyes on my Beloved as He is carried in triumph and love through this wilderness in which I must live. May I long to obey, love to obey, live to obey Him alone!"*

V.11 "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals (wedding), and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

"Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion..."

We must **"go forth"** in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake (**Psa. 23:3**). We are to step out in faith with Him and the entourage of His bride. According to **Heb. 12:22-24** Zion can represent true believers! In her dream she is made to focus on other **"lilies"** (daughters) (**Phil. 2:2-5**). The bride in this vision observes how they also love and follow Him with all of their hearts. She finds herself being drawn to them for they love what she loves - Jesus! Soon, they will become her closest friends and not just those who minister to her in the court. Her heart filled with His presence as she watched them! Even in this vision her heart was changing. She now deeply desired to intimately fellowship with those who loved her Beloved as much as she did!

"...Behold..."

For real victory two things are absolutely important: to **"go forth"** and **"behold"** our King of peace. Oh what the eye of faith can actually see! Here and in **v. 7** the blessed Holy Spirit beckons us to **"behold"** Jesus. That is the major work of the Holy Spirit in the bride, to keep her eyes on the Beloved. The command in **Hebrews 12:2** is to be a continual **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured crucifixion, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."** Listen to **Hebrews 2:9**, **"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."** In every circumstance of life keep your eyes on your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ! Let Him be King in all things (**Prov.3:5-7**).

"...with the crown wherewith his mother crowned Him..."

As the Holy Spirit ends this vision, the bride is given a very special scene to ponder. Who is this person representing the Bridegroom's mother? Let the Holy Spirit give us the answer from His Holy Word. Jesus tells us exactly who His mother

is in **Matt. 12:50**, "**For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.**" Do you realize that symbolically we are His sister, brother and **mother** if we obey Him? Wow, what a thought! He considers us intimate family because of our unreserved willingness to do His will! That is the proof we truly belong to Him (**Matt. 7:21**).

Will you, His "**mother**", crown Him? A crown is to be seen! What is this crown? We are His crown! In **Pro. 12:4** it states, "**A virtuous** (Heb. excellent, strong, valiant, able, efficient) **woman** (or wife) **is a crown to her husband...**". We are His wife! Listen to these words. **Rev. 19:7**, "**Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**" And from where does this righteousness come? **II Cor. 5:21** says, "**For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**" Any righteousness in our life that's spiritually worthwhile comes from Him alone! When our heart is surrendered to Him (**Rom. 12:1,2**) then His righteousness just flows through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The moment we willingly obey His Word - His righteousness (right living) is produced in us.

Crown Him with Holy Spirit humility, surrender, submission and service. This is the "**crown**" of His "**gladness**" when His righteous image is seen in us! That's a real testimony to the world (**II Cor.3:18; Rom.8:29**). Isn't it amazing what simple, loving obedience produces in us!

"...espousals (wedding)..."

Praise God we are wedded to the Bridegroom in our spirit. O the joy of true, pure unity with Him and His body. What joy it brings to Jesus! When we leave this earth a glorious change will take place - we will finally receive our new body (**Phil. 3:20-21; II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9**). Then the marriage ceremony will take place! Dear bride of Christ, be His gladness and joy now, allow Him to be the Husband He is supposed to be to you - the head of the spiritual household of your heart!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, I so desire to be the kind of bride which will bring joy to You and a completion of Your will in this life You have given me. I submit my will to You. Now, fill me with Your Spirit, fill me with Your wisdom, fill me with Your love and fill my walk with Your humility. Since it is Your responsibility to fill me, I can only ask! I empty out my will and surrender to You right now. Cause the characteristics of this wonderful filling to be seen in my life (**Eph. 5:18-21**). As You humbled Yourself, I humble myself before You. You said, **"...I am meek and lowly in heart...."** (**Matt. 11:29**).*

What a vision! What a scene for victory! The King is triumphant over the wilderness! So sure of His victory in heading for crucifixion, that before He went, the Lord spoke these words in the past tense! "**These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I HAVE overcome the world.**" (**John 16:33**)! Even in His pronouncement concerning the enemy He spoke not in the future tense, "**Of judgment, because the prince of this world IS judged.**" (**John 16:11**). He hadn't been led to be crucified, yet but He knew the victory was entirely finished before He ever climbed the hill of Calvary! Think of His promises to you from His Word. Any doubt that they will be fulfilled? Walk by faith as Jesus did! Jesus, the Son of Man, relied totally on His Father's promises and direction (**John 5:19,30; 14:10**).

At this very moment in the dream she takes the crown of her redeemed life and places it upon His head in total surrender! What inexpressible joy fills both of them! Even in this dream the bride knows she will never be the same! What a vision this has been - a capsule of the basic biblical promises (our spiritual weapons) that we are to live and conquer by!

Oh what a day it will be when the bride becomes complete perfection as He has planned! Listen to the beat of His loving heart concerning her in **Eph. 5:26,27**, "**That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it (bride, church) to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**" It will be realized in heaven.

Dear surrendered reader, give your glorious Bridegroom what He longs for most, a holy walk. You have been given all that is necessary for a separated walk. Let's show the world what a glorious difference the surrendered life makes. Read **II Cor. 7:1; II Pet. 1:3,4; I John 5:14,15; II Cor. 1:20; II Cor. 4:7-9; Zech. 4:6** and **Phil. 4:13**!

The bride in our song begins to awaken. Unaware that He is sitting next to her, with the voice of the heart, the bride speaks, "**O my Beloved King, my Bridegroom, it is too much for me to comprehend that I, who was made lower than the angels and born in sin, am able to bring such gladness of heart to You. To think that before I was born, before the world was created, I was on Your heart!**"

"O my Blessed Bridegroom, not for one moment did the gladness of Your heart for me ever skip a beat, not even when the nails split Your hands and feet. There was not a moment of change in Your infinite intensity to win my heart when the crown of thorns was pressed into Your sacred head; when the spit ran down Your face; when Your hairs were plucked from Your cheeks; when Your head was being beaten with a rod; when the whip came crashing down on Your back!"

"Glory to You my God and Father! Glory to You my God and Savior! Thank You my God, dear Holy Spirit! O my soul, rejoice and praise, rejoice and adore, rejoice and worship Him Who alone is worthy. Was there not one moment of hesitation concerning the cost? Or when Your Father turned His back from You in disgust because You had become my sin? No! No! No! With all the worship of the heavenly angels, cherubim and seraphim, You did not have second thoughts about becoming all that Your Father hated concerning my dead, sin-sick soul! Look at me now. I am all dressed up in Your beauty and I become lovelier day by day as long as I stay close to Your side!"

"I understand now just how much You really love me. The vision You gave me in my sleep has already strengthened my soul. Open my eyes further that I may see even more wonderful things from Your word (Psa. 119:18). O my Love my heart belongs to You. Now teach me further how to walk with You so I may bring pleasure to Your heart!"

PRAY WITH ME: *"Praise You Lord Jesus! You went to hell for me! I bow my heart in inexpressible joy in the Holy Spirit. You alone are my portion (Lam. 3:24). O how I long to fulfill Heb. 12:2 everyday. O Holy Spirit take me and cause me to bring a bride's joy to my Bridegroom this day. Work in me holiness and purity as I surrender to You. May my Bridegroom, whom my soul loves, never have to look at me and see impurity. May His ministering angels never have to turn their heads from me because of unholiness! O Father, I want my soul and spirit always to be attractive to my Husband, Your Son! I love You Lord! Continue to conform me to the image of the Lover of my soul. Thank You for providing for me all that is needed to have a pure and holy walk before You in Your wonderful name dear Bridegroom of my heart. Amen!"*

COME APART AND REST FOR AWHILE. GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK AND SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

THE DISCOVERY OF FULL ACCEPTANCE 4:1 - 5:1

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER FOUR: The Beloved describes His bride in detail reassuring her that His love has not diminished one degree because of her sin. Jesus declares that her love for Him overwhelms His heart. The Spirit leads her to the Mt. of Crucifixion in order to deal with areas of her life that are holding her back. After that, to her amazement, He begins to describe her as a garden possessing different kinds of fruits and spices. She prays that He will come into the garden of her life and enjoy the fruits and spices for Himself. Her Beloved Bridegroom first takes for Himself what He desires from this garden and then shares it with others.

Now let's return to the scene where the bride awakes from slumber and is keenly aware of her Beloved's presence. Her heart beats faster as she opens her eyes and meets His loving gaze. Speechless, she felt His **"first love"** love fill her soul. So many thoughts flooded her heart. No earthly language could express what was bursting within her spirit.

Then a pang of grief pierces through her. Doubt looms its ugly head. *"Does He still love me as He did, before I refused to go? Will I remain His special love in spite of what I did?"* At the precise moment these questions flashed through her mind He reached for her hand and held it oh so gently.

Immediately there was a witness in her spirit that nothing had changed! He just looked at her doves eyes. There was joy in His gaze. She was experiencing again the wonders of a Spirit-filled heart in full fellowship with her Beloved! O what a delight to His holy soul! For this is why He died and rose again!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, as You speak to my wounded heart, cause it to receive every word of intimate healing of Your love. Praise Your Holy Name for Your grace and infinite compassion! In Jesus' name, amen!"*

So often we punish ourselves with self-doubt, believing the lies that we are hopeless because we have totally failed. We say to ourselves, *"I can never be used again!"* But, praise God, He reassures us that His heart never, never changes in its intensity of **"first love"** love for us! Receive now dear bride, dear reader, the heart of your Bridegroom as He speaks to you, oh so quietly, oh so reassuringly but oh so powerfully! Listen to His heart as He proclaims His love to you...

V.1 "Behold, thou art fair (beautiful), my love, behold, thou art fair (beautiful), thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks (veil): thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead."

Even though this bride had refused to go with Him, her eyes were still **"doves' eyes"**. All she wanted was Him alone. When she read His Word her eyes were focused on His voice. The only problem was getting her feet to move when He beckoned her to come. She had become satisfied with having Him all to herself (1:1-2:17). The Bride did not realize He wanted to take her to higher levels of intimacy and it would come through fellowship with other Spirit-filled lilies who had experienced Him in the same way.

He looked deep into her eyes for the longest time. Breaking the silence of love He spoke with full joy, *"Your eyes are what thrill Me the most. Dear bride of My heart, the window of your soul, those wonderful doves eyes are saying to Me, I belong to You alone. You alone satisfy the longing of my heart. Your eyes are still doves eyes. Even when I was away and hurt so deeply because you would not go with Me, I could never get the wonderful glimmer of your eyes out of My mind. Thank you for surrendering your all to Me."*

Doubts had crept into her mind, but here He is reassuring her heart. Nothing had changed concerning His fervent love for her. As she looks into His eyes, her heart melts. Holding on so tightly to His nail-scarred hand, she expresses with joy, *"My Beloved, You have '...delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.'* (Psa. 116:8). *Thank You, thank You, I feel so clean and reassured now."* And so with you dear loved one of the Lord, look into His eyes with **"doves' eyes"** and listen to His reassuring words. Let your heart melt before Him in overwhelming adoration because you know by the Spirit He hasn't changed toward you! Praise God!

Husbands, observe carefully how your heavenly Bridegroom handles His bride. There is no scolding, no negative statements concerning the past. No accusing tone! He made sure she knew that His heart had not changed. Also, we who are in spiritual leadership need to learn a lesson here in how we are to deal with our Lord's bride in the church setting.

What we have here is an amazing revelation of what our Beloved sees in us who have fully surrendered everything to Him for His pleasure and His use. When we fail Him, as a surrendered believer, the spiritual pain is excruciating. We see ourselves as an undesirable, spiritual failure to the One we love. This is why the Song of Solomon is so important. We are able to see ourselves through His eyes. Drink in, my brother and sister, the words of Your Beloved to you, "**Behold, thou art fair (beautiful), my love, behold, thou art fair (beautiful), thou hast doves' eyes....**" This is what He sees in you as existing already even after your "failure"!

Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him before the rooster crowed three times in the morning (**John 13:36-38**). Yet in the very next breath Jesus says to him, "**Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.**" (**John 14:1; 14:27; 16:16**). How could Jesus say that to him? The sin of forsaking Him would be horrible. Jesus knew his heart's deep committed love for Him. It wasn't perfect but look at Peter's heart in **John 13:5-9**. Peter's surrendered love declares, "No way will my Rabbi wash my feet, I love Him too much!" Unacceptable to Jesus, Peter's surrendered love pleads, "Lord, wash me all over!" Jesus knew that when he would deny Him, Peter's deep love would immediately repent and cause him to weep bitterly (**Mt. 26:75**). A truly surrendered believer responds to sin in the same way! An unsundered believer is dull to his sin. He might go weeks, months or even years before any type of confession comes from his mouth.

He dealt gently with them. Why? He knew that they truly were surrendered to Him and very much in love with Him. Read **John 16:27**! The word for "**love**" in that passage is "*phileo*" (deep emotional love), the very same word used concerning the Father's love for Jesus in **John 5:20**! Instead of being angry at them, Jesus reminds them of the "*phileo*" love the Father has for them because of their "*phileo*" love for Jesus!. Peter was told by the Lord that he would follow Him later. Praise God for their surrendered hearts. Their sin was not as grievous to Jesus and the Father as it would be to them. He lovingly deals with Peter (**John 21:15-17**) and Thomas who willfully sinned (**John 20:26-28**). Yet, Thomas was given the greatest revelation of the deity of Christ ever in being restored. They would sin out of weakness (caught off guard) not out of wickedness (deliberate)!

Your Beloved speaks quietly in your spiritual ear and says twice, "**Behold, thou art (beautiful)**"! Why twice? Because you find it so difficult to believe it the first time. He sees you as His bride, His one and only love. You see yourself as a failure. He sees this as a growing, perfecting time to better serve Him. Say with me, "*By my faith Lord, help me to see as You see me. Thank You for letting me know You are patiently changing me through my failure (Rom.8:28)*. Dear Jesus, fill me with Your Spirit of wisdom."

"...within thy locks (veil)..."

Her locks or veil conceal a portion of her face. Some things Your Beloved shares with you are only meant for you and Him alone! The world will see a changed life but it is unable to appreciate, in any way, the spiritual secrets from the Word shared with you by your Bridegroom. Many times unsundered believers will get jealous over what you share with them. Be wise with whom you share spiritually precious things. We must learn from Mary the mother of Jesus, who could have shared amazing things about her Son who was so different in His birth and His ability to speak with the leading thinkers of Israel at twelve, plus His sinless life as a child. Other mothers wouldn't understand. It says in **Luke 2:51** that she kept or hid these things in her heart.

"...thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead."

When you are in love, every little detail about the object of your love comes into sharp focus. Also your Beloved cares deeply about every detail in your life. In this chapter and in chapters six and seven, the Lord Jesus reveals the joy every aspect of her spiritual beauty brings to Him. It gives Him great joy to see how you love Him in so many little ways in your spiritual walk. What a blessed shock to the bride it will be when her Beloved reveals all that pleases Him about her in just a few moments.

He loves her hair and will make loving mention about it again in **6:5** and **7:5**. Do you have "*spiritual*" hair that is attractive to Him? Goats from Gilead were known for their beautiful, long hair. It was their glory! What then is this "*spiritual*" hair that so captivates her Beloved? Let the Holy Spirit unlock the secret. Turn to **Num. 6:1-5**. Hebrew women would make a special vow before the Lord for a season. They gave up legitimate things in their daily lives in order to focus wholly on the Lord. It was a vow of dedication and separation. It was called a "*Nazarite vow*" and in the Hebrew "*Nazarite*" means to be "*consecrated*", "*devoted*", and "*dedicated*".

Oh dear Christian, can you see that long hair is symbolical of surrendering to the Lord, longing to please Him alone? **1 Cor. 11:15** tells us that a woman's hair is a glory to her. It is precious to her! Do what Mary of Bethany did with her glory (hair) in **John 12:1-6**. So too with the lady in **Luke 7:44** who wiped Jesus' feet with her tears of love using her

surrendered glory (hair)! Let us take our glory, our will (**Psa. 42:1-2, 63:1, 73:25, 84:2, 119:20**), kneel in surrendered love, and spiritually anoint His nail-scarred feet with that costly perfume of our will. Break it over His feet. O how this gives Him great joy!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, You are my only reason for living. You are the joy of my heart! You alone bring meaning in my daily walk! May my 'spiritual' hair, the submitting of my will, grow more and more beautiful to You each day!"*

V.2 "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came from the washing, whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them."

Beautiful teeth make for a beautiful smile and a pleasant expression. Teeth are used for eating food. A full set of teeth help the body digest food for nourishment. They unlock the excellent taste of some foods through chewing. She has a full set of teeth which are beautiful to her Beloved. Her Beloved knows that she loves to eat the Word of God (**Jer. 15:16**) and is able to take it in fully. O how this pleases His heart. She loves His Word. She spiritually feasts upon it. Why? Because the Beloved shares secrets in her spirit for her alone through His Word! His dear bride has food to eat that others know not of (**John 4:32**). How it gladdens Him to see the full set of spiritual teeth. He does not have to hold back and only give her baby food. She is able to receive the deeper truths of His heart (**Heb. 5:12-14**).

What does the Lord find in your mouth dear Christian? Does He find figurative teeth being used to hurt others (**Psa. 35:16; 57:4**)? Does great disappointment sweep over His countenance when He discovers that you still have baby teeth and cannot take in deeper revelations from His heart? O may He find, to His soul's great delight, a full set of teeth pure and clean before Him.

"...like a flock of sheep...which came up from the washing..."

Sheep are helpless, totally dependent. They tend to wander away without realizing it. When they wander away for any length of time the sheep usually get dirty and matted. In this case her teeth are compared to shorn sheep. These sheep spiritually represent Christians who are pure in heart and motive. Shorn sheep are totally clean from outside impurities. In other Words, her mouth is a joy to Him for He finds no uncleanness, gossip, anger, cursing or discouragement coming from her out of it. What keeps us spiritually clean today? The application of His Holy Word (**John 15:3; Eph. 5:26,27; Psa. 119:11**). If we submit and abide in His Word then the Holy Spirit will do the cleansing in us. Tell the Lord you are willing to let His Word do its work in you.

"...everyone bear twins, and none is barren among them."

Praise God she has a full set of teeth. In other Words she is able to take solid spiritual food from the Word and not just the milk (**I Pet. 2:2**). Thank the Lord for the spiritual milk but spiritual milk alone cannot give the needed strength for life's problems ahead. We must begin to eat more solid spiritual food to develop into a strong disciple for Christ. Read carefully **Heb. 5:13-14 and 6:1,2; Eph. 4:15**. She is able to "chew" on the Word and savor it. Chewing helps us unlock the flavor of the food we are eating. So with a full set of spiritual teeth she is able to savor those subtle meanings underneath the surface of the Word. She is able to taste things from His Word that others miss. A fully surrendered heart to the Lord gives you a full set of spiritual teeth. A baby or a young child does not have a full set of adult teeth. So many remain spiritual children and cannot be given deep devotional thoughts by the Holy Spirit from His infinite Word! They can only handle milk at this point!

Dear blood bought Christian, is your mouth attractive to your Beloved? Place into your Beloved's care the Words of your mouth. Say with the Psalmist (**Psa. 19:14**), **"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."** Let Him have control of the responsibility of your mouth and the meditation (what you spiritually chew on) of your heart! I can hear her now, all she can talk about is the Lover of her soul, **"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."** (**Psa. 34:1**). The angels who minister to her, love it; other lilies who fellowship with her, love it; but most of all He is greatly blessed by it!

Always keep in mind that above everything else He possesses, you are the Lord's portion (**Deut. 32:9**). If you desire this, claim **Psa. 81:10**! O the shame! O the sadness to be spiritually barren! Pray **Psa. 119:18**, **"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law (Word)."**

PRAY WITH ME: "I yearn with all of my heart to please You Lord, so control the words of my mouth by the power of the Holy Spirit. I want to speak the Word in faith and love (**Gal. 5:6**) and see You do mighty things in me and for me. Holy Spirit wash me clean by the living Word of God (**John 15:3**). May no criticism or sarcasm be found there. I claim and stand upon **Psa. 19:14**. Make it real in my life. May my mouth always be in agreement with Your Word! Dear Jesus, praise Your Holy name!"

V.3 "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely (lovely): thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks (veil)."

Listen to His heart dear Christian as He speaks of Your lips: "O My lovely bride, your lips are a scarlet thread! My blood has changed the way you talk! You now love to speak of Calvary and My blood. Before, it was filled with empty, worldly chatter. Praise for Me is continually flowing from your lips to My heart (**Heb. 13:15; Psa. 34:1**)! Remember the new song that I placed within your heart, I love the way you sing it to Me (**Psa. 40:3**). The sweetness of My words permeate your conversation in all that you say!" This is not necessarily a real tune but your life living in harmony with His heart which produces a perpetual song of love.

The scarlet brings out His beauty in you! Stop for a moment and meditate on the word "scarlet" (in the Heb. "shani"). It refers to a small insect through which the dye for the color scarlet was obtained. It was extracted by crushing the eggs of this worm-like creature. Please read **Ex. 26:31** where it speaks of the beautiful veil in the tabernacle in which scarlet was one of the colors to be embroidered in it.

Now read **Heb. 10:19-20**. Those passages will unlock the secret of what the veil represented - the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ! In **Ex. 26:31** an untranslated Hebrew word appears along side of the word "shani" and it is the word "tolaath". The word "tolaath" refers also to the color scarlet or red. "Shani" is the product (red dye) which is obtained from the "tolaath" (worm). Keep in mind that sinful mankind is referred to as a worm (same word for scarlet) in **Job 25:6** and Jacob (Israel) also in **Isa. 41:1**!

Dear dove of His heart, meditate on the depths to which your Bridegroom would go to have you as His bride. **Isa. 1:18** states, "**Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet (shani), they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson (tola - worm), they shall be as wool.**" Do you understand now what Jesus had to become in order to take away your sin? In **II Cor. 5:21** it states that God caused His own Son to become sin itself for us! Your Beloved had become a worm (us, sin)! When Jesus was on the cross and He said, "**...My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?**" (**Mt. 27:46**). Jesus was quoting **Psa. 22:1**. This was a prophetic Psalm concerning the crucifixion of Jesus (read **Psa. 22:16**).

Read **Psa. 22:1-5** and see what was going on in Jesus' heart while on the cross. The Father answered the requests of former Jewish leaders but would not hear the cries of His own Son. O how this was like a knife wound in the soul of the Father's Beloved Son. **Verse 6** reveals why the Father was painfully silent, when Jesus cried out in His heart, "**But I am a worm ("tolaath"), and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.**"! He was saying, "I have become a helpless, passive, naked and defenseless worm! I am not even a man whereby You may answer My cry to You, Father."

Remember, in order to obtain the scarlet, crimson dye, the "tolaath" had to be crushed! In **Isa. 53:5** and **10** it tells us that the Messiah would be "**bruised**" (Hebrew "**crushed**" and so translated by other versions)! Praise God, as the Father crushed His Son, the worm, the cleansing, saving blood came forth for His bride. It would be used in giving her a spotless wedding garment (**Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:7-9**)! Is your heart not touched by this revelation of the depth to which your dear Lord went for You, becoming a dead, putrefied, crushed soul? Doesn't this cause you to love Jesus even more? Please look again at the devotional study concerning the worm in the beginning of **chapter 1** entitled "How Low Would God Go To Save Us?"

With the application of the scarlet, her mouth is being made ready to speak things that will please her Beloved as never before. It will take place in her after she goes to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. Her lips will pour forth words that will please Him immensely (**v.11**)!

O WORSHIP HIM WITH ME NOW; BOW YOUR HEART: "My Lord, my God, my Redeemer, my Bridegroom, I prostrate myself before You. I worship You! I adore You! I praise You! I exalt You! I ascribe unto You glory, honor, power, riches, wisdom and blessing! You alone are worthy! O my Bridegroom You were crushed as a worm for me. Your blood flowed directly to my dead, sinful heart and wiped away all that offended Your infinitely pure heart! Praise Your name! Praise Your name! Praise Your name! O dear Holy Spirit, ever keep the scarlet upon my lips. O how I love the eternal blood of Jesus, my Lord, my Bridegroom. Dear Lord Jesus may Your eyes never cease to be pleased, for the scarlet will always

remain there for You to know just how sacred and precious I consider it. Abba Father, praise Your holy name for You gave to me Your very heart, Your Son (**John 1:18**), and crushed His heart out of eternal love for my soul! Glory to God! Hallelujah!"

"Alas, and did my Savior bleed? and did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?"
(original version - Isaac Watts)

To that question the answer comes thundering from the throne of God, "**YES!, YES!, YES!!!!**"

"...thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks (veil)."

Pomegranates are red and produce a red fruit juice. Red represents the blood of the Bridegroom. But now it appears on her temples instead of her lips, why? Let the Word of God unlock the secret. Read **Ex. 28:33,34; 39:24-26**. Pomegranates were embroidered upon the hem of the Levitical priest's robe. The priest represents sacrifice and worship to God so also the Pomegranates. Pomegranates were carved on the Temple (**I Kings 7:18:20**). The actual Temple in Yerushalayim, built by Solomon, was the place designated by God where true sacrifice and worship was to take place. As a blood bought believer, her temples (the place of her thinking process) represent the area where the will chooses to sacrifice to God and worship Him. What she spoke of with her lips was constantly on her mind. And what was on her lips – praise and worship concerning her Beloved within the "holy place" behind the veil of her mind! The Holy Spirit declares in **I Pet. 2:5,9**, "**You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**"... "**But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.**"

Listen for a moment to her thoughts as she privately communes with her Beloved, "*O my eternal Husband take me! All of me! I sacrifice myself (Rom. 12:1) in surrender to You day by day and minute by minute! I wouldn't have it any other way my Husband. I am not my own but bought with a price, Your precious, precious blood! O that precious blood, it has justified me (Rom. 5:9), redeemed me (Eph. 1:7), forgiven me (Eph. 1:7), drawn me near to Your heart (Eph. 2:13), given me peace (Col. 1:20), cleansed me (I John 1:7), given me a family (I Cor. 10:16; Eph. 3:14,15), overcome the enemy (Rev. 12:11), allowed me into the most sacred place in the universe - the holy place (Heb. 10:19-20). I will glorify the One whom my soul loveth with my body (I Cor. 6:19-20; I Pet. 1:18-19)!*" O how beautiful were her temples to Him; O what joy this gave to His heart!

Here the Lord speaks of her temples being like a piece of pomegranate. The pomegranate has been opened. It is seen as a slice. So many know about the doctrine of worship and the blood but never really open up and get deep inside of true worship. The Beloved loves to see the "open" pomegranate. Does He see that in you, dear Christian?

The fruit of the pomegranate is in the seeds. If the seeds are red then they may be eaten and the sweetness savored. If the seed is not red it will taste bitter! Thoughts are seeds! "**For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he....**" (**Prov. 23:7**). "*Dear Lord, I want my mind to be pleasing to You. I want Your mind to control mine since Your Word says that I actually possess the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16). May it become active in me (Phil. 2:5).*" The price He paid for you to become His bride is spiritually incalculable. "**For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**" (**I Cor. 6:20**).

O how important it is to apply the work of Calvary to everything that would enter your mind. Isn't this where true sacrifice and worship begins? Let every TV, video and radio program; every magazine, periodical and book be filtered through the blood and the Word of your Bridegroom. What seeds you allow to be sown in your mind will soon produce a harvest for good or bad. If you sow the good seeds of His Word in your mind and you abide (continually obey) in that Word it will result in producing a pleasant crop of adoration and service for your Bridegroom to enjoy (**II Cor. 9:8-12; Mk 4:13-20**).

Blood bought parents, are you willing to be an example of the Bride of Christ to your family? Teach them by your actions how to filter everything through the blood. Let only "red" seeds be eaten in your family! Save your children from the bitter seeds planted in their minds through secular television. I have seen two and three year old children use curse words (very filthy language) in a fit of stubbornness not knowing what they meant but knowing these "seeds" are used in anger! Don't let new age cartoons permeate their thinking. You as parents, and they as your children, will reap a bitter harvest!

V.4 "Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers (shields), all shields of mighty men."

The neck in scripture represents the human will (see comment **1:10**). How beautiful is the one whose will is submerged into Jesus' will. Her Beloved, the Lord Jesus, was the perfect example of sacrificing His will. He never made a decision nor did He ever speak a word that was His own. Read carefully **John 5:19,30; 7:16; 8:28,42; 12:49; 14:10!** Who can ever forget the words that dropped from His lips in full surrender to the will of the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, **"...nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done"**? Are we not called upon by the Holy Spirit to be, **"...imitators of God as dear children"** (Eph. 5:1)?

To Jesus, her neck (her will) was beautiful. Is mine? Is yours dear Christian? The Lord speaks of her neck being **"like the tower of David"**. David in the Hebrew means **"beloved"**. Because she has allowed the Holy Spirit to have total control of her life the bride has a neck like her King whose name is **"Beloved"**! When Jesus becomes King of your life, then you will come to know and experience all that His name **"Beloved"** means. King David did not have an army with awesome numbers. No, David's military strength was in his **"tower"**! David speaking about the Lord in **Psa. 61:3** says, **"For Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy."** God is our tower! Go to the tower and take one of His shields to stop the enemy in his tracks. Whether against Goliath or any other enemy the battle is and always will be the Lord's by faith (**II Chron. 20:15**)!

It is very significant that the Beloved sees shields around her neck. Shields protect us! She is ready and prepared to fight, not in her will but in His will! The Bride has many enemies (**"principalities and powers"** Eph. 6:12) because she is her Beloved's precious possession. She has no strength in herself. But she does have the Lord's shields. The most important shield in scripture is **"the shield of faith"** (Eph. 6:16). **I John 5:4** states, **"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."** There is only one good fight and that is **"the good fight of faith"** (**I Tim. 6:12**). It is good because godly, Holy Spirit filled faith in His Word is always victorious! Even when it looks as if you are defeated true faith waits and waits and waits knowing God will keep His promises. Yes, the victory is ours because of Him! Glory to God! As Satan beat on the Savior at the cross to break His will, unbeknownst to him, a shining shield was being forged that no devil could ever penetrate. The name on that shield of faith was "Jesus is Lord"! The Lord is our Shield of Faith. No devil's fiery missiles can ever penetrate it. When the attacks come we pick up the shield, but in reality the Holy Spirit is holding it in the powerful arm of God's strength (**Jer. 32:17**).

"...a thousand bucklers (shields)...."

A **"thousand"** represents blessing the Lord with multiple sacrifices (see **I Chron. 29:20,21**). When lilies come together they give to the Lord sacrifices of thanksgiving, praise, joy and even their bodies. This insures that the shields of the Beloved are around the necks of the Lord's lilies. They are ready to stand against the enemy. Take note what praise does to the enemy, (compare **Matt. 21:15-16** with **Psa. 8:2; II Chron. 20:14-23**). Listen to the lines of two old hymns:

"O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise, The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace." Thou suffered the cross and the torment, that I might forever go free, A thousand, a thousand thanksgivings, I bring, blessed Savior, to Thee!" (Charles Wesley)

She is seen as having many shields not just one. How can this be? When we come together with other surrendered believers to do spiritual warfare against the enemy, their shields of faith become ours. We are seen as one body fighting the enemy. She is viewed as if she were many mighty soldiers of her Beloved. O how important it is to be in one accord in prayer and praise with other lilies, loving Him and interceding for others (**Acts 1:14; 2:42,46; Phil. 2:2**). We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (**Eph. 4:3**). We who are many are still one body, the body of Christ (**I Cor. 10:17**).

Her Beloved sees her full of faith! She doesn't, but He sees deep into her spirit. What a joy! What a comfort! What assurance of heart to know that He sees us in this manner! Surrender is the ultimate act of faith. She had done this in the beginning of the Song. She did not realize just how strong she was in Him because of her momentary failure! Dear Christian, take in these descriptions for yourself so that the enemy may not get a foothold in your life through discouragement and self doubt. The enemy will do anything to bring division between believers. The result - NO POWER! All of our shields drop off our neck and we are spiritually exposed and extremely vulnerable! **"O God help me! '...to lay**

aside every weight and sin which so easily besets (traps) us....' (**Heb. 12:1**)". To some the Holy Spirit warns, **"Your church is seriously weak because you are so self-willed including the pastors and members of the flock. When are you going to quit fighting each other and take ground from our true enemy?"** Pray with all of your heart, **"Lord deliver us from such a spirit. Help us to humble ourselves and allow You to work out the differences! May these moments be an occasion for the fruit of Your blessed Holy Spirit to appear in our walk!"**

Listen in as Jesus encourages her, *"My beautiful lily, promise Me that you will unite your heart together with other of My lilies to pray and praise. Right now it is difficult to understand, but our relationship will grow even deeper. You think that the fellowship we had alone could not be surpassed, wait 'till you experience Me with other lilies who have the same kind of heart as you! My power will flow through you against the enemy as you never thought possible! You will receive new revelations of My heart because You are with them! Oh how I love you! Trust Me My dove! Trust Me!"*

PRAY WITH ME: *"O my wonderful Husband, how often I have disappointed Your heart by exposing my neck to the enemy without Your protection. I have been so willful but, praise Your name, You have freely forgiven me and placed a thousand of Your shields on my neck and fastened the latch. I love You with all my heart, dear Lord! Holy Spirit cause me to use the shield of faith always in my daily walk, only and forever for Your glory and honor my blessed King and wonderful Husband."*

V.5 "Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins (of a gazelle), which feed among the lilies."

The breasts represent faith and love. The key to this is found in **I Thess. 5:8** which tells us to put on the **"breastplate of faith and love"**. It is very interesting that for the first time her breasts are described as twins. Her relationship with Him has been based solely on love for Him (**Chapters 1 through 3**). When it came time for her to exercise faith and leave with her Beloved she did not. The balance was not there. Her faith needed to be developed and that was the purpose of the dream. Now she has both! Her breasts are full of love and faith!

Gazelles are known for their quickness (**II Sam. 2:18**). The word **"gazelle"** in the Arabic means *"affectionate"*. Also, the word for gazelle is the exact same Hebrew word translated *"beauty"*. In **Isa. 24:16** it is used in reference to giving *"glory"* to God. It is very instructive that the lady in **Acts 9:36**, who was raised from the dead by Peter was named Tabitha (Dorcas). Tabitha is the Hebrew word and Dorcas is the Greek word for **"gazelle"**! This woman abounded with deeds of kindness, mercy and charity. A spiritual gazelle is one who sees a need and quickly and quietly rushes to meet that need. How blessed she must have been (**Acts 20:35**)! What a beautiful Christian she was. Read her story found in **Acts 9:36-44**.

Our bride here has breasts that are twins, in other words they are balanced. **I Cor. 13:2** warns us of the great danger of having faith and yet lacking love. At the end of **I Cor. 13** the Holy Spirit also emphasizes the importance of faith. She has a spirit filled love flowing through her in power because of her faith! She is full of faith and full of love. The Holy Spirit instructs us in **Gal. 5:6** that, **"...faith...worketh by love."** Little babies feed on the nourishment of their mother's breasts. They are held close to the mother's heart as they feed and feel the security of that young mother's embrace. How does this happen spiritually? The bride is now ready to feed others with Holy Spirit filled faith and love. The Holy Spirit will lead younger ones into her life and they will simply snuggle up to the Word of God that is in her. Then the Holy Spirit releases the nourishment of His faith and love from the Word into their spirit. She is filled with that which only pleases God, faith (**Heb. 11:6**) and she is filled with God's character, love (**I John 4:8**). How could Jesus, her Beloved Bridegroom, not be pleased?

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, may there be a spirit filled balance in my walk. May faith-filled streams of living water of love flow through me, first to Your throne and then to those around me. Use me to do the works that my Bridegroom did and even greater works for Your glory (**John 14:12**)! I love You and You alone. Thank You for the faith and love which You have given to me (**Rom. 12:3; 5:6**)! In Jesus' wonderful and blessed name amen!"*

"...which feed among the lilies."

Surrendered believers long to be with other surrendered believers. Glory breaks out! The presence of God Almighty is felt and those who experience this are filled beyond human words! The bride had experienced this kind of glory when she fellowshiped with her friends the virgins. The Holy Spirit spoke to her heart, *"Don't you remember how your heart was filled when you were listening to your friends speak about Him?"* In her heart she answered *"Yes, and I could never get enough! How could I have missed it?"* The Holy Spirit responded, *"This is what it means to feed among the lilies. Your Beloved wants you to have more and it comes through gathering with those of a virgin heart and who feed upon His bread! Remember, He said that His spiritual body is true food and His spiritual blood is true drink (**John 6:53-58**)."*

Gathering with those who love Him is absolutely essential. Together, we feast upon testimonies of His heart and power in our lives. Together we drink from His cup of praise and worship. Together we feed upon His sweet Word (**Jer. 15:16**). This is true communion, true fellowship (*"koinonia"*) (**I Cor. 10:16,17**). This is when we begin to **"comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fulness of God!"** (**Eph. 3:18-19**).

Listen in again to fullness of His heart being poured out to her. *"O how you deeply touch My heart. In all of your submissiveness, your love for Me flows. The spiritual beauty that is in you brings so much glory to Me. My beautiful bride, your heart is all Mine. What joy it is for Me to bring My angels and bid them to gaze at you (Eph. 3:10). You are so filled up with My beauty, My goodness and mercy. My glory shines so much brighter when it is combined with other lilies as you, My love. You long to care for others who belong to Me. I love you so much for it! You are the joy that was set before Me at the cross (Heb. 12:2). There is still work to be done in you. I must increase and you must decrease. Soon, My lovely bride, you will climb the "mountain of myrrh" and begin to walk in a holiness you never thought possible. Trust in My love My beautiful dove!"*

There is nothing more beautiful, no image more endearing, no sight so captivating as Jesus seen in the walk and ways of a spiritual lily! Eternal love flows and flows back and forth from their hearts to each other and to those around them! She is now prepared to go through one of the most difficult spiritual experiences in her Christian walk, crucifixion of the self-life. Listen to her response...

V.6 "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense."

You know, myrrh (1:13) represents the work of the Beloved on the cross for her and in 3:6 she had been reminded, through the dream, that He provides the myrrh and frankincense for her! Hallelujah! He is the great provider, Jehovah-Jireh! He, the spiritual myrrh, was crushed in crucifixion and His blood came forth! It is the power of the blood that dispels the shadows (Rev. 12:11)! We must be willing to go to the mountain of crucifixion with Him. It will be painful, but oh the resulting power and presence of God in your life! We cry out for the blessings of the abundant life and the Holy Spirit directs us to go up to the mountain of crucifixion. We struggle, resist, whine and hesitate! Find out if there is anything you are not aware of by praying **Psa. 139:23,24**. Ask God to search you. If nothing comes to mind then you are okay. If there is something, then listen to the following:

In her heart the Holy Spirit quietly speaks, *"You are unaware of the bondages present in your life. Your heart yearns to please your Beloved. I have filled you with faith and love, now it's time to deal with the real problem - self which rises up and snares your spiritual feet in subtle, sinful traps. Look in the distance and you will see a mountain and a hill. One is the Mountain of Myrrh and the other the hill of Frankincense. To truly please your Heavenly Husband you must climb that mountain!"*

Conviction swept through her soul. Sinful attitudes and actions long buried and forgotten came to mind: a bitter, unforgiving spirit concerning an abuse in her childhood and a lie that had gone unconfessed to mention a few. She felt so dirty. She cried out in her soul, *"He will never love me knowing these things about me! What can I do to get rid of them?"* The Holy Spirit said to her heart, *"Look to the mountain! The answer is there!"* She said, *"I am willing to go. Tell me, what is on that mountain?"* The Holy Spirit replied, *"Only when you arrive there will it be revealed to you."* In strong words of faith she spoke, *"Yes, I must go if this is the only way to deal with my sinful self-will."* A peace filled her heart. It was a gift from the Holy Spirit. In her mind the precious Holy Spirit caused her to hear the voice of her Beloved, **"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."** (John 14:27).

Here was a crucial test of faith. The Lord's bride is going to a place where she had never been before! Why would she go? She knows just how important **"myrrh"** and **"frankincense"** are because of the dream-vision just experienced.

Already, she could feel godly sorrow working repentance in her heart. She had received eternal forgiveness from Him when she received Her Beloved as Savior and Lord. But lingering deep inside her soul was an uncrucified will. Although she had peace to proceed up this difficult mountain, painful things of her past - the unforgiveness, hurtful things said about others, hidden bitterness and pride all rose up in her to be dealt with. She knew in her heart that unless her will was dealt with there would be no real intimacy, no real walk in ministry with her Beloved. The Holy Spirit spoke gently into her soul, *"Have you forgotten the awful separation you endured not long ago?"* A dreadful emptiness swept through her soul. Just the thought of separation from Him again gave her new strength to climb. The Holy Spirit continued, *"Victory is at the top of this mountain. When you reach the peak you will begin to walk in beautiful, loving holiness. A new and deeper relationship with the One whom you love with all of your heart will result."* With that word, the bride took another giant step upward!

"Until..."

Praise God for the word **"until"**! To her it was a word of faith anticipating victory. The **"how"** of victory will be revealed to her on the **"mountain of myrrh"**. The Holy Spirit now reassures her heart as she climbs step by step, *"Because of your words of intensive expectation (faith), victory is coming into your life."* David knew about this, when all seemed

hopeless in that cave. The devil hammered him with this thought, "You will be dead by morning by the hands of Saul!" but David spoke faith words in **Psa. 57:1**. "**Be merciful unto me, God...for my soul trusteth in thee...until these calamities be overpast.**"

In those first steps up this imposing mountain severe attacks of discouragement race through her mind. There is no beauty on this mountain. It is foreboding and threatening. The higher she climbs the darker it becomes. Fearful sounds of thunder come crashing into her ears. The prince of darkness sends a chilling wind of no hope through her soul. No weapon is spared by the enemy to hinder her from making this ascent. Satan knows that if the Lord's bride makes it to the top she will have daily victory and the shadows of the little foxes will begin to disappear having no effect on her! She cringes and begins to turn away. The Holy Spirit reminds her, "*You must climb this mountain. What you will learn at the top will change and empower you to have healing and victory over bondages and the controlling self-life! You will feel your Beloved's love as never before!*"

Fear once again grips her soul. But all of a sudden her Beloved appears to her and whispers, "*Bride of My heart, you know how much I love you, your willingness to go to the mountain of myrrh pleases Me beyond all that you can imagine. The Holy Spirit will be with you through the whole process. He will give you My strength. (Deut. 31:6; Heb. 13:5).*" With this blessed assurance she continues and all the time saying to herself, "*I am pleasing the Love of my heart!*" As she continues upward onto this mountain of darkness and evil she hears the Holy Spirit say to her heart, "*Keep your spiritual eyes on your Beloved. Think about Him. Meditate on His Words given especially for you. Worship Him. The darkness and evil will not have power over you as you climb.*" (**I Cor. 15:57; Rev. 12:11**).

The dreadful darkness and diabolical coldness of self-will surrounded her. Winds of unspeakable shame and guilt struck at her trying to force her off the mountain. But each time, she did exactly as the Holy Spirit directed her. He reminded her of **Psa. 119:105**. All of a sudden in the darkness there was a lamp for her feet and a light for her path. She thought, "*It is amazing how one look at my Beloved takes the fear out of the evil surrounding me.*"

She reached the top and what seemed to be an eternity was but a moment in time. The Holy Spirit asked her to walk into the darkness with all the fearful peals of thunder around her. With hesitant steps she enters. What she saw there was repulsive to her soul. She shrank back in horror. It was her Beloved on the cross. Tears running down her cheeks she heard Him speak in tones of excruciating pain from the cross. "*Come closer, consider the cost of making you My bride.*" Gazing at Her Beloved's torn and mangled body caused her to turn back in horror. At that very moment her Beloved cried out in anguish, "*My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?*" The Holy Spirit pulled the curtain away and what she saw was much more terrifying than what had happened to His precious body. The most unimaginably hideous looking dark images of sin formed: murders, adulteries, blasphemous words of slander, violence, hatred and so much more. Then came the demonic attack: laughing, mocking, spewing out filthy slime against His mind. They kicked, they howled, they screamed, they tempted, they tortured Him with unspeakable acts. What was once holy was being crushed and conformed to the most grotesque evil image possible. The Holy Spirit brought to her mind, "*My Beloved not only took my sins (John 1:29) but He actually became my sin (II Cor. 5:21). My Beloved not only took my curse but became it (Gal. 3:10,13).*" All the curses of **Deut. 28** poured over His soul (tumors, boils, madness, blindness, pestilence, fever etc. (**vs. 15, 21, 22, 27, 28, 35, 59**; read **Matt. 8:17**).

She was made to look at her Beloved's spirit. What had been filled with the Holy Spirit and the glorious fellowship of the Father, now had been forsaken and left entirely empty. The chamber of His spirit became filled with anguish and loneliness. As she wept the Holy Spirit said to her spirit, "*Do you now understand why a terrible darkness fell from the sixth hour to the ninth hour while your Beloved was on the cross (Matt. 27:45)? You are seeing Him in all His physical, emotional and spiritual hideousness. You are seeing what it meant for Abba Father to 'crush' His own Son (Isa. 53:5,10).*"

She cried out, "*O my Beloved I never realized the depths to which You went. I did this to You!*" On His face she could see how deeply He was "**despising the shame**" (**Heb. 12:2**). No words could describe it. Fierce flames erupted from His innermost being as He cried out in pain. She saw her face in the midst of all those flames of evil which enveloped His

soul (**Rev. 20:14,15**). The Holy Spirit spoke once again to her heart and said, "*These are the flames of the second death you deserved to suffer. Your Beloved is taking the penalty you deserved! He loves you that deeply!*"

It was too much for her to bear as she fell to her knees sobbing and filled with a love for Him she had never felt before. Streams of living water began to flow from her heart to the cross. When she looked up again, she saw in His eyes an unspeakable joy. That Spirit-filled water flowing from her heart to the foot of the cross was the "**joy that was set before Him**" so that He could "**endure**" her hell.

The Holy Spirit spoke gently to her spirit, *"What you are about to see will be the key to overcoming the power your sin nature has within you. Those habits, attitudes and actions do not have to overpower you (Rom. 6:14). Never forget what is about to be revealed to you. This is going to make the dream given to you not long ago a reality in your daily walk with the Beloved."*

She looked once again at the soul of her Beloved. She saw her sin rising up within Him to take control: the lust after things; the criticizing words of gossip which had fallen from her lips; the arrogant pride; the strife caused by angry thoughts and words; unholy things she had watched, read and heard; the spirit of irritation and aggravation; the selfish coveting after things! Each evil separately rose up to take over and chain Him in its evil grasp. Each sin was enthroned upon a black throne. Emblazoned upon each throne were these words, *"I WILL NOT HAVE THIS MAN REIGN OVER ME! I will reign over my own life!"* Then, in the midst of the sin sitting upon the throne, her face appeared exuding self-seeking, arrogance! Out of her mouth came, *"I will raise my throne above the most High! I am my own god! My will and my desires alone!"* This sight was too much for the bride and she fell on her face crying out, *"I did this to my Beloved. Send me to hell! I deserve eternal punishment."* At that very moment she heard the Beloved cry out, *"Father, forgive her for she knows not what she has done!"* A drop of His blood appeared over her heart and an inexpressible peace swept over her. The gentle Holy Spirit whispered, *"Your Beloved's blood was placed upon your heart when you received Him as Lord and Savior."* Her spirit fell back into the arms of the Holy Spirit and proclaimed, *"Not my will! Not my will!"* She then looked back to the soul of her Beloved in all of His pain and watched her sins, iniquities and transgressions try to overtake Him.

Just as they were about to prevail a drop of His blood fell on each sin giving Him full victory over every one of those evils. The Holy Spirit spoke, *"Did you see what just happened to all those evil urges which live in your sin nature? Your Husband won a victory over each one of them! All during your lifetime these sins will separately attempt to take over the throne of your heart and rule you. They must be dealt with individually. Listen to what I wrote you, **'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (rendered powerless) that henceforth we should not serve sin.'** (Rom. 6:6). Notice the word **'might'**. It is still possible for you to be controlled by sin while you walk on earth."*

The Holy Spirit continued to explain, *"Jesus not only paid for the penalty of your sin (an eternity of punishment in the **'lake of fire'** - Rev. 20:14,15) but also won a victory over the power of sin to control you while living on Earth. What you need is to know how to daily use His victory to overcome these sins which will attempt to rule you. Don't ever forget how your Beloved defeated each sinful thing. Let your heart hear these words which I wrote just for you and you will know how to have victory, **"...reckon (consider) yourselves to be dead (to be separated from) indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."** (Rom. 6:11). For example, gossip rises up to rule your heart. By faith say to that sinful temptation or attitude, *'You have no right to control me, Jesus' blood has already defeated you. I consider myself separated (dead) from your power to control me. My Beloved won a victory over you and I am alive in His victory. I don't have to battle you. Your problem is not with me but with Jesus who is my Lord. He is the ruler of my heart right now!'*" The Holy Spirit said, *"Now you know how to stop sin. Remember, apply this each time when sin attempts to take over! Do it thirty times a day and you will have thirty victory celebrations."**

The Bride, filled with joy amidst this awful scene at the cross said, *"Yes, yes, I understand now. It's not my battle. My Husband's blood defeated the power of each unrighteous thing in me. All I have to do is apply it each time."* The Holy Spirit excitedly said, *"Then, what I wrote to you will actually be a living reality, **'For sin shall not have dominion (power) over you: for you are not under law, but under grace.'** (Rom. 6:14). It is all accomplished by your faith in the Word (Rom. 6:6-14). Then, sin's power will retreat in defeat! You are to live and walk by faith."*

Dear Christian, you and I must bring our old habits of independence to His cross and see them as having been crucified (Rom. 6:6-14)! We must take all of the attacks of the enemy to the cross and cease trying to fight them in our own strength (II Cor. 4:7-18)! We must be willing to go to the place of our birth (Calvary) and allow the cross to blot out what weakens our relationship with Him! He must increase and we must decrease (John 3:30) and it is realized only by daily going to the cross. The result will be Gal. 2:20! This is a sign of being a true bride of the Beloved, **"And they that are**

Christ's have crucified the flesh with all its affections and lusts." (Gal. 5:24)! This is true spiritual warfare! Make it a habit! The crucifixion of the flesh is simply surrendering that sin to Jesus' victory and your soul to His Lordship. His victory becomes your victory by faith as you proclaim each time His victory which has already defeated the power of these sins to control you, *"Not my will but Thine be done. Jesus' victory is my victory!"* Please read Rom. 1:17, I John 5:4 and Rev. 12:9-11, it will be very clear.

Dear reader, do you see why you first must go to the mountain of myrrh then you will experience the hill of frankincense? No wonder He instructed us to never forget His death through the communion! The mountain of crucifixion is

the most difficult mountain we will ever have to climb. Our independent sinful nature fights it with all of its strength! This is the place where He will increase and we will decrease. It is the place of true surrender! Every right that we hold dear is placed at the foot of the cross! O how we struggle to keep what we think we possess, yet in reality, it all had always belonged to Him in the first place (**James 1:17; John 3:27**). Everything: our gifts, talents, abilities, hurts, desires, job, family, positions and habits must be placed at the foot of the cross and recognize His power over them! This is that for which Paul pressed toward the mark, the high calling which is in Christ (**Phil. 3:13-14**), to become more like Christ and have His image seen by the world (**Rom. 8:29**).

"...the hill of frankincense."

After surrendering daily each sinful temptation to the Lordship of our King, then we go from the mountain to the hill! Coming down is so easy. No real energy is needed. When you reach the hill you will feel a refreshing peace, purity and holiness sweep over your soul, your walk and your ways (see **3:6**)! Why so effortless? Because the Holy Spirit is in control and it is by His power and might we are walking! The hill of holiness brings peace that passes understanding and joy unspeakable (**Phil. 4:7; I Pet. 1:8**)!

The bride looks down from the mountain and sees this beautiful hill. She already feels a refreshing breeze and lovely fragrance flowing from there. She takes a step toward the hill, her heart begins to pound as she feels the presence of her Beloved near. All of a sudden He appears. She rushes to His arms and He says, *"Come with Me, we will go together. This is what I have been waiting for."* Holding tightly to His strong arm they were immediately transported to the hill. He pauses and places a hand on each side of her face, then peers deep into her eyes and exclaims in love filled tones...

V.7 "Thou are all fair (beautiful, lovely), my love; there is no spot in thee."

O what Jesus sees in us that we do not see in ourselves! She is absolutely beautiful to Him. Before (**1:15** and **4:1**) He had said that she was fair, beautiful, lovely, but now He uses the word **"all"**! The struggle of our **"will"** up the mountain of crucifixion was very difficult, but one look from His eyes and these words from His lips made it worth it all! He has just described eight aspects of her physical features. Eight is the number of new beginnings (eight people in the Ark in **Gen. 8**). This is where we truly become the Lord's portion to His heart (**Deut. 32:9**)! O how lovely the walk of holiness is to your Beloved!

PRAY WITH ME: *"O dear Abba Father, may I always see things through Calvary's eyes, through eyes of holiness. Is there anything in me not pleasing to You my dear Bridegroom? Dear Holy Spirit reveal it to me (**Psa. 139:23,24**), then I will take it to the mighty mountain of myrrh so that I may walk on the holy hill of frankincense in Your peace and power! Your Words and Your thoughts are too high for me, too wonderful for me (**Isa. 55:6**). What You see in me must be so because You are truth. I heard You say them to my heart by the Holy Spirit! I do not see what You see in me, but in faith I receive these amazing words of love for me from Your heart. If only I had understood earlier that You were not looking for perfection in me while I walked this earth, but simply a total surrender of my will to You. You are patiently transforming me into Your image through the dear Holy Spirit and that makes me beautiful to You! My soul is flooded with worship for You. In Your most worthy name Beloved of my heart, my Lord and my God, amen!"*

V.8 "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards."

Here is a new invitation to **"come away"** with Him. Having had her **"will"** crucified there was only one answer, *"Gladly will I go with You, my loving Husband!"*

As she and her Beloved walk together hand in hand the Holy Spirit reveals to her what the enemy is really doing and how he does it. *"Leopards like to hide among the flowers. Their spots become a camouflage. Thus, the very thing that makes the leopard beautiful, becomes a deathtrap to the unwary on which he preys. At Calvary your Beloved defeated every lion and leopard lurking to devour you! Never forget what I wrote in **Eph. 1:22,23**, 'And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' (**I Cor. 15:27; Heb. 2:8**)."* With a discerning spirit of holiness, we are shown what the enemy is really doing and we act on that revelation. It might be just a feeling about a situation that something is not right or a doubt comes to your mind. It is the Holy Spirit warning you. You simply act on it and your walk is kept safe.

When we make the spiritual decision to be separated from the shadows, our Beloved steps in and says, **"Come with Me"**. The Holy Spirit declares in **II Cor. 6:17** to, **"...come out from among them, and be ye separate...."** The interesting thing in the Greek is that the first part of this verse is your responsibility and the second part is God's responsibility. **"Come out"** is in active voice meaning that you must take the first action with your will. **"Be separate"** is a

verb also and it is in the passive voice meaning that it is to be done to you. If you have the desire to come out and take the first step, then the power of the Holy Spirit will be experienced in that specific area of your walk. The Beloved receives all the glory.

Lebanon was a beautiful country bordering Israel but it also was a compromising nation. Dear reader, allow Jesus to take you away from compromise. Do you compromise your eyes with what you watch? Do you compromise your ears with what you are willing to listen to? Do you compromise your commitment by loving something more than the Lord? Have you now decided to apply the cross to all of these shadows and want His holiness to fragrance your walk? He says, *"I am right here to do it for you, come away with Me from all the shadows. If you are willing to come out then I will work it out (Isa.26:12)! I will take you by the hand, through the blessed Holy Spirit, and lead you away from all that endangers you (lions and leopards)!"* Praise His holy name! Satan's weapons (Isa. 54:17) will be formed against you (fear, depression, hurt, etc.) but they will not prosper. Shadows will come back but as you continually turn your eyes upon Jesus (Heb.12:2-3) the shadows of earth will grow dim and disappear in His light!

Jesus will not only lead you out but He will also lead you up to **Mt. Amana**. **Amana** comes from a Hebrew root word that means "confirm", "believe", "establish", "support", "faithful", "trust". What a spiritual mountain that is! A place where what is right and what is wrong is confirmed. You are given spiritual discernment! His faithfulness becomes your strength and establishes your faithfulness to Him. Through His blessed support you will learn to trust wholly. **Mt. Amana** is none other than His Word revealed by the Holy Spirit!

Jesus will not only lead you out but He will lead you up to **Mt. Shenir** and to **Mt. Hermon**. The meaning of **Shenir** is not clear. However, in **Deut. 3:1-9** it is mentioned as a border of the territory taken by the Israelites from their enemies. Dear bride, it is extremely important to realize that your enemies have been defeated. Before you can progress in Spirit filled intimacy with your Bridegroom you must know that Jesus has already defeated your enemies (your sin nature and the devil). He has taken the territory called the throne of your heart and made it His own. O how quickly the enemy gets our focus off the victory of **2:8**. Have you forgotten the testimony of that verse? Go up to Shenir and see how your enemies have been defeated. Look and see if the borders of your heart are safe. Has self made a breach in the walls, or is there an unguarded entry point where pride has slipped past the borders of your heart and is trying to sit on the throne?

Did not the Lord say in **Deut. 3:2**, *"...Fear him not..."*? Go up to Shenir and look down at your defeated foes in the valley. Stop and meditate on **John 16:11**. Jesus stated that the *"...prince of this world is judged."* He did not say *"will be"*! It was a foregone conclusion before He ever went to Calvary that the enemy was defeated. Look at **John 16:33**. Just before the cross Jesus declared the victory as having been accomplished, not *"will be"*! *"...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* Think about these verses as you sit with your Bridegroom on **Mt. Shenir**: **Rom. 8:31**; **I Cor. 15:57**; **II Cor. 2:14**.

Now you are ready for a trip to **Mt. Hermon** (meaning: "devoted" and "destroy" or "destruction"). Praise the Father that He would allow us to be taken to **Mt. Hermon** by His beloved Son where true Holy Spirit, *"first love"* love devotion is developed and maintained. It is a place where self, through devotion to Him, will be progressively destroyed and the joy of the Spirit filled life is established in you on a daily basis until your Beloved takes you to your permanent home in glory. It is a place where we become devoted to one another. We truly care about His body - our brothers and sisters who hurt. We will be of one mind and heart with each other focused on the Lord.

The early church knew about **Mt. Hermon** for they were devoted and steadfast, *"And they continued steadfastly (devoted) in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42)"*. Because of this steadfast devotion and beautiful unity, did the early church see the enemy being destroyed? Yes! Am I devoted to what Jesus was devoted - love for the Father and love for the family of God? Then Satan's foothold in the church will be broken and God's power will be demonstrated in dramatic transformed lives!

PRAY WITH ME: *"O my Lord and O my God cause me to hear what has just been proclaimed. You love me with a love that cannot be described. You have a plan already set for my life and You only ask me to come with You. You have led me and are still leading me into all truth (John 16:13) by the dear Holy Spirit and I am filled. What joy! What peace! What contentment! What purity! What righteousness! What strength! What a vision! You are all of these to my soul! Glory to Your Holy name! Thank You, thank You, thank You, thank You with all of my heart!"*

V.9 "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou has ravished my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck."

Can these words really be in the Word of God? Is it possible that the God of my heart would utter such emotional words from His soul about me? This is beyond comprehension. All because of the bride's willingness to go with Him to the Mountains! He has not changed and still loves for us to spiritually walk with Him, hand in hand along the pathway planned for each of us individually before the world ever existed (**Psa. 139:16**). And this excites Him! Why? It is because our willingness to go demonstrates our deep trust in Him and full love for Him.

This very same heart of His which was broken and pierced for His bride's sin is now totally taken with her ("**ravished**") in overwhelming love in what she has become! It is as if she totally steals His attention so that He can think of nothing else. And no wonder, she is the Lord's new creation! What does Jesus see in her? His own beauty of holiness that is beginning to rise from His surrendered blood bought bride.

PRAY WITH ME: *"O dear Lord, You say that Your awesome person has ravished my heart, but it cannot be that Your perfectly pure heart is ravished with me! How can You say to me that You are overcome with my beauty; overcome with joy and delight over me; overcome because I am totally pleasing and attractive to You? This revelation is too much for my spirit to bear. I prostrate myself in holy wonder before You. As You look upon all that heaven is - its glorious splendor, how is it possible for me to ravish Your heart!? If I so move Your heart with just a glance of loving obedience in one of my eyes, then I pray, please, please increase my capacity to love and obey You more. O dear Jesus, I long to ravish Your heart every minute of the day until I see You face to face and be overcome with that first look from Your eyes!"*

Dear blood bought bride, you are standing on holy ground right now. Sit in holy silence and wonderment. Let these thoughts directed to you from Your Beloved penetrate the deepest portion of your heart! Don't rush through this precious moment. Read and reread this verse and say, "*He is saying this about me!*" Let it sink in just how much your love moves Jesus, your Bridegroom!

Jesus proclaims that His heart is "**ravished**" by us twice so that you can believe and accept it without question. For the first time He calls her "**my sister**". This is the intimate family relationship we have with Him (**Eph. 3:14,15,16**). Before Jesus could take her (us) to be His "**spouse**" He first had to become one of us, a human being. So He became our kinsmen after the flesh, see (**Phil. 2:5-7**).

Read **Psa. 107:2**. The word "**redeemed**" is used and in the Hebrew "**kinsmen**" and "**redeemer**" are the exact same words. Read **Ruth 4:6**. The word used for "**kinsmen**" or "**relative**" is the same word used for "**redeem**" in that passage. Jesus is our "**Kinsman-Redeemer**"! **Luke 19:10** says, "**The Son of Man** (our human relative) **came to seek and to save that which was lost.**" (redeem - buy us back). He had to become a human first before we could be His "**spouse**"! And O what a desire for us and what cost to Him! I love it when I hear Him say, "**My sister**", "**My spouse**"! Praise God He uses the possessive word "**my**". It is blessedly reassuring to hear Him say, "*You belong to Me!*"

"...with one chain of thy neck."

This is the chain made by the Lord to adorn her neck in **1:11**. She gladly displays it around her neck so that all might know to Whom she belongs, loves and obeys. O how this fills His heart! Do those with whom you come in contact see Jesus in your life? Are you delighted to have Him displayed in your walk and talk? Dying to self (**Mt. Hermon**) allows more and more of His image to be seen in us (**Rom. 8:29; II Cor. 4:10**). Surrendering each fleshly moment is dying to self!

She is not embarrassed to display the chain of surrender and the crucified life to others. It represents all that honors Him through her choices and actions that please Him. Her life is like a living letter being read by all (**II Cor. 3:2-3**). The chain says, "*I belong to my Beloved alone! He has changed me and my life is no longer mine (Gal. 2:20).*" It is His to do with it whatever He desires (**Phil. 2:13**). He knows best. Her devoted love moves Him so deeply that He shares His heart to her by saying...

V.10 "How fair (beautiful) is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!"

Why is her love so beautiful to Him? What is it that He sees in her eyes? Previously, He described her features but now, for the first time, it is her love! What's the difference about her love now? It is love that is controlled by faith and an all-consuming passion to please Him. She was willing to have the unproductive, worthless areas of her life taken to the **Mountain of Myrrh** for crucifixion. Next, she chose to walk in holiness (**hill of frankincense**), fully separated to Him. This demonstrated to her Beloved that she would do anything to please Him. There had been a dramatic change - she willingly went with Him allowing the Holy Spirit to deal with her self-life. This is exquisite spiritual beauty to Him. For what pleased Him

pleased her. Once again He shares His heart with her, *"You have no idea just how much I love to quietly look at you. I walk all around in the room of your heart and see so much of My glory there. That is why I enjoy it when you just sit for a while and have a devotional time with Me during the day. Others get so busy with the temporal and forget Me. Sadly, I'll have to wait until they get to Heaven to see the change in them."*

"...how much better thy love than wine..."

Wine represents joy (**Judges 9:13; Psa. 104:15**). Think of it! The Lord looked out over the universe at His marvelous creation, and said, **"It is good!"** What pleasure it must bring Him. The glory of the stars and galaxies, surely they must be enough! Yet, He says, *"That is not enough to satisfy My heart's need for love!"* He gazes upon the faithful Seraphim, with their wings folded, crying out **"holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"** day after day (**Isa. 6:3**)! Surely, the joy He derives from them will suffice! He looks, but O the emptiness! They are not enough to make His heart complete! The Beloved watches intently the ever obedient angelic realm, but His heart still has the longing. Then He looks at you, dear surrendered believer and exclaims, *"Her love and passion for Me satisfies My heart! One glance of her loving gaze overwhelms Me. O how much better is her love than all the joys of My glorious creation!"* He speaks with intensity to all the hosts of heaven, *"There is nothing like her! Nothing! Absolutely nothing!"*

"...how much better the smell of thine ointments than all spices."

She had applied the myrrh and frankincense with the merchant's powders! All the beautiful characteristics of a Holy Spirit-Jesus filled life. The fragrance thrilled Him. It was a heavenly fragrance of Himself. Her eyes, her neck, the fragrances spoke clearly that she was wholly filled up with Jesus her Beloved! The bride was living in **Rom. 13:14**, **"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."** A Christian who displays Christ brings a sweet refreshing aroma in this world that is filled with a stench of evil. Once again Jesus gazes at His beautiful blood bought bride and says over and over, **"How beautiful! O how beautiful! Father, thank You for giving her to Me (John 10:29)!"**

PRAY WITH ME: *"O Lord, I am ready to burst, this is too much for me to ponder. In grace I accept these amazing revelations of Your heart to me. O my Beloved, is it true that there is nothing which is able to turn Your heart away from loving me for even a microsecond? Praise You dear Bridegroom of my heart - there is absolutely nothing which will distract You from being consumed with me. O precious Holy Spirit may there never be anything that attracts my eyes away from my all glorious Lord! Holy Spirit guard my ears, my lips, my eyes! May I have only one purpose in living, that I continually increase in pleasing Him whom my soul loveth! I worship You! I adore You! I magnify Your glorious name dear Lord Jesus!"*

V.11 *"Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."*

Her lips bring the Beloved great happiness. He once again takes note of the joy the lips of His bride brings to His heart! Why? In **1:2** she yearned for Him to kiss her with the kisses of His mouth. O how He enjoys kissing us with precious revelations from His Word. But now she gives back what He had given to her - the Word with thankfulness and praise! She now kisses her Beloved with what He has abundantly blessed her. This is the first time her lips are described as being filled! The first step was the application of the scarlet (the blood) in **v. 3**. Her lips have been made ready to bless His heart only after the life changing experiences on the **mountain of myrrh** and the **hill of frankincense**. The surrendered life has brought her to this point.

"Honeycomb, honey"

She is filled with His Holy Word. How do we know? The expressions of **"honey"** and **"honeycomb"** represent the Word. Honey and milk speak of abundance (**Ex. 3:8**). The delights of the Word of God are compared to honey dripping from the honeycomb (**Psa. 19:9,10; 119:103**)! Nothing pleases Him more than faith-filled words speaking out the very oracles of God. It was her faith working through His love that made her lips exquisite to Him (**Gal. 5:6**)! Only faith pleases Him (**Heb. 11:6**). How did all of this come about? As she obeyed Him and left the dangers of the lion's den and mountains of leopards (**4:8**), she walked and listened to the Lover of her soul. Like the honeycomb which is patiently filled with its delectable sweetness, so also is the heart of this adoring bride, filled with indescribable word revelations of Jesus, (**John 14:21**) which always come through a loving, obedient heart. Jesus Himself said in **Luke 6:45**, **"...for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."** Are you, dear Christian, so filled up with Jesus, who is the Word, that your lips automatically overflow with honey of praise and thanks?

"...milk..."

Milk also represents the pure Word of God (**I Pet. 2:2**). The bride began to take it in when she first came to know Him in surrender. It had fallen on **"good ground"** and was now bearing fruit for Him (**Mt. 13:23**). Those beginning joys found in His Word never left her. She still counted precious the first simple truths which led her into a deeper walk with her Beloved Husband.

Lips that please the Lord Jesus Christ are those that are in agreement with His word. It begins with a heartfelt prayer to Him. Listen to her prayer! *"I love You so much my dear Bridegroom and want to please You always, so I ask You to, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.' (Psa. 141:3)!"* Time passes and He has fulfilled that prayer request with wonderful results. She prays again, *"Thank You my Beloved Husband, I am so blessed by You among the children of men. Grace is poured into my lips from You (Psa. 45:2). I am so thrilled that I find my lips joyfully praising You more and more (Psa. 63:3,5) since I prayed Psa. 141:3! O how quick You were to answer it. My lips have continued to greatly rejoice in singing because of Your redemption in my soul (Psa. 71:23)! You have caused many to be touched spiritually through what has come from my lips and what a pleasure it is to see them blessed by You through me dear Lord (Prov. 10:21). You have given me spiritual discernment as to what is acceptable to say (Prov. 10:32). Your knowledge has made me an exquisite jewel in Your sight my glorious Husband (Prov. 20:15). My heart is bowed in thanksgiving to You, my Love, for I can sense Your approval and pleasure of what You hear from my lips. Only You could have changed my lips! I love You so much!"*

You now understand why the Beloved is so taken up with her lips again. Is this true of you? If not, pray **Psa. 141:3** and **Psa. 19:14!** Dear Christian bride, then your Bridegroom will speak **v. 11** to your heart!

"...and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."

O yes, when you are filled up with Jesus your spiritual garments will exude the wonderful fragrance of Jesus Himself - the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness (**Isa. 61:10**)! The cedars of Lebanon gave off a wonderful scent. The cedar tree speaks of the perfect, sinless life of Jesus. The wood of this tree was rot-resistant, strong and stately (see **1:17**). Garments placed in a cedar chest have a special fragrance all their own. The surrendered believer's life is **"hid in Christ"** (**Col. 3:3**) and as we sit quietly enwrapped in His arms, His fragrance permeates us. He is the cedar (**1:17**). O to have His fragrance (presence of the Lord) observed in our daily walk by others! Every believer has been resurrected from the spiritual dead, but so many are still wearing spiritual grave clothes (old habits and bondages brought over into the new life. The abundant life is activated exclusively through daily surrender of each circumstance to Him. Each time you do this you are proclaiming, *"I love You Jesus!"* It's the spiritual fragrance of Lebanon my friend!

PRAY WITH ME: *"O dear Lord, may my heart gather Your honey 'till I overflow! You alone are the sweetness, richness and nourishment of my life. I ask that Your fragrance, the fragrance of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love (Col. 3:12-14) be so predominate in my walk that my family and friends will be blessed by You! O my Beloved, I delight only in You! Take me! Use me! Love through me! Get only glory from me! Flow through my lips with faith-filled words. Glory! Glory! Glory! Praise Your holy name my Beloved! I love You and only You!"*

V.12 "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed."

Dear Christian, what a beautiful compliment from Your Beloved to have your life be called a **"garden"** by Him! Did you know that God has His own garden? It is called **"the garden of the Lord"** in **Isa. 51:3** and the garden of Eden is called **"the garden of God"** in **Ezk. 28:13**. God's wedding present to Adam and Eve was a garden in which He had already prepared for them. In that original garden a loving God placed all manner of wonderful things to be enjoyed through touch, taste, smell and vision. It was a place where God, longing for fellowship, could walk with man and share the wonders of His creation. It was the perfect setting for discussion, deliberation and devotion. God walked and talked with Adam in the garden. It was none other than Jesus Himself for He is the **"Word of God"** (**John 1:1**); He is **"...all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"** (**Col. 2:9**). He is **"...the express image of his (God's) person..."** (**Heb. 1:3**)!

O what infinite heart-wrenching pain Jesus must have felt when Adam and Eve chose another one to walk with after having committed spiritual adultery (**James 4:4**). The garden of their heart turned into hideous weeds of wickedness as did the actual physical garden. But, praise God, four thousand years later Jesus the Creator (**Jn1:3,10**) came back to earth to restore what sin had so corrupted. He created a new spiritual garden for the heart of every believer. The Holy Spirit would plant it by applying the precious blood of Jesus to the spirit of man! Man would become a new creation in Christ Jesus (**II Cor. 5:17**). This wonderful spiritual heart garden would once again be a place where God and man could share intimately.

A garden is where seeds are planted. Praise God for the powerful seed of the Word of God which was planted in the garden of our heart by the Holy Spirit (**1 Pet. 1:23**)! Are you lovingly, with great expectation, meditating on your Bridegroom's Word? Are you expecting a great harvest from those seeds being planted into your heart? Here's how it is accomplished.

This garden of the heart is made spiritually beautiful through absolute surrender of the believer's will to the Lord (**Rom. 12:1**). New and precious fruit begin to grow there for God and His children to enjoy. It will only happen as the bride gives over the garden of her heart to the Father, the "*husbandman*" or "*gardener*" (**John 15:1-11**). With the Father having full rights to the garden of your heart, He instructs the Holy Spirit to break up of the "*fallow ground*" (**Jer. 4:3; Hos. 10:12**). In grace He does for us what He had asked Israel to do! In this garden, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are planted glorious eternal seeds of His Word (**Matt. 13:23**)! O the blessed fruit that is produced: "*love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (self-control)*" (**Gal. 5:22-23**)!

So significant is the garden symbolism that her Beloved Jesus died, was buried and rose in a garden! "*Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.*" (**John 19:41**)! We know that there was a garden at the tomb because Mary Magdalene mistook her resurrected Lord to be a gardener (**John 20:15**). In the midst of the first garden was the tree of life. In the midst of Calvary's garden was the tree of life (Jesus on the cross).

In the first garden there was the tree of knowledge of good and evil and in Calvary's garden Jesus, the all good God, became that tree. He became sin - all that was evil. Calvary was the place where all the evil in the universe was exposed. Praise God, the bride now may eat freely of the fruit of Calvary and have all that is good, pure, and righteous produced in the garden of her heart. It will be progressive in her walk as illustrated in **John 15 "fruit"** and "**more fruit**" (v.1), "**much fruit**" (v.5). It's the tilling and the pruning that is not enjoyable to us. Thank God for the resulting "*peaceable fruit of righteousness*" (**Heb. 12:11**).

It was in the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus often prayed. In the original garden Adam "*fell*" before Satan. In this garden, three times Jesus fell to His knees in prayer and then finally on His face sweating great drops of blood. It was in Gethsemane the soldiers of Satan fell before Jesus the "*I Am*" (**John 18:4-6**)! Prayer, praise, power and victory are all found in God's garden.

Dear, dear bride of Christ, what is in your garden? Is it a place where Jesus can come and enjoy all manner of spiritual fruits (**4:16**)? Can your Beloved Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, find in your heart all that He sees in the garden of this bride's heart (**4:12-15**)? Or does He approach the gate of the garden of your heart, open it, and find all manner of spiritual weeds and thorns such as unforgiveness, jealousy, gossip and selfishness? Does He then quickly shut the gate walking off with His eyes toward the ground wondering why His Father (**John 15:1**) was not allowed into the garden of your heart to change it?

But this is not true of our bride in this Song! Since surrender, the Beloved sees eternal wonders in her beautiful heart garden. Let the Holy Spirit reveal all the specific joys in this garden which caused Him to earlier exclaim, "*...how beautiful is thy love...my spouse...*" He is so moved that He must share in loving detail what is so glorious about her garden. He takes her hand and says.....

"A garden enclosed (locked or sealed)..."

Because she has sought Him and found Him (**3:4**) and afterwards came away with Him from the lion's den and the mountain of leopards there is no longer a place where the "*little foxes*" can get in and do damage to the vines in her garden! Does the Holy Spirit have the only key (your will) to the garden of your heart? When the Father and the Son appear at the gate does the Holy Spirit have the key of your will to let Them in to have intimate fellowship and lead you into a special service?

This bride's heart is separated unto her Lord. It is only for Him! This "*garden enclosed*" (locked or sealed) speaks forcibly of the need of holiness (sanctification, separation). This is what pleases the Beloved so much, a heart separated (*locked*) from meaningless worldly things and desires, for that which has no value, and those things which pollute the mind and soul. He has been given full, loving control. His bride will not read, watch or listen to what she knows her Lord would not be pleased with (**Psa. 101:3**). It is not a struggle to her because she is in love. Who would ever want to hurt someone with whom they are in love (**John 14:23**)? Unthinkable!

It is extremely important to understand what brings about true, continuous, joyful holiness in the garden of your heart. The tools for cultivating a holy garden are the promises of God. "**Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through**

the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (II Pet. 1:2-4).

Please note the words: "**HIS divine power**", "**hath GIVEN**", "**are GIVEN**". Our Lord has given you everything to make joyful, separated living a reality. He does not need your energy (see **Zech. 4:6; Phil. 2:13; II Cor. 4:7-9**). He needs your submission and a perseverance that rests on Him alone. The results will be an unspeakable strength and purpose never before experienced. You will truly begin to travel from "**glory to glory**" (**II Cor. 3:18**)!

Consider these verses on holiness: "**Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.**" (**II Cor. 6:17**); "**Having therefore these promises (II Cor. 1:20; I John 5:14,15), dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**" (**II Cor. 7:1**).

How can I cleanse myself from that which displeases my Beloved? It is by exercising your God given faith (**Rom.12:3**) and confessing to the Lord, "*I can't but You can!*" The Holy Spirit gives you a promise from the Word. Then you speak that Word to the problem by faith (firm conviction) and the problem will either disappear (**Mark 11:23,24**) in God's timing or He will give you His strength enabling you to bear it (**I Cor. 10:13**)! It is in these circumstances you begin to know just how real God is! His praise will become a way of life. It will be a holy compulsion!

Your only part is to take the first willing step. Look again at **II Cor. 6:17**. Remember, "**come out**" is active voice and "**be ye separate**" is actually a verb in the original Greek that is in the passive voice. As you know, passive voice means you have nothing to do with it, it must be done to you! Praise God! You take the first step of separation in each circumstance you are facing and the Holy Spirit steps in and empowers you to continue in the victory. Isn't the Lord good? Give our God praise!

How often we have tried to put on the whole armor of God (**Eph. 6:11-18**) and yet at the first sign of attack we cave in and are defeated. So many of us miss the verse just before the admonition to put on the whole armor of God. It says, "**...be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.**" "**be strong**" is in the passive voice which means we have nothing to do with it. It is saying, "*be made strong!*" So before I try and put on the whole armor I need to say to the Lord, "*Lord I do not have the strength to carry the needed spiritual armor for battle but You do. I am willing to do battle so I submit my will to You.*" All the other verbs are "active" such as "**put on**" making it your responsibility. How do you put it all on? It immediately happens when you fulfill **v. 18**! You begin to pray the Word in faith, truth, righteousness and peace then the spiritual armor is activated completely. Praying God's promises is doing spiritual battle in the Holy Spirit! His power is activated in victory.

Do you want a perfect picture of holiness (separated unto Him and under His total control)? Then picture yourself, dear love of Jesus' heart, in the embrace of His arms (read **2:6; 8:3!**). Holiness is simply full surrender to His arms!

Listen to her speak, "*My Beloved, I never realized until now how secure it feels to be sealed by You, to be enclosed and protected by You. My heart has changed so much since I have turned everything over to You. I want to please You alone. My love for You has grown so much more intense. I am now sensitive to the 'little' things that displease You. Thank You for being so patient with me.*"

PRAY WITH ME: "*Abba Father, I come to Your throne of grace with one purpose only, make the garden of my heart totally separated from the deadening effects of the world's way of thinking and doing things which displeases You so much. Come wonderful, eternal Gardener and till the soil of my heart in whatever manner You desire! I know it will only result in that which is good and holy. I ask You to fulfill this promise in my heart, 'And I will put my spirit within you, and CAUSE you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.'* (**Ezk. 36:27**) so that I can please You! In the name of Your dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and by the power which is in His blood, amen!"

"...a spring shut up, a fountain sealed."

Why is the spring of her heart shut up and the fountain of her heart sealed? At this point her heart is for Him alone and no one else. He must receive the first fruits of surrender: love, worship, praise and adoration flowing to His heart. The Jews were instructed to do that at harvest time (**Num. 28:26; Neh. 10:34,35**). When the garden of her heart is fully developed and the fruit and spices have come to harvest, then she invites her Beloved into her garden which she calls His garden in **v.16**. After He has received His loving, first portion, then He allows others to be blessed from the garden of her heart and drink of the springs of living water (see **5:1**)!

But for now it is sealed, waiting for Him to come at the appropriate time to enjoy a heart filled with faith, filled with love and filled with the Holy Spirit. And when He opens it up, from the spring and fountain of her heart shall flow rivers of living water - refreshing, delightful waters of submission and obedience flowing back to His heart (**Eph. 5:18-19**). As she listens to His quiet voice her heart pounds with love for Him. She questions, *"Am I dreaming, or is this all for real? Can it be the Bridegroom of my heart, the God of the universe, has said all of this to me - to me, a nobody in the eyes of the world?"*

He takes her by the hand and says, *"Let's walk together in the garden for awhile, My love. And as we walk, I will show you just what I see inside of you that causes My heart to overflow in love."* He gives her hand a gentle squeeze as they begin to walk. Beaming with joy He excitedly says, *"Look how your garden is filled with My favorite fruits and flowers! They are so beautiful to Me My love."* He stops and just takes in the joy of all the beauty of colors and the fragrances. *"My love, look, look over there - you have these wonderful yellow Henna flowers in your garden. Let's get a little closer."* He picks a flower and puts it in her hair. *"That flower is so beautiful, let Me just step back and enjoy looking at you for a moment. I can't wait to share the flowers, fruit and spices of your heart with My friends (**Heb.13:16;Rom. 8:29**)!"*

This is almost too much for her. The bride is having such a difficult time paying attention because her heart is overflowing walking so close to Him. She whispers, *"Dear Husband, my heart is about to burst. Forgive me for not speaking."* It was a greater fullness of her spirit than she had ever experienced. Arm in arm they continued walking. Pausing, the Beloved breathes in the magnificent fragrance, then, with one sweep of His hand over the garden, He says, *"Your garden, look at it My love..."*

V.13 "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire (henna), with spikenard,"

O grasp this verse dear one of His love! The Lord has a special order in listing these very special plants! First, her heart is seen as an orchard of pomegranates with other precious plants dispersed among them! The pomegranate was dealt with in **v.3** and now her Beloved sees, not just one pomegranate, but a heart garden filled up with worship. Her heart is filled up with love for the blood of Jesus; her heart is filled up with sacrifices of praise for Him; her heart is filled up with surrender to Him! The Beloved puts His arm around her shoulder and says...

"So many of My people give Me a pomegranate to taste once or maybe twice a week. What I love so much about you is that I may come into your garden at anytime during the day and there are many, many pomegranates just for Me to pick. Thank you so much for allowing My Father, by My Spirit, to plant those seeds and cultivate and prune them and prune them..."

The first fruit in our life must be the pomegranate. Without praise and a love for the precious blood of Christ, service to the Lord is meaningless. Can it be said of you by the Lord as He looks at your garden - *"My bride is an orchard of pomegranates"*? Listen to the Bridegroom excitedly speak with joy to His Father about His bride, *"Thank You My Father for cultivating in My bride's heart garden so many beautiful spices and fruits (**John 15:1**). She is so lovely to Me. I love to look at her. You have filled My heart, Abba Father, with the joy You promised Me when I went to the cross (**Heb. 12:2**)! Thank You for giving her to Me (**John 10:29**)!"*

"...with pleasant (choice) fruits..."

No matter what, we will have some kind of fruit in our lives: some of poor quality, some of good quality, some of choice quality. What makes the difference? The pomegranate! Abiding in Him with true, heartfelt worship, praise and obedience (**Isa. 43:21; John 4:23,24; 15:1-5**) produce the fruit of the Spirit! She is pleasant to Him! Am I? Are you? Do we care?

"...henna, with spikenard."

"Henna" speaks of resurrection and joy (see **1:14** for detailed comments). O how our Beloved loves the **"henna"** for it tells Him that we are filled with His resurrected life (**John 10:10; Phil.3:10**). It is the life where our ways are controlled by the Holy Spirit through the precious promises of the Word. O dear surrendered believer, the **"henna"** needs to be seen desperately in our lives. Young believers are watching and learning from us. Do they see the Spirit filled life, the abundant life, the transformed life, the consistent life; in other words, the power of the resurrected life? The unsaved around us need to see Jesus in our hopes and habits; in our mouth and in our movements; in our attitudes and activities. May we have done to us as was done to Lazarus when he came forth out of the tomb (**John 11:43-44**).

Allow the Holy Spirit to take off the grave clothes of the old self-ways. Lazarus came forth, he demonstrated that he had life but he did not have it more abundantly until the grave clothes came off. When the grave clothes came off the new, abundant, resurrected life was fully demonstrated for all to see! Notice that others were responsible for that act. We must

allow others who are Spirit-filled in the body of Christ to minister to us by the power and unction of the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 4:16**). Humble yourself before Almighty God and allow members of His body to help unwrap those things in your life which hinder your spiritual walk. We need each other. That's the way the body of Christ spiritually functions.

It is significant that the Holy Spirit mentions nine specific items which make the bride's heart garden so beautifully attractive. Isn't it interesting that **Gal. 5:22-23** lists nine characteristics which make up the fruit of the Spirit. Note carefully that the fruits and spices are mentioned in pairs except for the pomegranate. Why? It is the blood of Jesus, first and foremost that causes the other fruits and spices to grow.

Spikenard was obtained by crushing a root. It is the independent human will that must be crushed and replaced with total surrender to the Lord's will found in His Word and lived out by the power of the Holy Spirit. It was Mary of Bethany who gave up the most precious possession she had, 300 denarii of spikenard perfume (representing her will). She anointed Jesus' head and feet with it. This consummate act of worship meant so much to the Lord that He never wanted Mary to be forgotten (**Mk. 14:9**)! The resurrection life (henna) never appears in the life of the believer without the sacrifice of the will, broken over the Bridegroom's feet.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, Gardener of my heart, till the soil of my garden until pure spikenard is obtained. Nothing less will do! I yield the rights to my garden into Your loving, caring hand. I humble myself under Your mighty hand. I humble myself before those You send into my life to change me. As they "tough love" me by unwrapping the grave clothes and point out the dross I will accept it from Your hand. Empower me to change. I cannot do it alone! In Jesus' precious name amen!"*

V.14 "Spikenard and saffron..."

Saffron is used in cooking for flavoring and coloring. It is obtained by drying the stigmas and parts of the styles of the autumn crocus. Approximately 4000 flowers yield about one ounce of saffron. Obviously, much time was required to produce the saffron. Perseverance (**James 1:12**) is needed in extracting the saffron. As with us, much time is needed to **"grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..."** (**II Pet. 3:18**).

With our will (spikenard) daily sacrificed to Him then the saffron will be produced. Saffron was also used as a deep yellow dye. Yellow is the color of gold. Gold, represents the glory and Deity of the Bridegroom as we will see in comments on **5:11,14,15**. A totally yielded life will allow the Holy Spirit to produce Jesus' glory in the garden of her heart. The Word of God states that **"God is good"** and **"God is love"**. It has a sweet fragrance (**Psa. 19:7-10; 119:103**). O to have the saffron produced in the heart, God in control and seen in the walk of the bride. Then it becomes **"not I but Christ living in me."** (**Gal. 2:20**)!

Think of it, 4000 flowers needed for one ounce of saffron. And as the bride yields thousands of moments of her will to the will and direction of the Lord, a sweetness appears in her manner of living and in her relationship with others.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, may Your Father cultivate the spiritual soil of my garden to see a wonderful harvest of saffron and producing the yellow dye which will be indelibly stamped on my walk. May more of You be seen in me as my garden is tilled by the Father in the Name of Him who is the True Vine of my heart. (John 3:30; 15:1-5)!"*

V.14 "...calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense..."

Calamus is referred to as sweet cane in **Isa. 43:24** and in **Jer. 6:20**. In **Exo. 30:23** it is called **"sweet calamus"**. When its leaves are crushed it gives forth a fragrance like that of ginger. It was used in the making of the holy anointing oil (**Ex. 30:23**). So sacred was this oil to the Lord that He warns in **Ex. 30:32,33** that the precise proportions of mixture were not to be duplicated by another Hebrew. It was to be used for Him alone! So serious was the secrecy of the mixture of the anointing oil that if violated the offending person would be cut off from his people! Interestingly, three of the four ingredients to be used in making the holy anointing oil are found here in the garden of her heart! Oh to be anointed with the spiritual oil of praise (**Heb.13:15; Psa.23:5**).

The root word for **"calamus"** means **"to stand upright."** The oil was used to set apart (anoint) items of the tabernacle and the priests to God. Those chosen to be kings of Israel were anointed with this oil. They filled lamps with oil for light. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus' light shines through us. Oil is symbolical of the Holy Spirit. O dear reader this is the heartbeat of God, to have us separated unto Himself. To stand upright in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and be changed into the image of the Beloved brings great joy to Him. He looks with great pleasure at the calamus in her heart garden.

O how He loves to feast His eyes upon it. It tells Him that His life is her life and His desires are her desires! May you dear soldier of Christ *"stand upright"* for Jesus. Calamus represents the Spirit led Christian standing against the enemy in the power of His might (**II Cor. 1:24; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27; Eph. 6:10-17; I Pet. 5:12**). What a glorious sight it is to see the Christian soldier advancing against the enemy (**II Tim. 2:3**). As the Bridegroom feasts His eyes upon all that is beautiful in her garden, He beholds the cinnamon connected with the calamus and what a sweet aroma it produces. Why is it so important to have the cinnamon with the calamus?

Cinnamon is an evergreen tree from which it is extracted and this is accomplished by cutting away the bark of the lower branches. Calamus represents the power of God. She gives Him the right to scrutinize her inner motives as well as her outward walk. The Holy Spirit begins to mix in the cinnamon and the work of Calvary concerning the crucifixion of the flesh and applies it to her attitudes and daily walk. Cut away from her are weights and sins which so easily beset her (**Heb. 12:1,2**). Although it hurts to have this process take place she keeps her eyes steadfast on Him, *"looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of (her) faith"*. With the cinnamon applied she now stands upright in the power of the Holy Spirit by the Word of faith! O how this displays the glory of God in her life!

"with all trees of frankincense..."

O how important is the frankincense (see **3:6** for detailed comments). As you know, it comes from a Hebrew word meaning *"to be white"*. All of the above fruits and spices in her garden are interspersed with the trees of frankincense (holiness) and the separated walk. All that her Beloved sees in the garden of her heart is pure and righteous. He loves purity for He is purity itself! Frankincense was used in the tabernacle worship and it was one of the gifts of the wise men worshiping the child Jesus. Purity must be in the heart for worship to be acceptable to the Lord. It is accomplished by heartfelt confession (**I John 1:9**) when we do sin, along with continual surrender and submission to His heart found in His Word.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, how I praise You for the love You have bestowed upon me in Your Son. O how Your beloved Son loves me! Thank You Holy Spirit for opening my eyes to all that will please Him. Continue to work on the garden of my heart so that Your Son's heart will overflow with joyous love because of the spiritual fruit produced there. In Jesus' magnificent name, amen."*

The bride is astonished with all her Beloved sees in her. Tears begin to well up in her eyes. She has never felt so much love in all of her life. He gently lifts her head so as to have her eyes meet His. What she sees causes her heart to almost burst. She could feel a grateful love flowing from Him to her heart. He whispered, *"Thank you My love for giving to Me the most precious gift you possess, total surrender of your will to Me! This is why I died for you! This is why I rose from the grave for you! This is why I sit on the throne and intercede for you continually (Heb. 7:25)! O how this fills My heart with tender affection for you! I am consumed with love for you My bride. The garden of your heart is so, so beautiful My love, for it is a reflection of My very heart!"*

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, 'Search me...and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked (Hebrew: hurtful, harmful, offensive) way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' (Psa.139:23,24). I want the frankincense to fill my heart garden so that You will see no spot or blemish which would bring disappointment to You!"*

V.14 *"...myrrh and aloes..."*

"My bride, I see you are still wearing the little pouch of myrrh around your neck I gave to you (see 1:13 for comments). She looks up at her Love and says, "I look at it often my Beloved Husband. I can't tell You how many times I have simply held it in the palm of my hand when the enemy attacked me. It always reminds me of Your complete victory on the cross crushing Satan's power. It reminds me that I belong to You and Your victory is my victory! It makes me feel so secure.(Rev.12:11)." She snuggled up against His strong arm and was quiet for a moment. With a twinkle in her eye she pulled out a little box she had kept hidden since they had stepped into the garden. The box was beautiful. Without looking up she put her hand out and said, "This is a gift I have kept for You and I would like You to open it my Love." His heart beats faster as He lifted up the lid of this love gift from His bride. In it was one small cup sealed and a piece of unleavened bread.

Placing her hand under His she said, *"I have so long wanted to have communion with You. Would You mind if we just sat down in this pleasant spot in the garden of my heart and have communion, just You and me my Husband?"* Quietly they sat down together. He held both the little cup and bread in His hand. *"My Bridegroom, the bread is so precious to me. Not only did You infinitely love me and have all my sins placed in Your holy body but that piece of bread says that I am Your body today (I Cor. 10:16,17). I share being Your body with all the others You have redeemed! Wow, what a glorious thought my Love!"*

You could see how much it meant to Him in all she shared. O how He loved to be loved! Still holding His hand a floodgate of His attributes and character came forth – on and on she spoke – *"You are my Shepherd, Friend, King, God, Deliverer, Keeper, Forgiver, Encourager, Burden Bearer, Healer and Provider..."* She spoke about each one in detail. All the Lover of her heart could do was quietly squeeze her hand. So ravished was His heart by her love and glances He could not speak. Hours passed but it only seemed to be a moment. Then all was quiet, He placed the bread in her hand and said, *"Thank you so much for loving Me! There are no words to express what this gift of yours means to My heart. I can see the myrrh has become a pouch of loving remembrance to your heart! Thank you My bride!"*

When she took the bread the Holy Spirit filled her with joy unspeakable. So blissful was this intimacy it was as if the world and all its cares did not exist. Intimacy with Him was a little taste of heaven. Taking the cup she quietly gazed upon it for the longest time. Lifting her head up, tears of thankfulness welling up, she looked into His eyes and said, *"Thank You for every drop of Your life's blood that fell from the cross for me!"* She drank it and they just sat there noticing the beautiful flowers springing up all around them in the garden of her heart. He said, *"I am so blessed that you have allowed My Abba Father to cultivate it in your garden (John 15:1). The crucified life is the blessed life! It takes away those things that would keep us from enjoying this kind of special intimacy."*

After this they often had communion together. It was a time for reflection, remembrance, repentance, rededication, loving, adoring, worshipping and praising Him. We are to never forget the reason for all the miracles, conversions, healings, revelations! It was all because Jesus was crushed for our iniquities – He was the myrrh. There would be no room for self-pride or exaltation!

The *myrrh* was coupled with the *aloes*. Interestingly, in **John 19:39** both were connected in the burial of the Lord Jesus' body. Aloe was highly valued and used for incense and perfume. One reason for wearing perfume is to be noticed or have someone else attracted to you. Let the sweet aroma of a heart filled with Jesus be your attraction! The aloes were obtained from the inner core of that particular tree. The process they used was to bury the aloe tree logs. I understand that the reason for this *"burial"* was due to the hardness of the wood. The outer part would decay making it possible to get to its heart and extract the inner core of resin. The result revealed a beautiful grain and it could be highly polished. O how this sounds like the dying daily to self so that the fragrance and beauty of the new man may be released (**Rom. 6:6-14; II Cor. 4:7-18**).

In chapter 1 she kept the myrrh between her breasts. It is a reminder of His eternal protection even while she sleeps. Her heart needed to be kept safe from nightmares or attacks from without while she rested. In **Psa. 45:8** aloe is mentioned in connection with the garments worn by the Son of God. We know that this Psalm speaks of the Son of God because **v.8** is quoted in **Heb. 1:8** by the Father concerning His only Son! The Lord has clothed us with His garments of salvation and with His robe of righteousness (**Isa. 61:10**). How appropriate that the last of the plants and spices mentioned should be the aloes (the inner core of our spiritual being). Her heart is filled with the incense of adoration and the perfume of holiness. O what joy this brings to His heart! What pleasure to His eyes!

"...with all the chief (finest) spices."

Finally, the Lover of her soul reveals that her garden is producing the finest of spices. Spices are added to various foods to make what tastes good taste great. One never ingests spices by themselves. Each spice is to be used with care in order to enhance a particular food. So it is with us, members individually in the body of Christ, your life is to touch others, to enhance and make beautiful their own walk. This bride's heart has been made ready to fellowship with other lilies. Prior to this she only wanted to be with Him alone.

She knew that her Beloved loved to be with other lilies (**2:16**). Now her garden is ready to bless Him and His lilies. He will take from her spiritually exquisite garden and share it with them (**5:1**). Each of us have been given by the Holy Spirit gifts and talents to be used for the good of others in the body of Christ (**Eph. 4:15-16**). Our *"little"* spiritual spice combined with other's spiritual spices cause us, the living temple of the Holy Spirit, the body of Christ, to minister godly love for one another (**John 13:35**). The Holy Spirit will bring believers next to your branch to receive a particular fruit needed in their lives. As the various spices of love are shared the spiritual body of our Lord becomes more outwardly beautiful. His image is more and more seen in us together.

As we totally surrender our will to Him, all the right spiritual spices will be applied to each daily circumstance. The Holy Spirit will be at work in each situation and most of the time we will be unaware of it. He will make sure that there will be: a right word given to renew; a loving touch for compassion; a peaceful look to encourage; a kind deed to show someone in need that God does care; a thoughtful telephone call to lift the spirit; a note of thankfulness to show an appreciative heart; a word of loving correction to one going astray. Read **Mt. 25:34-40**. It is a beautiful illustration of having the finest of spices in

our garden and then be unaware that others were being blessed by them. Because you are so filled with Jesus, ministering to others just happens so naturally without thinking about it.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Praise You Father that You are the Gardener of my heart (John 15:1). I give You glory that You can take the garden of my heart and produce such wonderful things in it and bring such pleasure to Your beloved Son. Thank You Lord that not only do You get the first fruits from my garden but You share them with others (5:1). Thank You Lord for making me a blessing! In Your powerful name Lord Jesus, amen."*

V.15 "A fountain of gardens (or a "garden fountain"), a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon."

PRAY WITH ME: *"O Lord, my Redeemer, my Shepherd, my King, my All, make this verse real in my heart and in my life. O dear precious Father, cause my heart to gush out the rivers of living water and allow all those who touch my life be touched by the presence of the Holy Spirit in my heart (John 7:38,39)! Fill me, fill me, fill me to overflowing so that others may have their parched lives refreshed. O caring Husband, just to have one touched by Your grace and truly make a difference in their life will fill me with eternal thanksgiving. You have commanded, in Eph. 5:18, to be continually filled with the Spirit. O that is my holy desire! I pray in Your name, which is written in bold letters over the door to my heart, Lord Jesus!"*

In the Greek **'be filled'** in **Eph.5:18** is in the continual present tense and it is passive voice meaning that it must be done to you. Every day you need to pray, *"Fill me Lord with Your Spirit so I may walk in Your ways, in Your wisdom, in Your humility and have fulfilled in me Your blessed will."* Keep in mind this is not a feeling you are asking for. But if you are surrendered to Him this filling takes place (see **I John 5:14-15** and **Mt. 7:7**). Praise God, it is not our responsibility to fill ourselves, it is His! He then gets all the glory from the path set out for us that day. For a vessel to be filled it must be emptied. That happens each time we surrender!

A garden fountain is enjoyable to look at and listen to. It has a refreshing sound that can cause one to relax. Out of her garden is the flowing of rivers of living waters. She is Spirit-filled to overflowing! The word **"living"** is the Hebrew word for **"fresh"**. She has that continual fresh anointing from the Holy Spirit in her heart. Notice that the words **"enclosed"**, **"shut up"** and **"sealed"** are no longer mentioned as in **v.12**. There was the private time with Him alone, but now, the Lord will share the goodness of the garden with others. The order is interesting. First we must be an empty open vessel so that spiritual water may flow through us. I must have the Holy Spirit pour the living waters of His word into my spiritual vessel. Then, as the Holy Spirit directs, the streams of living water begin to flow in refreshment to others. Praise God!

"Streams from Lebanon" presents a beautiful picture of what it means to be a Spirit-filled, fruit-bearing believer. The snow from Lebanon's mountains melts in the spring and flows downward replenishing the land below, not only with water, but with needed minerals to grow healthy crops. Keep in mind that these waters flow without effort! The mountain symbolically is surrendered to receive the heavenly blessing of pure white snow. So also with us, without any human effort, we simply **"stand upright"** (calamus) in the power of the Holy Spirit on the mountain of God's holiness and allow the pure water of the living word (**John 15:3; Eph. 5:25,26**) to gently **"snow"** down upon us. Sometimes we read the Word of God and it seems as if we are receiving nothing from it; that is the **"snow"** for it just stays there doing nothing (much like the planting of seed which remains dormant for a while). Then at the appropriate time the blessed Holy Spirit, at the request of the Husbandman (the Father), causes the warmth of Jesus' pure light to shine upon that stationary snow and it begins to flow into our heart garden and after having accomplished its purpose, it then flows in blessing to those all around us to the valleys in their daily lives. May the Lord fulfill the prayer of this old hymn in me, **"Channels Only"**.

*Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, a clean vessel in Thy hand;
Thou who boughtest to possess me, in Thy fullness, Lord, come in.
Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water from our inner man may flow.
Channels only, blessed Master, but with all Thy wondrous power
Flowing through us, Thou canst use us every day and every hour!"* Mary E. Maxwell

Before we leave this wonderful verse, meditate for a moment on a previous thought from **v.12**. Jesus prayed, died, was entombed and rose in a garden! All of us need a garden experience to be truly pleasing to the Lord. In the garden of our heart we need to be devoted to prayer and there, each day, lay down our will and die to self. When little shoots of discouragement, gossip, jealousy, envy and other weeds appear they will easily wither by simply saying, **"not my will, but thine be done"**. Then we will rise up and walk in the abundant life of resurrection power. His image will be stamped on your

walk (**Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:10**)! For a garden to really be productive and flourish, fertilizers are used. Reckoning yourself to be dead is the spiritual fertilizer of the resurrected life (**Rom. 6:11,14**). Fertilizer is usually matter that is going to be allowed to decay if it hasn't already. Then it is ready to be used! Don't ever forget that the fertilizer of the resurrected life is the decaying matter of the self-life! He turns the curse into a blessing because the Lord our God loves us (**Deut. 23:5**)!

To the bride these words (**vs.12-15**) were absolutely unthinkable, impossible! She had only seen disappointment and defeat! But she knew that it had to be true because her Beloved, who is the truth (**John 14:6**), said it was so. Satan had tried to blind her eyes from what was really going on in her garden. She now desires more of His beauty. With all of her heart she prays...

V.16 "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

She now gladly wants for the "**north wind**" to blow upon her garden. North winds in Israel were cold, bitter and harsh but necessary in order to fully develop the taste of fruit and the fragrances of spices. Farmers do not harvest the oranges or grapefruit until after the first cold snap so that their taste reaches maximum sweetness. **James 1:2** teaches, concerning the blowing of the "**north wind**" here, to **"...count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations."** (see **James 1:3,4** for the wonderful results). The Holy Spirit, who is the wind (**John 3:8**), allows difficulties to come into Your life. Why? So that you can be used by God to minister to someone else who is going through the exact same hurt you had previously experienced (**II Cor. 1:1-4**)!

We are called on at times to endure hardness for the Lord (**II Tim. 2:3**) yet, all the while our garden is being developed to the fullest by these "**north winds**". The north winds do come (**Rom. 5:3-4; 8:35,38**) and when they do we just snuggle up into "**Abba Father's**" arms (**Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Mk 14:36**) and He takes care of us as they blow (**Heb. 4:16**)! While His Spirit enwraps us, at the very same moment the Father's hands are continually working in the garden of our heart (**John 15:1**). How absolutely beautiful all this is!

We are so afraid of the "**north winds**", yet in them His power and presence will be felt through those blasts of cold air (**I Cor. 10:13; Phil 4:6,7; II Cor. 4:7-17; Heb.13:5-7**). Sometimes we bitterly complain about the harsh north winds and then confess the sinful attitude. Better to come through those winds understanding their purpose. It makes it so much easier. We will come through those winds having been lifted up higher than ever before and knowing Him in a way that we could never have known in any other way. Because of what He revealed about Himself to us during those times, **Rom. 8:27,31-39** and **I Thess. 5:16-18** become very real to us. We praise and worship our Beloved as never before! Mary, Martha and Lazarus knew all about the "**north winds**" (**Luke 10:38-42; John 11**) but they ended up with the glorious "**south winds**" of service, fellowship and victory in **John 12:1-6**!

Then she asks that the "**south winds**" be allowed to blow upon her garden. These are the gentle, warm south winds of special revelation (**John 14:21; 15:15; 16:13**) of God Himself! These are the winds of true Spirit-filled Christian fellowship (**Eph. 6:18-19**) and winds of ministering to the "**household of faith**" (**Gal.6:10**). These are the winds of His powerful presence falling upon us in prayer and meditation of His Word. These are the caring winds reaching out to the lost (**Mt. 25:34-40**) and the winds of our heart of worship and adoration for Him in the Holy of Holies (our private, intimate time with Him)! "*Blow upon us dear Holy Spirit with Your north and south winds of fullness! Breathe them upon us in full surrender of heart!*"

Notice very carefully that the "**north winds**" are first but, praise God, you will always end with the "**south winds**" if you are entirely surrendered to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God! She is thrilled that so much has been produced in her garden. Her Beloved is pleased that she wants Him to come and receive and be filled with joy. O the joy of giving, especially to the Lord. It is so true that, **"...It is more blessed to give than to receive."** (**Acts 20:35**). She speaks the desire of her heart...

"...Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

May we be so sensitive to the Holy Spirit and hear the voice of our Beloved saying, "*It is time for us to come apart and rest for awhile. Let us go where I can sit with you and feast upon the spiritual delicacies from our heart garden.*" (**Mk. 6:31; John 6:3**). He knows when it is best.

The eternal seeds of His Word have been planted and have grown into the wonderful fruit of His Spirit! With a heart garden filled with the Holy Spirit then you will feel free to invite the Lord Jesus into it for fellowship (special time of devotions) where He just enjoys you alone. O the purity of her garden. There is nothing in it that she would want to hide from Him.

Notice that she now calls it **"his"** garden and rightly so! It was He who created the garden in the first place. His Father tends the garden and His Spirit gives continual life to the Garden. All this produces the Bridegroom's image in the resulting fruit and spices. O praise God, He owns me, wholly and totally! IT IS HIS GARDEN!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Yes, yes come in and eat! Eat and be satisfied! Eat with joy! Eat from what Your Father's hand, by the power of the Holy Spirit, hath wrought in me! O eat Your choice fruits my loving, Beloved Husband! Eat the fruit of my surrender and submission. May there be much, much more as I abide in You and Your Word abides in me (John 15:7-11).*

Chapter 5 - The Discovery of Full Acceptance (cont.)

The Beloved responds:

5:1 *"I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spices; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved (lovers)."*

Notice that the Beloved answers her prayer immediately. He does not say, **"I will come"** but **"I am come..."**. He cannot wait to get there. What satisfaction awaits Him. A mature bride having her garden filled with all sorts of blessings for His heart to enjoy. O my dear friend, can you not see the Beloved here touching every flower, plant and tree. Do you not see the infinite joy, pleasure and satisfaction written in every expression on His lovely countenance? Observe how many times the word **"my"** appears in this verse. Everything belongs to Him. He is only enjoying what is rightfully His by creation and by redemption (**Ezk. 18:4; I Cor. 6:19-20**).

If you listen carefully you will be able to hear Him speaking to Himself and to His angels. He proudly proclaims, **"this is MY sister, this is MY bride."** He pauses, touching the various items in the garden, you can almost hear Him saying, *"Abba, Father, what an amazing Gardener You are! All Your patient work of pruning has created this magnificent garden, thank You!"* The angels observe in holy wonder (**Eph. 3:10**). They are filled with praise for what they do not understand - this marvelous redeemed heart.

The order - My sister, My spouse is quite significant. He is reminding her that He had to first become part of the human family and be her **"kinsman Redeemer"** before she could become His bride and He her Bridegroom.

"...my myrrh with my spices..."

O how often the **"myrrh"** is mentioned by the Holy Spirit in this song. We are to never forget it! The **"myrrh"** represents so much in scripture. Remember, the **"myrrh"** was obtained by crushing! He, the Worm, was crushed by the Father on Calvary (**Isa. 53:10**). His **"myrrh"** was the crushing of His soul by His loving Father at Calvary for my sin. He became everything that His Father hated. It had been as bitter as myrrh can be. But now the **"myrrh"** had turned into a sweet joy with all of the added **"spices"** of the surrendered life. She had received the **"myrrh"** and it was being applied to her daily walk. O look at the results dear reader. Bitterness turned into ultimate joy for Him whom her soul dearly loved!

What a joy it is for Him to gather His **"myrrh"** with His spice (Hebrew: *"balsam"*) from her heart. She was now experiencing the power of the crucified life. Her old sin nature was under the control of the power of Calvary. Sin no longer had rule or dominion over her walk (**Rom. 6:6-14**). She is walking in His victory. The **"myrrh"** is connected with balsam from which comes healing balm. Praise God for the healing virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the atonement there is healing for body, soul and spirit (Read **Isa. 53:5; Psa. 103:3; Mt. 8:14-17**). What had been ashes in her life - now became beauty beyond imagination (**Isa. 61:3**). It took time but it was worth it. O the inexpressible delight, O the glory this brings to His Abba Father! O how He loves to see His Father filled with joy!

This is the first time the Beloved has had, for any extended period of time, a real spiritual intimacy with her. The garden of her heart was made ready so that they could enjoy the highest and most intimate relationship possible. This does not just happen. The spiritual maturity comes from **"abiding"** (Please read **John 15:7-11**). To abide has the meaning, *"to remain, steadfast, continue, endure."* Staying close to the Lord no matter what is going on is the key to obtaining spiritual insight, victory, direction, wisdom and growing in love for the Bridegroom. It comes through prayer, praise, and trusting in the Word of God daily in every circumstance. You don't give up even when you fail! The secret - she abides with Him on the Mountain of Myrrh, dying to self.

The bride knows that she is perfectly loved by Him no matter what (**I John 4:18**). She knows that her faithful Bridegroom is always refining her imperfect steps. There are no more doubts but simply a total reliance on His loving heart and wisdom. She abides with Him in a blessed walk of holiness on the holy hill of frankincense!

"...my honeycomb with my honey..."

He now partakes of the honey and the honeycomb. The orchard had flourished more than anyone else had ever expected. Exquisite flowers, luscious fruits and the finest of spices had been produced. The bees came, creating their honeycomb, then taking the precious pollen, made honey! **Prov. 16:24** helps to unlock the meaning for us: **"Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones."** **Psa. 19:9-10** says, **"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."**

She had taken the Holy Word of God and by faith stood on the promises. By that she found out just how sweet to the soul they can be. She stood on the judgments and precepts of the Word and found them to be true and righteous! She willingly applied the judgments of her Beloved to her life in the power of the Holy Spirit. What joy this brought to her Beloved as He partook of the **honey** of His word and the **honeycomb** that flowed from her surrendered, abiding heart!

He first takes the **honey** of His word, for she has been lovingly obedient to it. Next, He takes the **honeycomb** of her surrendered heart garden. The **honeycomb** is longer lasting. He not only is receiving immediate joy from the **honey**, but there will be more joy for Him to come in the future. So often the Lord gets a few joyous spiritual spurts from us - a few praises at church during an exciting moment and maybe a *"thank You Lord"* in the morning after reading a meaningful passage from His Word. But all is forgotten on Monday during the busyness of the day! However, in the surrendered heart, there is an ongoing praise - love relationship with her Bridegroom in her spirit all week long. Does your Beloved have any honeycomb from the garden of your heart that He can enjoy in the middle of the week as well as taking in the honey of your heart on Sunday? We owe it to Him! As the Holy Spirit keeps reminding us, this is the joy of **Heb. 12:2,3!**

"...my wine with my milk..."

Next, the Beloved drinks His wine with His milk. **Wine** speaks of joy and gladness (**Psa. 104:15**; see **1:2** for comments) and **milk** speaks of the purity of God's holy Word (**I Pet. 2:2**). The Beloved's bride had reached the place of experiencing **Eph. 3:16-20** for she was **"...filled with all the fullness of God."** It is the Bridegroom Himself Who takes in deeply the **wine** and **milk**. He is filled with joy and purity of her surrendered heart! Then, He invites other lilies intimate with Him to...

"...eat O friends; drink..."

Abba Father speaks into the heart of His Beloved Son and says, *"Son of My heart this garden of Your bride is filled to overflowing. It's time to share the glory with Your friends."* The Beloved's eyes sparkled with delight knowing the joy that would be His in sharing the goodness of her garden with His **"friends"** (**John 15:14**). He stops and directs their attention to the beauty of some flower, fruit or spice. He lifts up and examines a sample of each of them with a satisfying eye, then beckons others to see and taste. He exclaims to those with Him, *"Isn't that exquisite My friends!"* He adds one of the chief spices to the fruit and says, *"Try this! You will never taste anything more delectable! This combination is rare and only comes from My garden!"* This is Holy Spirit led, body ministry supplying what other believers need through her garden (**Eph. 4:15,16**).

The Beloved's friends, the lilies, could see the glow on His face and the gleam in His eyes. There is nothing like sharing with others what has brought joy to your heart! There is a special pleasure and satisfaction just looking at the expressions of appreciation and wonder on their faces as they see what you see and experience what you have experienced!

He took time to describe to them the unspeakable condition in which He had originally found her garden. They were overawed at His power to transform a life! There was no trace of the ugliness concerning the former state of this garden. They all knelt down and praised the Father who was so faithful to watch out over the condition of this surrendered garden (**John 15:1**); they praised the Son whose image permeated the garden (**John 15:5**). They all gave thanks for the Holy Spirit who was the power behind the cleaning up and restoring of this beautiful garden (**John 15:3; 16:13-15; Eph. 6:17**) through the blood of Christ and the Word of God.

In heaven, the dear Abba Father speaks to His Beloved Son, *"My Son, tell those who are looking at Your bride how she has been used to bless others. She so pleases My heart also. I will instruct the Holy Spirit to send others into her pathway and they will be blessed by the fruit that has been produced in Your vine, My Son."* And so brought into her life were those in need of the spiritual fruit which appeared on her branch in the Vine. They came, they picked the fruit, they grew stronger in the Lord. Here are some of the testimonies:

There was a little girl who had been hurt so deeply by unloving parents - she met the bride one day and picked off a large portion of Jesus' love. It made such a difference. Her heart was healed! O how they rejoiced and praised the Lord together.

On another occasion the bride "*happened*" to be standing near some people who were expressing great concern over a family whose father had lost his job. The bride secretly found out where they lived and anonymously sent \$500 special delivery to them. It "*happened*" to be the exact amount needed to pay the mortgage of their house that month. They were on the verge of losing it. The note inside simply said, "From Jesus!" The fruit of kindness tasted so good to them.

A few months later she learned that a friend of hers lost a husband. The bride spent many nights with her friend caring, comforting and doing all the practical things that needed to be done. The terrible emptiness began to be lifted. The fruit of peace was so needed at that very time. A "***peace that passes understanding***" miraculously filled her!

On another occasion where the bride worked there was a very irritating co-worker. The bride prayed each day for the situation and the attitude. Then came the unexpected opportunity to do her a kindness. One day that irritating co-worker came and apologized for how badly she had treated the bride. She thanked the bride for being so longsuffering and for the kindness shown her. It gave the bride an opportunity to witness for Christ. The co-worker, who had tasted the bride's fruit of self-control, said, "*I don't know how you put up with me. If it were me in your place I would have had a few 'choice' words to say.*" The bride said a quiet prayer to her Beloved, "*Lord, little does she realize how often I was on the verge of 'losing it'. Thank You for Your self-control! Thank You for controlling my words, You sure do keep Your promises (Psa. 19:14)!*"

Dear surrendered branch in the Vine, the Bridegroom wants to do the same thing in your garden. The fruit of the Spirit that is produced through total submission. The Holy Spirit will lead people over to your branch. Some will need a taste of joy, others will need to digest some kindness, and still others will need a dose of patience. God will invite them into your life to distribute to them His fruitfulness through you. They in turn will continue to have the Lord do a work in the garden of their heart! As our dear Bridegroom sees it, there is actually only one garden. It is made up of a myriad smaller gardens (**1 Cor. 10:17**). Praise God her soul had become a "***watered garden***" (**Jer. 31:12**)! The glorious result was the fruit of faithfulness. She was faithful to pray, read the word, lovingly obedient, patient and faithful to care for others.

Before we travel on into deeper heart revelations of the Bridegroom, notice once again the words "***my***" in **5:1**. As was shared before, all you are and think you have in reality belongs to Him. Don't attempt to hold on to it for selfish reasons. If you do, it will impede the anointing of God's leading and peace in your life. Give back everything in your life to Him: your house, money, time, goals, spouse, children, job, will, emotions, etc.! Surrender what already belongs to Him and see how wonderful the garden of your life will become through His power and care! "***The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.***" **Psa. 24:1.**

PRAY WITH ME: "*O precious Father, move on my garden so that I may experience being filled with all the fullness of Yourself! May the garden of my heart produce all that is good so that You may share it with many who are in great need. I love You and belong to You alone. Take me and mold me as You have planned, for I know it will produce joy unspeakable and give You the glory due Your Name! In the Name of my Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen and amen!*"

PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

THE DANGER OF HESITATION WHEN HE CALLS 5:2 – 5:5

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER FIVE: Time now passes since He came into the lovely garden of His bride. The Beloved has been busy out ministering and fellowshiping with other surrendered believers (lilies). He comes to the place where she lives and knocks on the door. At first she hesitates to answer. The bride finally decides to go to the door, but to her great dismay, He had departed. Desperate, she attempts to find Him. She searches in the streets of Jerusalem for Him asking the daughters of Jerusalem if they have seen Him. Not knowing who she is talking about, they ask her to describe Him. As a result, something wonderful happens to her and to them. Immediate deliverance is at hand! She is just a few moments away from His loving arms.

Between 5:1 and 5:2 there is a time lapse. The wonderful experiences she and her Beloved received in the garden needed time to be savored. A few days later the Lord knocks on the door of her heart once again. But this time it is for a different reason. He knew that she no longer had a problem of going with Him for she had gone with Him to Amana, Hermon and Shenir. It was now time to test her commitment on the mount of Myrrh and the hill of Frankincense to see if she will go with Him even at an inconvenient time! Notice her restlessness as the bride speaks...

V.2 "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of night.'"

There is a warning to us hidden in this verse. She falls asleep after having experienced ultimate joy when all the choice fruit and spices of her garden were accepted by her Beloved. You might ask, "*What is wrong with her going to sleep, she had done that before in 2:7 and again in 3:5?*" Upon closer examination of the passages in **chapters two and three** you will notice an important difference. He was present and had directed her to sleep! However, in this verse His words are conspicuously absent!

There is a time for spiritual rest but only when the Lord gives that permission to do so and He will be right there in intimate fellowship to see to it that the sleep is true rest for your soul.

After this wonderful mountaintop experience (4:9 – 5:1) she did what so many do, lean upon the experience rather than keeping focused on the Lord Himself. Yes, we are to absolutely enjoy the blessings. We are never to forget them! There will be times the Holy Spirit will bring them back to our remembrance to be strengthened for a new step of faith. However, the bride here decided to go to sleep not realizing that her Beloved had left. Her sleep was not very restful, for her heart was awake. The Holy Spirit began to disturb the bride's sleep in order to get her attention. She was uncomfortable and restless! At this point the bride should have inquired of the Spirit, "*Is there something wrong? Are you trying to tell me something?*"

So often in our Christian walk we begin to unconsciously coast ever so slowly. Spiritually she is coasting! Instead of being out there ministering with Him, moving from grace to grace, glory to glory and blessing to blessing, she is sleeping. Ever so subtle a spirit of dullness has crept into her soul. Her spiritual discernment is being impaired. The voice of her Beloved is becoming less distinct. She is alone! He is away from her. We know this because He comes and knocks on her door.

Jesus longs to have her minister with Him. He knocks on the door of her heart. Praise God for His persistent grace and longing patience with her and with us. Will she open without hesitation? Dear blood-bought one, listen to the voice of your Beloved knocking at your heart's door, the door over which you had written, "**...wither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people...**" (Ruth 1:16). Will you respond? Will she? He pleads with her...

"...Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled..."

The Beloved Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, is so polite and courteous. Her heart has been purchased by His blood. He has every right to barge in, yet He still knocks. He will never force you to go with Him in ministering to others. He looks for a heart which will readily respond in love to Him! The implication of His request is that He wants her to leave and go with Him. Her response in v.3 indicates this is what she understood, but she was saying "*I don't want to go out because I will get my feet dirty!*"

How could one ever, ever hesitate with such love-filled words? Listen to His pleading, "Open to Me on the basis that I am your kinsman Redeemer ('sister')! Open to Me on the basis that you alone are the bride of My heart ('love')! Open to Me on the basis that you still have only eyes for Me alone ('dove')! Open to Me on the basis that your garden is pure ('undefiled')! Open your will fully to Me! Give to Me final and total access to your heart of faith. Step out and see the strength, peace, wonders and fulfillment awaiting you!" Will she rush to open the door of her will "...to Him whom her soul loveth"?

"...for my head is filled with dew..."

With the above words drawing at her heart to open to Him, the Beloved adds these words, "**my head is filled with dew**". He is reassuring her that He is filled with God (**Hosea 14:5**). He is saying by the reference to the "**dew**" that God's favor, His grace, will be with them continually (**Prov. 19:12**). He is "**filled**", meaning there is more than enough! Why would she hesitate? Her love is so great for Him, yet she hesitates. O my dear Christian friend, be careful about the "**little**" hesitations in your life when you definitely know your Lord is prompting and leading you to do something under His guiding anointing!

"...and my locks with the drops of night."

Earlier His friends were brought near to her to receive fruit from His garden (**5:1**). Now He wants to share her fruit with others far away (**7:11-12; 8:5**). He has been ministering in the night to those who are groping in the darkness. He is asking her to take a step of faith and be led by Him to the hurting, then she will give Him to them for their healing! Do you hear Him saying, "**...it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.**" (**Rom. 13:11-13**).

Lost men, women, boys and girls walking in darkness and yes, believers can also walk in darkness because of disobedience! He wants us to go out into their darkness with Him who is the light of the world. Will she respond? Will you? Jesus doesn't always "*show up*" at the most convenient times (the **Matt. 25:35-40** principle). Will you say "yes" to the Holy Spirit's gentle beckoning? Will she? Jesus stopped at a well in Samaria and He was weary (**John 4:6**). It was inconvenient for Him to take time with this woman but He did! The immediate rewards were tremendous. His hunger subsided. He received supernatural energy from Abba Father and was rewarded with great joy (**John 4:32-34**)!

If only she would go with Him and step out in loving, obedient faith for a whole new world of blessed intimacy and service awaits her! This is where He is escorting her all through this Song. He wants her to give His heart to others. His great joy is for Him to minister through us in blessed, intimate fellowship. You might be thinking that this approach here is really reading too much into the text. This is exactly what will take place later (**7:11-13; 8:5,8**)! For now, at least, there is a desire on her part to go with Him.

In **chapter two** He yearned for her to go with Him. Praise God this is a learning experience here for the bride and not condemnation. She will never be the same after this failure. It will lead her into a deeper, fully surrendered relationship. She excuses herself by saying...

V.3 "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

Listen carefully, and you will be able to hear a slight tone of irritation in her voice. Have you ever been somewhat "*put upon*" with an "*untimely*" request of the Lord to do something or go somewhere? You said in your heart, "*Lord, I don't mind doing it but not right now! I just need to sit and relax for a little while.*" But His voice quietly persisted, "*Open to Me and let Me take care of that irritation.*" You had no idea that a "**little leaven**" of hesitation has been sprinkled over your "*will*" (**Gal. 5:9**)! The sad result will be seen in **Song 5:7**! O the "**little leaven**" of my rights, rights of convenience. "*O Lord, expose the leaven so I will not begin a destructive, downward journey.*" She had taken off the coat of practical righteousness (**Isa. 61:10**). It was the mind of her old nature making the choice and not the mind of Christ! She asks, "**how shall I put it on**"? The answer is by declaring, "*Not my will but My Beloved's will!*" But alas, she continues with the excuses of leaven, "**I have washed my feet...**" Will He not wash her spiritual feet with the water of the Word when they are through ministering (**John 13:8-12; 15:3; Eph. 5:25,26**)?

Although she is truly surrendered in heart to Him and in no way wants someone else, the bride falls back into the trap of inconvenience which constantly pleads, "*not now, but later!*" We would never say it that way. We dress it up in a more spiritually acceptable tone. In **vs. 2 and 3** the little word "I" appears five times. She is saying to her Beloved, "*You know how much I love You but don't You see, I need to relax now and sleep? I thought You really cared for me! I want to spend some*

time reading Your Word before I go to sleep. I absolutely don't want to take another bath later!" Notice the words, "**my coat**" and "**my feet**!" She is in control of their use! They are not totally submitted to Him! Ministering to the Samaritan woman He met at the well was certainly inconvenient for Him. He was tired, weary and hungry! But He laid aside that which was of temporal importance to deal with the emptiness of a longing, hurting, wounded heart!

Lovingly He asks her, "Have you forgotten that I gave up all My rights (**Phil. 2:5,6**) for you My love?" Will she respond? Will you? Her concern about defilement is admirable, but a "little" defilement has taken place already in her hesitation to respond! So many of us think we are clean, when, in actuality, there is still spiritual dirt clinging to the feet of our will. Her spiritual feet, which were clean, have now become polluted. This wouldn't have happened if she had bound all decisions to the "**mind of Christ**" which is in her (**I Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5**). This is the mind which causes us to always make the right decisions!

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Lord, may I never, never hesitate in responding to Your prompting! I long to do Your will and Your will alone. Cause me to walk in Your ways (**Ezk. 36:27**). May my response always say, 'I love You with all of my heart. Your desire is my desire. In Jesus name, amen!'"

V.4 "My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels (feelings) were moved for Him!"

The doors were quite thick and had large holes in them where a person could reach through and unlock the door. Do you see the hand of your Bridegroom through the hole in your heart's door? Do you see the nail-scarred hand there, desiring a quick, loving response from you to go with Him? O how your Blessed Lord wants you to share in the work which He had already chosen just for you in eternity past (**Eph. 2:10**). There is no reason for reluctance. Our Omniscient God has the work all planned out and the dear Holy Spirit provides the power to accomplish it! Surely there will be no hesitation on her part! It is unthinkable!

Her emotions were moved because of His voice just as our feelings are touched when we read the Word of God and the voice of the precious Holy Spirit speaks to us through it. That should have been enough for an immediate, positive response to submit. But are stirred emotions enough to cause us to obey His voice and answer, "yes" to any request of our Bridegroom? No! The feelings, which she is experiencing, are from the soul. God made us with emotions. The Holy Spirit tells us in **Psa. 103** for our soul to bless Him with all that is within us. But emotions alone will not necessarily move her feet. An inalterable decision should have been made in her spirit long before this, that whenever her Beloved calls she would go, with no questions asked! Each day as we hug on Him during that special "first love, love" quiet time, by the Spirit we should look Him in the eyes and say once again, "My Husband, I will obey You today because of Your grace-filled, loved-filled heart for me which never changes!"

This indecision will cost her dearly. He will go away grieved having His purpose for her to share in His work unfulfilled. **Eph. 4:30** tells us that we can grieve the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ (**Rom. 8:9**). Previously when asked by the Beloved to go with Him she declined because of the desire to have Him just for herself alone. That decision brought on an unexpected and fearful separation (**2:17**). Since that time her heart has changed. She will go with Him but only at a convenient time. The good news is, the bride does arise and goes to the door. All seems well, but is it?

V.5 "I rose to open to my Beloved; and my hand dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet myrrh, upon the handles of the lock."

The door handles smelled of myrrh. His nail scarred hand had touched it leaving a reminder of the cross there. She loved that fragrance. It had become so much a part of her life since going to the mountain of Myrrh. Her heart beats faster as she detected the scent of the myrrh. O how well she knew what it meant. It was the symbol of total and complete love for her and how He had shed His blood for her sins making her heart beautiful. That very moment blessed thoughts of His infinite, giving heart raced through her mind. "O my Beloved, I see the cup Your Father offered to You in the garden. Dear, dear Lord You saw my dirty soul in that cup, then, without hesitation, You reached forth Your hand to take the cup of wrath, knowing full well what it meant! You went to the mountain of Myrrh for me. It was a bitter taste to You, but it was there that You placed the very costly myrrh on my soul. I remember skipping and jumping all the way down to the hill of frankincense in holiness. Thank You, thank You my Love!" Her heart, bursting with excited love for Him, couldn't wait to put her arms around Him and say, "I love You so much for Calvary and the myrrh!" As she put on her garments the bride raises her voice in panic, "My Beloved, I'm coming! I will be there in just a minute! Wait! Please Wait!" Instead of joy there would be shock and dismay as she said...

V.6a "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone..."

She gets to the door quickly! Her heart pounds anticipating the joy of His fellowship. She opens the door with great anticipation calling out to Him, *"Here I am my Beloved!"* Her heart sinks! He's gone! She runs outside shouting, *"I am here, don't, don't leave me! I'll go with You! I'm sorry I hesitated, I won't do it again!"* But there is no answer, just the quiet sounds of the night! Tears fill her eyes as she shouts over and over again, *"He's gone!" "He's gone!"* Sharp pains pierce her heart and mind. The depressing realization hit her, *"I have deeply wounded Him!"*

Howling winds of doubt begin to swirl in her mind! *"Will He come back? If He does, how long will I have to wait?"* The enemy of her thought life begins to build a stronghold there. Thoughts rush through her mind, *"He won't come back, I have deeply grieved my Love! There is no way He will ever want me again! It's too late!"* Despair floods her soul! She cries out, *"O my soul why, why did I hesitate? I'm so sorry Lord, I hurt You again."* Weeping and sobbing uncontrollably, she falls asleep. A cold, spiritual distance begins to creep into her heart. He now seems so far, far away! The hurt is so much greater than before.

She awakes from an uneasy sleep realizing all over again what she had done. O the pain of the voice of her heart, *"No! No! No! It can't be! He's gone, really gone! O my Love how could I have done this to You? How could I give You the impression that I did not want to be with You anymore; that You were not worthy of my immediate obedience and attention? What can I do to change what has happened? I love You so much and now You're gone! My Love, please, please give me just one more opportunity. In anguish my heart cries for You!"* The Lord has to allow her to go through this terrible emptiness so she will never again permit the leaven of her will to detract and divert her from the blessed filling and sensitivity of the Holy Spirit.

That very moment the enemy came rushing to speak to her mind. *"Yes, you blew it, He no longer loves you. You are worthless. He will find someone else who really loves Him. He knew that your heart was just a lie. The fruit He saw in your garden was just an illusion. What good are you?"* Oh, these terrible, evil lies from the enemy; the enemy bombards her mind over and over again with them. Were it not for the unseen angels holding on to her she would have been entirely crushed in despair. (**Psa. 91:11-12**). A confusing cloud of darkness sweeps over her soul.

We cannot open to the Lord whenever we *"feel"* like it. There is a line that is crossed by the well-intentioned believer which derails their walk with the Lord for a time and brings much needless agony, emptiness and distress. All of the pain this bride will go through could have been avoided if she had kept her heart and eyes on **"Him whom her soul loves"**.

Learn a great lesson here. What seems to be a meaningless act of reluctance may turn out to be an extremely painful experience. Be on the alert for a little *"leaven"* creeping in. May your heart be sensitive to that *"quiet, gentle voice"* of the Holy Spirit warning you of danger. Weigh carefully every decision you make, for it can cost you days, months or even years of blessed fellowship and walking in Abba Father's plan for your life. The more you are in love with Him, the more responsive you will be to His voice!

Notice that there is activity in her walk **"I rose up to open"** and there is correct action **"I opened to my beloved"**. What caused this lack of sensitivity to His loving invitation to go and minister with Him to those hurting in the darkness? Possibly she was coasting on the great blessing which had just taken place a few days before, where her heart garden was totally pleasing to Him. She was now leaning on the blessing and not the Blessor! It is so easy to do that. Yes, we are to savor the joy of being used as a blessing by Him for His heart and others. Yet, we are never to take our eyes of worship off of Him. At least the lady in this long song is quick to repent. Read **Heb. 12:1-3** once again. The answer to all of our needs is to keep our eyes upon Jesus! It's not how much we know about the Word! It's how often we keep our gaze upon Him!

V.6b "...my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer."

Look at her heart, she immediately realizes what she has done and begins to search for Him in the streets, *"...I sought him, but I could not find him..."*. This bride, who has brought so much joy to His heart, is now wandering the streets of Jerusalem. There is grief and pain in her voice, *"My Beloved, where are You? Please, please answer me! I'm so sorry for what I have done! I need You more than ever before! Please let me hear Your voice!"* But there was no answer. The agony within would be enough suffering in itself, but now there will be excruciating pain from without. She will be confronted with hurt as never before! Yes, she had changed her mind and went to the door. But that was not enough! She calls out to Him again and again, but all she hears is an unbearable, deafening silence. O how hard it is to read these words, **"...he gave me no answer"**. (Please read all of **Psa. 6**, in your tears He will hear!)

He had left and moved on in the divine schedule of ministry. The Beloved had to be some other place at a specific time to meet the needs of others and fellowship with them. He deeply desired for her to share in all this glory (**John 17:22**).

Previously the attention of her heart had been wholly on Him, but now she lingered too long on self-rights to minister with Him. There is a place in your Christian life when your Beloved calls on you to, "...**endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**" (II Tim. 2:3). It might be in the middle of the night but you will go with Him. His arm will be around you all the way. (However, for now the tears continue: **Psa. 31:9; 38:10; 88:9.**)

Why would He not wait? Because her hesitation was sin! With all the blessings she had experienced thus far, the bride should have responded to her Beloved immediately! Think of all the love-filled compliments lavished on her from His heart! Think of the description of her heart garden by Him! Think of the fruit which was enjoyed by Him and shared with others! What a spiritually productive life! Yet, there was hesitation. This was no spiritual baby. This was a full grown, surrendered believer who should have known better. He is going to allow her to experience a few moments without Him again to let her know the dangers of hesitation. He is cleansing her. She will never be the same again. An incredible intimacy awaits her from which she will never turn back. Praise God, **Psa. 116:8** will soon become true of her.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Holy Spirit please have such control of my will that I will never hesitate at the voice of my Beloved. Cause me to be so sensitive with my spiritual ear that I will be able to hear His slightest movement. O Lord Jesus I never want to hurt You as this lady must have. Father, I ask You to grant this for it would glorify You and Your Son (John 14:13,14). In Jesus' name, amen."*

THE DESPERATION AND DEPRESSION OF LONELINESS 5:7 – 5:8

V.7 "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me."

Can this really be happening to one who has had such a beautiful heart garden; to one who has been so intimate with her Beloved? This verse presents a terrible scene and yes, it can happen to the dearest Christian who decides not to obey the voice of the Beloved. She has a double problem: first, it is her emotions (v.6) for the bride cannot find Him in her desperate search. As the watchmen attacked her, a dark cloud of fear and loneliness enclosed her. Second, the enemy has been given opportunity to attack her unmercifully through well-intentioned "spiritual" leaders. The very people who should be helping her, the enemy uses.

Hear what the Lord has to say to those shepherds who hurt His flock, **Jer. 23:1 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture! declares the LORD."**

"The watchmen that went about the city found me..."

At first sight she was relieved to see the watchmen. She thought, "Maybe they will help me once again." But in their eyes was not help, but anger and judgment. Hope turned into fear as they approached. The watchmen represent those who care for the Lord's sheep in some way. It speaks of them in **Heb. 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls..."** She who needs comfort and guidance from the watchmen, will only receive scorn and punishment. These watchmen had previously given her direction (**3:3**), but now, they have become angry and disgusted with her. One of the watchmen thought, "Has she not learned her lesson? Is she spiritually stupid?" How sad that these "**watchmen**" immediately judged her without an honest, caring inquiry in hopes of restoring her (**Gal. 6:1,2**).

"...they smote me, they wounded me..."

They remind me of Job's friends who wept with him for seven days (**Job 2:11-13**), then began to beat him unmercifully with their words of condemnation (**Job chapters 11,15,18,22**)! Amazing how ready they were to quickly pounce on this lady! Harsh, unloving, critical, sarcastic words "**smite**" and "**wound**" so many believers who have sinned. How sad that many counselors (pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, etc.) in the church are quick to condemn if their advice is not obeyed! Yes, there is need for discipline in the church. But we had better be careful how it is administered! Do we want to crush or restore the spirit of the offender? Is the problem pride in the counselor because the advice was seemingly not heeded? Where is **Gal. 6:1,2** in all of this? "**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**"

Verbal blow after verbal blow is brought against her! Finally the beatings and the insults cease and the "**watchmen**" and "**keepers**" of the wall stand there looking at this pitiful sight satisfied she will never be that brainless again!

"...the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me."

They rip her veil from her face. These keepers are now going to expose her sin for all to see. The watchmen thought, "Maybe others will get the message that they had better listen to 'spiritual' correction the first time or suffer the consequences." How sad that they did not heed **Prov. 10:12**, "**Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.**". A loose word from our lips can make it so difficult for an erring believer to be properly restored. The enemy of our souls loves to have the "**veil**" torn away and expose our sin to those who are younger or less mature in the Lord. Even if the one corrected returns, many times there is a coldness from those who formerly were warm in their relationship. All those who truly counsel must keep the "**walls**" up in order to protect the hurting believer. Love does not expose another's sin but keeps it within the spiritual confines of only those who need to know, bringing the offender into restoration. How often "**spiritual**" Christians expose the sin to others by saying, "You need to pray for brother.....! Did you know he.....?" It's called "gossip" in all of its ugliness.

As she lies there spiritually bleeding, the cold and darkness of night fell around her. She is left unveiled out on the street with her shame exposed for all to see. The enemy of her soul comes quickly to attack her mind. The sharp arrow of self condemnation pierces her soul with such accusing thoughts as, "You deserve all of this! You are worthless! The best thing you can do is to end it all. No one will ever care for you again. You can't even go back to your own country for they have been shamed with what you have done! Nobody cares for you! Just end it all." What a lie from the lips of the enemy! Dear Christian, don't ever entertain such attacks against your mind. Do battle (**II Cor. 10:3-5**). Begin to praise Him no matter what state you are in (**Psa. 8:2; Matt. 21:16**). Quote the Word in faith (**Jer. 31:3**, etc.).

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Father, thank You for making me a gift to Your Son even in my horrible sin-sick condition. Thank You dear Lord Jesus that You would never insult Your Father by trashing His gift to You (me) (**John 6:37,39; 10:28,29**). Thank You Holy Spirit that all three of You care so deeply for me and are transforming me more and more into Jesus' beautiful image!"

As the light of morning dawns the daughters of Jerusalem appear on the street going to get water from the public well. They stop and cannot believe what they see. Astonished, one of them remarked, "*It looks like the King's beloved wife. It can't be! Impossible!*" They hear a moaning sound coming from this unveiled, beaten woman. With tears of unbearable shame streaming down her cheeks she tries to explain to the daughters (those palace ladies who served her **v.8**) just why they have found her in this frightful and appalling condition. Can you not feel the utter pathos in her voice as she personally recounts to them what was done to her by the "**watchmen**" and the disgrace of not going with her Beloved?

This sobbing lady, bruised all over her body ("**wounded**" Heb. "*to bruise*") tries to explain to the women why she does not have her veil (shawl) and appears as a common prostitute! She blurts out a word or two, then more sobs, broken sentences punctuated with convulsive crying. All they could really make out was her mournful, repentant heart saying, "*I'm so sorry my Beloved! I'm so sorry! Please forgive me! I am so utterly alone without You!*" Cradling the bride in their arms the daughters lift her up, give her water, brush her hair back, bind up her wounds and lovingly embrace her. Her sobbing then begins to ease.

Dear loved one of Jesus, what would you do under these circumstances? Would you give up and say, "*It's not worth the effort anymore, why stay where I am not wanted? He won't love me in this condition anyway for I have violated His heart's purpose for me and now I have been spiritually violated by those I thought really cared for me. How could He love me looking so spiritually repulsive?*" Many believers in this condition will simply stay home away from fellowship. But this will not be the case with this truly surrendered bride. If she had been a quitter, she would have missed the glorious blessing of **chapters six, seven and eight!** This is exactly what your enemy wants you to do, have nothing to do with fellow believers. God has given you spiritual love to pass on to others in the body of Christ (**Eph. 4:16**). If you give up you will have fallen into Satan's trap!

Praise God, this lady in the Song teaches us what it truly means to love Jesus with all of our heart! She doesn't quit! She was persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed (**II Cor. 4:7-9**)! You see, she has a treasure inside of her! Many would have given up Christian fellowship under less difficult circumstances to never return.

And now, the bride asks one of the most important questions of her life in the next verse. Keep in mind that although she has been totally devastated, physically and emotionally, the eyes of her spirit are immediately focused on her Beloved and not her circumstances! In a pitiful, deeply distressed tone she pleads with the daughters...

V.8 "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem if ye find my beloved that ye tell him, that I am sick of love."

(paraphrase: "*my heart is breaking!*")

The word "**sick**" is also translated "*to grieve*" or "*faint*". The prospect of losing Him is so intense and her love is so great for Him that she is on the verge of fainting with grief. In such a terrible physical and emotional condition her spirit still longs for Him! Notice that there is not a word of bitterness toward those who heaped such indignities upon her. In her heart she is living out the forgiveness of **Eph. 4:31,32** and **Mt. 6:14**. She forgives those who have hurt her, so that her Beloved will forgive her.

How often have surrendered believers been wounded deeply in their spirit by a spouse, a son or daughter, a parent, a friend, a church minister or fellow worker? It is almost unbearable as **Prov. 18:14** proclaims, "**...but a wounded spirit who can bear?**" Praise our God, she remembers her Beloved has carried all of her sorrows and griefs (**Isa.53:4,5**). She can forgive as He did on the cross. The Lord Jesus allowed the Father to forgive through Him when He cried out, "**...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.**" (**Luke 23:34**)! When you find it almost impossible to forgive a terrible wrong done to you, allow the Lord to forgive through you. Just say in your heart, "*Lord, I allow You to forgive (name of person) through me as You did to Your persecutors while hanging on the cross. Your forgiveness is my forgiveness since I am one with You dear Lord (John 17:22)*!"

Upon what do you dwell when passing through a deep valley of testing? Is it the hurt itself (self pity)? Is it the people from whom the affliction came (bitterness, revenge)? Or is it upon your Beloved alone (for forgiveness, healing and strength)?

The Holy Spirit will direct her thoughts back to the Beloved by having her answer a question asked by the daughters of Jerusalem. What is about to take place will change her life and enhance her relationship with Him forever. She will be so changed that He will not have to ask her to go with Him again. Instead, she will ask Him to go (**chapter 7**)! This is the spiritually defining moment in her life!

THE DRAWING OF HER HEART BACK TO HIM: 5:9 - 6:3

(The Daughters of Jerusalem speak)

V.9 "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest (most beautiful) among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?"

To their credit they did not judge and condemn her. The Daughters of Jerusalem knew who the Beloved was and that He had a special place in His heart for His beautiful bride (**2:7; 3:5,10,11**). They knew about Him from what they had heard from the virgins who also served the bride.

They are asking a very serious and important question concerning the Beloved. The bride is in terrible condition. She is almost unrecognizable. So to make sure that she is the one they had served in the palace, they ask a very probing question. These daughters well know what He looks like. If she is the bride it will be no trouble to give an accurate description. What the bride and these daughters don't realize is, this description will be more than they bargained for. It will be a soul changing revelation to all! The answer will restore her to the Beloved once and for all. As the bride describes the greatness of His person and the wonders of His heart, their souls will be drawn to Him as never before.

Dear bride of the King, what would be your response to their question? Would you only say that Jesus is your Savior and leave it at that? O He is so much more, yet very few Christians are able to give more than just a simple answer to this question, "*Who is your Beloved?*" The Holy Spirit will bring to her memory awesome thoughts of her Beloved's greatness and glory. Now, in her direst need, these memories will miraculously bring restoration to His presence and lead the daughters to pure joy!

In the moment of crisis what has been planted in your heart will surface as **Prov. 23:7** declares, "**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...**"! What is it you meditate upon (**Psa. 1:3**)? The Holy Spirit is going to use the Daughters to plumb the length, breadth, depth and height of the glories which reside in the Bride's wounded spirit concerning the only Love of her heart!

Keep in mind that this bride is not backslidden. What is the difference? A backslidden sheep's heart finds something else more important than the Lord. This is not the case with the bride. The intensity of her love for Him still fills her heart! There is no coldness or lukewarmness here. This is just a moment in growing into a greater intimacy with her Beloved, a very difficult one but a spiritually necessary one to enter again into the surging, cascading waters of His glorious presence.

Think about this, who is really going to minister to whom here in these passages before us? Amazingly, it is the bride who will minister to the Daughters' hearts rather than visa versa. In our worst condition, if we are filled up with Jesus,

the dear Holy Spirit will use us to draw others hearts to the Beloved. The answer to their question is found in **6:1** when the Daughters beg the bride to tell them where her Beloved is, so they may seek Him too! They will see Him first hand for themselves. They will understand that even her description was extremely inadequate in comparison to His real presence.

For the moment let's consider the Daughters of Jerusalem. They truly want to help her. The Daughters can minister to her wounded body but not to her wounded spirit. They have no answers. Lying there before them a hurting lady cries out to them, *"I desperately need your help, tell my Beloved I need Him! Only He has the power to restore me fully."* The wonderful thing is that the bride, without realizing it, will minister to their hearts and lead them to her Beloved (**6:1-2**).

When a person is truly in love they can talk and talk and talk about the object of their love. The Lord allowed His bride to be injured so that many would be led to His heart! What was meant for evil by the enemy, the destruction of the bride, resulted in an enormous blessing for many! Read **II Cor. 1:3,4**. No trial is ever wasted by our caring, loving, leading Lord.

What you are about to witness is the answer to how the Holy Spirit draws a believer's heart back to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of truth clearly states the principle in **John 12:32**, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."* In that passage Jesus spoke of His death. But the principle of drawing a believer back to Himself is there. Lift Him up and your heart will be drawn back to Him. Praise is the prime way to lift Him up.

The Holy Spirit did just that in order to draw back the Ephesian believers to the heart of the Lord. The first three chapters lift up the Lord in so many marvelous ways. Then He begins to deal with real difficult problems in that church (**chapters 4-6**)! The heart of the Ephesians was tenderized toward the Lord (**chapters 1-3**) so they could be drawn to Him (**chapters 4-6**)!

As she lifts Him up to the Daughters, this bride will be drawn immediately to her beloved and find Him in **6:2,3**. She will never be the same! There will be no more departure from His presence and fellowship! Come now and hear what has been locked up in the deep recesses of her heart for Him alone. The secrets He had revealed to her in private, now will gush forth as rivers of living, healing water. In pain, the bride slowly lifted up her head and said...

V.10 "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand."

With thoughts of her Beloved rushing through her memory, her countenance is transformed with joy! Praise God she can still say, *"My beloved...!"* He is *"white"* (Heb. - dazzling, glowing, clear), in other words, there is not one bit of impurity in Him. He is righteousness and purity personified. The precious Holy Spirit described the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, in **Heb. 1:3** as, *"...being the brightness (radiance) of His glory..."*! *"Ruddy"* (Heb. - "to make red") seen in one's face connotes perfect health. Just the beginning thoughts of Jesus, the Living Word, is health itself! **Prov. 4:20-22** declares, *"My son, attend to my WORDS; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and HEALTH to all their flesh."*

Relying on the promises in His Word and obeying its precepts, then stress, which causes much of our sickness, is almost eliminated. Jesus Himself stated that He is the Word of God (**John 1:1**). His very words are *"life and spirit"* (**John 6:63**)! Praise God for spiritual, soul and physical health, all found in the One who is *"ruddy"*! He who was pure became totally impure for us at the cross. But thanks be to God for the victory of His blood over our sin! He rose in purity so we might possess His glorious, dazzling, clear, eternal purity in our souls! Hallelujah! It is progressive in this life! We are becoming more and more like Jesus. Not until heaven will we experience it completely.

"...chiefest (Heb. - "to look; to behold") among ten thousand."

If all the human race could stand together, her Beloved would stand out amongst them all! There would be no reason to bother looking with interest at any other! Do you feel this way, my dear surrendered reader? Does Jesus really stand out so much in your heart and mind that others become truly insignificant in comparison? I really enjoy reading the first words of **Heb. 12:2**. After reading about all of the others who lived by faith in **chapter 11**, the Holy Spirit directs us to the One who not only is the greatest example of living His life by faith and overcoming but He is faith itself. He possesses it and gives it away to all of us so that we can bless Him (**Romans 12:3**).

The term *"ten thousand"* is actually *"tens of thousands"* and in the Hebrew, it is used as a superlative. In other words, He is the best, the greatest, unsurpassable, outstanding, indescribable among an incalculable number of others. Jesus, the Beloved of the Father, is the eternal dazzling light to her soul. He is the sum total of her existence, nothing else matters. The bride gives us a wonderful overall description of her one and only Love. Is He the, *"chiefest among ten thousand"* to you? Is He your everything? What follows are the holy particulars of why He alone is all glorious!

PRAY WITH ME: "O my King I must bow down and kneel before Your glorious person. O dear, dear, Bridegroom of my heart, I am filled to overflowing with **'first love'** love for You! O my Lord, may this love continue to flow, I only ask that You increase its width, depth, length and height by the filling of the Spirit who resides in the temple of my body! O my Light, You are dazzling with beauty and the brightness of Deity. You radiate all that is good, right and perfect! You uphold all things by the Word of Your power and to think You tenderly hold my heart in Your nail pierced hand. O my Husband this is too much to contemplate. I will just sit quietly in the arms of Your presence meditating upon Your glories! In Jesus' name, amen."

V.11 "His head is as the most fine (pure) gold, his locks are bushy (wavy), and black as a raven."

From the well of her overflowing heart bursts forth all the cherished secrets experienced in her relationship with the Beloved. Words filled with Him flow freely from her lips. The bride glows as she declares, **"His head is as the most fine gold..."**! Gold symbolizes absolute authority, honor, power and strength and the right to rule (read **Dan. 2:31,37**). Gold, when put into the hands of unregenerate man becomes his god, but when God is the center of man's life then it is looked upon as being good, **"...the gold of that land is good."** (**Gen. 2:12**).

The temple within, where God's presence would reside, was overlaid with gold, even the floor (**I Kin. 6:21,22,30**). The heavenly city is described in Revelation as **"Having the glory of God...and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass...and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."** (**Rev.21:11,18,21**). Pure gold represents the manifested glory of God. It represents God Himself! A transparent life is a life lived honestly before the Lord. You quickly admit your weaknesses and sins to the Lord. You don't pretend to be something you are not. It is the humble life (**I Pet. 5:6,7**).

PRAY WITH ME: "Lord, You alone have the right to rule over me. I welcome Your Lordship into my life. Let the pure gold of Your glory permeate my soul. May the gold of Your power and authority daily control and lead me! Lord make me to live a transparent life! In the name which is above every name, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen."

Later, in **v.14** she will describe His hands as gold and in **v.15** His feet are gold! Here, the head of her Beloved is gold. His thoughts, His words, what He sees, what He hears, He is the Omniscient God! Jesus is God (**John 1:1,3; 8:58; 10:30,33; 20:28**)! She is saying to us and to the Daughters of Jerusalem, **"He is my God and He has absolute authority over my life! This is my joy and contentment. His strength makes me feel so safe, for my enemies must fall back in defeat when faced with His strength, power and presence. He is God and His every thought to me is pure, just, holy and righteous! His Spirit puts wonderful, godly thoughts in my mind by which my thinking is transformed (Rom. 12:2)! This is why I hurt so deeply! I dishonored Him by hesitating to go with Him and now depression, sorrow and guilt have filled my mind. But even now, as I speak of Him, I feel a lifting of the heaviness beginning, O praise His Holy name!"**

"...his locks are bushy, and black as a raven."

He has a full head of black hair. He is still young looking. To His own He is ageless. He remains eternally the same for His Bride, powerful, handsome, glorious! Jesus, the Son of Man, sitting on the throne as God in Heaven, will never change physically as He did while on earth. Praise God, **"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."** (**Heb. 13:8**)! Your heavenly Husband will never change, never grow old or weary; He will always maintain that all consuming **"first love"** love for you His bride! Hallelujah!

Think of it, since I am going to have a body like His glorious body (**Phil. 3:21**) then I will never grow old either in eternity! There is another description of Jesus in **Rev. 1:12-16**. It is an awesome and fearful description. This is the Jesus of judgment! This is the Lamb ready to pour out His wrath (**Rev. 6:16**). Thank God, we will not have to deal with Jesus the wrathful God (read **John 3:36; I Thess. 1:10**). O how beautiful and forever youthful Jesus is for His bride! That's love!

PRAY WITH ME: "Lord Jesus, I worship and adore You. Can it be true that You will never lose Your Bridegroom's intensity of love for me? Yes, yes, yes for You cannot lie, You are God! Millenniums will pass and Your Bridegroom's love for me will not diminish one degree! Forgive me for ever hesitating when You called on me to go with You."

V.12 "His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set."

O my dear surrendered friend, sit quietly next to your Lord. Place your hand in His nail-scarred hand and just sit there in His presence with your eyes closed, praising and loving Him in your soul and spirit! Listen quietly for Him to whisper

into the ear of your heart, *"My beautiful one, My sister, My dove, My bride I love you, I will never cease loving you. You alone are the portion of My eternal joy, O blood-bought one of My heart (Deut. 32:9; Heb. 12:2; Zeph. 3:17; I Pet.1:19)!"*

She remembers so vividly how He would take her face in His hands and lift her head so her eyes would meet His. O how often He would do that and her heart would melt. Those Bridegroom eyes spoke so forcefully with tender affection of His pure love and compassion for her eternal welfare. In her mind she can see those eyes of her Bridegroom. When His eyes "spoke" a loving obedience flooded her soul. Every time she looked into those eyes the things of the world became meaningless or less important. That gaze of His was penetrating her thoughts again; she was changing. It was as if she were seeing it for the first time! She could feel a subtle transformation taking place by just describing her Love! He truly has **doves eyes** for you dear surrendered believer. Look at those eyes through the window of the Word of God. You see in those **doves eyes** His sacrifice for you (**Lev. 1:14-15**). Because of your hesitation, you will see a sad mourning in His gaze (**Nah. 2:7**). He missed you so much (**Isa. 38:14**) and you were oblivious to the pain which pierced His longing, lonely heart for your fellowship on life's journey.

"...by the rivers of waters..."

As her mind is flooded with thoughts concerning the joy of His doves eyes, she sees streams of living water flowing from His gaze to her heart. He was forever, infinitely filled with the Spirit! Every time their eyes met, brilliant streams of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance flooded her soul. The very remembrance of just a glance from His eyes brings renewal to her spirit and soul! A strange and beautiful change sweeps over her as she describes Him. The water of the Word is washing away the pain (**Eph. 5:25,26; John 15:3**)!

"...washed with milk..."

The milk of his eyes speak to her of nourishment, satisfaction, purity and refreshment. In her heart she has turned back to Him with a new resolve. The battered bride sees the milk in those eyes: pure, white, sincere (**I Pet. 2:2**). She knew in her soul that His motives were always completely trustworthy towards her. Although practical fellowship with Him ceased, she was still safe in His Omnipresence for these words were forever etched in her heart from His lips, *"...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* (**Heb.13:5**). Excitedly she says, *"Oh, He is near! I can feel the power of His presence drawing me!"* And she was right, for in just a few moments (**6:2**) she will be restored to that blessed, Holy Spirit filled intimacy with her Beloved! O how this brings comfort to her heart. The darkness of depression and guilt begin to abate as she continues sharing these marvelous descriptions of her Beloved.

The bride cannot contain herself as she speaks animatedly to the daughters, *"Something is happening to me! I feel it. Healing, I am being healed! My heart is being healed! O praise His glorious healing name! Jesus! Jesus! I love You! You alone! O what patient grace You have even for someone as me. Me who failed you so terribly, yet Your Words, those Words of pure spiritual milk are healing me! I can feel it! I can feel it! Hallelujah!"*

The Daughters of Jerusalem knew they were watching a miracle in progress! *"It is truly the bride!"* they said in absolute astonishment. They were awestruck and pleaded with her to go on with the description of her Beloved. Their spiritual hunger was overwhelming! They couldn't get enough. Something strange and wonderful was happening in them also! There was a long pause, then she whispered to them, *"His eyes, His eyes they are..."*

"...fitly set"

This Hebrew verb for **"fitly set"** is used over 1090 times throughout the O.T. and has a multiplicity of meanings such as: to "sit", "remain", "dwell", "stay", "be enthroned". It is used when speaking of Jehovah being enthroned in Heaven (see: **Psa. 22:3; 80:1; 99:1; 113:5; 123:1; Isa. 37:16**). Her heart races with waves of love for Him. She knows that His eyes continually dwell on her alone. She will never be out of His loving, protective gaze. The bride desires that her eyes will not focus off onto some worldly distraction which would pain His heart. She earnestly wants her eyes to be as His, **"fitly set."**

Listen once again to her worship in the temple of her heart, *"My Beloved Husband You are the One and only true God enthroned in the glory of heaven. You rule over all of the universe (Mt. 19:28; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 4:10; 5:13)".* She sees in His eyes the eternal glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords! *"I am forever enthroned upon His heart (Jer. 31:3) and seated with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6)! I feel so safe when my eyes meet His eyes of forgiveness, mercy and compassion for me!"*

How could she have forgotten those intimate talks with her Beloved and His words of promise? Words such as, **"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I WILL GUIDE THEE WITH MINE EYE."** (**Psa. 32:8**). It

is so important to keep your eyes upon His gaze. Do you desire to look into the eyes of your Beloved Lord? Gaze with love within the pages of His Word. The eyes have a language all their own. When you are truly in love with Jesus others will see it in your eyes.

PRAY WITH ME: "O Lord, I am so ashamed that I failed to look into Your eyes and missed Your look which would have kept me from straying away. Be enthroned upon my heart that I might have a clear view of Your loving, caring, correcting, leading and forgiving gaze. I give You praise that You have eyes only for me, Your bride. Thank You for assuring me that You have doves eyes! I love You and long to be faithful to You only. Take me Holy Spirit and cleanse me and make me after the will of my Lord and my Savior. Dear Bridegroom, I do not want to hurt You with my sinful wanderings anymore. Thank You, for Your ever watchful eyes ready to guide me. In the blessed name of Jesus my Lord, amen."

The more she speaks of Him the more healing of her heart takes place. She doesn't understand it but there is great expectancy flooding her soul. Her guilt and shame, the enemy's accusing finger of worthlessness and failure have all but disappeared! With joy she says...

V.13 "His cheeks are as a bed of spices (balsam), as sweet flowers (herbs): his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh."

The Holy Spirit is about to bring to her memory the horrors of the cross, the pain of Calvary and a vision of what she was before she met Him. It will have a profound effect upon her heart in driving her back into the loving arms of her Beloved!

"**Balsam**" is a plant from which is extracted balm to be used for healing. Her eyes filled up with tears seeing in a vision the bloody and bruised cheeks of her Beloved. She watched them being slapped in mockery many times (**Mt. 27:30; Mark 15:18-19; Luke 22:64**) and O how He despised the shame of it all (**Heb. 12:2**)! She saw His beard being ripped out (**Isa. 50:6**)! Then came the spit! Soldier after soldier spit ugly contempt upon those lovely cheeks! All this before He was led away to die for her. His countenance was hideous, marred more than any man (**Isa. 52:14**). The Holy Spirit's voice spoke in her heart, "All this your Beloved allowed because He so desperately desired your love for eternity! All of this is for your healing, your restoration!" She responded, "How could I have ever forgotten what He went through to make me beautiful for Him? O the sin of neglect, putting my comfort over His call to go with Him. Forgive me My Beloved, forgive me!"

All of a sudden she detected the aroma of **balsam**. At that very moment the stripes and wounds on His back and face appeared realizing that by them she is healed (**Isa. 53:5**). She could feel the healing virtue flow through her body, healing all the cuts and bruises she had just suffered (**I Pet. 2:24**). She rejoiced at the scent of sweet smelling flowers and herbs about His person. It reminded her of the garden in which He had prayed, the garden in which He died and the garden in which He was resurrected (**John 19:41**)! It brought back memories of the beautiful garden He had made out of her heart. The scent of resurrection life was in the air. Great expectancy filled her heart.

She understood for the first time that the only way to walk in the resurrection life was to open to Him when He knocked and to go with Him when He beckoned. A beautiful glow of God's presence enclosed her as she continued to describe Him whom her soul loved...

"...his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh." (go back and read about the myrrh in **1:13**)

The bride had wronged Him and now, guilt ridden, feels she is an embarrassment to Him. She desperately needs grace for failing Him a second time and bringing shame to His testimony. Immediately the Holy Spirit reveals to her heart another glorious aspect of her Beloved's "**sweet smelling myrrh**". She hears His voice speak in her mind **Psa. 45:2** that, "**...grace is poured into thy lips...!**" Her heart began to pound with joy! It was grace she needed and grace she was receiving - forgiving grace, loving grace (**I John 1:9 and Jer. 31:3**). He just can't help Himself! He is infinitely in love with her! The constant dropping of sweet smelling myrrh tells us what His abounding, rich grace cost Him - the crucifixion! She felt His healing virtue continue to flow through her body. She looks at her arms and the bruises were disappearing. This priceless myrrh was bringing back the beauty she once possessed. What was bitter to Him becomes sweet to us.

She knew that "**lilies**" represented surrendered believers (**2:1-2**) and also His glory (**Mt. 6:28-29**). True surrender brings glory to Him. The bride speaks of His lips being like lilies. What a blessed revelation about our God! He was the epitome of the surrendered life. Jesus, the Son of Man, taught us how to live. He surrendered His rights to exercise the power of His deity when He took upon Himself the form of a servant (**Phil. 2:5-7**). He "**...made Himself of no reputation...**" (literally - "**He emptied Himself**"). That's surrender - That's a Lily! Every word spoken out of His mouth came from His Father (**John 14:10; 12:49**). That's surrender - that's a Lily! All the miracles came from the Father through the power of the Holy

Spirit; Jesus did nothing of Himself (**John 5:19, 30**). That's surrender - that's a Lily! It is a holy, loving passion to obey and please the Father. When lilies speak, only life is produced (**John 6:63**) because they are under the total control of the Beloved's Holy Spirit.

The ultimate surrender was Jesus' human soul in the garden of Gethsemane. His soul was saying to Him, *"I don't need to die, I've committed no sin!"* But Jesus' spirit surrendered that last right to the Father when the sweet smelling myrrh came from His lips and declared, **"And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."** (**Mark 14:39**). How sweet those obedient words to His Father's heart! That's surrender - that's a Lily's mouth! When we surrender the rights of our attitudes, actions and words we are applying **Rom. 6:6**! When we say "no" to self we are seeing the power of the Cross at work in us (**Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:22; II Cor. 4:10**) producing the sweet smelling myrrh of **Rom. 6:14 and Gal. 2:20**. Jesus never sinned but His human soul sure was tested throughout His lifetime.

The daughters of Jerusalem are overwhelmed. They had never heard such glowing descriptions before concerning any human. A miracle of transformation was taking place right before their eyes as the bride described Him whom her soul loveth! O the joyful, satisfying, sweet words which continually proceed out of His mouth when He looks at His lilies and sees the victory of His bitter **"myrrh"** in their lives. As His lilies apply the cross to their daily lives that bitter **"myrrh"** becomes sweet to His taste and His lilies' taste (**Psa. 119:103**)! Their lives were changing into the image of the Bridegroom (**Rom. 8:29**).

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Bridegroom of my heart, O thank You, thank You for making me Your lily! Thank You for always having me upon Your lips. May my lips be sweet to You! Thank You for the myrrh! Your precious and holy blood is sweet to my soul having changed me from a thorn to Your personal lily. Thank You for the healing which now allows me to have Your glory displayed in me here, then totally when I reach Your arms in Heaven! I love only You dear Lord Jesus!"*

V.14 "His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright as ivory overlaid with sapphires."

She remembered those nail scarred hands which gently held her (**2:5**). *"How could I have taken my hand away from His? If I had only held on to His hand I would not be in the condition I am today! How could I have so easily forgotten? O how secure I felt the time when He took me by the hand and led me away from the dens of danger on the mountains (4:8). He was always there to protect me, even when I was unaware of the menace to my spiritual well being."*

His hands were the hands of God! Her heart raced with excitement as thought after thought flooded her soul, *"Every time He held my hand, it was God holding me."* The Holy Spirit spoke to her heart, *"Remember the time when Jesus held your hand so tightly and whispered into your ear, 'My love, I have given you eternal life and you will never perish, neither will any one ever pluck you out of My hand (John 10:28)?' Yes, it's true you have stumbled but even now He still holds your heart no matter what (II Tim. 2:13)"*. Waves of spiritual anticipation of seeing Him real soon swept over her heart! She just knew all would be well!

"gold rings set with the beryl"

"Rings" – no beginning or ending! Whatever the Beloved, eternal God touches it must respond to Him. Whatever He accomplishes with His hands it is an infinite, eternal work! Thank You dear Lord, since we are in Your hand, then we are encircled by Your **"gold rings"**. O the security, the comfort, the assurance, the peaceful shelter in being surrounded by His hands; to be totally encompassed by God Himself! People wear rings to display their symbolic value, beauty or cherished meaning. Is that not what the Beloved will be doing with His bride in **Rev. 21:1-11**? Glory to God! How befitting that we should be part of His ring (**"beryl"**).

In **Exo. 28:20 "beryl"** is mentioned as one of the twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest and it represented one of the tribes of Israel. These stones were placed over the high priest's heart so that he would never forget how special the tribes of Israel were in the sight of God. He would intercede for them! And Jesus, her High Priest, continually intercedes for His bride (**Heb. 4:14-15**). The bride paused with this blessed knowledge and thought to herself, *"My Beloved must be interceding for me right now (Heb. 7:25)! And thank You dear Holy Spirit for You must be praying for me also since I could not in my bewilderment, pain and shame (Rom.8:26)!"*

All of these thoughts filled and thrilled her but it was the **"beryl"** (Heb. *"tarshish"* or *"precious stone"*) which moved her to tears because His preciousness was enwrapping her soul. The Holy Spirit shares with us the deep thoughts of the Beloved in **I Pet. 2:4-8**. We who are His holy people and priests know how infinitely valuable He truly is – the Beloved is the precious Cornerstone, the Rock upon which her life is established. Then, wonder of wonders, the Holy Spirit discloses that

we are **"living stones"** which make up His spiritual house/temple (**Eph. 2:19-22**). We, His bride, are just like Him – glorious, valuable stones!

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Lord Jesus, You are the strength and keeper of my heart! You are the precious Cornerstone of my heart and You have made me a precious, living stone in Your temple. Thank You for placing me on the spiritual breastplate of Your heart! Everything about You is precious! Dear Lord, cause me to feel more deeply that preciousness. In Jesus' name, amen!"

Filled with joy she continues...

"...his belly is as bright ivory..."

She continued to speak words that filled the daughters with astonishment. The word **"belly"** is a Hebrew word meaning *"inward parts"* (me'eh) and is sometimes used figuratively to represent emotion or compassion. It is used in connection with God (**Isa. 63:15; Jer. 31:20**) concerning His feelings. **"Ivory"** in Bible times was a rare commodity, therefore extremely expensive. Only those who were very wealthy could afford to possess it. Ivory was obtained at great sacrifice, for the elephant had to die!

So in love was the Beloved with His bride that He was filled with infinite spiritual hunger (**belly**) for her sin-sick soul. He left Heaven and lived and died for her. How rare this was (**ivory**). O what a sacrifice! O what a cost! Only God Almighty could feel this deeply. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** (**John 3:16**). **"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."** (**1 John 4:10**).

The Holy Spirit brought to her mind how Jesus is touched by the feeling of her infirmities. (**Heb. 4:15**). The bride began to experience her Beloved's compassion sweep through her soul. Clean and pure, that's how she felt. It was His righteousness and holiness, the highly polished white ivory! (**II Cor. 5:21**).

"...overlaid with sapphires (lapis lazuli)."

The sapphire, a very costly jewel (**Job 28:16**), is the second exquisite stone that the Holy Spirit reveals to her heart. She felt the strength of a firm foundation holding her up (**Isa. 54:1**) while reflecting the meaning of the **"sapphires"**! It was a precious gem which adorned the breastplate of the High Priest (**Ex. 28:18-21**) representing one of the twelve tribes. Sapphire is also one of the foundation stones used for the new Jerusalem (**Rev. 21:19**), the city in which the Bride of the Lamb will forever reside (**Rev. 21:19,27**). This blessed thought swept through her soul, *"I am on His heart and He is the foundation of my life. He wants me to live with Him forever. As much as I want Him, He desires me infinitely more! His promises and love for me are my firm foundation."*

Joy, peace and contentment swept over her. The daughters were thrilled at this wonderful change continuing to take place right before their eyes as they themselves were being drawn to Him. The bride continued her description of Him...

V.15 "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars."

Marble is extremely hard and durable. It represents stability. His legs speak of His walk or manner of life. The Word of God declares, **"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth..."** (**Psa. 25:10**). Concerning the Lord Jesus, the Word teaches, **"...who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil..."** (**Acts 10:38**). His feet were **"fine gold"** and she knew that His footsteps were actually God walking on this earth. She said to the daughters, *"My Beloved is white, pure, and righteous ("Lebanon" - 3:9) and He is stately and majestic ("cedars" - 1:17). He is my Wonderful Counselor, my Mighty God, my Everlasting Father, my Prince of Peace! He is my King forever! He is magnificent! He is my Husband!"*

She exclaimed, *"I was, '...troubled on every side, yet not distressed;...perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;' (II Cor. 4:8-9). For in me, my '...earthen vessel, is the excellency of the power (Christ living in me - Gal. 2:20; the Holy Spirit living in me - Acts 1:8, II Cor. 4:7). Even though I was unaware of it during my times of great pain and sin, my Beloved's power was bringing me safely through it all. Praise His holy name! There were many times I was so spiritually tired I could not take one more step. I remember the relentless attacks of the enemy bearing down on my soul. Now I know it was my faithful and loving Husband who would pick me up*

and carry me! When I thought I was all alone His ever steady, infinitely strong legs were taking me through the deep mire of my mess. There was not one moment He stumbled! His legs are the legs of God. I feel His invisible, gentle and secure arms holding me as He carries me onward and upward to our permanent home. O praise His holy name!"

With that she sprang to her feet renewed in heart, refreshed in soul, restored in body, rejoicing with thankful tears streaming from her eyes, hands raised toward heaven, her countenance radiating the glory of God and shouting the following words for all heaven and earth to hear...

V.16 "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

As these words fell from her lips, the bride knew deep from within her heart she would never, never hesitate again when her Beloved called (and she never does from this point to the end of this song!). His Words are, **"life and spirit" (John 6:63)** and **"life... and health..." (Prov. 4:22)**. Not until this moment, in confessing His beauty and glory, did she understand how powerful and life changing His Words truly were! This wounded bride remembered that her Husband was **"the Word"** who **"was God"** (John 1:1)! **Prov. 18:21** teaches us that there is life in the power of the tongue. When speaking His Word, life and spirit emerged from her innermost being. She had previously hidden His Word in her heart (**Psa.119:11**) and now the remembrance of that living Word was overcoming her failure in the time of crisis! It was the dark hour of her deepest need. Yet, His Word, which had been stored away in her heart, was transforming her from the pit of despair to the glory of renewal! Joy flooded her soul as she shouted to the heavens...

"His mouth is most sweet..."

His spiritual mouth had been sweet from the beginning. The Beloved had kissed her heart with His Word from the very beginning (1:2) She testifies, *"Sweet! Yes, yes, yes! There is a sweetness of joy in my spirit, where there had just been self-condemning bitterness! There is a sweetness of hope in my soul, where there had previously been the desperation of depression! There is a sweet wholeness in my body, where there just had been defacement! Look at me - every wound has been healed!"* With joyful intensity she speaks, **"How sweet are thy Words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth."** (**Psa. 119:103**). Honey gives quick energy and that is what has just taken place in her spirit, soul and body! Then silence, a holy silence swept across the plains of her heart as joyful tears fall from her cheeks. And after what seemed like an eternal moment of quietness, the bride in an emotional whisper proclaims...

"...yea, he is altogether lovely..."

All of a sudden the bride abruptly stops speaking. Her mind races searching for more descriptive superlatives, then the tense silence is broken as she intensely declares: *"He is altogether lovely!"* Over and over she says it with a heart bursting with liberating love: *"He is altogether lovely!"* All I can say is, **"HIS MOUTH IS MOST SWEET! THERE IS NOTHING OR NO ONE SWEETER THAN HE! HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY! THERE IS NO BEAUTY BEYOND HIM. HE ALONE BRINGS BEAUTY TO MY HEART AND SOUL. HE IS MY BELOVED!"** What was once hideous became totally beautiful.

She thought, *"Who would have imagined that a scar could be so beautiful?"* At that very precise moment, the Holy Spirit flooded her mind with a vision of her Beloved's scar. His hand became larger and larger until she could see what was imprinted in that scar: "I am the Almighty, the Bread of Life, the Chief Cornerstone, the Conqueror, the Deliverer, the Emancipator, the First and the Last, the Great Physician, the Holy One, the Image of God, the Justifier, the Keeper, the Lover of your soul, the Messiah, the Near One, the Offering, the Prince of Peace, the Quick One to bless, the Rock, the Shepherd, the Truth, the Upholder, the Vine, the Word, the Yielded One, the Zealous One!" *She then exclaimed again with a loud voice of conviction: "He is altogether lovely! O how I love Him!"*

If only we could realize how powerful speaking His Word out of our mouth truly is. She had spoken to her mountain and the mountain of despair had disappeared (**Mark 11:23,24**). As she spoke the Word of the Living God out of her mouth, angels were activated to minister to her (**Psa. 103:20; Heb. 1:13,14; Psa. 91:11,12**). O yes, **"His mouth is most sweet"** because His Words break the yoke of bondage in our souls and stops the powers of darkness coming against the soul. Make a study of the following verses: **Deut. 30:14; Psa. 8:2; 119:103; Prov. 10:11,21; 14:3; 18:7; 23:16; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:11; 19:15.**

What the bride has just spoken (**5:10-16**) are the revelations given to her by the Beloved in intimacy of devotional fellowship with Him. She has the heart of Mary of Bethany. It was Mary who sat at Jesus' feet and received the Word from the One with whom she was in love. Jesus said that Mary had chosen that good part which would not be taken away from her. O to have those spiritually intimate thoughts stored in the deep recesses in our heart because we sat with our Beloved and meditated upon Him. When we go through times where we have failed our Beloved, such as this bride did, the Holy

Spirit will bring back to our memory His gracious and merciful Word and long forgotten glories of our Bridegroom's blessed person. Why? So that we may be healed and delivered!

He had asked her to go with Him in **chapter two**. Her Beloved wanted His bride to share these revelations with other lilies. He loves to see the surrendered lilies come together and share with each other the secrets He gave them in private. Our Beloved has great joy watching the angels exulting in what they hear from such gatherings. Because of this we begin to see the Lover of our souls in a much more magnificent light. This is when we are **"...able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God"** (Eph. 3:18,19).

Dear surrendered reader, gaze upon this bride who is so in love with Him, standing there strong, all signs of her bleeding wounds have disappeared! Just look at her with the eye of faith and see her countenance beaming with great delight and hear her voice filled with joy and intensive expectation (hope)! The bride stands before you in His strength, vibrantly testifying of the wonders and beauty of her Beloved, fulfilling in her the words of **Neh. 8:10, "For they said to them, 'go...drink of the sweet...for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."**

However, the best is yet to come. In just a moment her faithful Bridegroom will do what He said He would do in **John 12:32, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."** In times of distress, difficulties, depression and defeat lift Him up. Give Him praise. Speak thanksgivings to His heart. You will feel the intimacy of His arms holding your heart. He will draw you to Himself. So also with this bride, she has lifted Him up and now her spirit will be drawn to Him in **6:2!** She will never, ever be the same!

Doesn't this excite your soul dear Christian? She was restored in but a moment of time. There was no waiting, no lengthy process of restoration, no self-inflicted punishment in order to purge the guilt away! Glory to God! **"Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts."** (Jer. 15:16). Her heart was so filled up with Him that her mouth overflowed with His glories, **"...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."** Mt. 12:34. With what is your heart and mouth filled up dear reader?

The atmosphere is so charged with His presence that a holy silence once again fell upon all. She looks at each one of the daughters and says with all of her heart...

"This is my beloved, and this I my friend"

Her heart continues to beat faster and faster. *"I know now that He will always love me through any and every circumstance because my Beloved is my Friend (Prov. 17:17)." He is, "...a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24). Could I ever ask for anything better than that? No! In my spirit I see those wounds inflicted upon His body because of my sins. Dear daughters don't you know that 'He was wounded for our transgressions...' (Isa. 53:5)? How could I have forgotten that '..with His stripes we are healed'? O how faithful my Husband has been to me even in my unfaithfulness for 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend....' (Prov.27:6). And I am not only His bride but His friend so that I may know the deep things of His heart! (John 15:13,14). I will never doubt Him again nor delay in obeying His Word again!"* The Daughter's hearts were filled with a holy hunger. They all deeply desired to have Him as their friend and Lord also. Nothing else mattered to them. The daughters themselves began to feel this strange, but wonderful, drawing of their heart to Him.

The Daughters spoke to her in amazement, *"Look at you, you are completely changed. When we first saw your condition there seemed to be no hope for you at all. When we came upon you your head was bowed down in shame. Your clothes were torn with bruises all over your body! Yet now we see that your Beloved has truly lifted up your head and made it shine with His glory."* (Psa. 3:3 **"But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head."**)!

With all of heaven we declare, **"BLESSING , AND HONOR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE (of my heart), AND UNTO THE LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER...And (I) ...fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever."** (Rev.5:13,14).

COME APART AND REST FOR A WHILE. GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK AND SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

Chapter 6 – THE DRAWING OF HER HEART BACK TO HIM (continues)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER SIX: So overcome were the daughters of Jerusalem by the description of the Beloved that their hearts were drawn to Him also. Immediately after the bride had gloriously described her Beloved, the Holy Spirit reveals just where He's having fellowship. After finding Him, the bride is filled with shame and guilt. Gazing directly in her eyes, He reassures her that the fervency of His love for her has not changed one iota. The bride declares His lordship over her life. All the ladies in the King's court have a new, deep appreciation for her. Days of joy and blessed fellowship fill all and for the first time she willingly leaves with her Beloved.

The Daughters speak:

V.1 "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Wither is thy beloved turned aside that we may seek him with thee?"

One of the daughters excitedly said, *"We have just seen a miracle! She has been transformed into His glorious image before our very eyes! In the past we have seen and known about the King. But now, let us go and give our hearts to Him. He alone has what we have longed for - transforming love. We will surrender wholly to Him because we desperately need to be transformed and He is the only One Who is able to do it."*

Whenever Jesus is truly lifted up in our attitudes and actions others will be drawn to Him by the Holy Spirit. The daughters of Jerusalem have come a long way since we met them in **1:5,6**. At that time there was jealousy in their hearts toward this foreign lady who had been chosen by the King to be His very special bride. By **3:10** the daughters had grown in their appreciation of the Beloved and had lovingly served Him.

These dear ladies showed just how serious they were in finding Him by asking twice, **"wither is thy beloved..."**? Puzzled, they asked, *"How is it that you do not know where He is after that glorious description? Surely with the description you have given to us, you wouldn't leave Him alone for a minute?"* The bride paused, her head hung low in shame, *"I became self-absorbed (5:3) and insensitive to His work, His ways and His will! O insidious, subtle and spiritually debilitating was my self-will! I am so sorry and I repent of it all. All I want now is to find Him, fall at His feet and allow Him to forever direct my steps."* She began to sing, *"All to Jesus I surrender all to Him I freely give..."!*

What a lesson and rebuke to the bride! The daughters of Jerusalem are ready to drop everything and seek out this wonderful person immediately! Oh dear surrendered bride, may you and I learn a great lesson in attracting people to the Lord Jesus. The bride was totally unaware of the daughters needs. In their hearts was a perpetual emptiness. Nothing they did ever seemed to satisfy or fill up that lonely void. But as the bride was describing her Beloved, something strange took place deep within them. Peace and contentment swept over their souls. There was an unexplainable joy rising up inside of them, ready to burst forth at any moment. With an urgency they said,

"...wither is thy beloved turned aside...that we may seek him with thee."

Oh praise God, they know something that so few believers really know! **"Seek and ye shall find!" (Matt. 7:7)**. You shall find the answer to all of life's problems! Seek Him! **"Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore."** (Psa. 105:4,5)! **"...and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."** (Heb. 11:6)!

They are spiritually right on track. They will be blessed since God is faithful to His promise about those who seek Him! How utterly marvelous, there is no condemnation from Him. They love the bride so much that these ladies want to seek the Beloved together with her.

What a joy it must have been for her to go from total loneliness and despair to loving, longing fellowship with others truly seeking the One she loves! There is nothing more satisfying than being with those who want Jesus only - to pray with them, praise with them, serve with them, worship with them! Can you imagine what it must have meant to the bride's heart to have them with her? What joy! What peace! What anticipation!

One of the ladies spoke to the bride as they walked. *"We are experiencing a love so amazing, so powerful that we are willing to give your Beloved our hearts, our lives, our all!"* The bride, now focused on them, said, *"I have been so taken up with Him that I did not see what was happening to you. You're not the same either! I am beginning to see my Beloved all over you."* They looked at each other and they were astonished! Tears filled their eyes as His holy presence filled their hearts. *"When we first met you we were jealous (1:5,6). But now we are blessed in you – you, who had been '...without*

Christ, being an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope... (Eph.2:12). *But we are one with you! We will go and surely He could find a place in His heart for us too.*" Little did they know that they were already on His heart!

Oh how I love to be with those who seek to bless the Lord of my heart. There is nothing like fellowshiping with those whose only real joy is to share, sing and praise Jesus, their one and only love. When you meet them the first thing on their lips is something about the Lord and what He is doing. It is **Eph. 5:18-21** all over again. In their private devotions and study of the Word they want to see Jesus from Genesis to Revelation. They see Him in the tabernacle! They see Him in the law! They see Him in Joseph, Moses, David, Jonah and so many others (**Luke 24:27**). Nothing else really fills and thrills them. Whether meeting together in homes or in church fellowship they seek with one heart to love Him there, bring joy to His heart there, to be a true bride and pour out their souls before Him there! Together their souls thirst for God, for the living God (**Psa. 42:2**). Not for salvation but to satisfy His heart. Something very wonderful happens when those of a pure heart meet in one accord to bless Him. A holy presence of the Spirit fills the place. From their hearts flow springs of living water over the feet of their Beloved!

How important is spiritual unity? Read **Eph. 4:1-4**. He cannot work where the people are not in one accord, but O the glory and power of unity. They who were jealous of the bride are now in communion with her. Notice what takes place from this point on. There is immediate revelation knowledge given to the bride concerning where her Beloved is located (**v.2**)!

Dear surrendered reader, does your walk demonstrate how deeply in love you are with the Lord Jesus? Is it obvious that the Lord is changing your life so that others may see Him in you and thus be attracted to Him? As they walked, the bride excitedly said, *"Do you smell a fragrance in the breeze? That is His aroma. He is near here ladies, He is near! You're going to meet Him in just a moment."* She now knew just where He was and said to them...

V. 2 "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed (pasture) in the gardens, and to gather lilies."

The closer they came the stronger the presence of the Lord became! A glowing group of people came into sight, gathered round a magnificent looking Man. All of a sudden the bride became very animated. Catching her breath she exclaimed, *"Look! Over there! That's Him! That is my Beloved! He is in a beautiful garden. It looks like an orchard of lilies!"* How quickly the Holy Spirit restores to full fellowship when Jesus is lifted up! Does this not tell you just how anxious He is to have communion and fellowship restored?

Notice that this verse first uses the word **"garden"** singular, then **"gardens"** plural. The Lord Jesus loves His garden. We who are His blood bought people are one body (**"garden"**) with many individual smaller, lovely gardens making up this one glorious garden of the Lord (**I Cor. 10:16,17; 12:12-27; Eph. 2:16-22; 3:14,15; 4:16** etc.).

The special presence of the Lord is with those who desire to be nurtured and fed by Him. Lilies are surrendered believers (**2:2**) and their hearts are His gardens. He loves to gather His lilies to Himself and enwrap them with His love and discipline (**Heb. 12:6**). What joy it brings to His heart when His lilies are pliable and allow Him to work in their lives, giving and receiving! Can't you see Jesus sitting in His garden with all these **"lilies"** gathered round Him - those who have forsaken all that is empty, meaningless and unfulfilling in their lives and have Jesus as the only reason for living! He fills them with His presence and His Word. They feed His heart because of the flow of **"first love"** love from their hearts to Him. Is this not a picture of the true purpose of the church - all of the Lord's lilies gathered round Him to talk and sing of Him only?

"...bed of spices..."

The spices of God are awaiting the bride and her new found friends. The spices are the multiplicity of promises the Lord gives to us for a walk in all holiness, godliness and stability (**II Cor. 1:20; 7:1; II Pet. 1:2-4**)! There is a promise of God for every circumstance to be stood upon in faith, each will be blessedly fulfilled! Go to Him in His garden and let the Holy Spirit apply the needed **"spices"** for your circumstances. These were all purchased for you in the garden of Calvary (**John 19:41**)! All His promises are confirmed in His blood, attested to by the Words from His lips, and sealed by the Holy Spirit to our spirit!

As she and the daughters approach this beautiful gathering of lilies around the Beloved, the daughters remark to the bride, *"As wonderful of a description you gave to us concerning Him, it doesn't even come close to the glory and beauty before us."* They paused there for a moment and allowed this exquisite scene of glory to fill them. The Holy Spirit began to move powerfully in the bride. She now knew, in crystal clear clarity, what she must confess openly and without reservation.

This was her defining moment of decision. What had been revealed to her by the Spirit of her Beloved would keep her from ever straying from the path set out by Abba Father for her! She knew that acting upon this revelation would guarantee continual, intimate fellowship with Him! There would never again be the need for a scourging (**Heb. 12:6**)! Great expectancy floods their souls as they draw closer to Him! Before Him and all of His lilies, the bride grasps hold of the moment giving testimony to her absolute commitment to her Beloved saying...

V.3 "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies."

You have come to one of the most important moments in the Song of Solomon. This heartfelt declaration is the difference of walking in communion and victory with the Lord or in defeat! DON'T MISS WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WANTS TO TEACH YOU, IT IS VITAL!

The bride stops and turns to all of the daughters. The power and presence of the Holy Spirit is all over her. There is a strength, boldness - a holy determination in her countenance. With a full heart these words burst forth for all to hear! **"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine...."** *"I now know that my place is with other surrendered lilies."* Pointing to the glow where the other lilies had gathered round her Beloved lovingly says, *"This is where He planned for me to be all of the time."* (**2:16**). With a love filled heart she witnessed to the daughters, *"Do you want to please your King? Do you want to have a spiritual intimacy with Him you never imagined possible? Then let Him possess you! Let Him have total control of every aspect of your life. Tell Him that you belong to Him wholly and totally, that you trust Him and His Word without question! Pray, 'Holy Spirit fill me now and forever with Jesus!' Then and only then will you experience what those spiritually surrendered lilies are experiencing over there!"* There was a long silence. Then, looking up with a fire of finality in her eyes she said, *"My precious companions and true friends, let me say it with all the reason for living that is in me, **I AM MY BELOVED'S NOW AND FOREVER MORE!**"*

"...he feedeth among the lilies."

With that they quietly moved closer to this beautiful garden scene of Holy Spirit filled lilies! Peace, love, joy, laughter, understanding, wisdom and His glory emanated! There was joyful weeping and the shouting of praise! Others were worshiping with a quiet intensity. They could see Him and there was an indescribable joy written all over His countenance. Not only were the lilies being fed, but His heart too was being filled! This was the joy that had been set before Him so long ago as He endured the pain and shame of the cross (**Heb. 12:2,3**).

As He gathered His surrendered lilies around Him, each one poured out streams of love upon His feet. Others who watched broke out in praise, with shouting and holy dancing (**Psa. 149,150**)! His eyes glistened with delight! Sometimes He would ask some lily to repeat what had just been said because it so blessed His heart! There was that wonderful smile of joy they would never forget. Here was blessedness that the daughters had never seen before. Even the bride, thinking back to the most joyful times she had with Him alone realized that it did not compare with the experience of corporate worship, adoration and love. Something truly special was happening. The Holy Spirit whispered in her heart, *"Don't you remember what He said to you so long ago, **'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them?'**" (**Matt. 18:20**)! They all could say with Isaiah, *"...the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee."* (**Isa. 26:8**).*

Having confessed her heart, the bride will never depart from her Beloved again. Sin will become an occasional thing in her spiritual walk with the Beloved. Why, because she will stay ever so close to His side. So very, very few Christians know God's power and His presence in their lives because the spiritual impact of this verse has no place in their lives. Many come so close! They walk to the edge of the glory and then look back. They are given a powerful revelation in their hearts by the Holy Spirit who is wooing them to make this confession, but at the last minute they turn back, holding on to something they know down deep does not please the Lord. It is some "small" idol that they feel they must have. The lady before us surrendered her heart to Him way back in **1:2**. She was given opportunities and experiences to grow in true surrender. She had been lovingly disciplined and each time responded with a right spirit. She never gave up! That's proof of full surrender!

When she found her Beloved in **chapter three** she took Him home with her. In **chapter four**, she allowed Him to minister to her concerning the outside dangers to her soul. She willingly climbed to the top of the Mountain of Myrrh (crucifixion) and then walked in holiness on the hill of frankincense.

She hesitated in **chapter five** but did not cease to look for Him! Her yearning for Him had not diminished one bit. But now, the Holy Spirit led her to the defining moment of truth where surrender turns into true service for her King. She faced a spiritual juncture in the road. One road leading to apathy and deadness, the other leading her up out of the wilderness hand in hand with her Beloved. This absolute commitment (**v.3**) of what is truly important in her life will greatly impact all those around her. Dear reader, you will receive God's best if you will make the same deep commitment of your heart concerning Him. Give everything over to Him.

You and I have come a long way together as we traveled with this bride. We watched her movements, reactions and responses. We rejoiced with her, sorrowed with her, wept with her. Now it is time for you and me to stop everything. Stand with her and the daughters. I am ready to make the ultimate decision that a Christian can make. Are you? Over a long period of time this devotional study was written down. I have wept tears of joy and tears of conviction over many, many passages. My heart burst forth proclaiming with resolute affirmation, "***I am my Beloved's! I am my Beloved's!***" What you don't know about me is: I had been ministering for 30 years as a Martha until one day the Lord broke me and drew me to His Bridegroom's heart of full surrender through this Song! He made me stop all the activities so He could talk to me! Hallelujah! Glory to His name that He bothered to do that with me!

And now let the Holy Spirit unravel the mystery presented on **page eleven**. The answer is the secret to the victorious Christian life. In **2:16** the bride said, "***My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.***" What is the difference between that verse and the verse found in **6:3**? The difference is vital, for had the bride sincerely spoken these words here in **6:3** back in **2:16** she would not have gone through all of that unnecessary heart wrenching pain and suffering!

The difference is in the reversal of the first eight words. In **2:16** the emphasis is on what she thinks belongs to her. The primary thought was, "*I, first and foremost, possess him*" and as a secondary thought, "*He possesses me.*" The first is similar to a young believer saying, "*Jesus is mine!*" That's salvation! The question is does He possess me? Is He Lord of all in my life? Have I given Him all the rights to my life: to mold me, strengthen me, use me, and change me more into His image? (**Rom.8:29; Eph.5:1,2; Gal.5:22,23**)

Now His Lordship is proclaimed loud and clear, "*First and foremost in my life I belong to my Beloved, and of less important now is that I have Him*". THIS IS LORDSHIP! THIS IS WHY JESUS DIED. "***For to this end (purpose) Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord (not just Savior) both of the dead and living.***" (**Rom. 14:9**)! He didn't come to just save you but to sanctify you (set you apart for Himself alone)! This is what surrender is all about! This is where God's power becomes real in your life: power over habits (**Rom. 6:6,11,14**), power over your thought life (**II Cor. 10:3-5**), exercising power over the enemy (**Eph. 6:10-19**), power to experience the precious filling of the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 5:18-21**), power to receive the deep and intimate things about your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ (**I Cor. 2:9-12**). It will be progressive; your love will grow deeper and deeper just be patient.

She knew that her beloved "***feedeth among the lilies***" in **2:16**. Even way back then He was revealing precious, practical truth to her. Did she act upon that knowledge? No! She had heard the truth but did not abide in it so that it set her free (**John 8:30-31; 15:7,8**). As with many Christians, they have a lot of biblical knowledge in their heads and they can "*talk*" truth real good with others, but the power of God is sadly missing in their daily walk and it is obvious to all. If you want the Lord's power in your life, then there is no middle ground! Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "***So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.***" (**Luke 14:33**)! Why fear to give it all to the Lord? Will you be deprived? That's a lie from the pit of hell! Consider carefully the following thoughts.

What will cause me to turn everything over to the Lord? Promises such as this, "***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.***" (**Rom. 8:28**). The key is loving God. If I am in love with Him He will cause everything to turn out right, even the attacks of the enemy that I will feel. What does it mean to have Jesus as Lord of my life? What I give up He gives back on loan. I no longer own anything! I am a steward or manager of His property! My wife does not belong to me, she is on loan from the Lord. She belongs to Him. I had better take good care of His "*property*"! I find out what His management manual says about treating my wife along with everything else and do it in His power (**Eph. 5:25-27; John 2:5**).

He gives me back the car I once owned and He tells me to manage His car carefully. If He asks me to take people some place, even though inconvenient to me, I will do it because it is His car, not mine. But O the benefits! You will have in your life the fruit of His Holy Spirit (results of daily surrender (**Rom. 12:1,2**))! Everything people are desperately searching for, you will possess in your daily life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It's Christ's image in you (**Rom. 8:29**).

Why is it that we Christians are unable to truly receive what we already have according to **Eph. 1:3**? "***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.***" Did you catch it? It says "***hath***" not "***will***"! This "***blessings***" box is filled with God's promises. The key to unlocking the safe deposit box is simple, trust in God's character that He does not lie (**Num. 23:19; II Cor. 1:20**). Exercise faith. If you are surrendered completely to Jesus, you have no need to worry about Him answering your prayer requests. Why? Because you will not ask for anything that will not bring Him glory (**John 14:13-15; I John 3:21-24**).

His will is found in His promises. Read **I John 5:14,15** and **Heb. 4:14-16** and start waiting on your Abba Father and Bridegroom to pour out the **"spiritual blessings"** upon you! The enemy prowls about like a roaring lion seeking those he may devour (**I Pet. 5:8**). In surrender we have the victory (**II Cor. 2:14**). We'll have trouble, **"Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."** (**Job 5:7**). But, Praise God, we know the Troubleshooter! Surrender to Him and victory is ours!

Surrendering all to the Lord is so important that without it you will never experience the next three chapters of this Song. The whole purpose of this Holy Spirit inspired Song is to get you and me, dear reader, to enter into and live out daily the verse found in **8:5**.

From a distance a group of people are watching a couple coming up toward them. Wondering if it might be the bride and Bridegroom they ask, **"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved...?"** Answer it by placing your name in the reply, **"Why that's _____ and Jesus!"** We are to be leaning on Jesus, not **"hanging"** in there by our fingertips. Leaning declares I'm weak but He is strong! We will discuss this verse later.

All the joys of former moments with Him had just flashed through her mind; the loving, intimate words He had so often spoken to her (**1:9-11,15; 2:2; 4:1-7,9-15**) which had so filled her heart. Now a darkness seemed to envelope her thoughts. Seeds of doubt and depression were creeping in. **"What is happening to me?"** she thought. It was the enemy attacking her thought life by placing these questions before her. **"To think that I have thrown it all away, how could I have done this? Why did I give it all up? Look at Him there with all those other lilies, He doesn't need me! I am a failure! I am no good!"** She bowed her head and would not go a step further.

The enemy of her soul continued the attack on her mind. He was doing everything to keep her from taking this step in to her Beloved's power. Satan knew that if she did she would have authority over him and all his demonic hoards. Excruciating emotional pain, waves of guilt, replaced the joy of the moment. With tears dropping at her feet, she bowed her head. The bride was so ashamed and did not have the courage to look up. She feared it was too late to have the surrendered intimacy once experienced.

At the very lowest moment in this satanic attack she felt a powerful presence of someone standing in front of her. Her head was still bowed but she cleared her eyes of tears. She went limp as she saw the nail-scarred feet. It was her Beloved! She still could not bring herself to look up. He gently lifted her head and bid her to look into His eyes. He brushed away the tears from her cheeks. O how wonderful that hand felt to her. As her eyes met His, her heart melted! Instantly, every doubtful and depressing thought disappeared from her mind! There was no more attack! An awesome power was flowing through her from head to toe! She was filled with the Holy Spirit, His very special, eternal gift to her!

The enemy could not stay in the presence of the Ruler of her heart. Because of that one statement, **"I am my Beloved's"** she experienced for the first time, surrendered victory. She learned, in a moment's time, that having her eyes on her Beloved during an attack will bring sweet victory! The victory over the enemy of our minds comes when we are focused on Jesus alone, the Bridegroom of all grace! O the words He is about to breathe upon her heart and mind, they will become a total balm of healing so that she could experience, **"...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before..."** (**Phil. 3:13; Isa. 54:4-8**). Rejoicing with great joy the Bridegroom reassures her heart that He still loves her with the same fervent "first love, love" as from the beginning. His love had not changed nor His desire for her though she had brought momentary shame to His name. He forgave her without hesitation. The Bridegroom said, **"I am restoring your soul and will once again lead you in the paths of righteousness for My Name's sake."** The Beloved takes both of her hands in His, and with great delight in His voice tells her what He sees in her:

THE DELIGHTS OF HIS HEART REVEALED 6:4 - 7:9

V.4 "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely (lovely) as Jerusalem, terrible (fearful) as an army with banners."

With her heart bursting with love, she thought, **"He hasn't changed! He hasn't changed! His 'first love' love for me is still as intense as it was from the very beginning!"** Love entirely engulfed her heart, soul and mind. It was the same spiritual passion, that Holy Spirit electricity, which she had felt the first time He kissed her with the kisses of His Word (**1:2**)! The joy of intimate acceptance sweeps over her soul as the Lover of her soul continues...

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah...."

"Tirzah" (Heb. "to be pleased with", "to accept favorably", or "approved") was the capital city of the northern kingdom's ten tribes (**I Kin. 14:19**). Listen to Him speak again to her, **"O My love, you are beautiful, you please My heart so. I completely accept you and approve everything about you!"** Why does He not remind her of the deep failure? Why does

He not speak in ominous, warning tones of strong discipline? Because He knew that her heart had never really walked away from Him. It had always been surrendered even if her walk deviated at times from what was truly in her heart.

A true surrendered believer will always respond to godly repentance worked in the heart by the blessed Holy Spirit. O how this pleases the Beloved. By her very coming to Him, it implied that she had repented! He says absolutely nothing concerning the sin. Repentance makes you beautiful, delightful and lovely in His sight and He tells her as much...

"...comely (lovely) as Jerusalem..." (Heb. "place" or "foundation of peace").

What greater compliment could the Beloved pay the one and only love of His heart by comparing her to Jerusalem? Jerusalem has a special place in the heart of God (**Psa. 48:1-3,8**). It was God's special dwelling place on Earth (the Temple). His glory dwelt in Jerusalem! It was lovely to God because wherever He is beauty is! The Bridegroom could see His peace dwelling in her. It was that confident peace, after describing Him in **5:10-16**, which caused her to boldly proclaim, **"I am my Beloved's...!"** Without His peace as the foundation of your life you cannot please Him or have His plan accomplished in your life (**John 14:27; Phil. 4:6,7**). As her Beloved, the Prince of Peace, gazed into her eyes He saw the peaceful, still waters of her heart and soul resting in Him (**Heb. 4:10**)! To have His total peace activated in her brings a walk of holiness. Peace and holiness complement each other. Listen to **Heb. 12:14**, **"Follow (pursue) peace with all men, and holiness (sanctification) without which no man shall see the Lord."** (See **II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:24; I Thess. 3:13**).

Come with me to **Rev. 21:9** and see yourself described there! **"And there came unto me one of the seven angels...saying, 'Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife'. And he carried me away...and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (read the rest: vs. 11-27)."** The angel showed John the bride of Christ, and in so doing he showed him the new Jerusalem!

"...terrible (fearful) as an army with banners."

There is nothing more awesome than an army marching triumphantly with its banners and flags flying, celebrating the defeat of the enemy resulting in peace for the nation. He sees this in her. His conquering power has overcome her enemies! The enemies of guilt, doubt, fear, hesitation, coldness, misunderstanding, etc.! His victorious power emanates from her very demeanor. Our enemy attacks us as a roaring lion and at that very moment the Holy Spirit makes us aware that the old serpent has shown up again! He tells us to lift up our banners! It defeats the old dragon every time. What is written on that banner is this, **"His banner over me is love" (2:4)**. God's perfect love for me casts out my fear (**I John 5:18**)! His love is none other than He Himself (**I John 4:8**). Why is His love so fearful? It's a parents' love and a parents' love will do anything to protect their children! He is our banner with many faceted smaller ones. What was written on the myriad of banners flying in the breeze? They are written in **I Cor. 13:4-7** for you to see. Love conquers all things! Jesus' love conquered sin, Satan, death, hell and the grave! And we have that victory living inside of us (**2Cor.4:7**): Himself, His Word and the Holy Spirit! Glory to God! Dear surrendered reader, fling out the banners of: faith, God's promises, Jesus' name, His blood, your position - seated with Christ in the heavenlies (**Eph. 2:6**), the sword of the Spirit, the Spirit filled life!

Note that the Holy Spirit did not say the bride looked like an individual soldier. Rather, she is seen as part of an awesome army! She is with other lilies in the unity of the Spirit! That makes an awesome army and puts bondages and the devil to flight! Dear Christian reader, are you seen as an army in the spirit world? You need to meet regularly with your regiment (**Heb.10:25**) for a review of your orders and the "how to" in defeating the enemy from the training manual (**II Tim. 3:16,17**). Get with a few other lilies as they did in **Mal.3:16,17**.

Meet together to praise, worship, adore and learn from our Commander. That's where the power is! One day the Commander-in-Chief will return claiming what is already His, the final victory. Each soldier will stand before Him for rewards (**I Cor. 3:11-16**). Will He have to ask you why you went AWOL so often and seldom showed up to review instructions for the daily battles? What excuse will you use for not staying with your regiment? Did He not say to you, **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."** (**II Tim. 2:3**)? He has provided the whole armor (**Eph. 6:10-19**). If you look closely at **v.19** it is what activates the armor!

The daughters stood there overwhelmed, riveted on what had just transpired. They had never seen such infinite, intimate, forgiving love before. They themselves longed for this kind of relationship. Then the Holy Spirit brought to remembrance the process that lifted the bride into the arms of her Beloved. The Holy Spirit said, **"You remember the words of the bride, 'He is altogether lovely!' and 'I am my Beloved's!' Look at her, dear daughters, she is consumed with love for Him. She desires nothing more than His fellowship! His plans! His perfect will for her life! If that is your desire, express it to Him and to others. His heart will fill your soul!"** The Bridegroom looked over in their direction knowing just what the Holy Spirit was proposing to their spirit! His look melted their heart!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, dear Abba Father, dear precious Holy Spirit - Holy! Holy! Holy! My soul doth magnify the Lord! I am fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of my Bridegroom and I give Him the glory! I adore You! You are my whole life! Never again will I move to the right or the left from the path You have set out for me. I will follow the nudge of Your arm in mine. HALLELUJAH, THE LORD MY GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, REIGNS IN MY HEART! In Your glorious name Lord Jesus, amen."*

He takes her by the hand and says, *"Come with Me and meet My other spiritual lilies who love Me as deeply as you do. They have been anxiously waiting to fellowship with you. I have told them so much about you and what you mean to My heart!"* Then He leans over and whispers quietly to her, *"O how I've missed you My Bride, My love! I missed your surrendered eyes and your beautiful voice! I have longed to share so much from My heart with you. Remember how we would meet in the morning and talk with each other? It was so difficult for Me, especially that first morning you weren't there! I waited and waited but you did not come! But now, O it is so good to have you in My arms once again!"*

As He spoke she laid her head on His breast. Tears of relief and restoration filled her eyes. The other lilies rejoiced for they had experienced the same blessed cleansing. O how wonderful did the strength and peace of His arms feel!

Something strange and wonderful was happening inside of her, she knew that she would never say "no" to Him again, never leave His side. The daughters standing there were still filled with holy wonder and amazement. She beckoned them to come near and meet the Beloved of her heart. He opened His arms to them and was so pleased that they had made the decision to surrender their all to Him also.

Having spoken to the daughters He turned and His eyes met the riveted gaze of the bride. It was almost too much for Him. He was seeing a pure reflection of Himself coming from the windows of her soul, her eyes! Streams of living water flowed from her heart through the windows of her gaze, wave upon wave of love for Him alone. The Bridegroom lovingly commands her to...

V.5 "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome (Heb. to behave proudly, to act boisterously) me:..."

Place yourself in this scene. The Lord, the Bridegroom of your heart, has just lifted your head and spoken these words to you. All doubt, guilt, depression and self-deprecation have been swept away. Your entire being has been immersed wholly in the Holy Spirit! You just stand there with your eyes fastened to His. Every ounce of love in your heart passes to His heart through your gaze! It is His strong love returning to Him, that love which had been lavished upon her by the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 5:5**).

Can it be that He is affected so deeply by her gaze? This is not a scene of weakness on the part of our Beloved but of being overwhelmed by her deep responsive, repentive, transformed gaze of **"first love"** love! The language of her eyes filled Him with overwhelming joy! It is as if He were saying, *"You make My head swim; you take Me by storm!"* He was seeing eternal beauty, love, care, compassion, longsuffering, joy, submissiveness, peace, kindness, faith and so much more! Think of it, an infinite God experiences unexplainable infinite joy from His bride. He is consumed with **"first love"**, love. The Beloved saw her future, together with Him as if it were now! He saw her ministering with Him in the fields, villages, vineyards and witnessing to her little sisters (all coming in **chapters 7 and 8**)! What does the Lord Jesus Christ see in your eyes dear surrendered believer?

When you say in your heart, *"Lord, I belong to You forever. Do whatever You want in my life!"* an exhilarating joy sweeps over His soul. He sees in your loving, surrendered gaze all that the Holy Spirit will accomplish through you: an intimate love for Him and His beautiful image revealed in your walk. Each one will walk a different path but it will be His steps. Many will be drawn to Him because of His presence in you – drawn to repentance and to an intimate relationship with Him!

V.5 - 7 "...thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them. As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks." (a repeat of **4:1-3** see comments)

He lovingly reassures her that He sees her glory (hair) submitted to Him as before. It has not lost its submissive beauty. Her teeth are as strong as ever. He will now be able to share with her the deep things of His heart to feast upon. Praise God there is the pomegranate, again saying to Him that her deepest thoughts are of His blood that brought to her soul: grace, mercy, and life filled with worship and praise. Why did He repeat the words from **4:1-3**? This was His loving assurance that the fervency of His love had not changed in the slightest degree toward her! Praise God our Bridegroom never changes!

Jesus, the Bridegroom, looks at her beautiful smile and gleaming teeth and says, *"Look at those spiritual teeth. You, My bride will bring life to others with the Words I will put in your heart. My dove, you will teach others My ways and My wisdom. The words of your mouth will bring glory to Me. The love you have for Me will become the sword of My Word against the enemy."*

"...from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren..."

Dear reader, each day we need a spiritual washing and refreshing. Unsundered believers seldom bother, or it is just half-hearted. If you sin, confess it and have it washed once again in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (I **John 1:7**). Sit quietly with your Lord and allow Him to wash your feet with His Word (**John 15:3**). Your daily walk may step out of His will and become dirty. O how refreshing to have His spiritual hands take our feet and wash them with the water of the Word (**Eph. 5:25,26**). Have your conscience cleansed by the precious blood and your spiritual body cleansed with the pure water of the Word (**Heb. 10:22**).

What joy it is to Him to see purity restored in your soul. What beauty it is for Him to behold! Glory to His name, our Bridegroom has provided all we need to stay clean and pure before Him in love. **"Bearing twins"** speaks of balance. You possess a balanced spiritual mouth to: chew on His Word, utter praise, intercede for others, submit to authority and encourage others. You will not be *"barren"* but you'll be filled to all the fullness of God (**Eph. 3:19**). The precious fruit of His Spirit will be produced in your character and daily walk!

Remember, from the beginning of this Song the bride has been surrendered in heart to Him. The training time is over and the active serving time is about to begin. She has proclaimed His lordship over her life (**6:3**). As a result she has lovingly submitted to an important process in order to be made more beautiful for Him. Note the order in these verses, her eyes riveted on Him. Next, she *"eats"* the Word and is cleansed by it (*"washed"*). As a result, she walks with a new spiritual balance of maturity. This then leads her into a deeper worship of His glorious person and her mind is becoming more and more the mind of her Beloved (pomegranates, temples - I **Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5,6**). She values His precious blood even more.

V.8 "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number."

King Solomon was the most powerful of all the Hebrew kings, and foreign countries wanted to live in peace with Israel. In order to tangibly demonstrate their sincerity they would send to the King ladies who were members of the royal families as a guarantee. It is not our purpose to deal with what God allowed or with the near eastern customs concerning queens, concubines and maidens. Eliphaz, Gideon, Saul, David, Rehoboam, Abijah and Jacob all had concubines. There were biblical regulations concerning the status of concubines (**Ex. 21:7-9; Deut. 21**).

Keep in mind that the Holy Spirit wrote this wonderful Song of Songs! It is absolute spiritual purity at its best. A devotional thought for you - because of your deep love of the Beloved, He will send beautifully surrendered members of the bride of Christ into your life to share with you the breadth and length and height and depth of His love. Wow, what a gift of love to those who are truly intimate and fully in love with Him. The joy of being with others of like precious faith is indescribable.

V.9 "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bore her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her: yea, the queens and the concubines and they praised her."

Say in your heart and speak with your lips to Him dear reader, **"I am my Beloved's!"** and you will hear Him speak **v. 9** to you in your spirit. O how blessed this scene is! The bride is standing there with all of those beautiful ladies along with the daughters of Jerusalem. Praise God, the Beloved is not ashamed to express His deepest thoughts about her publicly (**vs. 4-7**)! Just imagine how she must have felt to have those words spoken in the presence of all around her. Her past failure caused her to see only condemnation in herself when He had already cleansed her!

Then there were all of the beautiful women surrounding her. She thought, *"Why doesn't He choose one of them?"* No sooner had that guilt ridden, self-defeating thought passed through her mind, she felt her Beloved place His arms around her. He spoke in clear, rejoicing tones so that all may hear, **"My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one..., she is the choice one...!"** That is said to you my dear surrendered friend! Receive it and rejoice! He sees you as undefiled! Only our Bridegroom, the I AM, the crucified and risen One could do that miracle! Hallelujah!

"My dove..."

Interestingly Jesus calls her His **"dove"**. The Beloved publicly calls attention for all to look at her eyes, those **"dove's"** eyes whose gaze is locked on Him. Her eyes still belong to Him and the Beloved is thrilled beyond measure. The

Bridegroom wants all to observe carefully what He desires from all who want an intimate, victorious relationship with Him. He asks, *"Do you truly want to be a consistent overcomer? The answer is in her eyes!"* The old hymn says it all, *"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."* How many times have we read **Heb. 12:1-3**? Please take time and read it again and see what her dove's eyes see! When attacked Mary of Bethany said nothing but kept her eyes riveted on Him (**Lk10:38-42; Mk14:3-9**). *Oh, dear Bridegroom of my heart I love to hear You say to me "My dove; My undefiled"! What an awesome, intimate word!*

"...my undefiled..."

To understand the impact of this statement consider the meaning of **"undefiled"** which in the Hebrew language means, *"to be complete", "whole", "healthy", "to perform completely", "to be pure", "a finished product", and "wholehearted"*. This is true sanctification. She is absolutely set apart to her Beloved and for her Beloved. Holiness is real. She is no longer influenced by the sinful *"little"* foxes. There is no *"minor"* leaven to dull the relationship. The fervor of her heart is seen in the sparkle of her eyes. Her eyes continually say, **"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul..." (Lam. 3:24)**. She **"is"** (present tense) not **"will be"** complete in Him (**Col. 2:10**)! Hallelujah! Oh how He sees the end from the beginning now!

"...she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her...."

In all the created universe the bride of Christ is unique! As a human being she was made a little lower than the angels (**Psa. 8:5; Heb. 2:7,9**), but now in Jesus she is exalted to sit with her Bridegroom in the heavenlies (**Eph. 2:6**). Not only is the corporate bride unique, but each one of His surrendered lilies is unique to Him. Individually to them He declares, **"she is the only one...."**! What a great Bridegroom we have who can make each one of us feel O so special to His heart.

It is the woman who gives birth to new life. The Lord uses the term *"birth"* to illustrate just exactly how we were brought into His spiritual family. In this world it is the husband's seed that begins new life in his wife. It is the seed of the Word that is placed in our heart that brings new birth. God Himself, the Holy Spirit placed the eternal seed in Mary, and Jesus came forth. The Holy Spirit places the eternal seed of Abba's Word in us (**I Pet. 1:23-25**) and the new life begins.

Who is our mother who gives us spiritual birth? It is the dear Holy Spirit (metaphorically speaking). In our case, He gives the spiritual seed and spiritually births us. We are born of the Spirit (**John 3:5**). For example, wisdom in Proverbs is called *"she"* but spiritually speaking it is actually representing the Lord Himself (**Col. 2:3**).

The Holy Spirit and His seed brought us forth. As the corporate bride we are the **"only one"** ever or will ever be born of the Holy Spirit! Be humbled with this thought, in all of God's vast creation we are matchless! We are one with Jesus as He is with the Father (**John 17:22**)! That is true family! That is true marriage! We are the choice one! The Father gave us to His Son through the Holy Spirit (**John 10:29**)! There is nothing in all of God's creative universe that compares with us! Not angels! Not Cherubim! Not Seraphim! **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."** (**Eph. 1:4**)! Read **I Thess. 2:13**. You, with all the other believers are His unique bride! Nothing higher or greater, nothing more exquisite or beautiful has ever been created, not even the universe itself!

Can it truly be I am all of that to Him? **"The heavens declare the glory of God...."** (**Psa. 19:1**) how much more His bride! Think of it, since we are one with Jesus and Jesus is one with His Father, then we will have His glory radiating throughout the new Jerusalem through us. **"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was....And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."** (**John 17:5,22**)! O the glory that is manifested in us when we are fully His!

"...the daughters saw her, and blessed her: yea, the queens and the concubines and they praised her."

Why do the beautiful women want to bless her? It is what they **"see"** in her! In **v.10** it says that this bride **"looketh forth"**! She is to be blessed and praised because she looks like Him! What a joy it is to see Jesus in our brothers and sisters. Many Christians are skilled in talking Christianity but O what a blessing to see someone walking and displaying a living, vibrant Christianity! She is the Ruth of the Old Testament and the Mary of Bethany of the New Testament. Both these ladies were totally committed to God (**Ruth 1:16,17; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 10:38-42**).

Wonder of wonders! Is this the one who lived in the tents of Kedar (**1:5**) and now resides in the King's palace? Is this the one who was treated as a nobody by her brothers (**1:6**) and now is showered with accolades of blessing and praise from the royal household? Can this be the one who considered herself a common desert flower (**2:1**), yet now is told that she is a priceless, exquisite flower of unsurpassed, unequalled beauty and perfection? Glory to the Lord, Yes! O the joy of giving to

Him our bodies as holy, living sacrifices! O the joy of speaking with our lips from the depths of our will, **"I am my Beloved's!"** Oh the purity that is felt! O the fullness that is experienced! O the divine health that is received in spirit, soul, and body! Stunned, they looked at each other in bewilderment. One asked, *"This is not the same person we saw on the street just a while ago is it? We are looking at a miracle of infinite, transforming proportions."* Questions fill their minds...

V.10 "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning (dawn), fair (beautiful, lovely) as the moon, clear (bright, pure) as the sun, and terrible (fearful) as an army with banners?"

This bride had just gone through great suffering and shame because of the sin of hesitation. Her appearance had been anything but lovely. But Oh, when she stepped into the presence of her Beloved (v.3), with her will now totally submerged into His will, a burst of His glorious light radiates from her! The ladies look and are awestruck! This astounding transformation causes them to ask,

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning..."

Yes, she is like the morning! The Bride is like her Beloved. He is the bright and morning Star! She had just returned to Him, transformed into His likeness! The glory of the surrendered life is beginning to appear like the glow just before sunrise. There is the freshness of a new day in her look, in her eyes, in her ways! The dark shadows of self had engulfed her, but now, a new day in her life was dawning!

Is this true in your life? Each morning there will be a refreshing spiritual newness in your life. You will proclaim with Holy Spirit excitement, **"This is the day which the Lord hath made"; (I) will rejoice and be glad in it.!" (Psa. 118:24).** When you awake, immediately the gentle, loving Holy Spirit will witness with your spirit that the Lord's purpose and plan is already at work in you, preparing you for a new day and new battles already won by the Lord Himself (Psa. 46:5)! In the morning your soul will feel enfolded by His lovingkindness (Psa. 59:16). His joy (Psa. 30:5), compassion and mercy (Lam.3:23) will rise like the dawn in you. There will be a refreshing quiet confidence that His glorious light will shine through you brighter and brighter as the day unfolds (Prov. 4:18).

There is a spiritual freshness for the new day, knowing you are enwrapped in His arms and **"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper...." (Isa. 54:17).** You will rejoice because He has made this day for you. You will walk by faith and not by sight. So you are glad in it, knowing He is in total control of your surrendered life. Isn't it great to be around other believers who don't dwell on the past but look to a new day and a bright future in the Lord with absolute assurance from Him ? Your own spiritual joy is enhanced by them. Praise God for the freshness of the Holy Spirit filled life. The daughters continue to gaze at this miracle before them. One of them exclaims that the bride is...

"...fair (lovely) as the moon..."

The moon gives off a soft and gentle light by reflecting the rays of the sun. Because of sin, this old world in which we live is engulfed by spiritual darkness, hardness and harshness. The world needs to see the **"moon"** in us. In itself the moon is absolutely lifeless, it has no energy of its own. However, the moon continually reflects the light of the sun. The moon's life is the life of another, its gentleness is the gentleness of another, it blesses only by being blessed by another; its glory is totally the glory of another!

As the sun gives beauty to a submissive moon so also the light of Christ, in the power and beauty of the Spirit-filled life, will be reflected in us as we submit all to Him. No wonder they were so delighted to gaze on her. She reflected pure beauty! She reflected Him!

Your spouse, your family, your friends, your co-workers and casual acquaintances all need to see a **"dead"** and **"dark"** former you reflecting the living light of Christ (Gal. 2:20)! Just as the moon uses no energy to bless, so you are not to struggle in your energy to live the Christian life, but you are to surrender each day to the Lord totally so He may touch you and others through you.

The Holy Spirit then arranges all the circumstances in your life that will best reflect Jesus to those who need to see Him in you. You will, for the most part, be very unaware of all that the Holy Spirit is doing, but you will have confidence that He is **"doing!"** Do people need to hear your opinion, wisdom and knowledge? No! A yielded life to the Holy Spirit will reflect Jesus' wisdom and knowledge to all those brought into your life (Col. 2:3).

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, I want to have Your glory shine through the life that You have created in me. I submit my mind and heart to You. Take them and transform my walk to be in agreement with Your Holy Word. Let the lovely image of my Beloved be daily reflected in me by the power of the Holy Spirit. That is my desire in the wonderful and mighty*

There are many times we are called on to walk through a dark circumstance. Even though it seems at times He is not there, the reflection of His promises say otherwise. The moon is just a reminder that the sun is still there in the darkness. What an encouragement to all of us that the night will pass and the day will dawn whether it be in a deep, dark crisis we are facing or knowing that through the darkness of this world, Jesus, the Light of the world is coming back soon.

"...as clear as the sun..."

As an adjective the Hebrew word for "**clear**" carries with it the meaning of: "*pure*" or "*clean*" (see **Psa. 19:8; 24:4; 73:1**). This word "**clear**" comes from a Hebrew word which means: "*to purify*", "*cleanse*", "*make bright*". The sun is the power of our solar system. This is the light that brings life! Are you "**...as clear as the sun...**"? Do you bring life wherever your footsteps take you? The sun is the generating power of our solar system. Without its power and energy all would be lifeless and dreary. She not only reflected Jesus' light as the moon but she possessed His dynamic spiritual power within!

The power cannot be unleashed and seen in us until we have given our all to Him. She has repented from her compromising sins and made Him Lord of her life. She now walks the blameless life (**Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Phil. 1:10; 2:15; Col. 1:22**) before all - clear as the sun. It all happens when we give every aspect of our life to Him without reservation! It's His power that will be seen in us and then, flow out through us! Lives will be blessed, changed, saved, healed, delivered (**Eph. 3:20; Acts 1:8**). Remember, it all began with the defining moment in **6:3**.

He chose you to be His vehicle through which the world may see His purity and love (**John 17:22-23; II Cor. 3:18**). Do they? This poor old world, with its empty lives, gropes for meaning, purpose, usefulness and purity but to no avail. They give up in despair. O Christian disciple, let the world see Jesus in you! Stay daily surrendered and submissive to Him! We are to be pure and clear as the "*Son*"! That kind of life is at your fingertips if you would take your compromising hands off the controls!

There is nothing like a transparent (clear) believer! You never have to guess about them! They have a clear-cut witness and would do nothing to offend Jesus or you. You know, without question, they are totally in love with Jesus and you, filled with His Spirit, filled with His Word and His ways! Are you perfect? No! But as you confess each failure and sin then repent of them, a little more of Jesus is seen in your life (**John 3:10**)! Your reflection of Him will grow brighter.

"...and terrible (fearful) as an army with banners?"

The Beloved proclaimed this in **v.4** and now the Daughters of Jerusalem absolutely agree with His estimation of her. When Jesus becomes your entire reason for living, then nothing, absolutely nothing can defeat you! His banners over you cause the Prince of Darkness to cringe in fear and retreat!

Glory to God we are in His army and fully equipped to do battle. God Almighty is our banner (**Ex. 17:15**)! As the enemy approaches he sees written on these victory banners over you: "*Abba Father*"; "*Righteous Father*"; "*The Blood of Jesus*", "*The Name of Jesus*"; "*The Sword of the Spirit*"; "*It is Finished*". As you submit every situation to your Beloved these banners are unfurled by His angels encamped round about you! The enemy must retreat. These banners are filled with His light that the Prince of Darkness hates. Notice she has His light in the morning, at night (moon) and during the day (sun). Twenty-four hours of protection! The Word proclaims, "**...the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended** (Gk. overpowered, overwhelmed, seized) **it not.**" (**John 1:5**).

The bride asked that her very special intimate friends, the virgins and daughters, meet with her for fellowship. The sharing times were always an inspiration to them. More than anyone else, they understood her deep experiences in the Lord. Their own spiritual journey had been very similar. Waiting for the bride to arrive they conversed with one another about how much their lives had changed and of the Bridegroom's love which filled their hearts.

The bride walked in, radiant looking as ever, with an excited tone said, "*Dear, dear friends, I just want to say how much I love you. You have been so faithful to me. Look at us here, why do we meet so often like this? It's because of Him! He's everything to us! But I especially have much to be thankful for concerning Him. He has been so gentle with me from the very beginning. He knew long before it ever dawned upon me that I had to go through the growing pains of surrender. But O the joy ladies, you all know what I mean! Remember what I did not want to do (2:16)? My Beloved is giving me another opportunity. He is asking me to go with Him into the valley. What I am so excited about is that I didn't hesitate one second this time.*"

They were all smiles and then at the same moment clapping for joy they broke out in laughter! One of the virgins said, "We'll miss you so much. These times of fellowship are very precious to us. We will be praying for you as you leave on this wonderful journey. We will be anxiously awaiting your return and you'll have to tell us all the details of what it meant ministering so intimately with the Beloved." Everyone gathered 'round and laid their hands on the bride praying a blessing of the Beloved's Word over her.

PRAY WITH ME: "I give You praise, I give You praise, I give You praise! My Father, I love You! My dear Lord Jesus, I love You! Dear, dear Holy Spirit, I love You! I give You all the glory for on me and in me shines Your light from morning to night! I bow before You with a heart filled with thanksgiving. Your banners are lifted up above me causing my enemy to be defeated. Thank You Lord, I submit my heart and life for You to keep it clean and bright before a wicked and perverse generation. Bless others through me, in my Beloved Jesus, amen!"

Before they leave the Beloved explains to her the purpose for this journey. He says...

V.11 "I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits (Heb. "freshness") of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded."

How wonderful is this scene! It is springtime, a time of new beginnings. The Beloved is leaving to examine His spiritual garden to see how fruitful it will be. There was another time He spoke of this in (2:11-13). At that time her heart was not moved. But now He knows she is ready to leave with Him on a spiritually breathtaking journey by faith into His vineyards! Even while speaking about the beauty and fruit of His garden a special glow came upon His face.

The Beloved's great concern is always the condition of His garden. He Himself is the seed that was planted there (John 12:24; 19:41; Mt. 13:36-38). Jesus buried His seed at Calvary and resurrected it in our heart garden. He gave His life so glorious fruit could be produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart garden of each believer! O the power of that SEED to transform the hardest of hearts! Paul prayed, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection..." (Phil. 3:10)! He loves to share His work! He does not want to go alone! It enhances His joy! For a moment He pauses, then explains...

V.12 "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like (set me over) the chariots of Amminadib."

The Hebrew word "**Amminadib**" is a combination of two words "**am**" and "**nadib**". The first is usually translated "people" and the second word can be translated "willing", "voluntarily", "inclined", or "noble". Am I seen by Him in the company called "His willing people"? O how it pleases the Beloved's soul to be with those who possess a willing spirit to do His perfect will. An inclined heart voluntarily desiring and doing His will causes the Lord Jesus to call us "**noble**"! Are not His chosen called "**a royal priesthood**" (1 Pet. 2:9)? Chariots imply movement from place to place. It is a vehicle that must be controlled and driven by another. Are you spiritually noble by having a willing, submissive spirit obeying His loving commands?

The Beloved looked deep into her spirit and knew she was ready, O so ready and willing to go with Him to the garden! His heart leaped with joy because she was now one in purpose with Him. He could hear her say quietly, "Wherever You want to go I want to go! Your desire is my desire! Your work will be my work! I have to be with You my Love, my Bridegroom, my Lord! Your joy alone is my joy!" He takes her by the hand and they begin to walk toward the valley of orchards! Little was said but a beautiful glowing midst enveloped them as they walked off.

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Lord, for too long I have held the reins of my soul's chariot deciding where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do! Seldom did I consult with You and find out Your heart's desire. Take the reins out of my hands! I want to hear You say that I am noble because of my willing heart. This is my longing and this is my joy. Praise Your holy name Lord Jesus, amen!"

With tears in their eyes, these beautiful ladies of royalty watched as this wonderful couple walked off in the light of the early morning sun. O how they would miss them! They called out to her with hearts full of love and appreciation for what she had become and said:

V.13 "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company (Heb. "dances") of two armies (or "encampments")."

They had been overwhelmed and awestruck at the glorious transformation into His likeness since the first time they had laid their eyes upon her in **chapter 1**! Those who have the fullness of Jesus in them are the ones who are truly missed when they depart. Your heart cries out, "Come back, come back, come back! Let me gaze upon Jesus in you once again for it is so refreshing to my soul!" For the first time she is called "**Shulamite**". It has been pointed out by others the name "**Shulamite**" is the feminine form of "**Solomon**". How appropriate that they call her by His name for she now bears His image more than ever before because of her confession and submission of love. Praise God, one day we who love and

adore Him; we who have been chosen as His bride will have His name written across our foreheads for all eternity. **"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."** (Rev. 22:4).

Excitement filled the bride. Quietness gave forth to joyful dancing and skipping down the path to the valley below! The daughters were ecstatic as they watched the bride dance in delirious delight. Praise God for those who are so surrendered and spirit-filled that they can dance like David danced before the Lord (**II Sam. 6:14**)! When you confess that Jesus has total control of you and then obey, the Holy Spirit fills up your soul with joy unspeakable, full of glory (**I Pet. 1:8**). **"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing."** (**Psa. 30:11**). The scripture tells us to **"...praise his name in the dance."** (**Psa. 149:3**)! The change that had taken place in the bride's life was so dramatic that she could not hold back. Thus, she danced exuberantly before the One she adored! Glory to God! Just like two armies dancing and rejoicing over victories! Reread **v.11**.

As the Bride walks with Him through the garden in the valley she observes the deep, deep concern and care her Beloved has for the spiritual trees, plants and vines in His garden. They are of inestimable value to Him. All of a sudden she remembers that this is where she had found Him (**6:2**) when her life was so dramatically changed. She noticed what great delight swept over His countenance when He, O so lovingly, touched the tender buds. He could envision blessed fruit being produced in the future!

He spoke to her concerning the garden. His hand pointed from corner to corner and said, *"See this vast, beautiful garden ready to bloom, it was a very dead and ugly piece of ground filled with thorns and thistles before I planted My seeds in it. This ground cost Me dearly but it was worth it all. Look how beautiful it is now My love and one day it will be perfect forever without spot or blemish"* (**Rev. 19:7,8; I Cor. 3:11-15**)!"

They walked and talked through this splendid garden. She could feel something strange and fantastic happening in her heart. She was beginning to have the same great love for the garden as her Beloved! All He could talk about was the beautiful, blessed fruit that was being produced. She felt the thrill of it with Him. She shouted with joy in her spirit at this new revelation, *"This is what He saw in me (4:12-5:1)! This whole garden reflects His glorious image (Rom. 8:29). I now see what He is seeing, the beauty and wonder of other surrendered lilies!"* Now she understood the deep concerns of His heart!

Jesus wants us to be concerned about His concerns. He wants us to love our brothers and sisters and see them flourish in the power of the Holy Spirit. Is the vine flourishing, in me? In you? In others (**John 15:1-11**)? That is His deep interest! He is the vine and what delights His heart is to see abundant life budding in the lives of His people. The Beloved looks closely to see if the pomegranates are blooming. Blooming indicates there is heartfelt **"first love"** love being offered in worship to Him from His thankful people.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, I love You and will gladly allow You to have Your wonderful name displayed in my life and speak it with my lips as long as I live! When people gaze upon me may they immediately say 'Jesus' in their heart! Lord, may I be like Peter and John when others saw and heard them, the people knew they had been with You Lord (Acts. 4:13). So strong were You in their life that people were powerfully affected even by Peter's shadow (Acts 5:15)! Dear Bridegroom of my heart, cause me to be so intimate with You that Your very presence in me will have a positive spiritual effect on others. Praise Your holy name! Amen!"*

COME APART AND REST FOR A WHILE. GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK AND SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

CHAPTER 7 - THE DELIGHTS OF HIS HEART REVEALED (cont.)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER SEVEN: The bride is now ready for service. With His heart filled with joyful anticipation the Beloved describes features of His bride which had not been considered before. The Bride is completely convinced that His desire is for her good only. She acts upon that revelation and suggests they both go out into the villages and country and minister. What He had so desired from her in **chapter two** ("come away"), she initiates! She has the mind of her Beloved - the mind of Christ!

The bride is ready to disciple others with Him. The symbolism of the feet and nose are very significant. Never before had He described them. All of this is leading to her new walk of ministry. This is the believer's crowning moment while living in this dark wilderness scene. A path of service has opened to her and a spiritual intimacy seldom experienced by the average Christian.

As they walk hand in hand in His garden (**6:11**) the Beloved's heart continues to be filled with glorious joy. Thoughtfully He pauses for a moment admiring her feet, then shares...

V.1 "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints (Heb. "roundness") of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hand of a cunning workman (artist)."

For the first time the Beloved describes His bride's feet and hips. What has made the difference? Prior to this He described her from head to waist, but now she is ready to walk in holiness, power and service. He observed with great delight her joyful dancing just a few moments ago. Her feet were clean in (**5:3**) but they were not ready for action. These feet are ready and willing to go with Him anywhere. With her shoes on she is ready to stand! What are these shoes? **"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."** (**Eph. 6:15**). With that kind of firm foundation she is able to stand, **"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, stand therefore...."** (**Eph. 6:13,14**). O to walk with peace while the storms of life gather 'round you and the enemy's weapons are formed against you.

With joy He says, *"I died for you My bride that I might experience this moment with you. Now there is nothing in you that will hinder our intimate fellowship anymore. You have reached full maturity. I look at your feet and see that they will walk with Me and for Me without any hesitation. You have no idea what happened in My heart when you, My dear dove, said, 'I am my Beloved's!' It was at that moment your will became My will! My heart is pounding with great anticipation with what lies ahead for you and Me together! Thank you, thank you, thank you for not giving up, but always seeking Me whom your soul loves! One last time I am going to describe the beauties of what I see in you. Keep this love description deep in your heart. It will be a strength and joy to you throughout your wilderness journey."*

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs flooded her Spirit-filled soul (**Eph. 5:18-21**)! Heavenly melody upon melody was played upon the heart of her spirit to her Beloved. O so thankful! O so pure! O so submissive! O so filled with incomprehensible joy! She was about to burst!

Your spiritual feet are important to the Lord. You must first allow the Prince to wash your feet (**John 13:5-17**). Your walk becomes dirty. He will do it through the Holy Spirit applying the Word to your life. If you do not allow Him to cleanse you then the Prince cannot share His ministry with you (**John 13:8**).

Let's pause for a moment and consider what the Word has to say about "walking" and "feet". She had to receive His Word first before she could walk in His will. The Lord proclaims in **Psa. 119:105, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."** At the very beginning of their relationship (**1:4**) she had prayed for the activity of her feet as well as the daughters of Jerusalem, **"Draw me, we will run after thee... "** Feet must move in order to run. That spiritual request was being answered progressively in **6:1,13; 7:11**! She had to first hear the Word before her feet would heed His call! It took time! Be patient dear reader, God's timing is the only timing for a true sanctified, Holy Spirit led walk for Jesus! Don't try to figure things out, just lean on Him and know His purposes are being fulfilled in your life daily.

When the Beloved decided to inspect His garden and orchard, He started to leave (**6:11**). He did not ask her to come with Him. His bride did something she had not done before - she followed Him **"down"** to the valley where the garden and orchard were located. Previously, she was willing to go to the mountaintop. But it is in the valleys of life where the gardens find the best nutrients and weather to produce quality fruit! Don't reject the valleys! O my friend, this is true beauty, walking where Jesus is walking in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit! Jesus cannot help exclaim, **"How beautiful are thy feet!"**

The Holy Spirit said to the Bride's heart, "Look once again at the feet of your Beloved. Remember how He leaped upon the mountains and skipped upon the hills (2:8)? His feet were bringing victory over every difficulty in this dark world. As Jesus loves your feet so also the Father loves His Son's feet. Shhh...the Father is about to speak to your Beloved Husband, **'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publisheth peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that says unto Zion, Thy God reigneth (Isa 52:7)'**! No wonder Jesus is excited about your feet. They are becoming like His feet! And the more believers surrender to Him the more the Father's joy is increased. Why? Because He sees His Son's feet in them walking all over the world fulfilling the Word of Isa. 61:1-3".

So many believers who love Jesus, praise Him and study His Word with great expectation, then the Holy Spirit bids their feet to move in a new direction and they hesitate! Their feet are not beautiful! They come to the very edge of great spiritual blessing and then fall short! Within reach is everything that they had ever longed for in their Christian life but miss it! There is a beginning desire to **"run after"** Him! But they are unwilling to have the Word of correction (**Heb. 12:6-14**) do its work in their lives. Emotional enthusiasm for Jesus is beautiful but it must be coupled with spiritual determination! Many are in love with the principles of the Word, but not with the Prince of the Word! If so, then this would be true, **"...if a man love me, he will keep my Word...."** (John 14:23).

The Bridegroom declares that she is now totally separated unto Him (true sanctification) from head to toe. What kind of walk truly pleases the Prince? It is to: **"...walk in the Spirit..."** (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:4) and walking in the Spirit is to walk: **"in faith"** (II Cor. 5:7); **"in love"** (Eph. 5:2); **"in wisdom"** (Col. 4:5); **"in the light"** (I John 1:7). All of these are accomplished by leaning totally on the **"...sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"**. (Eph. 6:17). How do you know when you are filled with the Spirit – it is the moment you have surrendered all your rights to the Lord – overall and in specific circumstances. When you do that your spiritual vessel has become **"emptied"** and the Spirit immediately comes and fills it every time! Your burning desire is to obey the Word of God because it is the Word of your Beloved! You can't force yourself to walk in this manner. You become filled with His Spirit and totally in love with the Bridegroom! This **"walking in the Spirit"** is accomplished by the Spirit, as you abide in Jesus' Word which is making you free (**John 8:31-32**). Freedom in the Spirit brings fulfillment in your walk (read **Rom. 8:2-4**). Freedom in the Spirit turns everything back over to Jesus. Do you have a problem facing you? It's not yours it's your Prince's problem! Speak His precious Word over it and then leave it in your Beloved's hand. He has never failed to work out a problem given to Him!

"...O prince's daughter!..."

Who is this Prince? It is none other than Jesus who died on the cross, **"And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."** (Acts 3:15); **"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins."** (Acts 5:31). Glory to God, our Bridegroom is the crucified, risen Prince of Life. Everywhere a surrendered believer walks he steps into a footprint that has a nail scar in it. Pause and read **I Peter 2:21-25** and see what it says about walking in His footsteps. O to walk daily having the imprint of the Prince of Peace in my footsteps! O to be recognized that I belong to my Lord, the Beloved! May those who watch my life see the imprint of a nail in every step I take! Don't miss this thought, He goes before us and a surrendered believer walks in His steps. **"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."** John 10:4!

PRAY WITH ME: "Lord, thank You so much for the shoes You placed on my feet. Thank You for having made them Yourself. Praise Your Holy name for the shoes of the **"preparation of the gospel of peace."** (Eph. 6:15). I stand strong in them in You against the enemy. I now run and am not weary! You, dear Lord, slipped Your shoes over my feet and all fear has disappeared! What a God You are, when I am following after You I am actually walking in the plans You prepared for me.(Jer.29:11) In Jesus' name, amen."

They continue to walk through His garden. The Beloved pauses again and just looks at her, feasting on the heart that is gloriously one with His. He whispers to her, **"I'm so, so pleased My Father gave you to Me! You are so spiritually beautiful to Me My dove, My bride, there is nothing in the universe more lovely than you for..."**

"...the joints of thy thighs are like jewels..."

The word in the Hebrew for **"jewels"** carries with it the idea of **"ornaments"** and is so translated in **Prov. 25:12**. Women of the ancient east wore strings of ornaments attached around the waist, flowing down over the hips or thighs (**Gen. 52:25; Ex. 32:27; Num. 5:21; Psa. 45:3**). Spiritually He is admiring the lovely sixty-six strands of ornaments flowing from the hips over the spiritual thighs – lovingly obeying His Word that are guiding her heart and footsteps!

The spiritual ornaments given to us are every facet of His truth received in our heart. Does not the Word say, **"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...."** (Eph. 6:14)? Our loins give strength of movement to our feet that now walk in His truth. We walk unencumbered up the King's highway in holiness (John 17:17). Our daily walk (manner of life) demonstrates to all around that we are free of doubt, fear and worldly pollution. May the Lord be able to say about you and me as the apostle John said, **"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."** (Ill John 4)

"...the work of the hands of a cunning workman."

Notice, what makes her beautiful is done by someone other than herself. It is an expert artist. It is not so much the hips that are in view but the ornaments. To walk one must have hips which are unimpeded. **"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."** (II Cor. 3:17). Who is this expert artist? None other than the Lord Himself. Let Him tell you from His Word, **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."** (Eph. 2:10; Zech. 4:6; Jer. 18:1-6)

Her heart about *"melts away"* with the fervor of His loving description. She asks, *"My Love, my heart is about to burst, please allow me to sit down and rest in Your presence!"* He takes her by the hand and leads her to a very special spot. They sit down together under the shade of the Tree of Life (2:3). She lays her head on His breast. After a time of blessed quietness He continues to pour out His heart...

V.2 "Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth (Heb. "lacking") no liquor (Heb. "blended wine"); thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies."

The word **"naval"** is the Hebrew word for *"umbilical cord"*. As with the original purpose of the navel, the lifeline to the unborn child, so also with our spiritual lifeline, He alone is our life, **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21); "...Christ, who is our life..." (Col. 3:4); "...nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..." (Gal. 2:20)!**

The navel symbolizes how we were sustained by someone other than ourselves. As an unborn child we were totally dependent on our mother's nourishment. The navel continually reminds us that we were totally dependent on someone else beginning at our conception. He not only is her Bridegroom but He is the One who caused her to be birthed by His Spirit (**the Spirit of Christ, Rom. 8:9**). As a babe she drank the spiritual milk of the Word (**I Pet. 2:2; John 6:63**) He was the One Who had nurtured her (**Eph. 6:4**) as a child. The bride was totally dependent on her Beloved and still is. He has become her life! As in the pregnancy stage, the umbilical cord was filled with nutrients for the baby so also here symbolically it has the spiritual capacity to be filled with Bread of Life and the fruit of the Spirit. The Beloved envisions it as a round goblet filled with blended wine.

"...which wanteth (Heb. "lacking") no liquor (Heb. "blended wine")"

The Hebrews would blend their wine with some other substance in order to protect themselves from drunkenness (milk in 5:1). They were not to **"look upon the wine when it is red"** (Prov. 23:31). Red wine represented full strength. For individuals to drink blended wine indicated that their motives were pure not wanting the wine to adversely affect them. In our spiritual umbilical cord flows the blood of Jesus, the wine of God! It carries the spiritual nutrients needed to sustain our spirits and souls while walking in this world. Without the blood of Jesus there are no spiritual nutrients: no Holy Spirit, no living Word, no transformation, no joy, no real purpose, no healing and no pleasing God. She is filled up with joy and gladness (**Psa. 104:15**). O to be filled up with Jesus' joy (**John 15:11**)! O to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 5:18-21**). The joy of the believer is found in the blood of Jesus! Read **I Cor. 10:16,17** and see how living the Blood of Jesus truly is.

What is to be blended into your spiritual cup of wine in order to have the **"joy of the Lord"** (**Neh. 8:10**) which is your strength? Into the cup of your spirit and soul the Holy Spirit will pour heavenly revelations about the Lord Jesus Christ! These thoughts will come while meditating on His Word, during prayer, while praising or at the most unexpected times. He will reveal the deeper things concerning His heart, glory to God, and you will be sustained!

Song of Solomon 2:4 tells us the Beloved brought His bride into the **"banqueting house"**! The literal translation of that phrase is **"house (sometimes "palace") of wine"**. In this house, set aside for joy and fellowship, her Husband placed a banner with **"love"** emblazoned on it over His bride. It was the blood of Jesus that brought ultimate joy to her heart. Inscribed on the walls of His **"banqueting house of wine"** were these words, **"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."** (Rom. 5:8,9)!

And now, the Beloved of her heart saw the wine in her spiritual lifeline! The blood was ever on her thoughts and was her daily victory. Jesus very clearly proclaimed to the leadership of Israel after the feeding of the five thousand (**John 6:5-14**) that unless they ate His body and drank His blood they could not have eternal life nor would they abide in Him in the Christian walk. Jesus stated that His body was true food and His blood true drink (**John 6:51-58**)! Praise God for the "blended wine". Praise God for the blood of Jesus! Enjoy again a devotional review concerning the blood of Jesus: (**Exo. 12:13; Lev. 17:11; John 6:55; I Cor. 10:16; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Heb. 10:19,20; 13:12; I Pet. 1:18,19; I John 1:7; 5:8; Rev. 1:5; 7:14; 12:11**)! Jesus is the Bread - we must fill up on the Word! The life of the flesh is in the blood (**Lev. 17:17**). His blood runs through the Word. Without the shedding of His blood, the Word from Genesis to Revelation would be powerless. Drink in His Word fully!

"...thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies."

The word "**belly**" in other passages is translated, "womb"; "birth"; "body"; "stomach" and "inward parts". In other words it is the center of the body. It is the place where the Lord forms new life! The Holy Spirit tells us in **Psa. 147:14** that wheat represents being satisfied and filled by the hand of God. There is so much here in this verse. He knew us while we were in our mother's womb. He birthed us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He gave us a spiritual body. He fills us with spiritual food to satisfy our inward spiritual cravings. Wheat or its grain is full of spiritual meaning for us. It is symbolical of satisfaction (**Psa. 81:16; 147:14**); true believers (**Luke 3:17**); the Word of God (**Mt. 13:25**). Jesus, Himself, is the grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died (**John 12:24**). Praise His holy name, He rose from the grave and produced much wheat - us! Yes, our wonderful Savior and Lord is the "heap" of spiritual food to our souls so that from the very core of our innermost being a "heap" of praise and worship must flow back to His heart!

PRAY WITH ME: "You, my wonderful Bridegroom, are the good seed planted in my heart by the Holy Spirit. Your glorious kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, has taken deep root in the garden of my heart (**Mt. 13:24,25**). The water of Your Word has caused it to grow into the wheat of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 14:17**)! O my King, You are my grain offering (**Lev. 2:1**) of pure wheat flour that I offer to Abba, Father! My Beloved, You are the wheat of my soul for You alone satisfy and fulfill my life! Glory to Your name alone, Lord Jesus! Amen and amen!"

"...set about with lilies."

Lilies were etched into the temple (**I Kin. 7:19:22; Hos. 14:5**). That was the place of worship. Her Beloved sees her now worshipping and rejoicing with other lilies. They desire to gather round her because she is filled with Him! Lilies surround her "**wheat**". Only when we fellowship with other lilies who are filled with wheat will we ever truly be satisfied. She is seen as an army (**6:10**) worshipping Him, loving Him, adoring Him and caring for Him!

A victorious army is filled with joy, praise and exultation! Months, even years later, veterans will come together to reminisce over the momentous triumphs won at great cost. These soldiers will talk about it to their children and their children's children - future generations are never to forget. Whenever these conquering heroes have the opportunity to talk about it they will! It's their continuous delight! What joy there is to be with other surrendered lilies whose great delight is to speak about the triumphs of their Beloved Commander in their individual lives! Any place where they meet to talk about or worship Him becomes His banqueting house of wine! Isn't this what the Lord's Supper is supposed to be all about - a corporate victory celebration?

He is overjoyed that her concern is for the lilies too. They have become part of His bride's life. It is extremely important that we fellowship with other surrendered lilies (**Eph. 4:15,16**). The bride and the Love of her life walk a little further hand in hand without saying a word, but O so much is being communicated heart to heart in the silence. Then He speaks lovingly once again;

V.3 "thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins."

Here, the Beloved repeats the words He uttered in **4:5**. Be reminded that **I Thess. 5:8** unlocks the secret of the two breasts. She is filled equally with faith and love. That is exactly what she needs when she actively goes with her Beloved to minister to Him ("**love God**") and to others ("**love one another**"). And it is faith that is the product of love and only pleases Him (**Heb. 11:6**). It is faith that overcomes the world and blesses others (**I John 5:4**). All she needs is to serve in the faith and love imparted to her! (**Rom. 5:5**; and the last part of **12:3**).

It is significant what is omitted here. The additional words in **4:5** are, "**...which feed among the lilies.**" Faith and love are developed through other Holy Spirit filled believers. We definitely need the fellowship of other surrendered lilies. The Holy Spirit feeds our spirits and souls through their hearts sharing about Jesus. It cannot be described: the oneness, the

love, the unity, the joy, the fellowship, the glory that is experienced when a group of Mary of Bethany's come together in perfect spiritual harmony with the Lord to love Him and share Him!

However, a truly sold out Christian for Jesus must never depend on that fellowship for spiritual sustenance. There will be times of loneliness when no surrendered lily is to be found with whom you may fellowship. Jesus alone must be enough to truly satisfy the inward longings for fellowship. Ultimate Spirit-filled surrender confesses, *"You, my King, my Bridegroom are more than enough to fill all my needs. Thank You for the blessing of sharing together with the lilies. and as thrilling and precious as the lilies are, You alone are my portion. You always will be! I exclaim with Jeremiah in Lam. 3:24, 'The Lord is my portion saith my soul....' "*

There is a touching testimony of a French lady named Madame Jeanne Guyon, a 17th century Christian imprisoned for her deep faith and voluminous writings on the Word of God. This dear Christian had a special place in her heart for the Song of Solomon. It was this deep love relationship she had with her Bridegroom that caused her to survive the many long years of imprisonment in the Bastille where she "lived" in a cell below ground level. She had no light except a candle at mealtime. After ten years in such misery she wrote:

*"A little bird I am, shut from the fields of air;
Yet in my cage I sit and sing to Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee!*

*Nought have I else to do; I sing the whole day long;
And He whom most I love to please, doth listen to my song!
He caught and bound my wandering wing,
But still He bends to hear me sing!*

*My cage confines me round; abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound, my heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul!*

*Ah, it is good to soar these bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore, whose Providence I love,
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind!"*

V.4 "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus."

The neck in scripture represents the human will (see **1:10; 4:4,9** to review). Ivory was first mentioned in describing her Beloved (**5:14**). Now the ivory, His image, is appearing in her character (**Rom. 8:29**). Ivory is a product of suffering and sacrifice. Many an elephant has died at the hands of cruel hunters for the procuring of their ivory tusks. Jesus died willingly at the hands of bloodthirsty leaders for us, but O the glory of the resurrection, O the joy of the victory over evil! He who was crushed in all of earth's ugliness, is now altogether lovely! Jesus is the polished ivory of eternal purity and righteousness!

Much time is also needed to polish the ivory to perfection. Our wills are dealt with by the Holy Spirit in grace, in truth, with mercy through the application of His loving discipline. This polishing of the "new man" progressively gets rid of the ugliness of the human will and replaces it with the will of the Beloved Bridegroom! What does the Lord use to polish the rough ivory in our necks - the everyday circumstances in a believer's life! There is nothing more beautiful than a Christian totally submitted to the will of God and filled with all glorious Holy Spirit fruit! In the beginning of her surrendered journey (**1:10; 4:4; 6:3**) the bride had presented her body (neck-will) **"...as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...."**

In order to have a polished neck of ivory you need to have His yoke rubbing constantly upon your neck. Jesus commands us to, **"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."** (Matt. 11:29,30). His yoke, which is His will for your life, goes around your neck! It is there to lead and guide you. Why is it so easy? It is because He carries it for you. It is done through the power of the Holy Spirit and His sword! You are so close to Him He carries the real weight!

PRAY WITH ME: *"O Lord, place Your yoke upon my neck! Guide me into the paths and works already planned for me in the councils of eternity past. Thank You for revealing to me the way that satisfies and completes! In Jesus' holy name, amen!"*

"...a tower..."

Her neck (will) had become spiritually, like a **"tower"**. The Lord Himself is a tower according to **Psa. 61:3**. She is becoming more like Him! O to be a spiritual tower! A tower may function as a lookout to spot an approaching enemy or as a light giving revelation, warning, direction and protection in the night. The white of the ivory is symbolical of the bride's pure motives and her will submerged into His. His will is her will! His heart yearns to cultivate young believers into mature, fruit bearing members of His body. That is her heart's desire also (**7:11**)! She has become a tower into which young Christians may run and find His light and protection, and a place into which they may leave their burdens! **"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."** (Gal. 6:2).

Dear surrendered saint, has your neck been highly polished with submission to His will? When your will rises to do something that is contrary to His Word, does your Bridegroom hear from your lips, **"not my will but thine be done!"** said with delight and resolve? This is His joy! This is His satisfaction! This is His eternal reward for Calvary! Ivory is strong. It takes His strength and not ours to do His will.

There is only one real pain of sacrifice that we must suffer and that is placing our will into His hands; but O the Tower of Abba's presence released in us! O the Tower of Jesus' peace, of Jesus embracing us! O the Tower of the Spirit's power flowing through us! O the Tower of God's holy purpose produced in us! O the magnificent fruit of the Spirit that will be produced! The great reward is to hear my Beloved say by the Holy Spirit, **"Your neck is like a tower of ivory!"**

PRAY WITH ME: *"My loving Husband, I recommit my will into Your hands for another day. O my Bridegroom, flow through me today; bless through me today; work only Your works through me today! Receive glory, honor, adoration and praise from me today! Conform all of me to Your beautiful image! Let much fruit be produced in my branch, by You dear Holy Spirit, for my Beloved. Spirit of the living God fill up my vessel for today and let the ivory alone be seen in my neck, then my feet will continually be beautiful for You. May I walk as one who is the Prince's daughter. In Your omnipotent name Lord Jesus, amen!"*

All of these unbelievable descriptions of her swirled about in her mind. Her heart was ready to burst but she is unable to utter a sound! Words are too inadequate to express the onrushing love bubbling up in her soul. Secure in her heart, tears of love spill down over her cheeks. She places her arms around her Beloved holding Him O so tightly while resting her head on His chest. The Beloved's soul is flooded with the purity and fullness of her grateful love and adoration! Filled with her love He looked deep into her eyes and said...

"...thine eyes are like the fishpools of Heshbon by the gate of Bathrabbim..."

It is amazing how one can speak with the eyes alone without a word being said. You can look into the eyes' expression and detect: joy, peace, love, hate, understanding, depression, confusion, etc. Her eyes in the past had been dove's eyes. The Beloved now perceives something new, something beautiful!

"...fishpools of Heshbon..."

We are told that springs of water flow into these deep pools for the town's water supply. They are still, quiet waters ready for use. Her eyes have a spiritual depth to them. These are eyes that are not easily distracted anymore! There is a holy fire of commitment for His plans. Praise God, she is ready to go out and see how the vines flourish. Those eyes can stay steady on the ministry which will require concentration and discernment. She has an abundant supply of the water of the Word residing in her to refresh others. She is ready to minister and in just a few minutes in (**v. 11**) it will happen.

"Heshbon" is a form of the Hebrew word which means *"to plan"; "devise"; "make a judgment"; "actively meditate"* or *"think about something"*. **"Bathrabbim"** comes from two Hebrew words meaning *"daughter of abundance"*.

He can see in her eyes that a life changing decision has been made. She thought deeply about His plan for her life (**Jer. 29:11; Isa. 46:11**) and that His judgment was now her judgment to walk in His plan. She will meditate on Jesus and His Words (**Psa. 63:6; 77:12; 119:78; Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:8**). She desires to, **"prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** (**Rom. 12:2**). She feels deep within her spirit an abundant overflowing like rivers of living water springing up, flowing out to her Beloved and then to others (**Eph. 3:20**). She has been blessed by her Beloved over and abundantly beyond all she could ever have expected. She is filled with Him and filled with His Spirit. Her eyes are saying to Him, *"all I can think about is living for You my Beloved, doing Your will alone. I have tasted the more abundant life and nothing else matters to me anymore but Your will. It is the best and the purest!"* Over and over again she shouted in her soul, *"YOU are my abundance!" "You are MY abundance!"* All those spiritual blessings (**Eph. 1:3**) which belonged to her were now ready to flow out to others in their need. The abundant life that He gives is to be flowing out to others. He reaches over with His left hand and runs His finger gently from the top of her nose to the tip end. As He does this He says...

"Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh (points toward) Damascus."

A tower's function is to discern if there is any movement of the enemy in the distance. Her willingness to allow Jesus to be Lord of her life has activated her spiritual senses needed so desperately in the battle against the evil one. This is the first time her nose is mentioned. Why is it so important? In the natural, the nose discerns between what is spoiled and what is safe to eat. It gives warning if there is a gas leak or an electrical wire burning. Many lives have been saved because of the nose's ability to detect what is normal and what is dangerous. Without its ability to distinguish what is rotten and rancid we would be eating and drinking things that are detrimental and destructive to our health. Praise God He has given us the discerning capacity of spiritual smell to detect that which would harm our souls.

Damascus is the seat of Israel's perpetual enemy, Syria. This tower looked out over the valley or plain in order to spot enemy movements from afar. Lebanon represents stability, pleasant fragrance and fruitfulness (**Hos. 14:5-7**). It also represents transformation (**Isa. 29:17**). Only a surrendered, Holy Spirit filled believer possesses this! Lebanon means *"white"* which represents purity or righteousness (**Rev. 19:8**). It is a tower of purity or righteousness. O how our Beloved loves purity and righteousness in our lives (**Rom. 8:4; II Cor. 7:1**)! The evil one can never defeat the believer who is totally given to the Lord and His Word. It sanctifies unto holiness (**John 17:17**). It is through the receiving and obeying of the Word of righteousness and purity that the senses of our spiritual nose are developed and sharpened. It is extremely important for our spiritual survival and the success in spiritual warfare that we be able to face the enemy and know clearly the subtle temptations by the angel of light (**II Cor. 2:11; 11:3,13,14; Mt. 7:15**)!

Notice carefully that her nose is pointed in the direction of Damascus. A discerning believer is one who knows just where the enemy is located. Most Christians are so distracted by the **"little foxes"** that they have no idea where the enemy is because their vision is on so many other things. The enemy comes from behind and wounds them. They are ambushed or taken by surprise. Her sense of spiritual discernment has to be greatly sharpened and thus, the bride here will not have this problem because her eyes continue to be on her Beloved. If you are focused on Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will give you the sensitivity concerning the whereabouts of the enemy. Peter (**Mt. 16:23**) was insensitive to the enemy's plans for Him, Jesus stepped in and rebuked Satan.

Our enemy would even get us involved with what is good in order for us to miss what is best! O how we need discernment. Someone once said, *"My greatest concern is not that I'll be a failure, but a success at something that doesn't really matter."* How can you have your spiritual sense of smell finely tuned? Stay in the Word! Stay intimate with Jesus! **II Cor. 2:11** says as much, **"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."** The Word exposes his trickery and lies.

Pray that the Lord, ***"...may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."*** That, ***"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ..."*** (**Eph. 1:17-20**)! Pray, ***"...that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."*** (**Phil. 1:9,10**)!

Your Beloved, through His Spirit, challenges His bride to get into the Word for discernment! Read **Prov. 1:1-9; 2:1-12; 3:1-26; 4:5,7, 20-22**! Walk with Jesus through the Gospels. See how He responded to various circumstances and situations. Learn from your Beloved, ***"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*** (**Col.2:3**). ***"If any of***

you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally...and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering...." (James 1:5,6). Because the bride is wholly surrendered to Jesus and His Word, she has His wisdom and knowledge readily available to her for every circumstance by the power and revelation of the Holy Spirit.

The nose enables us to taste the difference between a filet mignon steak and an ordinary piece of bologna. Without it there would be no enjoyment of all the various fragrances of flowers or scents of a mountain forest in springtime. At this point, because the bride is **"being rooted and grounded in love...(she is) able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that (she) might be filled with all the fulness of God."** (Eph. 3:17-20; 4:15,16).

His bride is able to discern the various spiritual fragrances emanating from lives of other lilies. She savors in her spirit all of those special revelations of Him given by the Holy Spirit in their lives. O how much Abba Father, Jesus the Bridegroom and the dear Holy Spirit want to share the deep and intimate things found only in the heart of God. O how God loves to have someone so sensitive to Him that He is able to reveal Heaven's secrets to them.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, You are my discernment. I stand upon Your holy promise in James 1:5 by which You will give me the needed wisdom in every situation as I face each day my Damascus! Praise You Lord that I have been delivered from my enemies and my past. I bow before You and worship You my wonderful Lord. I am Yours and because I love You, You will disclose Yourself to me in every circumstance (John 14:21; 15:15; 16:13,14,15). Thank You for making this all available to me, in Jesus' Holy and powerful name, amen!"*

He begins to lightly run His hands through her hair. Her eyes are closed. Enjoy the tenderness of the moment. He says,

V.5 "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries (or "by the locks of your hair")."

"Carmel" means: *"vineyards"* or *"fruitful place"*. **"Carmel"** was the place where Elijah, in the power of God, defeated the prophets of Baal (**I Kin. 18:19-20**). It was there the Lord proved His faithfulness to His devoted, surrendered servant.

What a compliment! Listen to this verse, **"...the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isa. 35:2!** O the glory of having the mind of Christ in full control and all foreign thoughts cast out (**Phil. 2:5**). The order of the description is interesting. The spiritually discerning nose must be first in order to recognize the presence of the enemy (the world, the flesh, the devil). Next her head is described like **"carmel"** to deal with the attack in the thought life where most of the trouble begins and plagues us! Her mind, under the control of the Holy Spirit, becomes a spiritual vineyard producing the needed fruit to dispel the enemy, the fruit of: righteousness against unrighteousness (**Heb. 21:11**), thanksgiving against unthankful thoughts (**Heb. 13:15**), love against hate, joy against sadness, peace against fear, patience against annoyance, kindness against hurtfulness, goodness against wickedness, faithfulness against disloyalty, gentleness against crudeness, self-control against self-will (**Gal. 5:22,23**)! In truth, that is **"... the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."** Remember that fruit is produced from seeds. In this case it is the Word of God itself (**I Pet. 1:23**).

The Holy Spirit in **II Cor. 10:3-5** tells us that our weapons are not fleshly to fight against that which comes against our thought life. Obviously the weapon we do have is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (**Eph. 6:17**)! May He say of you and me dear reader, **"Your head 'is like Carmel'!"** May we no longer be spiritual babies tossed about by every kind of teaching, thought and ideas which come from the world, the flesh and the devil.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, may You see my head crowned with total devotion to You alone. As I walk may Your glory and excellence be seen in my life. May my mind and mannerisms be a spiritually fruitful place for You. In Your glorious name, amen!"*

"...like purple"

Purple dye was the costliest of all the ancient dyes. It took thousands of shellfish to produce one ounce of it! The Lord directed that purple be used in the curtains of the tabernacle and the temple (**Ex. 26:1; II Chron. 2:14**) which represented sacrifice to Him and His presence. It was a symbol of royalty and wealth (**Judges 8:26; Prov. 31:22**).

Ancient Greek and Roman writers used the word symbolically to describe exquisite beauty! What then does her Beloved really see in her? She now is walking as royalty, as the daughter of the King! The Lord Jesus is captivated by the color of her tresses. Colors are seen by those around us. You need to be seen for what you are. All true Christians are priests unto the Lord (**I Pet. 2:5,9**) but sadly, few truly exercise their privilege as priests and rob the Lord of love and praise. Hair is the glory of the woman (**I Cor. 11:15**). She, like Mary of Bethany in **Mark 14:3-9** and the woman in **Luke 7**, had submitted her glory to the feet of the Beloved. Where did this take place? When she found her Beloved in **6:2,3** and declared, "***I am my Beloved's...!***" Hair is to be seen. She is now displaying her royal heritage. She is displaying King Jesus!

Her glory (hair) has been transformed into His royal glory (purple)! All who come into her presence will see the purple. She will exclaim to them, "*It is no longer I but my King living in me. For my Beloved's Spirit has been changing me into the Image of my Husband!*" (**Rom. 8:29; II Cor. 3:18**). This dear lady has given all to her Beloved and out of that, her royal priesthood is plainly apparent (**I Pet. 2:9**) to Him and others. Her mind and decisions are governed by her majestic, royal Husband! O how this pleases the Bridegroom. Is this a picture of you dear reader?

"**Purple**" speaks of one who is rich. As an heir of your King (**James 2:5; Rom. 8:16,17**), do you know just how rich you are dear bride of Jesus? Let the Holy Spirit, Himself, reveal what true riches you possess:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3

"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:7

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Eph. 3:16

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." Prov. 10:22

Are His riches seen in you? Does your Bridegroom rejoice in what He sees in you? Is His image being progressively worked into your walk and talk (**Rom. 8:29**) by the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit? Praise God for the purple locks of hair! We are looking at a bona fide Spirit-filled believer!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, cause me to have displayed every moment in my life the precious spiritual purple which only comes from a Holy Spirit controlled life. Let all see the greatness of Your royalty in my life. I love You Lord with all of my heart. I thank You for Your wonderful patience in changing me for Your glory and pleasure! In the name of my wonderful Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen!"*

The Bridegroom continues:

All of a sudden the Bridegroom stands up. Reaching down He takes her hands in His and lifts her up, then letting go, He moves back a couple steps, pausing to admire His beautiful bride. There is such happiness in His voice as He proclaims to her,

V.6 "How fair (beautiful) and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!"

How many really desire to be made beautiful for the Lord so that He might have the joy of watching with delight the transformation into His glory of what was once dead in trespasses and sins? Do we not want to become His delight? "***For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.***" (**Phil. 1:21**). How did all of this come about? She had died in **6:3**! She died to selfish motives.

She realized that there is no fullness or fulfillment of life apart from His life. "***For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.***" (**II Cor. 5:14,15**). See **Acts 17:28**.

In all the 45 years as His child, I have never seen a believer who held back part of his life for himself ever be ultimately fulfilled. There was always some area in their walk that eroded any momentary joy. However, when they finally

submitted all to His feet (hair) there came about a glorious change in their attitude and demeanor! They were blessed and walked in the blessing. There was an increased intensity of love displayed for the Blessor as never before! Where there is the lukewarmness of the compromised life there will be no hunger for Jesus to increase in our life and for us to decrease.

You must understand that in our spirit we are beautiful to Him. That is where the Holy Spirit resides. But it is in our soul, the place where decisions are made, our feelings are experienced and our mind thinks that a practical and progressive change needs to take place day after day, month after month, year after year so that the image of Christ will be seen in us more and more. O there will be deep problems after you surrender, but you will begin to experience **II Cor. 4:7-9** and **I Cor. 10:13!**

Do you not desire to have Jesus step back and just look at how wonderful you appear to Him, as this bride does? From where did her beauty come? He did it all! She had nothing to do with it except to daily submit her will to His and then lovingly obey! Can you imagine God captivated with His bride? Well He is! Listen to **Deut. 32:9**, "**For the Lord's portion is his people....**" Is He your portion dear reader? Can you say from the depths of your heart **Psa. 16:11** and **Lam. 3:24**? Am I a joy to the Lord? Does He look with satisfaction on how increasingly more I look like His Son than a year ago?

Jesus is completely captivated by His surrendered, submissive, spiritually mature bride. He observes every detail concerning her and you also my Christian friend! He really loves every little thing about you when you simply say, "*Take it all!*" and mean it. You now own nothing. It all belongs to Him; your job, your desires, your mind, your spouse - everything! May He receive joy as He gazes upon each detail of your life. May He say, "*How beautiful! How beautiful!*" His delight is your delight in Him! "**Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.**" (**Psa. 37:4**). And what is your desire? Him! He will give you deeper revelations of Himself by the Spirit! O how it thrills Him when we finally say, "*Take all of me and work Your life into my living!*" Beauty that was never seen before begins to surface. There is a new person walking around. She looks like Jesus and she acts like Jesus! Let this famous hymn and additional lines be your commitment prayer right now!

*Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love!
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee;
Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King!*

*Take my lips and let them be filled with messages for Thee;
Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold!
Take my love, my God, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.* Frances Havergal

*Take my will and make it Thine, it shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart it is Thine own, it shall be Thy royal throne!
Take my thoughts and take my soul - love for You my only goal!
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in endless praise;
Take my ways and always use, every step as Thou shalt choose!
Take my all my loving Lord, guide me with the Spirit's sword! author unknown*

V.7 "This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of (fruit) grapes (more than likely a reference to the dates produced by the date palm tree)."

The surrendered saint is like a "**palm tree**" in the desert. Palm trees in the desert indicate the presence of water, a place of rest and refreshment. Depending on the type of palm tree, it can give the weary traveler something to nourish their bodies. The Palm tree, what a symbol of: strength, victory, joy, abundant supply, nourishing others, standing firm (**Eph. 6:14**)! He had never described her in this manner before! Glory to His name.

The Date palm was highly prized in biblical times as it is today. The fruit was valued more highly than bread. One tree could yield up to 200 pounds of dates in a year and its fruit bearing power increased rather than decreased with age. The taste of the fruit also improved with age! By comparing her to a palm tree the Beloved was stating that now His delightful bride had great possibilities of abundant fruitfulness which would bless Him and many others for the rest of her life.

What a compliment from the lips of her Beloved! He sees her as one who displays His righteousness. **Psa. 92:12** declares, "**The righteous shall flourish as a palm tree.**" They will flourish and bring forth fruit even in their old age if they are planted in the house of the Lord (**Psa. 92:12-14**). In other words, her life has been planted in the center and presence of God's will ("**house of the Lord**"). That is exactly what took place in **6:3!** Surrender places you in that fruitful, productive position.

A palm tree has great flexibility and when the winds of adversity (violent storms) blow hard against it, the tree simply bends against the pressure to almost the breaking point. But when the storm passes, the palm tree is found standing tall having weathered the trial of the enemy once again (its branches are a symbol of victory **John 12:13; Rev. 7:9!**) Praise God, He makes me into a beautiful palm tree through praise, His Word, by His Spirit, in my obedience! Glory to His wonderful name!

The temple building was ornamented with palm trees (**I Kin. 6:29-35**). It was the place of His presence, sacrifice, service and true worship to the living God. He sees all of this in her because of the total yielding of her heart to Him. Dear bride of Jesus, you are the temple of the living God. Does the spiritual significance of the palm tree ornament grace your temple?

During the Feast of Booths or ingathering, palm branches were used as part of the Jew's celebration before the Lord at the time of harvest (**Lev. 23:40-44**). By seeing her as a palm tree the Bridegroom makes an indirect reference to His spiritual harvest of joy and rejoicing emanating from her heart. Is the filling of spiritual joy and rejoicing characteristic of your life (**John 15:11; 16:23,24**)? If not, pray **Psa. 139:23,24** and see if there might be a little fox lurking in the shadows of your soul which has not been dealt with. If there is a sin there, then confess it, repent of it, surrender all to Him and go on with the Lord.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, cause the roots of my tree to take in the precious living water (**Psa. 1:3**), then I will flourish and bring forth heavenly fruit to bless You and Your people. I will take in the water of Your word (**Eph. 5:25,26**) and have the dear Holy Spirit quench my spiritual thirst. It's always for Your pleasure and glory Lord Jesus, in Your name, Amen!"*

"...and thy breasts to clusters of grapes."

Keep in mind that breasts represent faith and love (**I Thess. 5:8**). Breasts are mentioned eight times in the Song of Solomon. Here, for the first time, they are likened to "**clusters**" of fruit. O to be so absorbed with Jesus that faith and love flow out freely from your temple. As you abide in Him, stand upon His promises without wavering, life from the vine will flow through your branch and produce much fruit. The Lord will send needy people by your branch so they can pick the appropriate life-giving fruit which will meet their need by the power of the Holy Spirit. For the first time, He sees in her not just "**fruit**" or "**more fruit**" (**John 15:2**); but "**much fruit**" (**John 15:5**) as a result of abiding with Him ("**clusters**")! This description will be borne out in her testimony as we observe the bride's actions in **7:11-13** and **8:8**. Let us end this meditation with the stated purpose of the palm tree by the Holy Spirit in **Psa. 92:15**, "**To show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.**" He continues...

V.8 "I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples."

Dear surrendered bride, is there anything the Lord can take hold of in your life (faith, love, praise, obedience) and from it derive pleasure for Himself? Read carefully **Phil. 2:13** and **Psa. 149:4**. Are you so yielded to Jesus that He has free access to your heart? In **v.7** her breasts are like clusters. In **v.8** they shall be as clusters. He is not only looking at present fruit but also for future fruit bearing (growing in and consistency in fruit bearing). Remember, it is His business to take hold, enjoy and then distribute the blessings in her life (**5:1**)! May it not be once in a while, but everyday.

"...I will take hold of the boughs thereof...."

The boughs are the top of the palm tree. Someone suggested that this represents the thoughts of her mind. What a beautiful point. He has taken hold of her thoughts. O to be so steady that He can take hold of me and have total freedom to do whatever His perfect, caring and loving heart desires. O what inexpressible joy it is to be possessed by Him! Praise God, He has control of her thoughts. She has the mind of Christ (**1Cor.2:16**). Think of it, He can take thoughts out of her mind and enjoy them for Himself. Not only that, she will be guided with His thoughts through the darkness of this world. She will continue to be victorious. "**For as he thinks in his heart, so is he....**" **Prov. 23:7.**

Our Beloved Bridegroom, the God of our hearts, has the right to enjoy the fruit of our lives! Spiritual fruit is to be offered to Him first. Give this some thought! The fruit in this chapter is the fruit from the Tree of Calvary (**Acts 5:30**). The Tree of Calvary was the ultimate Palm tree. Spiritually it was bent in all directions against the tornadoes of sin, the hurricanes of unrighteousness, the hail storms of demonic attacks, the vicious dust storms of iniquity which clouds our minds. Yes, the Tree of Calvary withstood the eternal weight of sin. However, when it was all over, the Tree of Calvary became the Tree of Life. We are the branches (**John 15:1-5**) and His life produces the fruit on it. When He takes hold of it pure joy flows through His whole being. Let Him go up and take hold of the boughs of your palm tree dear lovely saint and let Him enjoy the fruit of your fellowship! This old hymn is my prayer: *Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee! Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love, at the impulse of thy love! Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee! Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King, always, only, for my King! Take my love, my God I pour at Thy feet its treasure Store! Take myself and I will be ever only, All for Thee, ever, only, all for Thee!*

"...And the smell (fragrance) of thy nose like apples."

There is no detail so small about the love of His life that ever goes unnoticed! Everything about her is special! He observes with joy that even the very air of life, which comes from breathing, is likened to that of apples. Who do apples represent in this love letter to the Lord's bride? None other than the Beloved Himself! In **2:3** it states, **"As the APPLE TREE among the trees of the wood, SO IS MY BELOVED among the sons..."** Her whole being is permeated with the life of her Beloved.

Jesus is the very breath of God. Jesus is **"the life"** (**John 14:6**)! What is deep within her, the breath of God, automatically comes out and blesses her Beloved! She is saying, *"My Beloved is my very breath, my life."* (**Col. 3:4**). Can this be said of you by the Lord, my friend? O how He enjoys the fragrance of His pure, holy, righteous life flowing from her nose, the very organ used for discernment. She is filled with the Holy Spirit (He whose name means *"wind, breath"* in the Greek). Glory to God that we are able to bring joy to His heart! (**Heb.12:2**).

V.9 "And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."

And just what is this **"best wine"**? It is the new wine of a spirit-filled believer (**Mt. 9:17**). Her tongue is under the control of the Holy Spirit. What is it that thrills His heart? The words, which come out of her mouth, are in total agreement with the Word of God! This is the best wine! Do you, dear chosen one, watch the words of your mouth? The words of your mouth have the capacity to produce life or death in you and in your hearers (**Prov. 18:21**).

So powerful are your words that the Lord is going to judge every word that has come out of your mouth (**Mt. 12:36,37**). Words are seeds according to (**Mt. 13:1-23**). When you speak you are planting seeds. Seeds produce a harvest of good or bad depending on the seeds planted. You will reap what you sow (**Gal. 6:7**). Thus you need to sow good words out of your mouth and the only good word is that which is in agreement with the Word of God.

Get your mouth in line with the Word of God and *"all heaven will break loose"*! Read **II Cor. 1:20** and **I John 5:14,15**. In each circumstance of life speak it out of your mouth as you are instructed to do by the Lord in **Mark 11:23,24** and then **Eph. 1:3** will literally come alive in your life. Remember, the very Bible which you have before you is the mouth of God! It has awesome power when a truly surrendered believer begins to rely upon it in holy faith (**Rev. 19:15; Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17**).

She feels free to speak to the Love of her heart and to others about what fills and thrills her! O how sad that the lips of believers fall silent so often. A Sunday school teacher asks the class to pray a brief praise to the Lord. The teacher asks for someone to begin. After others have praised the Lord, he will close the time of praise. So often there will only be a few audible praises from those who belong to the Lord. In those moments you can hear the Beloved sadly speaking to the Father about the silence, *"So many of them can speak to others freely about many, many things, but when it comes to Me, their Savior and Lord and You, their Abba Father, their lips fall silent when asked to give Us a brief praise from their lips."*

Jesus declared the Words He spoke were actually living spirit food in **John 6:41-63**. Give your Beloved Jesus the best wine – the daily conversation of your words agreeing with the Word of God.

"...that goeth down sweetly (Hebrew word for "uprightly")..."

When she reads God's Word she does it in faith, fully trusting what she is reading is feeding her spirit (**Rom. 14:23**). Her reading and listening to God's Word is done with the purest of motives, in sincerity and uprightness of heart! It goes

"down", suggests it will become part of her whole being. The "new wine" will affect every circumstance. O to walk uprightly before the Lord and the world! So many read the Word but it never goes **"down"** deep inside to bringing necessary sustenance and guidance so desperately needed in this dark world of emptiness and purposelessness!

"...causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."

Other believers, who are spiritually asleep, will be renewed and refreshed as they watch her faith in action and hear her love filled words. They will walk once again in the land of the living (**Psa. 116:9**) with a revived spirit. Don't miss this! This totally consuming relationship with her Beloved will have an awesome effect on others. Praise God, for the power of His presence in her life.

It is very instructive that just before the momentous, life changing statement to come (**v.10**) her mouth and breath are dealt with. Read **James 3:3-18** and do a spiritual word check. How do you react in unexpected, irritating moments? What does your spouse, children, parents, sisters, brothers, friends, acquaintances, fellow workers see? Has the Lord taken hold of your mind in the morning so that you are ready for the surprise attacks of the enemy? The wicked one wants you to fail and fall in the presence of others in order to try and embarrass Jesus. Do as Mary of Bethany did in the circumstance, say nothing and just look to Jesus to solve it.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Father, I praise You for having given to me the wine of Heaven, Your Beloved Son. Thank You for having placed in me the Power of that wine, Your wonderful Holy Spirit. Lord, thank You, that others are touched and changed because You are actively living in me. I open myself to all the intimacy of Your heart. I submit my mind and my mouth to You! Be blessed in me. Let Your mind control my mind. I love You Lord Jesus, in Your wonderful name, amen!"*

THE DYING TO SELF - 7:10

And now the mystery presented in the beginning of this book will be solved as you consider the next verse. O how important this verse is. The victorious Christian life hinges upon it. She will be able to say in truth, *"It is no longer I but Christ who lives in me."* What has been latent truth in her heart now will become vibrant, active and ready to serve. In this verse, faith and love are working together in this final, ironclad commitment to her Beloved and His plans. Paul rejoiced concerning the Thessalonian believers, declaring, **"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love..."** (**1 Thess. 1:3**). **Gal. 5:6** states that **"...faith which worketh by love."**

V.10 "I am my Beloved's, and his desire is toward me."

Praise God, the bride has reached the place where she can be fully led by the Holy Spirit and bring glory to the Lord. It has been a long journey but a spiritually progressive one. What awaits her is so wonderful that it will make the years before surrender seem as if they had never happened! Be encouraged dear bride of His heart, it will happen to you if it hasn't already! Be patient with yourself. **Verse 10** is the confession Jesus waits and waits and waits to hear from your heart and your lips.

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

Let's review so we can get the big picture. The Song began with a Holy Spirit implanted desire in her heart, longing for an intimate, personal, holy relationship with the One she dearly loved. She said, **"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth..."** (**1:2**); **"Draw me...after Thee..."** (**1:4**); **"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth..."** (**1:7**). When she entered into His chamber and He kissed her with the Word, I can hear her excitedly exclaim within, *"There is nothing I wouldn't do for Him and I will go anywhere He desires, just so that I have constant fellowship with Him."*

Yet when the Beloved asked her to come away with Him she responded, **"My Beloved is mine, and I am His..."** (**2:16**). In other words, *"Jesus belongs to me first and foremost and I also belong to Him, and I will decide when it is time to go."* There was no doubt about her love but the **"little foxes"** of self shared the throne with her Beloved! Shadows and night appeared in her life once again (**2:17**; **3:1**).

She was not in the will of her Beloved, the Light of the world! Realizing what she had done, the bride searches for Him with a heart filled with longing love. (**"...I will seek Him whom my soul loveth."** **3:2**). The glorious truth is, when you seek you will find, and, praise God, she found Him. What a lesson, never quit seeking! In **chapter 3** the Holy Spirit gives her a vision of the power and glory of her Beloved. In **chapter 4** the Beloved describes her in beautiful, intimate terms assuring her that His love has not diminished one iota.

Because she was separated unto Him alone (**chapter 4**), He describes the garden of her heart in glowing terms. Then, He shares the blessing of her heart garden with others (**5:1**). Then she rests. The Beloved goes out in the night ministering to the needs of others. He returns at a very inconvenient time, desiring that she come with Him. The Beloved asked her to open to Him. She hesitated. Finally she did go to the door but He had left. What is the lesson? There still were a few **"little foxes"** of convenience (self) left on the throne of her heart. She was not one hundred percent submissive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As a result, she suffered in spirit, soul and body (**5:6-8**) for hesitating; however her heart was still filled to the brim with love for the Bridegroom. The transformation came when she began to lift Him up in her mind and confess it out of her mouth (**5:9-16**). Jesus said it, **"If I be lifted up I will draw..."** (**John 12:32**). And now she is right there in Her Beloved's presence and proclaims from the depths of her soul the sweetest words a surrendered heart can say to Him, **"I am my Beloved's, and my beloved is mine..."** (**6:3**). *"Above everything else in life, my heart belongs to You first, my Love, whatever You want is what I want. You are in reality Lord of my life!"* Then, in **chapter 7**, the Beloved begins to describe her, beginning with the feet. Praise God, she was now ready to be actively used in His service. After this glorious description by Him she exclaims, **"I AM MY BELOVED'S AND HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME!"** Thank God the **"little foxes"** no longer have an effect on her!

What's the difference? For the first time His lovely bride realizes it is no longer important that she has Him (**"my Beloved is mine"**) but He possesses her wholly! She is about to initiate something her heart had never dreamed of saying before let alone doing! You will see this in a moment. The words that follow are extremely significant:

"...His desire is toward me."

This is the key to a walk of faith. This heartfelt statement is the ultimate revelation for living the surrendered life consistently. You are absolutely sure of His heart toward you! It changes everything: the way you think, feel, respond, pray, praise and walk! Without this there is no real progress made in sanctification, worship or service. In heart she is saying, *"I am absolutely convinced in my spirit that I'm totally possessed by Jesus. His desire is for my good only and nothing else. I have heard His words of assurance spoken to my heart and I am persuaded that His love is totally for me. What have I to fear? My Beloved's **"perfect love"** is casting out all of my fears! Hallelujah!"* (**I John 4:18**).

For most Christians they have two lives, their real daily life and then, what they call, their spiritual life. They separate them. There is only one life, the spiritual life! It includes my personal life, family life, married life, school life, work life, recreation life, church life - these are but aspects of one true life. This declaration, **"...His desire is toward me"** can be summed up in these words, **"For in him we live, and move, and have our being..."** (**Acts 17:28**); **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die gain."** (**Phil. 1:21**); **"...Christ, who is our life..."** (**Col. 3:4**)! Of what are you afraid? In making this total commitment you will begin to experience **"...the mountains of spices"** (**8:14**)! There will no longer be mountains of separation in your life (**2:17**).

By coming to this place in your surrendered walk, knowing that His desire is always for your good, you will be able to give thanks in every kind of circumstance. Why? Because you know that even in the **"bad"** He is leading you through it, giving you strength in it and, using it in building up your spiritual character to help others who are hurting in the same kind of difficulty! **I Phil. 4:6,7** **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."** **I Thess. 5:18** **"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."** We do not give thanks for what the devil or our sin nature is doing to us. No! But in those things we give thanks because we are completely assured that our Beloved's desire is for our good only. Why? Because we are the number one item on His heart – we are His bride! Knowing all this, these verses will become food to your soul: **I Cor. 10:13; II Cor. 1:3,4; II Cor. 3:18; Rom. 5:3; I Pet. 1:7; II Pet. 1:1-8.**

She has received the ultimate in Holy Spirit confidence! Listen to her heart speak, *"If my Beloved is for me who can be against me? My Husband shall supply all of my needs according to His riches. I am able to do all things through my Bridegroom who is strengthening me! I am trusting my true Love with all of my heart and I will lean not on my own understanding. In all my ways I am acknowledging my Beloved and He is and will continually direct my paths. Since I am delighting myself entirely in Him, whom my soul loves, He shall give me the desires of my heart. I have committed my way to Him and trust my Beloved fully. He will bring everything that is right, good, pure and true to pass in my life. My Beloved is my strength and I will not be afraid what man can do to me."* (**Phil. 4:19; Phil. 4:13; Prov. 3:5,6; Psalms 37:4,5; Psalm 27:1**).

O how gently the Holy Spirit leads you to this point in your Christian walk! Then it finally dawns upon your spirit and you say *"He really does love me with all of His heart. His desire is for my good!"* To walk away from this moment is to insult God Almighty! It is to commit the ultimate discourtesy! To not fall at His feet, joyfully resigning your will to Him is to commit extreme spiritual rudeness. It is impossible for you to even imagine the depths of pain and grief experienced in the heart of

your Bridegroom! Dear caring reader, will you make an absolute quality decision, once and for all? Take her words and make them your own!

It is at this moment she is totally free in her spirit to make the initial move without her Beloved having to ask as He had done previously in **2:10** and **5:2**. For the first time she truly trusts in the promises of her Beloved (**II Cor. 7:1; II Pet. 1:3,4**). She is ready to act upon them. **THE BRIDE DEMONSTRATES IN TRUTH SHE POSSESSES THE MIND OF CHRIST (Phil. 2:5-13)**! How do we know this? In the next verse she speaks with an urgency and excitement, **"COME, MY BELOVED, LET US GO FORTH...!"** She has a boldness that was not there previously. She is spirit-filled and she can't help herself!

"There was a moment in my own life in the excruciating spiritual pain of despair, I cried out to God in my failure and exclaimed, *"O God, I cannot go on like this any more. I am filled up with Christian activities but empty of spiritual satisfaction that I have striven after for so many years! If there is something else You are going to have to reveal it to me."* At that moment I experienced a frightening emptiness. But my Lord knew that it was absolutely necessary. Without realizing it I had simply surrendered it all into His hands for the first time. I had given up my striving.

A very gentle and soft light had been turned on in my heart. The Holy Spirit whispered in my ear, *"Everything is all right."* An unexplainable peace flooded my soul for the first time. I knew that my Lord's arms were tightly enwrapped about me and He was pleased with me. I fell on my face prostrate on the floor and just worshiped Him, filled with praise! After this, everything became new: His word, His work, my prayer and praise life, and little did I realize it, that this was only the beginning! I began to rest in Him for the first time in my Christian life. By simply surrendering all that I was and had to His hand, I knew that as long as I stayed with that heart attitude I was in His will. I seldom knew what His specific will was for each day, I just knew I was walking in it, in what He planned or allowed into my life that day.

THE DEVOTED LIFE: 7:11 - 8:14

V.11 ***"Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages."***

With these words from the bride, the Lord leaps for joy and begins to sing! ***"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."*** (Zeph. 3:17)!

This is glory, her heart in absolute oneness with the Son and the Father. ***"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."*** (John 17:22). She wants what He desires. Now she is speaking the words her Beloved had spoken to her much earlier. Remember, He had asked her to go with Him in **2:10**. Her mouth is in agreement with His Word. No more backsliding from this point on, praise God! Listen to her heart break forth in singing...

*"So near, so very near to God, I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son I am as near as He.
So dear, so very dear to God, more dearer I cannot be;
The love where with He loves the Son: Such is His love to me!
Why should I ever careful (fearful) be, since such a God is mine?
He watches over me night and day, and tells me 'Mine is Thine.'"*

William H. Havergal

"...let us go..."

One moment of going it alone is repugnant to her soul. Her decision is to go, but only with Him. The where, how, why and to whom are not important to her, He knows best! It will always, always be ***"...LET US..."***! The Holy Spirit reminds her and us, ***"...that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform (finish) it until the day of Jesus Christ."*** (Phil. 1:6).

Oh, if only churches spent much time lifting up Jesus and drawing the young ones after His heart, there would be little pressure needed to get them to go out to the harvest. Lift Jesus up and He will draw. When will the church ever believe and fulfill what Jesus admonished to be done in **Mark 14:9**? We are all to become Mary's of Bethany! That is the goal of the Gospel. Mary of Bethany spiritually panted after her Lord and His heart. She was credited with having led many to the Lord (**John 11:45**). Just like this bride, the trusting, surrendered believer will say, ***"...let us go..."*** no matter what the cost! The Holy Spirit speaks to your spirit once again and says, ***"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*** (Phil. 2:13). Is your response... ***"let us go!"***? The joy is knowing just how pleased He is.

"...the field(s)...villages...vineyards" (v.12)."

Her only concern is to be with Him in His work. It doesn't make any difference if it is Kenya or Indonesia, Alaska or the city in which she resides. She says, "...**let us go to the hungry, hurting, angry, abused, troubled, terrified, depressed and downtrodden.**" Her spirit says, "If I am with You what evil can befall me. I will be attacked by the enemy but not defeated for I have this treasure in my earthen vessel and the greatness of His power will always bring the victory (II Cor. 2:14; 3:17; 4:7-17; 12:9-10; Phil. 4:13,19)! I will be filled with Your joy (John 15:11) because I will be filled with Your Spirit. O my love I will be filled with You!" She began making melody in her heart as the Holy Spirit swept over the strings of her soul!

*Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus, I am blest;
Peace which passes understanding, on Thy breast;
No more doubting, no more trembling, Oh, what rest! Oh, what rest!
Occupied with Thee, Lord Jesus, in Thy grace;
All Thy ways and thoughts about me only trace
deeper stories of Thy glories of Thy grace, of Thy grace!
Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus, I would be;
Finding joy and satisfaction all in Thee;
Thou the nearest and the dearest unto me, unto me!*
Miss C. A. Wellesley

THESE WORDS CHALLENGE THE CHRISTIAN TO SURRENDER HIS/HER LIFE TO THE LORD!

*How I praise Thee, precious Savior, that Thy love laid hold of me;
Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me that I might Thy channel be.*

Chorus:

*Channels only, blessed Master, but with all Thy wondrous power
flowing through us, Thou canst use us every day and every hour!*

*Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand;
With no power but as Thou givest graciously with each command. **Chorus***

*Witnessing Thy power to save me, setting free from self and sin;
Thou who boughtest to possess me, In Thy fullness, Lord, come in. **chorus***

*Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water from our inner man may flow. **chorus***

Mary E. Maxwell

V.12 "Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves."

It is all "**let us**"! "**Let us go...let us lodge...let us get up early...let us see.**" There is not the slightest hint of an independent spirit here. It is **US, US, US!** Do you feel her soul's burning desire and excitement as she says, "**Let us get up early...**"? This is what happens with a surrendered, spirit-filled believer. "**Early**" is having the "**let's get going now!**" attitude, whether it is for prayer, praise or service. This attitude of "**early**" is found in our Beloved Lord (**Mk. 1:35**); Abraham (**Gen. 21:14; 22:3**); Jacob (**Gen. 28:18**); Moses (**Ex. 34:4**); Joshua (**Josh. 3:1; 6:12; 7:16; 8:10**); David (**I Sam. 17:20**); Hezekiah (**II Chr. 29:20**); and Mary Magdalene (**John 20:1**). They rose up early! What about you dear bride of Christ?

"...let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear..."

The Beloved's face glowed with joy, quietly watching His beautiful bride checking to see if the vine flourished, touching the pomegranates to see if there were buds. Great intenseness filled her eyes as she walked among the plants of His garden. He saw how important they were to her heart. She turned and could see what blessed delight He was having in watching her care for what He so deeply cared for.

O how He loves to see signs of life in the vine! A flourishing vine is one that produces fruit. Jesus is the perfect Vine (**John 15:1-6**). The exquisite value of the Vine may only be seen in this world through fruit produced in us, the branches, by the Holy Spirit (**Gal. 5:22,23**). The heart and true image of the Vine is displayed in the fruit. Does the Vine flourish because you are an open channel through which His life may flow? This world is a place of deadness, darkness and dreariness. It desperately needs loving, holy, humble, God-fearing fruit bearing branches in the midst of all the thorns and thistles.

May we who are mature in the Lord disciple those who have just been saved; inundate them with the love of Christ. Let us take these very young branches under our wings and protect them. They are like tender grapes and the little foxes will sneak in and try to spoil the life that has begun (**2:15**)! They first need loving, caring, understanding fellowship. That is exactly what is being provided in this verse, getting close to the vine, touching it to check out the tender grapes. Touching symbolizes spiritual intimacy. You can't minister from afar off. Surrendered believers must establish loving relationships with the new, tender branches. Having a closeness with them helps the new one in Christ be accountable to someone who really cares! They will feel Jesus' love through the one discipling. It is for the young branch's protection. They do not know how to spiritually care for themselves! We who are into discipleship are not only concerned whether the vine is flourishing but that it will continue to flourish!

So many promising new believers fade away because of a lack of encouragement through example and enlightenment in the "how to's" for daily victory through discipleship. They flourish for a while then disappear into a life of mediocrity. These new lilies get excited about the Lord and His Word, then slowly, O so slowly, this spirit-filled drive and energy begins to be eroded. Why? There are some whom these tender lilies hold in high regard tell them not to go overboard in spiritual things saying, "You need balance. You don't want to become a fanatic!" (as if you can divorce your spiritual life from your daily walk!). They encourage them in everything else but the Lord.

Praise God the bride is in love with the garden and especially the budding branches. These are new believers of every age, culture and nationality. The baby buds desperately need to be nurtured right away! The first desire of a new baby believer is, "**the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.**" (**1 Pet. 2:2**). Someone needs to nurture them. They need to learn to fall in love with Jesus so that they will learn to obey for the right reasons. Jesus said it in **John 14:23**, "**If a man love me, he will keep my Word!**" They need to be loved unconditionally by a mentor so they will understand how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit unconditionally love them. As newborn babes (buds) they need to be protected, cared for and warned concerning the enemy who would come and try to seriously harm them. A Bible study only concerning basic church doctrine is not enough. They need a live, mature mentor, in the image of Jesus, showing them the walk of love. Then the doctrinal discipleship will become meaningful. So many think they are doing good because they memorize a few scriptures. How many have made shipwreck of their lives because they only receive church doctrine and a few memory verses?

Then there are those who would put them to work immediately. How sad! Babies don't go to work right off the bat. They are not equipped for it. Some well meaning leaders will quote **Mt. 28:19,29** and **Mark 16:15** and rush these new "buds" into service. But no one ever stops to think that these Words by the resurrected Jesus were said to seasoned followers, not babies! The "*cart is put before the horse*" for they are told to love their neighbor first when the spiritual order is to learn to love God first! We as shepherds are to lead these new believers into a Mary of Bethany – Song of Solomon experience. How sad that most shepherds know little of the admonition of the Lord in **Mark 14:9**. Mary was consumed with love for Jesus! New believers need to see that in the mature believers. What does God expect? What does He consider most important? Read **Deut. 6:1-9; 8:11-14!** As these new "**buds**" grow in love with Jesus there will be new "**buds**" of worship, praise, prayer and loving service and obedience in their lives.

PRAY WITH ME: "O my Beloved, use me to be a blessing in Your vineyards. May Your vine bud and blossom in the place where You have put me. Dear Holy Spirit speak through me, care through me, touch through me, love through me, save through me, heal through me so that the young branches in Your vine will begin to show signs of producing the same abundant life fruit of worship and praise for You their Husband! Pour out Your life producing Spirit in me! In Your powerful name, Lord Jesus, amen!"

"...and the pomegranates bud forth..." (see **4:13 & 6:11** for complete comments)

Are there pomegranates budding? It is spiritually exhilarating to hear and see new believers longing after more of the things of God, devouring His Word, praying with a full heart, involved and serving with the body of Christ, giving out fresh Holy Spirit filled praise! O how the Lord thirsts for the fruit of pomegranates (worship and praise). Why did God save us? "**This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.**" (**Isa. 43:21**; see **John 4:23,24** also). Let us encourage the young believer by example to praise our most Holy God! Let them see in us that the whole purpose of their

spiritual existence is to be, **"to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made (them) us accepted in the beloved."** (Eph. 1:6). Is there anything more joyous to the soul than being with young and old believers alike in a Holy Spirit led praise meeting? When the bride sees the fire of others loving on her Bridegroom through praise and worship it causes her surrendered, lily heart to rejoice and say,

"...there will I give thee my loves."

The bride is so filled up with thankful love for this new realm of ministering love with her Beloved out in the highways and byways of hurting, lost people. They now sit together. She is so grateful for His patience (1:1 – 7:10) in leading her into this glorious work of service. She is ready to release on Him what was poured out in her spirit so long ago – His love by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5). The opening between her spirit and her soul (mind, will, emotions etc.) is wide open and a torrent of love is ready to be poured out!

Where is **"...there..."**? It is first with Him alone and then with other Jesus-filled lilies who have the same intense desire to simply share His love with each other with Him in their midst. The Hebrew word for **"love"** is pluralized. This makes it a superlative (the very best). He gave you His saving love, covenant keeping love, forgiving love, providing love, accepting love, guiding love, sanctifying love, enduring love, instructing love, personal love, redeeming love, healing love, delivering love, sharing love, intimate love and in so many more ways. Ask Him to bring to your mind how many ways He has demonstrated His love to you past and present. And now, most of all give Him your, **"I am my Beloved's"** love which is the best love. It won't just be in church but an ongoing, inwardly hidden, beautifully blooming pure love that the Lord can enjoy all day long.

Speak to your soul with all the **"first love"** love that is there and say, **"Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name."** (Psa. 103:1). Love God and love one another - let it flow! Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10)!

V.13 "The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved."

The mandrake was considered a fruit symbolical of love. It was said to have special properties enhancing love's desire and increasing fertility. Praise God, she is so spiritually fertile that much fruit will be produced through her life in Him. And the fragrance is the presence and glory of the Beloved. His total possession of her (7:10) causes the spiritual mandrake to grow into maturity. He said, **"... Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."** (Jer. 31:3). O what a sweet smelling scent it is to the Bridegroom of our hearts! The only other place the mandrake is mentioned is in **Gen. 30:14-16** (5x). The mandrakes appeared in the fields at the time of wheat harvest. It was a time of rejoicing and celebration, a time of first fruits offered to the Lord, a time of praising God for His blessings. There is celebration by the angels as the Lord proudly invites them to see what His redemptive love has created - the heaven sent, sweet fragrance of the mandrakes; when His heart is locked in holy unity with His submissive bride. Enjoy the following verses concerning God's people and spiritual fragrances: **Psa. 141:2; II Cor. 2:14; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18; Rev. 8:4.**

"...and at our gates"

Gates represent the many and varied opportunities to serve. She is so overjoyed to share with her Beloved all the blessings that going through the gates of opportunity have brought to her heart. His gates are her gates (**"our"**). He chooses each gate in which they will enter and minister together. There is an indescribable sparkle of great delight in the Bridegroom's eyes as He takes her by the hand to go through each gate. He can feel just in the touch of her hand that she is filled to the full with the Holy Spirit. On her lips were these words, **"I have 'enter(ed) into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise....'"** (Psa. 100:4). She sang songs with confidence in her spirit about the victory and triumph she was about to experience together with Him (**I Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 2:14**)!

There were so many gates and so many victories! When the ministry was finished He would take her by the hand and lead her out of the gate in which they had entered. The Lover of her soul would find a green pasture near each gate where they sat together sharing all the wonderful things that had been accomplished. Every gate was a new experience producing all manner of fruit. What were some of these gates?

There was **"the Valley Gate"** (Neh. 2:13). At first it seemed so foreboding for it was known as the **"valley of the shadow of death"** (Psa. 23:4). So many people walked in the darkness of emptiness and despair. These poor souls had looked everywhere to find peace but there was nothing. As soon as the Lord opened the gate His light shone so brightly that it dispelled the darkness. Many who walked in darkness (**Isa. 9:2**) saw His light (**John 8:12**) and joyfully followed Him.

Songs of eternal life filled the air. The depressive land beyond the "**Valley Gate**" became known as the "**Valley of Berachah**" (II Chron. 20:26; "**Berachah**" Hebrew for "*blessing*")!

Next came "**the Fountain Gate**" (Neh. 2:14). It was a place where the fountains of this world had dried up long ago. All who lived there had hearts empty and parched to the things of God. All through the streets she went from person to person leading them to her Beloved's special fountain. There was something about her that others longed to have. She told each one who inquired that "*There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains!*" A bright sparkle gleamed in her eye as she continued to share with them that "*The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day; And there may (you), though vile as he, wash all (your) sins away.*" (by William Cowper). The Beloved through His bride also offered them refreshing, spiritual living water without cost (John 4:14). Hour after hour for days the people streamed to receive a drink. So many responded and before her eyes their souls became white as snow! The real Fountain of Life had visited them with the eternal water of the Word and the precious blood. As a result springs of living water flowed continually from their hearts in thanksgiving for all He had done for them.

Her joy was so great that time seemed to fly by. Then the Beloved lifted her up from this intimate sharing which they had experienced together and said, "*Come my love, it is time to go through 'the Sheep Gate'*" (Neh. 3:1). She opened the gate and saw confusion, pain and defeat. Tears of compassion flowed down her cheeks as she paused and asked her Beloved, "*My Love why all this hurt? Why all this defeat and loneliness? My heart breaks for them. They are so defenseless.*" He said, "*Because they were led astray by the enemy.*" (Isa. 53:6). Weeping He said, "*Many are My wounded sheep who have been attacked by the wolf*" (John 10:12). *They strayed away from My side.*"

She joyfully shared that the Good Shepherd, her Husband, was there and that He had died for them (John 10:11) and now He was risen to take care of them. She took them to her Beloved and as He drew them to His side their wounds and brokenheartedness disappeared. There was a beautiful transformation taking place. What joy swept over her soul! The Beloved filled them with the Holy Spirit as they began to be equipped in every good work. They were so thankful that she had led them to the "**Great Shepherd of the Sheep**" (Heb. 13:20,21).

"...are all manner of pleasant fruits..."

As the ministry within each gate was completed she gathered all those touched by her Bridegroom to meet together and just share their hearts about Him. It was a joyous time of communion (I Cor. 10:16,17). She explained to them that having communion together was a personal request of His. All those who had been redeemed came together with a burning desire to share all about their new Lord and God. The bride explained what communion was all about. These new members in the family of God broke out in boisterous praise and worship. Many gave testimony of the greatness and goodness of the Bridegroom.

As they passed the bread and cup to each other a holy quietness filled the place. After they had given thanks for the blood of Jesus some were weeping with tears of joy and thankfulness. Others knelt and still others lay prostrate on the floor. Hands raised everywhere in silence before a holy God. The Beloved leaned over and said to His bride, "*Thank you for bringing these, My redeemed ones together. There is no greater joy than for Me to hear and see the freshness of their first love, love for Me! It makes the shameful suffering of the cross worth it all!*" (Heb. 12:3)! *They are My portion and My joy!*" (Deut. 32:9)." The Beloved simply sat there taking it all in. The glow around Him burst into great glory. When the fellowship of praise and worship was ended she and the Lover of her soul went out, paused and found a place covered with green grass near the gate, the Bridegroom and His bride in a holy oneness were unable to talk, for mere words could not express what their hearts were experiencing!

What joy, what pleasant fruits: glorious fellowship with Him while ministering, souls saved, saints encouraged, hurting Christians delivered and filled with the Holy Spirit, all falling more deeply in love with the Bridegroom and His Word, becoming hungry for much more! Anyone passing near them could smell the delectable fragrance of the spiritual mandrakes.

"...new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved."

It's time for you and me to go and find a quiet place. Let us take out the precious mandrakes and just sit in silence with the One we so dearly love. We will reminisce over what He has done and all the spiritual fruit He has produced in our lives. May our thankful hearts simply reflect on the remembrance of His holy work that has been accomplished in us. Thinking about the old with the new reminds us of just how infinitely consistent the Beloved really is. Placing past and present blessings together will dispel any doubt that He might change tomorrow! What a pleasant reassurance this time is to the soul of the surrendered believer! It will encourage more consistent dependency on Him who never changes (James 1:17). Let us pause and do what the Psalmist did, "***...I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.***" (Psa. 143:5). "***I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.***" (Psa. 145:5). "***All thy***

works shall praise thee...." (Psa. 145:10).

As the Lord walks through the main archway of your heart, there appears a number of gates allowing access to the deepest recesses of your life such as: the gate of Bible study; the gate of praise; the gate of giving and receiving; the gate of earnest intercessory prayer; the gate of witnessing; the gate of intimacy; the gate of hurt and spiritual attacks. You place at these gates for your Beloved, fruit gleaned in each area, sharing with Him the wonderful things His blessed Holy Spirit and Word have done through you. Oh to save up in the memory of your heart all He has done for you. Oh to just sit and savor all of His grace and mercy which has been daily bestowed upon you, thanking Him and thanking Him and thanking Him from an overflowing heart!

Is not this the purpose of the Lord's Supper? When the body of Christ comes together for communion they are to remember Him, His cross, His character, His attributes and the fruit of the cross in our lives today. It is a time to think about all He is to us individually and corporately, sitting in His presence around the emblems of love for us, His bride! It is a continual victory celebration!

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| <p>PRAY WITH ME: <i>"Lord, my heart is overwhelmed with Your presence! Thank You for being so real, so personal, so patient! I love You alone! In Jesus' Holy Name, amen!"</i></p> |
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PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

CHAPTER 8 - THE DEVOTED LIFE (continued)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER EIGHT: The bride in perfect union and communion with her Beloved, ministers to her younger, spiritually immature sister. As the bride and her Beloved come up out of the wilderness, she leans completely on Him for strength and guidance. One of the most sacred moments in the life of the bride comes when the Beloved asks her to set Him as a seal upon her heart and her arm. The Beloved entrusts her with His vineyard, her personal one, as He leaves to minister in other vineyards. There is no hurt but just a longing for Him to return to her very quickly. The Song ends with the Mountain of spices instead of the mountains of Bether (division). There is perfect harmony between the Beloved and His wonderful bride.

The Bride continues:

V.1 "O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised."

She loves Him with all of her heart and wants every one else to know. She is not ashamed, as so many Christians are about their Lord in the world. In her there is a Holy Spirit boldness of heart. Feel the fervency of her "first love", love (Rev. 2:1-5) for the one nearest and dearest to her heart as she declares over and over in her soul, "I want to let the whole world know that Jesus is my Lord, the Love of my life, my everything!" She wants to show her Beloved public affection. Isn't that what "first love" is all about?

We who are God's new creation are unique. We are not only His bride but also His family. He is not ashamed to call us "brethren" (Heb. 2:11) even though we do much to disappoint Him. Has not the Holy Spirit, by the blood of Christ, placed us in the family of God and caused us to be spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ?

The Beloved calls His bride "sister" 5x in this Song. The terms "sister" and "brother" are used in the spiritual family – the body of Christ. Examples of this are found in Rom. 16:1 and Philemon 1:1,16. So we have the freedom to express our love for Him publicly because we are not only His bride but His family (Eph. 3:14). May His love be demonstrated in our love for our brothers and sisters (John 13:34,35)! (Serious references John 5:24 and 1John3:14)

"...when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee."

First love always makes a spectacle of itself. It talks about, thinks about, and publicly demonstrates its fervent passion for the object of its affections! What does it mean, "...when I should find thee without"? "Without" indicates publicly. Let the Word of God unlock the meaning. Read Mt. 25:34-40. When we minister to those in need (hungry, thirsty, a place to stay, naked, in prison, sick) we will find Jesus right there! That is how we lavish our love on Him publicly! He said, "...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Mt. 25:40). O the pleasure of spiritual love He must experience as we love on the hurting, the lost, the rejected, the failures! Read Gal. 6:10; John 13:35; Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12; 1 Tim. 3:7.

Then there is that very, very special time when His lilies regularly meet to love on Him. Although God is omnipresent something happens when believers meet with the specific purpose of gathering to His Name. He causes His anointing, presence and glory to be experienced when He is loved in "one accord" fervency. Jesus makes this point very clear in Mt. 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Praise God for a place He has provided for us to express our love for Him publicly. A place where we are able to share those spiritual kisses the Holy Spirit placed upon our hearts (1 Cor.2:9,10).

The local body of believers is the place where we can come to gather and express freely our love for what He is doing for us and in us. Isn't this what it means to be continually spirit filled? Listen, "...but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Eph. 5:18-21.

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear, dear Lord Jesus, Beloved of my heart, I love You. I love You alone! I do love my spouse, I love my friends, I love my children, but love for You supersedes all other loves. I worship and adore You only! Cause me Holy Spirit to kiss the Lord of my heart publicly by a willing heart to obey His Word no matter what the cost. Bring into my pathway those who are in great need. Give me discernment to see their need. Lord, I love to serve others and in so doing I am serving You! Father, keep my mind and heart on the alert. I want to "find" Jesus out there in the public arena and meet

"His needs". By doing so I will be kissing Him publicly! Lord, once again I bow my heart, soul and body to You. I break them over Your nail scarred feet in total surrender to You! In Your awesome name, Amen!"

Kiss Him with the submissive, serving will. The daily joy of the abundant life, the power of God controlling their heart; the peace, contentment and rest all of this brings will cause those around you to marvel and long to possess what possesses you.

V.2 "I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would (has taught) instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate."

After the consummation of the marriage there is a desire to go back home to the families and rejoice together over this wonderful union of committed love. It is a time of returning and saying thanks to the parents, especially the mother who has instructed the daughter in the proper ways of relationships.

Notice how the bride is initiating things she desires for her Beloved and it is with others, not as in **chapter two** where she only wanted to be alone with Him. The commitment in **7:10** is proving to be very real.

Spiritually, it is a time of demonstrating gratefulness to those who have been used to lead and guide the bride in her tender years as a believer. How beautiful it is to contact them (those who were your caring mother in the Lord) and let them know that their efforts were not in vain. The Lord used all of them to produce a beautifully mature *"Mary of Bethany"*! What an encouragement it will be to those who nurture new believers.

O how this bride wants to share Him with the one who had nurtured her. Spiritually, where have we been *"nurtured"* or *"mothered"* so to speak? Our spiritual *"mother's house"* is the church, the body of believers. The Lord, over a long period of time brought specific members of His family into our lives to supply us with what we needed to further our spiritual growth at that moment of time. Please read **Eph. 4:11-16!**

Yes, dear surrendered believer, go back to the church fellowship and share with young and old alike what it means to give your life over in total trust to love of Christ. Plant the seed in the hearts of the next generation. Encourage others who are where you are not to give up but to continue leaning on their Beloved, teaching others by example what all this means. Go back to your spiritual *"mother's house"*, the church, and be a visible example of your Mary of Bethany heart.

"...I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate...."

There is a very different lesson the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us here than in the other two verses where "pomegranate" is mentioned in **4:3** and **6:7**. In those verses the Lord speaks of a *"slice of pomegranate"*. He used it as a description of her. It was not actually in her possession. Here, it is her own personal pomegranate. In **4:3** and **6:7** she had some but not all of the characteristics of a pomegranate in her life which was worship of her Beloved. Now, she gives Him the juice of the fruit. To extract juice the pomegranate must be crushed. Jesus was bruised (crushed) for our iniquities and it pleased the Lord to bruise (crush) Him (**Isa.53:5,10**). What has been crushed in her life – it is her will. What greater act of worship could you give your Beloved than the crucified life (**Rom.6:6-14**)? What greater offering than to present your body as a living sacrifice to Him (**Rom.12:1**)? Praise God!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear blessed Lord, drink from my life all the day long and may it always be the taste of the spiced wine of surrender. Your joy is my joy! Your life is my life! Your will is my will! I love You with all of my heart! In Jesus name, Amen"*

V.3 "His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me."

His left hand is the Word of God to guide my thinking in every decision. However, if this is to happen I must first rest my thinking (head) in His left hand and accept (submitting my will) what God's Word says about a concern I have without question. Oh to have the **"mind of Christ"**, which we already possess (**I Cor. 2:16**), to have dominion over my thoughts. His mind is His Word.

His right hand represents the strength of the Holy Spirit. In an embrace it is the right arm (**Psa. 44:3; Isa. 62:8**) that holds the weight of the other person. Spiritually the Holy Spirit (also known as the Spirit of Christ) is our strength (**Acts 1:8**). I must rest my spiritual body in the arms of His strength. His right arm will guide me or restrain me whatever the need may be. The Beloved does not need the strength of my good intentions. If I plan without consulting Him; if I proceed without His power - no matter how good it might be, it is the flesh trying to do good. The glory will go to the flesh and not to the Beloved.

I like the Word "**should**" here. When I am faced with a decision, the Holy Spirit reminds me that the Bridegroom's hand should be guiding my thinking in the decision. If I am truly in love with my Beloved, then I need to make sure to run to His arms for that particular circumstance. He loves that kind of "**first love**", love from our hearts. Waiting in His arms is so important. Don't rush with a decision but be patient (**Psa. 25:3,5,21; 37:7**). He will give you absolute peace concerning it in His time! Stay in His Word, for through it you will experience **Psa. 119:105**, "**Your Word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.**"

She yearns to have Him control and support her emotional thought life (**left hand under her head**) and her actions (**right hand embracing her**). She is saying to Him, "*embrace my thoughts and my ways; be my restraint and constraint. I love you with all of my heart and I don't want to make one move without your gentle but strong embrace around me! As I go out to minister I must have Your spiritual arms embracing.*" This request He will gladly fulfill! Isn't this what is meant in **II Cor. 5:14**, "**For the love of Christ constraineth us...**"? Dear reader is this the desire of your heart?

PRAY WITH ME: "*My Holy Bridegroom, Beloved of my heart, keep me ever so spiritually sensitive that I will always know when I have moved slightly to the right or left of Your will for me. Crush my will! Crucify it! Press out all the juice of my pomegranate so I may give You a drink of what real, true love is for You! I know You'll never leave me nor forsake me. I want nothing but You! What is important today is that Your heart is blessed and Your will is accomplished in my life. I desire nothing but You! Nothing but You!*"

Caring so deeply for the welfare of His wife He says...

V.4 "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he ("she") please."

Each time He has caused her to sleep He was preparing her for a new spiritual step. It is the same now. Between verses four and five much time passes. Together they are about to embark on a long journey into the fearful wilderness of this world (**v.5** implies that they have been gone for a time). He knows she will need rest for this very difficult journey fraught with dangers, yet filled with glory! So He takes her into His arms. Jesus says the same thing to you as He did to His disciples, "**Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.**" (**Mk. 6:31**).

How beautiful, she falls asleep without a worry or care about anything. She is so peaceful and secure when her soul is totally enwrapped in His presence. May we feel that kind of rest, for it is so needed today. So often we are busy, busy, busy but there is little time for Him. We don't even hear our Beloved and ask Him to embrace us as in **v.3**. We burn out mentally and give up spiritually. This ought never to be! Falling into His embrace is simply a complete surrender to His strength. Listen to His voice saying to you personally, "*My love, come away for awhile and just sit with Me and rest. Let Me embrace you and hold your hand.*" He will make sure you have time to rest and there will be no guilt! You might just sit back and quote quietly to yourself the **23rd Psalm**, meditating upon it. Sit with Him outside and enjoy a tree, a mountain, flower, lake, a gentle breeze or a sunset that He has made. Tell Him how appreciative you are of it.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. 4:8

"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." Psa. 63:5,6

Because of **v. 5** we know that some time has passed. How much time, we do not know. It is obvious that she awoke from her restful sleep and went with her Beloved, hand in hand, ministering and serving in His many vineyards. The daughters of Jerusalem longed for them to return. They were chosen to be intimate helpers to prepare the bride for the journey. O what joy it brought to them! Each day they looked with expectancy out over the horizon.

Questions arise in their hearts: Did she continue on with the Bridegroom? Was there a time in the journey where she decided to go on no further? Did she keep her commitment of total surrender? Is her love for Him still as deep as it was just before they left? Then one day early in the morning, as the sun rose in the east, two figures appear. Excitement fills her intimate friends' hearts as one of them asks:

V.5 "Who is this that comes up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?..."

All their loving concerns were answered when they recognized that the two coming up out of the wilderness were Jesus and His bride! Observed is a full and enduring "**first love**" love for Jesus. Is this how those close to you see your relationship with Jesus? **Love leans!** Here is the fulfillment of His heart's longing as expressed in **Rev. 2:1-5**. Remember, the Ephesus church had everything going for them as a church except they had fallen out of love with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit beckons for you to draw near to this couple as He whispers into your spirit, "*Dear redeemed one, come and gaze upon hallowed things. Drink deeply the glory you are about to see and hear. I will allow you to see what this bride experienced in the wilderness with her Beloved! Because of your surrender I will teach you the deep things of God (1 Cor.2:10) for your own wilderness journey with Me!*"

Dear reader, are you not spellbound by the sight of Jesus and His bride totally immersed in each other? And this is toward the end of their journey. Is not your heart beating faster as you long for this same relationship? Mine is! Does it not ache to grow in this beautiful leaning upon Him during your wilderness journey? Here is the answer to the abundant Christian life – LEAN! LEAN! LEAN! So many Christians will say, "*I'm hanging in there!*" NO! NO! NO! We are called upon to lean on Him! Lean on His promises. Lean on His love and rest in Him!

The Holy Spirit speaks to you again dear reader, "*This is exactly why I am leading you to watch them. I want you, my precious holy one, to know how to walk in your wilderness journey! Be patient! Lean on Me! You have already begun to walk in this manner without realizing it. The Bridegroom is so pleased that you, His blood bought child, are going to join Him in this intimate, hand in hand walk into eternity! Look, at the pathway on which they are walking. Isn't it glorious? But first, I must have you look at what you do not desire to see, so that your love may grow even stronger in Him. What you will witness will cause your love to lean on Jesus that much more.*"

The Holy Spirit turns your eyes away from the pathway itself to see what was enveloping both sides of the narrow path on which they are traveling. Your heart sinks. You are in shock and feel faint. You are seeing the wilderness as it actually is, in all of its sheer, naked evil. Never before in your wildest imagination had you conceived of anything so offensive, atrocious, foul, obscene, destructive and hateful.

Evil spirits of depression, lust, dullness, boredom, spiritual disinterest, distraction, gossip and unforgiveness claw and scratch at the minds of the poor souls who are not walking in total submission to the Beloved. There are believers wallowing in the mire of self, all the while thinking that they are pleasing God in their lackadaisical walk! Within their reach is the path of safety, surrender and full satisfaction, but sadly, they turn away. They but need to repent and pray the protective promises of God's Holy Word in faith, then glorious restoration on the true path of victory and the abundant life will be experienced!

A cold and convicting pain of sadness sweeps over your soul as you are seeing much of what your spiritual walk has been. It has been neither hot nor cold, but a halfhearted faithfulness, all the while thinking that nothing was really wrong. You cry out, "*O dear God, how I have sinned against You! Precious Holy Spirit deliver me from lukewarmness! Oh how I have hurt my Beloved! Cause me to walk like this couple! Let me feel the total spiritual satisfaction flowing between them! Lord, I am so sorry! Thank You for allowing me to see all of this before it was too late and have spent my life totally on the wasteful, meaningless and temporal.*"

At this very moment the gentle, Holy Comforter fills you totally with Himself and tells you to, "*Turn your eyes away from this scene of emptiness, this wilderness of stony waste (Jer.17:6), this desolate and parched land (Jer.12:10; 50:12) where the enemy readies himself to ambush the lovely bride of Jesus (Lam.4:19)! You're forgiven by the blood of your Bridegroom! Be filled with Me! Be filled with glory! Be filled with heartfelt surrender. It is done!*"

Your heart breathes a quieting sigh of relief. You know it has happened! A phenomenal peace floods your soul! As you gaze upon this couple coming up out of the wilderness, you see yourself in them. Joy floods your soul looking at this narrow path, full of light and glory. The misery of the wilderness scene disappears from your mind. The Holy Spirit takes your hand once again and draws you right next to them. You now are able to observe every detail of their walk.

In a gentle voice the Spirit says, "*Look how completely she leans upon her Beloved. Draw closer to listen to the peaceful Words whispered between them. Learn from them.*" You notice that the bride's arm is interlocked with His arm, held ever so tightly against her side. As she looks up at Him she says, "*My love, I was so weak in myself, but now I feel Your strength flowing through me. O my Husband, I love You so much! Your arms feel so good to me my Love, there is so much strength in them (Isa. 41:11)!*"

Jesus looks at her with eyes filled with joy and says, "*Just to hear you say that brings such satisfaction to My heart. I'm so glad My Father gave you to Me (John 10:29)!*" Their steps are so unhurried, so steady, so restful in a purposeful pace, leading them up to the many dwelling places (John 14:2,3) where they will live together forever! When the bride becomes a little weary on this journey, her Beloved just gives her a hug and reminds her that it won't be long 'till they will be home! That spiritual hug imparts a renewed strength and refreshing vigor for her to continue on.

She leans her head upon His strong shoulders and shares, "*I used to get so confused, not really knowing the right pathway which would please You, my Beloved! It was awful. Sometimes I felt I was doing OK as Your child and then I would find myself way off the true path. It was terrible. I was so empty. I wanted to do what was right for You but seemed to always miss the mark. But now I am filled with You! Even though the enemy of my mind attacks, I simply turn the eyes of my heart and look at You, speaking a Word of promise and immediate peace comes. O how secure I feel leaning upon You my dear Bridegroom!*" Jesus glances at her eyes and His heart is ravished. He quickly turns away as a tear of joy falls onto His cheek (**Song of Solomon 4:9; 6:5**).

As Jesus points to a pleasant green pasture, He says, "*Let's stop here for awhile and sit together. I want to share a few things with you. I have always been the 'Way.'* I am so thankful you responded to My Spirit as He drew you into deeper truths concerning My heart toward you. I am leading you to our home, My love, My sister, My spouse. O how happy you and I will be for eternity! Be encouraged, there are just a few more miles to go and a few more stops on the way to pick up other lilies to go with us. I'm so thankful that you will never refuse to go with Me again." He pauses and puts both of His hands on her cheeks. Looking into her eyes with admiration, He says, "*It was worth every single stroke of the whip, every nail driven into My body for what I see in Your eyes right now My dear wife!*" She could see tears of joy well up in His eyes. For a long while they sat together in the green grass under the shade of the apple tree (**SofS 2:13**). Then, taking her by the hand they continued to go up out of the wilderness. They walked from village to village and through the countryside ministering, caring and loving others. All the while she snuggled up leaning upon His everlasting arms (**Deut.33:27**).

The bride speaks very little. Her eyes stay riveted on His loving gaze. There is much being said with her eyes making Words unnecessary. He was guiding her with His eye (**Psa. 33:18; 34:15**)! She feels so encouraged and confident about the direction in which He is leading. She places her left arm around His side knowing that this is the only place she ever wants to be. He is so blessed by these loving acts. His glory bursts out all over the pathway!

Watching them intently you speak within your heart to the Holy Spirit, "*Even though this wilderness is so horrible, it is as if it did not exist to them. What an 'up' experience this is for both of them. My eyes have been so focused on the wilderness itself, I have missed the joy of Jesus (John 15:11)! Jesus is so sure footed upon this pathway and knows exactly where it is leading. That is what I want for my life dear Holy Spirit.*"

For this bride, it was a walk of grace upon grace; His grace alone (**John 1:16**). The more she leans upon her Beloved, the more she realizes that all of this is so undeserved! She proclaims with joy, "***I have 'found grace in the wilderness.'***" (**Jer. 31:2**).

As you watch them, you point out to the Holy Spirit, "*At times it was difficult for me to distinguish just how many were walking, one or two.*" The Holy Spirit responds, "*Yes, she has become so much like her Beloved. She is entering into the oneness her Beloved had prayed to the Father for her (Jn.17:22,23). It actually makes her look like Him (Rom.8:29). Isn't it wonderful? This can be the same for you, as you in loving surrender lean upon your Beloved in this wilderness-. Don't ever forget this scene. The bride is so taken up with the Love of her life that she is not aware of the transformation.*"

The unhurried pace gave her time to whisper to His heart, "***Your mouth is most sweet...my Beloved!***" He responded by saying, "***How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine!***" He held her close to His side as they continued to walk. She felt so safe. He knew her heart was fully His! She leaned upon Him to hear that still small voice. She leaned upon Him for she had no strength of her own. She leaned upon Him because He alone was the Way up out of the wilderness! As her heart is filled with overflowing love, she holds His hand even tighter, overwhelmed with unspeakable joy singing quietly to her Beloved:

"What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms!

What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms!

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms;

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms?

I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms!

Leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus, safe and secure from all alarms;

Leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus, leaning on the everlasting arms!" Elisha Hoffman

As they walk up out of this wilderness the Beloved reminds her of a blessed secret shared with her earlier. Knowing these things will keep her ever leaning upon Him who has become her wisdom, purpose, protection and strength. "*Don't forget that...*"

V.5 "...I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee."

O the infinite purposes of an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God! Praise His holy name! Was there ever any doubt in the mind of God that His plans to have a bride for His Son would go unfulfilled? O the glories of the purposes of God, to know that I was on His heart before I was born and then raised up under the protection of the apple tree which is none other than Jesus Himself, (see 2:3) listen:

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth." (II Thess. 2:13).

Paul testified to this glorious truth in Gal. 1:15-16, **"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."**

Listen to Isaiah concerning this wonderful truth when He states, **"And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant." Isa. 49:5**

Jeremiah confirms the thought of God dealing with us even before we were born when He makes this astounding pronouncement, **"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou came forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jer. 1:5**

The Psalmist knew about this when he wrote by the Holy Spirit, **"Upon thee I have leaned from my birth; thou art he who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of thee." Ps. 71:6**

And again, **"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Ps. 139:15**

Our glorious God does not leave things to happenstance! It's true concerning His prophecies! Were they not written as absolute certainties? Praise the name of Jesus for the following Words of comfort and purpose for your life and mine, **"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isa. 46:10-11).**

Praise His holy Name, the bride was loved by Him before the world was ever created! Again, what a thought, you were on God's heart before you were born! Listen to the Words in v.5 once again.

"...I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee."

God our Father planned a bride for His Son before the worlds were created. Doesn't that comfort you dear Christian? He cared so much that He brought you up, nurtured you and lavished His protective love for you under the apple tree!

She had exclaimed in 2:3, **"As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons..."** Praise God we have always been under His watchful care and protection. So important are you that He has a host of angels ministering to His bride (Heb. 1:13,14). Dear surrendered reader, listen to your Beloved whisper into your ear, **"I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5).**

She meditates in her heart, **"O may this never, never change! There is no other place I desire to be except listening, talking and walking with my Love! What peace! What strength! What assurance!"**

He already knew what she was thinking and immediately responded to her longing. He spoke with passion to His surrendered bride and asked her to do something very, very important. Here is the defining moment for her Christian walk in this wilderness journey. Her Beloved pauses once again, looking down at the pathway. There is an eternal seriousness written over His countenance. Then, He raised His head, looking longingly into her eyes, with a quiet finality in His voice says...

V.6 "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel (severe, unyielding) as the grave: the coals (Heb."flames") thereof are coals (flames) of fire, which hath a most vehement flame ("of the Lord")."

The Word "**seal**" is the same Hebrew Word for "**signet**" or "**signet ring**". The king (or his representative) would affix the royal seal to a document representing His authority, will, ownership, protection or direction. It was to be permanent! **Esth. 8:8** is a wonderful example of this: **"Write ye...in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing**

which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

The seal from King Jesus today is the Holy Spirit (**II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30**)! The Holy Spirit is the seal placed within us and assures us that what God promises in His Word He will perform! That "*sealing of the Holy Spirit*" took place the moment she received her Beloved as her personal Lord and Savior. However, in this verse, He is asking her to set Him as a seal upon her heart and arm because she knew she was already sealed according to His Word!

He smiled, "*I placed the seal of My Spirit upon your spirit, but now My darling bride, your heart must have My seal upon it for that is where you make your decisions. Then it must be put on your arm that carries them out. With each decision you must place My seal upon it, then nothing will ever come between us as we walk together up out of this wilderness. It will demonstrate more than anything else the love and surrendered heart you have for Me. My beautiful bride, this is something I will never force upon you. I want you to willingly place Me on your heart and arm. It will be a permanent, eternal seal!*" She knew this was the most holy and sacred moment of her life. His desire was her desire. Nothing else mattered!

A powerful presence of the Holy Spirit filled her whole being. Speaking in her spirit the Holy Spirit said, "*Dear surrendered bride, this is the ultimate gift of joy you can give to your Beloved.*" The enemy fought this decision with all the demons of fear and doubt he could bring against her. But it was to no avail because she kept hearing what the Holy Spirit had just revealed to her! Her eyes stayed steadfast upon Jesus. With longing, pleading Words she said, "*Please, my Love, I must have this seal. I must give You this joy. I must satisfy Your heart, for nothing else matters to me!*"

Her Beloved's eyes sparkled with delight. Intently gazing at His hands He slowly opened the palms exposing the scars and said, "*My faithful bride these are the seal for you, the scars of My crucifixion. They are the guarantee that I will never leave you nor forsake you. They are the assurance that My love for you is eternal. They are My pledge that your sins will never rise again to condemn you and the safety that no one can snatch you out of them (John 10:28)! My Spirit's indescribable power will be released in you! Then you will know My love which surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:19). You will be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19) and be transformed from glory to glory in Me (II Cor.3:18). My seal will cause you to always triumph in all the battles of life which you will face (II Cor.2:14).*"

She touched His outstretched hands and lifted them up to look more closely at the scars. Overwhelmed at what she saw, tears fell uncontrollably upon them. Catching her breath, in a forced whisper she exclaimed, "*My name, I see my name, it's there, there in Your hand! Right in the middle of Your scar!*" She stood there speechless. Then, He lifted up her face to look deep into her eyes and said softly, "***Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands...***" (**Isa. 49:15-16**)!

She took His right hand and gently, with a holy reverence, placed the scar over her heart and declared, "*O my Love, I promise to You that every decision I must make will be made by You. Every thing that would vie for my love and attention will first be filtered through Your scar!*" All of a sudden an indelible mark of His scar appeared over the door of her heart. An inexpressible, heavenly glow of joy filled Him. She then took His left hand and placed it over her arm. Looking into His eyes with a holy fire of devotion the Words poured forth, "*Every action, every activity in my life will have Your approval. It will only be for Your glory.*" She closed her eyes and felt wholly immersed in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Contentment and peace filled her soul. Jesus, bursting with love, said, "*Thank you, thank you, thank you - you have made My joy complete!*" (**Col.2:10**). In this powerful presence she fell limp in His arms - His left hand was under her head to give rest to her mind and His right arm embraced her to impart strength.

Power and glory filled her to overflowing! Deeper than ever she understood what her Beloved meant concerning being baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire (**Luke 3:16**). Her attitude and actions, her desires and decisions would be entirely under the Spirit's control. She would gladly walk in the pathway of crucifixion (**Rom. 6:6-14; II Cor. 4:7-18**) - dead to self and independent ambition, but alive in His resurrected life. Everything in her life would have His seal of approval on it. She would say with each decision, "*Your will be done in my heart as it is in heaven - never my will!*" (**Mark 14:36; Mt. 6:10**).

This is true dying to self; the crucified life, every desire, decision and circumstance filtered through the cross. You ask the question each time, "*My Beloved, would You be pleased with this?*" "*Would You be pleased to watch this with me?*" "*Would it please You if we listened to this together?*" Place His hand in front of everything! The crucified life is total confidence that He knows best. The crucified life brings into the heart a wonderful godly fear giving heavenly wisdom and holy direction. His voice, presence, power and love will be experienced as never before. **You will fear to hurt the One you love!** That's spiritually healthy fear (**Psa. 147:11; Prov. 1:7; 3:7;10:27; 14:26; Eph. 5:21**)! While she continued to rest in His embrace He shared how infinite and eternal His love is for her...

"...for love is strong as death, jealousy as cruel (unyielding) as the grave..."

Jesus explains, "You see, My loving beautiful wife, death is unyielding and so is My love for you! I will never cease to love you with a 'first love' love! My jealousy is for your good! It is as strong as the grave for it is unyielding! My passion for your welfare is as flames of fire from on high! O dear bride of My heart, never forget that I have a holy, protecting jealousy (Exo. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Josh. 24:19) which will always fight for you against the enemy."

A holy blaze rushed through her entire being (Heb. 12:29). It was a commitment to pure motives and a desire for greater holiness ablaze in her spirit and soul. She leaned close to Him with tears of joy running down her cheeks! Thrilled beyond her wildest dreams, she looked at Him, "YOU are consumed with me!" She burst out in song....

*"Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art,
I am finding out the greatness of thy loving heart.
Here I gaze and gaze upon Thee, as thy beauty fills my soul,
For by Thy transforming power, Thou hast made me whole." Jean Sophia Pigott*

The Lord bid His lovely bride to once again look at His nail-scarred hand. He said, "*I want you to never forget what I went through to have you as My wife! And now My precious bride, let's continue the journey up this path in the wilderness.*" He beckoned her to look just beyond the side of this narrow path. The mist, which had been hiding its contents, began to lift. Pain shot through her soul! Her eyes, once again, looked upon everything that was detestable to Him. With vehement scorn, all sorts of demons shrieked, screaming unspeakable filth at Him and His bride.

She looked to the right and saw her old self, lurking at the edge of the pathway of light trying desperately to grab her and take control. It was repulsive - dark in color with a stench of spiritual corrupting death and decay. She glanced to the left and horror filled her soul. It was grotesque, repelling and vile. All that was evil cast disgusting obscenities at her and Him whom her soul loved. These evil spirits had the shroud of their counterfeit garments of light ripped away. There were those in the putrid mire who had a form of godliness but denied the power thereof (II Tim. 3:5). Exposed was the screeching, howling darkness of despair! Victims of demonic deception, writhing in excruciating pain, attempted to escape but to no avail, it was too late!

Tears of anguish fell from her eyes, for the polluted waters of decaying spiritual filth seemed to rise higher and higher to the edge of the pathway of the Light. Her Bridegroom said, "*All of this which is repugnant to you, My love, is what I became when I was nailed to the cross (2Cor.5:2; Gal.3:13). I willingly had My Father place it in My holy, pure and righteous soul.*" Jesus gently turned her head so that He could brush the tears away and said, "**...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**" (John 14:27), "**...be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**" (John 16:33). That one touch put her heart at ease and peace flooded her soul. He whispered, "*Your faith in Me, which I gave to you (Rom. 12:3), has given you the victory to overcome the world (1 John 5:4,5)!*" She said, holding His hand very tightly, "*Thank You my Love for giving to me the victory (1 Cor. 15:57) and always causing me to triumph (II Cor. 2:14)!*" That ugly scene seemed far distant now, as He whispered assuredly to her...

V.7 "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it..."

Again her soul burst forth in song,

*"O love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe, that in Thine ocean depths its flow
may richer fuller be."*

George Matheson

Filled with the Holy Spirit she continued making melody in her heart,

*"Who can cheer the heart like Jesus, by His presence all divine?
True and tender, pure and precious, O how blest to call Him mine!
Every need His hand supplying, every good in Him I see;
On His strength divine relying, He is all in all to me.
All that thrills my soul is Jesus, He is more than life to me;
And the fairest of ten thousand in my blessed Lord I see." Thoro Harris*

The Beloved reminded her that His supplying, protecting love was free to her. He reminded her that the cost to purchase it was the cross of shame. He said concerning them, "*There are those who search and search in the wrong places for this kind of love attempting to purchase it! You can't buy it!*" He paused, then declared in the strongest terms, "**...if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned (despised)**". "*All you need, My darling bride, is an empty vessel and My Spirit will fill it continually with My infinite love which cannot be bought. It's free only to those who freely surrender to My heart! You know full well, My spouse, that My whole character and being is Love. My only joy is sharing it!*" They walked a little further on this path of righteousness coming up out of the wilderness.

The Lord's eyes sparkled with excitement as He put His arm around her, "*Guess what? I have prepared a surprise for you My love. I don't think you can see it just yet but we are real, real close.*" And then, all of a sudden there appeared this magnificent "**table in the wilderness**" (**Psa. 78:19**). It was round and filled with radiating splendor! Two awesome figures were seated there, but she did not recognize them. The light emanating from each was too bright for her eyes to handle just yet. Shading her eyes with His hand the Beloved said, "*It's alright my love. Your eyes will get used to this amazing glory in just a moment and you will see clearly!*"

When the Lord took away His hand she could see without any difficulty. Her heart burst with joy! She looked up at Jesus, holding tightly to His arm and said, "*You love me so much and as always, You think of everything! You have prepared 'a table before me in the presence of my enemies.'*" (**Psa. 23:5**)! "*O my wonderful Husband, You keep on surprising me with so much! I know I say this constantly but I can't help it, I love You with all of my heart.*" He lovingly pointed out, "*This table is exactly what will be needed for you in this terrible wilderness journey.*"

Jesus escorted her to the table, and with great grace, pulled out this throne-like chair and bid her to sit down. One of the glorious figures got up and gently anointed her head with the oil of gladness and said, "*It is an honor to have you sit with Us.*" In her spirit He revealed Himself to her. It was the blessed Holy Spirit! Her heart ("*cup*" **Psa. 23:5**) began to overflow with heavenly joy. A glorious light burst forth from her spirit. She had never experienced anything like this nor had she ever seen light so dazzling. It was the glory of God all over her. The Lord Jesus took her by the hand and said, "*My precious bride, come and sit next to Someone who has loved Me forever.*" She knew by looking at her Beloved's eyes that there was an eternal, infinite very special kind of love in His heart for this One sitting across from her. (**John 5:20; 17:22-24**).

The Beloved said, "*This is My Father who has given you to Me!*" (**John 10:29; 17:2**). Her heart was bursting with love! Tears of gratitude welled up in her eyes. The moment she sat down the Father kissed her on the forehead. He said, "*I have waited a long time for this moment.*" The Father looked into her eyes as His love covered her soul. In a soft, hushed voice she kept repeating two Words, "**My Abba**", "**My Abba**", "**My Abba**" (**Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Mark 14:36**)!

As she gazed at this wonderful table and all that was freely provided for her there she knew that no matter how great the waters of adversity, His love for her could never be quenched. Every kind of spiritual weapon was there for all the evil which would be brought against her (**Eph. 6:10-18**)! No matter how great the rivers of evil would rise to drown her, His protective love and grace would always be greater still. It could never be purchased with all the riches of the world. His love and all the provisions that went with it were more valuable than His created universe and it was hers without cost! The cost to her God was enormous: the Father emptying out His heart for us by the giving up of His Son; the Son emptying out Himself on the cross in total spiritual, soul and physical death; the Holy Spirit's infinite grieving over what the Son had become!

The Father looking proudly at her and proclaims, "*I can see that you love Us with all of your heart. But it doesn't stop there, you also love others with the same fervent love.*" She bowed her head and said, "*Yes, and that fervent love is greatly concerned for...*" The Holy Spirit quietly broke in and said, "*...for your sister, she belongs to Us and it is now time for her to learn about the true surrendered life.*" It was in **7:11** that she initiated the request to go wherever He desired to lead. But now she is specific! The bride has a discerning spirit and sees that her little sister needs nurturing to develop into a strong consistent Christian. So she voiced her deep concerns, wanting direction in what to do about this little sister she loves so much. She spoke again to Abba Father...

V.8 "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?"

The Words "**we have**" indicate that her little sister already belonged to Jesus, first by creation and secondly through Jesus' redeeming blood. Having "*no breasts*" points out that spiritual growth and maturity have not taken place in her young Christian walk. Faith and love have not been developed in her heart (**I Thess. 5:8**) nor exercised in her soul that is so needed to please God in the walk of surrender (**Eph. 5:2**).

The bride poured out her heart, *"I long for my little sister to enter into this glorious rest and contentment. I desperately want her to enter into this blessed, intimate relationship. I know I can help her because of the afflictions I have gone through. I can share these experiences with her and she will know what to expect."* In other Words, lead her into having a **7:10** experience. The bride would be able to help her sister through the rough spots, since she had been there before (**II Cor. 1:3,4**)!

Great are the dangers to the one who walks as an immature Christian. So many decisions must be made and many will **"speak for her"**. All these voices: dating, hobbies, entertainment, church, money, security, friends, material goods will all speak for her; each will make a claim on her saying, *"I am the most important consideration for your life, all others are secondary. Pay attention to me first and foremost."* So many voices vie for her absolute attention and affection.

The bride said to Abba Father, *"may my sister never listen to the '...voice of a stranger...' (John 10:4,5). She needs to be nurtured to love my Husband's eternal Word and develop discernment in her."* The Father said, *"There is One other voice that will speak for her. I love her so much that I will fill her with My Spirit as I did for you. He will speak for her! I will draw her to Myself. My Spirit will pour out Himself in her soul a baptism of fire and love. You, My very special child, will be used so that My love will flow through you to your little sister until she is mature."* Then the Spirit within her heart said...

V.9 "If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace (encampment, battlement) of silver: and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar."

If an ancient city had only a wall surrounding it, then it was quite vulnerable to the attack of an enemy and in a short time would be forced to surrender. Why? Because without battlements (towers from which the enemy could be sighted and fought) built on the top of the walls, no action could be taken against the enemy. It was the battlements on the top of the walls that allowed the soldiers of the city to fight against the enemy and keep them from climbing over the walls at will. They will know exactly from which direction the enemy was attacking.

Here was a spiritually young believer not fully developed. The question is, what will be her place of function in the body of Christ - a wall or a door? All true blood bought believers have been given gifts and talents to be developed and then used by the Holy Spirit in His body (**Eph. 4:15-16**). It is for the surrendered believers to be used by the Holy Spirit in taking the younger Christians under their protective wings to disciple them. They will help nurture and encourage them to grow in the Lord, leading them slowly in the exercising of their gifts. Thank God for those who are willing to take the time to protect and care for the little ones!

The bride is placing the need for discernment into the hands of her Husband. Once the discernment is given, then she will work with her Bridegroom in the developing of her sister to full maturity in Christ (**Titus 2:4**)! Whatever gift(s) and talent(s) surface will need to be carefully nurtured and exercised. A spiritually young person is not to be thrust into a ministry too rapidly (**I Tim. 3:6; I Pet. 5:5**). Pride, in all of its subtle and not so subtle forms will surface. The focus is on them and their gifts instead of the Lord. Yet, in many churches their leaders will say, *"Get that new believer teaching a primary class in our Sunday School. They can do it. It's all there in the teacher's manual on how to do it!"* However, the young believer needs to grow spiritually by watching those who are deeply in love with the Lord.

How sad that churches thrust young baby believers into positions of spiritual responsibility and yet they have not learned to grow in love, surrender, prayer, praise and faithfulness. They have not been tested. The enemy will make sure that the young believer will have a very difficult trial come along to devastate him/her. The new believer quits the responsibility and others are hurt in the process. Satan loves it!

Note carefully that it has taken eight chapters in the life of this bride for her to come to the point where she is ready to be used in the nurturing of her little sister. She has the heart for it because of **7:10** and **8:6**! Only when she came to the realization that only Jesus is everything to her (**7:10**) and then, convinced of His never ending love, places His seal upon her heart and arm (**8:6**) is she ready for the work of mentoring her little sister.

Pride was mentioned a moment ago. We see the diminishing of pride in her own life. It took time and through surrender pride was patiently dealt with by the Holy Spirit. How do we know? In **2:16** she stated, **"My Beloved is MINE."** In **6:3** she stated it again, **"My Beloved is MINE."** There had been growth by **6:3** and the statement is of less importance. However, not until **7:10** is the **"MINE"** eliminated. What vestiges of pride remained is minimal.

"...we will build upon her a palace (battlement)..."

Notice carefully that the building of a *"battlement"* is not the responsibility of the young sister to build but the Bridegroom's and the Bride's (**"we will build...we will inclose"**). Who are the **"we"**? It is the Father, the Son and the Holy

Spirit ministering through the bride! Here it is dear Christian from the Word of God, **"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."** (I Cor. 3:5,6). God receives all the glory in whatever is accomplished when you are mentoring a young believer. The bride is now a yielded spiritual instrument in the hand of the Beloved to bless the little sister. A spiritual wall indicates separation; separation from the world's philosophies and mindless activities (John 15:19; II Cor.6:17), and separated unto the Lord for His use and pleasure (Rom. 14:7-9; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 2:13).

He will work through His surrendered bride to build the *"battlement"* within her younger sister. This will happen when the bride begins to pray specific promises from the Word doing spiritual warfare over her sister. The bride will spend time just being a friend to her little sister, so that she can see what a mature Christian really is. This little sister must see the image of Christ in her older sister. How many times does the Lord have to say it to us. *"Let them see My image in your life."* Listen, listen, listen to His Word, **"That which was from the beginning (Jesus), which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life...That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you...."** (I John 1:1,3). Did you catch the order here? First they heard, then, it was proven out by what they saw! Let people see the power of what you spiritually proclaim. *O God, let me be a transparent believer. Let my "little sisters" know You through me!* The bride will be living out the life of Christ in her walk hoping that Her sister will become an imitator (I Cor. 11:1).

The new believer will begin to see: a love for God, a love for one another, a love for the lost, acts of kindness, an attitude of humility, a faithfulness in prayer, praise and worship, a strong spiritually sustaining purpose of intimacy in the *'older sister'* (surrendered bride). The new believer will experience the gift of a loving, listening ear from the *'older sister'*! Spiritual fruit will be picked from the tree of the surrendered believer (Gal. 5:22,23).

"..of silver..."

Verse nine states that the *"battlement"* is to be made of **"silver"**. Silver in scripture represents redemption. This thought comes from **Exo. 30:11-16**. The people brought the prescribed amount of silver money that would be used for the sockets. These sockets of enormous amounts of silver supported the boards that made up the Tabernacle. This **"silver"** money given to support the weight of these boards was called **"atonement"** or **"redemption"** money.

The *"little sister"* must be taught clearly about her spiritual foundation and never forget it. Christ is her foundation (I Cor.3:11) and she is not only on it but in it (**"in Christ"** Rom. 12:5)! That foundation is her stability and everything else: her life, her purpose; her daily decisions, actions and attitudes. The bride is to never forget she has been redeemed (**"silver"**) without cost to her. The cost to the Lord was immense (I Pet. 1:18,19; Psa.103:4; Eph. 1:7). O how this needs to be constantly reinforced in new believers. The more that is understood about the enormity of their sin nature and the depths to which Christ went on the cross to buy back their soul, the more likely they will remain (abide) loyal to Him and grow to spiritual maturity because of their deep love and appreciation for Him!

How sad that young Christians are thrust into the battle of life without knowing how to use the spiritual weapons available to them (II Cor. 10:3-5). We tell them about **Eph. 6:10-17** but seldom demonstrate how. No wonder there is so much defeat and defection from the fellowship of believers. It is easy to evangelize, but nurturing new believers requires much time and Holy Spirit wisdom. We who are *"big sisters"* (surrendered Bride) must realize that our every move is being observed. That is how the **"little sisters"** are taught. They are seeing Christ, our Beloved Bridegroom, living in and through us. All the little sisters who are brought into our lives must see the victorious Christian life lived out as much as hearing about it! They must see the *"battlements"* at work. Let them see a life being lived out on the promises of God in the Word – a walk of humility, patience, caring and accountability.

How often do young spiritual children see victory in adult believers lives? How many churches allow for a time of testimony from believers who are seeing God work in their lives through specific answers to prayer? It is one thing to testify about being saved, it is quite another to give personal examples of spiritual victories and how they were accomplished through the Holy Spirit's power by faith in God's promises!

"a wall...a battlement"

At this point it is not known what the **"little sister"** will become – a wall or a door. If she be a wall then a spiritual **"battlement"** will be built upon it. She will be a watchman – looking out for the enemy coming against the body of Christ – an intercessor with a gift of discernment in recognizing the enemy's subtle attacks against believers. She will be that expert warrior on the battlement using the weapons of spiritual warfare (II Cor. 10:3-5): the whole armor of God (Eph. 5:10-19); proclaiming the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11); and the power of the Holy Spirit (Mark 13:11; Acts 4:21; Rom. 15:19).

If her sister's function in the body of Christ will be a wall then her foundation must be solid spiritually. She must be very, very careful what she builds upon that foundation: prayer, praise, fellowship, doing good, intimacy with Jesus through His Word. That is why it is so important for young believers to be truly discipled, not just told what to do but shown how to do it. Then the "**little sister**" will become a spiritually strong watchman - protective wall for others.

But some are given a special place to lead in that battlement-watchman ministry. There are real dangers in a leadership role if the foundation is not strong (**Psa. 11:3; II Tim. 2:19**). Jesus is our example of how to fight in the daily battle, He knew how to take orders from His Father and obey them. He was totally in love with the Father. He is our example. If she remains humble and submissive, the Beloved will cause her to continually triumph (**I Pet. 5:6-8; II Cor. 2:14**). Oh to be a strong wall in Christ for His body. O to be a place where the spiritually immature may run to and be protected behind and in our wall.

Dear love of His heart, how many "**little sisters**" are out there watching your life? Do they see a victorious Christian? Do they see the fruit of the Spirit in your life? When you do stumble and hurt someone else do they see you confessing it and asking the offended person to forgive you? Do they see you praying for those who have hurt you instead of hearing you complain about them? Do they see you excited about being a Christian? Does your life demonstrate how simple it is to use and speak the Word of God to defeat the enemy? Do you use the authority given to you by the Lord? Listen, "**And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**" (**Eph. 2:6**). Why are we seated with Christ? It is the throne of His authority. We have His authority (Word - promises) to exercise against the enemy!

As the bride sat at the table of the Lord, Abba Father remarked,

"...and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar."

It was so wonderful listening to her Abba Father, her Beloved Bridegroom and the dear Holy Comforter talk about what will be needed to be done for her "**little sister**"! A loving, caring God had all of her little sister's needs supplied already! The plan was set. O how secure and confident this made the bride feel. All she had to do was make herself available to her "**little sister**" and her heavenly Bridegroom would take care of the rest through her, His adoring, submissive, serving bride!

Will her "**little sister**" develop into being a door? Will her life be a door to which others may go through and find Christ, the Beloved? The door of her heart would become an entrance to the true Door of eternity and a door where hurting Christians may find access to encouragement, healing and strength (**Gal. 6:2, 10**)! Let's teach the "**little sisters**" how, by example (**I Cor. 11:1**). Will her heart be an open door where the Lord will have complete access to every area of her life?

The "**cedar**" is an evergreen tree (see **1:17** for comments). It is an illustration of the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ about whom the Word of God states, "**...Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.**" (**Heb. 13:8**). The cedar grows over one hundred feet tall. It is strong and stately! Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords ruling them with the power of His Word (**Rev. 19:11-16**). He must become the "**little sister's**" strength.

The cedar was rot-resistant and knot free. Jesus lived His life without sin (**II Cor.5:21; Heb. 4:25; I Pet. 2:22; I John 3:5**). He must become her holiness, purity and righteousness. What good is a door without a wall? Both are absolutely necessary. Notice that she will be enclosed with "**boards**". Other spirit-filled believers must become part of her life demonstrating by their walk what being a "**board**" is all about (**I Cor. 11:1**). Boards speak of stability when they are connected to each other! The boards in the Tabernacle are a good example of this principle. They were held together by four outward bars and one unseen bar (**Exo. 26:26-29; 36:33**). The boards cannot keep themselves standing straight and in line with the others, even though they are all standing in sockets of silver.

They must have the four bars on the outside and the unseen bar running through all of them which represents the Holy Spirit. The four seen bars represent what was important in the early church found in **Acts 2:42**: bible study, prayer, fellowship and the breaking of bread! In the Tabernacle all the boards together are "**looking**" inward. They are centered around all that represents Christ in the Tabernacle. O to have the local body of believers centered around Jesus in what they say and do so the "**little ones**" will see the beauty of Christ in our actions and sense the presence of Christ in our worship of Him.

Dear bride of the Living Lord, become a board in some new believer's life. Be an encourager, a prayer warrior! May this be your heart's desire, "**Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.**" (**I Sam. 12:23**). The bride continues to speak...

V.10 "I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favor (Heb. 'peace')."

What a testimony by the bride! The purpose of a wall is to separate and to protect. Here is a key to the contented, spiritual life - separation. When did she begin to have real peace in her life? It started to take place the moment she acted on her desire to be separated unto her Beloved. That's when the Holy Spirit began to reveal the infinitely deep things of the Bridegroom to her (**I Cor. 2:9,10**). When did this happen? In chapter one she had asked the Beloved, "**Let him kiss me...Draw me...Tell me...**". It was there Jesus really opened up His heart to her and oh so much has happened since that moment! The wall began to be built right there and then. It would take time but her Beloved was full of tender mercies and heavenly patience to see His plan and work accomplished in her (**Jer. 29:11; Isa. 46:11; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6**).

Are you dear one, an object of His affection, a "**wall**" for Jesus yet? All you need is a sincere heart for it and the Holy Spirit will do the rest. This is made so clear in **II Cor. 6:17** which states, "**Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing...**". Just be willing to "**come out**", make the first step, turn off the TV and pick up a spiritual book to read instead of wasting so much of your time on the temporal. Quit frequenting that place which has you in bondage. Take the first step that is all.

The Holy Spirit declares in the next part of that verse He has the responsibility to continue to keep you "**separated**". ("**be separate**" is passive voice in the Greek - it means it will be done to you). The Lord is in the "**building business**". Let Him build you up as a strong wall (**Col. 2:7; I Pet. 2:5**). You are a spiritual palace (temple of the Holy Spirit). As you surrender each day you will have peace within your walls and prosperity in your spiritual palace. "**May peace be within your walls, And prosperity within your palaces.**" (**Psa.122:7**)

Would I want to do anything that would displease my Beloved? Holiness (sanctification - separation to the Lord **Rom. 12:1; 6:13,19**; and separation from the things of the world – (**Rom. 12:2; I John 2:15-17**) is vital in order to have a vibrant and victorious spiritual walk in Christ. Meditate on the following verses (**Psa. 29:2; 93:5; Eph. 1:3,4; I Thess. 3:12-13; Heb. 12:10,14; I Pet. 1:13-16; II Pet. 3:11**). Holiness is not something that is worked up, but through a deep love for the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit causes it to flow through us as refreshing living waters. Love will not do anything that would offend the one loved! "**Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my Words....**" (**John 14:23**).

"...like towers..."

As His spiritual bride, your breasts of faith and love (**I Thess. 5:8**) will become fully developed as if they were "**towers**". Yes, "**towers**" where all those around you will see what is most important in your life. "**Towers**" are to be seen. And what is the Christian life all about? It is faith and love. Remember, the battlements on the wall were like towers in order to discern exactly where the enemy would attack and from which point he could be fought. The Lord Himself is the tower of all towers for battle, "**For Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.**" (**Psa.61:3**)! The enemy is defeated every time through your absolute "**tower**" of love for Him, His Word, His people, and being firm in the "**tower**" of your faith by standing on His promises in each attack.

"...then was I in His eyes as one that found favor (Heb. 'peace')."

Praise God for the wonderful, all seeing eyes of the Lord that reflect His heart of peace, love and grace. Oh the joy of having His peaceful favor. What a comfort to know His loving, Bridegroom eyes are watching your every move. When faith and love are exercised then He guides you with His eyes (**Psa. 32:8**) and His eyes become your spiritual eyes each moment of the day. You see with spiritual discernment! You see as He sees! His Word becomes alive in your spirit (**Heb. 4:12**). O what peace to know He is watching you with His infinite, caring heart. In the following verses find rest and peace dear lovingly watched one: (**Heb.7:25; Rom.8:26; Psa. 4:8; 34:15; 36:1; Prov.5:21;15:3**)..

V.11 "Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver."

This love song begins (**1:1**) and ends with Solomon's name that means "**peaceable**". This lover of Jesus begins and ends her day with the Name she dearly loves and desires to glorify. The vineyards of the Lord and the fruit produced in them should always have the characteristic of peace. **Heb. 12:11** speaks of the "**peaceable fruit of righteousness.**" The surrendered believer, when faced with a difficulty or attack, begins the process with His peace and ends with His peace. When the Lord dropped the spiritual bomb on the disciples that He was leaving and they wouldn't be allowed to go with Him (**John 13:33,36**), He began to show them what was needed for facing the heart-wrenching circumstances to come (betrayal and crucifixion). How did Jesus do that? He did it by giving them His peace (**John 14:27**). When He appeared to them in resurrection, Jesus met with them and the first Words out of His mouth were "**peace be with you!**" (**Jn 20:19,21**).

He taught them to begin with His peace and end with His peace. Praise God for His peace (**Phil. 4:6,7**)! Jesus is our "Solomon". **Eph. 2:14** proclaims that, "**He (Jesus) is our peace.**" The heavenly Father refers to the eternal Sonship of Jesus in **Heb. 1:5** and is a direct quote from **II Sam. 7:14** which speaks of Solomon, David's son! Jesus is the King of Peace. When His Kingdom truly rules in your heart there will be peace (**Rom. 14:17**). We are to allow His peace to rule our hearts (**Col. 3:15**).

All true peace comes from Him (**II Thess. 3:16**). Peace actually comes from His wisdom. Remember, Solomon represents wisdom (**I Kin. 4:29-34; Mt. 12:42**). Jesus is wisdom itself (**Col. 2:3**). There are circumstances that would seem to overwhelm you, but by faith, standing on the wisdom of His Word, you experience **James 3:17**, "**But the wisdom that is from above is first pure (brings holiness; a separated walk), then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**"

"Baalhamon"

"**Baalhamon**" means "lord or ruler of a multitude." Thus, from the beginning and throughout your day His peace will surround the activities and challenges Abba Father has planned for you. That is why it is so important to keep the promises of God between you and your activities all the day long. Let it become a filter through which you make all of your decisions! Let Him be the Lord or Ruler over the multitude of things you will have to face! Remember, the very sly "**little foxes**" will be lurking in the shadows with all of their wicked intents to begin to destroy the fruit of God in you!

Remember, Jesus died that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living (**Rom. 14:9**). If He is not Lord of you, the individual, or Lord of the "multitude" - the body of believers in the local fellowship, then He is not Lord at all and the Holy Spirit's power to teach, reveal, protect, answer prayer, guide, save, heal and deliver will be greatly hindered. O the shame of division in the congregation and leadership. Strife simmers beneath the surface of the local body of believers because He is not Lord. Their will is more important than His will. They simply will not humble themselves and fulfill **Eph. 5:21**.

"...he let out the vineyard unto keepers..."

The one who possess a deeply committed bride's heart will have great "**keeper**" or "**caretaker**" concerns for all the "**little sisters**" in His vineyard (the particular members in the body of Christ, His bride). This was illustrated in this bride's life from the very beginning in **1:7-8** and reconfirmed in **7:10-12** and **8:8-10**! Do you have this vineyard concern?

Isn't it wonderful that our Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, loves us individually and not just as a corporate body? This is demonstrated in how He makes us "**keepers**" individually. Each one has a very special and private place in His great heart. Our "**Abba Father**" gives to us a sphere of responsibility (our own vineyard) to minister to the needs of others. For moms and dads your first and great ministry is to your family. From there, the Holy Spirit might lead you into other ministries: teaching, cleaning, nursing home, rescue mission, evangelism, discipleship or simply supplying encouragement to others, etc. The Lord knows that we will be happiest in serving just as our Bridegroom did while here on earth and is still doing so in Heaven (**Mark 10:45; Phil. 2:5,8; Heb. 7:25**).

Remember, silver represents redemption (**comments 8:9**). God expects to receive something from you, His redeemed one, which will bring Him ultimate joy. Jesus redeemed us so the Holy Spirit could produce in us redeemed actions, attitudes, worship and service. As a surrendered redeemed one, you have the privilege in bringing Him the "**thousand pieces of silver**" so to speak.

How? There will be the "**thousand**" little pieces of silver resulting from the redeemed fruit of your life. When? It is happening every day in small increments. These pieces of redeemed silver (actions) from your vineyard are being sent into glory every day. Later, when you stand before your Bridegroom at the Judgment Seat of Christ (**Rom. 14:9-12; II Cor. 5:10**) He will show you all of them. He will experience ultimate joy there as He rewards you for giving to Him the redeemed silver accrued during your lifetime. Keep this verse in mind, "**...It is more blessed to give than to receive.**" (**Acts 20:35**).

It is joyful to receive but it is more joyful to give. At the Judgment Seat, Jesus our Lord wants to give you rewards. It will bring ultimate joy to Him. Don't rob Him of the joy of giving rewards to you. Just be faithful in whatever you do. He has made it so easy for us to receive rewards. It says so in **Col. 3:23,24**, "**And whatever you do, do it heartily as for the Lord, and not for men; Knowing that from the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.**" **WHATEVER means WHATEVER!** How much easier can He make it? Get dressed in the morning for Jesus, do your homework for Jesus, work at your place of employment for Jesus, and all the little things that come your way during the day. Do them faithfully and He will have the joy of giving you a reward. The thousand pieces of silver, plus gold and precious stones will be made into crowns for you (**I Cor. 3:11-14**).

There are five different crowns we, His redeemed ones, may receive from our King. It all has to do with being faithful in what He asks of us. All we want to hear from Him will be these Words, "**...well done thou good and faithful servant...**"

(**Matt. 25:21**). The "thousand pieces of silver" are bound up in the Word "**faithful**"! What He gives you to do, do it faithfully (**Eph. 2:10**). The crowns that may be received are for: Self Control – (**I Cor. 9:25**); Loving Jesus' appearing and keeping the faith (**II Tim. 4:8**); Persevering under trials (**James 1:12**); Keeping, care giving or shepherding other Christians (**I Pet. 5:1-4**); Faithful in suffering for Christ (**Rev. 2:10**). Will you have the infinite joy of casting crowns at Jesus' feet as the elders will do (**Rev. 4:10**)? Read **Col. 3:24,25** again! Please don't rob Jesus of the joy of giving to you or rob yourself of the joy of giving to Him. Read **Acts 20:35** again.

Now the question asked by the Holy Spirit in **1:6** can be answered, "*Will she ever be able to truly minister in the vineyard her Lord had chosen for her?*" Has this beautiful spiritual bride been made ready to be a "**keeper**" also? Yes! Reflect back to when she shared with us just what her Christian life was like before surrender – the constant burden of a multiplicity of activities in **1:6**, "**...my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept**". The frustration is evident. "*I can't do what I am truly called to do!*" You can feel the desperation of her heart in **1:6** that she was burned out and crying for help. The Lord allows us to come to the end of Christian "busyness" and waits to hear us cry out for life-fulfilling spiritual intimacy with Him.

Then, the Holy Spirit sent a Marybeth into her life and asked, "*Have you ever surrendered all of this over to your Heavenly Bridegroom?*" A spiritual hunger came! This bride said, "*No! No one ever told me that I had a Heavenly Bridegroom who wants to be intimate with me!*" There are a great many believers, like this bride, who do not know anything about being His bride. So many know Bible doctrine but know nothing of intimacy with their beloved Lord.

Then one day in desperation her soul cried out, "**Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.**" (**1:2**). This was heavenly music to His ears! And oh, how He fulfilled it, as we have seen traveling with her through these wonderful eight chapters watching Him disciple His bride through intimacy.

Now she is seen as the keeper of her own vineyard. She proclaims it with joy in **v.12**. What has changed from **1:6**, "**...but mine own vineyard have I not kept.**" to this precious moment in **8:12**?

V.12 "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred."

How did her Bridegroom transform His bride from an ordinary believer, who had been filled with the extreme exhaustion in **1:6**, to a blessed, joyful keeper of her own vineyard ready to bless her heavenly Bridegroom with a thousand pieces of silver from a great harvest? Her Abba Father was allowed to prune her branch freely (**John 15:1**)!

This journey began when a desperate seeking fell over her soul for an intimate relationship with the Beloved. Next came a revelation of His heart when He described in detail just how deeply special she was to His heart. She experienced the destructive *little foxes* and the emptiness they bring (**2:15; 3:1**). She learned the great need to protect this special

intimacy with her Bridegroom. Next came the painful hesitation to go with Him and the suffering which resulted (**5:2-7**). His precious bride had learned that a truly surrendered heart does not hesitate to obey what she knows is His "**...good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**" (see **Rom. 12:1,2**). This difficult lesson would cause her vineyard to be ready in producing much fruit!

In **6:11** He took her to see how productive His beautiful vineyards could be. She had learned to never tend her vineyard alone! After these vineyard lessons then came the beginning of fulfillment in **7:12**. She said, "**Let us rise early and go to the vineyards; Let us see whether the vine has budded and its blossoms have opened, and whether the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love.**" This is really where we can give our Beloved Bridegroom our full love and see beautiful fruit produced for Him and by Him to bless many others.

Her heart garden from **chapter 4** had grown into a full-fledged vineyard of her Beloved. It took time and patience but she did not give up! It was all part of His plan to see His greatly loved bride become a beautiful garden with which He and others would be blessed. In **chapter 8** the bride leans upon her Beloved and seals her surrendered heart with His seal. She now is moved to minister to her younger sister. The work of her vineyard became personal one-on-one. What does all this mean to you dear reader, dear bride? Your Beloved Bridegroom has given you your own special vineyard in which both of you can minister together. What is this spiritual vineyard? Let the Holy Spirit reveal it to you in **Isa. 5:7**, "**For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel...**" It is His people! Yes, your vineyard is made up of all the people who are in your life: family, friends, co-workers; all the daily issues and circumstances brought your way by the Holy Spirit. May those who are brought into this vineyard be able to pick His fruit from your branch in all your actions and attitudes.

The more we are obedient the more (**Col. 3:11-17, 23,24**); and **James 3:17** will appear in her vineyard. Oh, my dear partner in the vineyard of the Beloved, it is by His fruit produced in us that others will truly see Him. And here it is, in **John 13:34-35**, "**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**"

May you and I always realize that even though we call it *my vineyard* it is really *our vineyard!* He is actually ministering through us. As His bride never forget to learn the meaning of the vision given to her in **1:14**, "**My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi.**" He is the center and purpose of the vineyard. The Beloved is the picture of life and resurrection that others may be drawn to Him.

Then comes the reward, the harvest (**Gal. 6:9; Col. 3:23,24**) as He blesses His keepers with a portion for them to enjoy – 200 pieces of silver. Now the bride has the great, great joy of offering to Him the 1000 pieces of silver. Oh the joy in rewarding our Bridegroom with the harvest of a surrendered, redeemed life. It will come when you stand before Him at the Judgment Seat (**Rom. 14:10**). Oh the joy He will receive as He finds a great amount of silver appearing from the intimate, surrendered, obedient life you lived while on this earth! Oh just seeing the joy on His face and in His eyes will be worth it all (**1 Cor. 3:11-15**).

The blessings of having His specially selected vineyard for your life is an honor but very, very serious if you do not surrender each day and its circumstances to Him. Sowing obedient, intimate faith and trust in the promises of your Bridegroom keeps the vineyard beautiful and healthy. Then others will come, attracted to Jesus' fruit in you! They will taste His life-giving goodness and discover what you discovered in **2:3**, "**As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.**" (see **Psa. 34:8; 119:103**). Read **Heb. 2:9**. Jesus tasted death that others might taste His life through you! Intimacy with your Bridegroom through surrender to His Word will protect your vine from becoming a rancid curse:

"Many shepherds have ruined My vineyard, They have trampled down My field; They have made My pleasant field a desolate wilderness." (**Jer. 12:10**).

How many have been turned away from the Lord because their so-called Christian life portrays little difference than those who do not belong to Him? It is awful to look at joyless, uninterested, so-called believers, who disdain keeping His loving commandments found in the 66 love letters He wrote to His bride to follow as the true way to show Him how much she loves Him! **1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."** Read **Psa. 1; Psa. 19**.

PRAY WITH ME: "Praise You dear Lord for giving me a vineyard so that I may have much fruit to give back to You! Thank You my Beloved that there is also a portion for me (**200**) that I may share with my fellow workers in order to bless them! Lord, I have no means in myself to care for the vineyard. Thank You for giving me spiritual gifts, talents from the Holy Spirit to accomplish Your plan for the vineyard in Your power! Thank You, dear Abba Father, my Vinedresser! Thank You so much for Your promise, '**Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it.**' (**1 Thess.5:24**). May much redeemed silver be sent to glory each day from my life. May Your heart receive great joy at the Judgment Seat. I will, in joy, cast any crowns given at Your feet! In the Name of my King, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen."

V.13 "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it."

God loves corporate worship and corporate fellowship. He began this Song with a group desirous of intimate fellowship with Him (**1:2-3**). And now, as the Spirit brings to a conclusion this beautiful Song He speaks of "**companions**". Remember back in **chapter three** the bride was given a special vision. She saw men and women working together in communion with the King. The bride was being taught the importance of true fellowship with other believers. When people who love Jesus come together it brings to us His glorious presence as no other way can.

Each individual believer is a garden (already discussed at length in **chapter four**). Jesus loves to dwell in the garden of our heart. He loves to talk and share with us through His Word. But He also loves to have us talk and share with Him the desires, distresses and delights of our heart (**2:14**)! He wants so much to be wanted. Does your wonderful Lord look into the fullness of your heart and hear, "**Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee** (**Psa. 73:25; 42:1; 119:10**)". What a joy it is to fellowship with other truly surrendered believers ("**companions**") and spend time just talking about our favorite topic - our Bridegroom Jesus!

Will you "**companion**" with those who are in love with Jesus? Will you seek them out? A surrendered heart just can't help it. It is a holy compelling in them to meet with other like-minded lilies! When they begin to share what is on their heart, you are hearing the voice of your Beloved Lord. Get with other surrendered lilies, spend time sharing with each other about Him and **Eph. 3:17-19** will be fulfilled in your hearing, "**That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye,**

being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

"...thy voice: cause me to hear it."

Remember, something special happens when two or three gather together just to talk about Him and share His Word. These are the one's who hearken to His voice. They lovingly obey the voice of His Word. These obedient ones love to come together and talk about Him, His Word and what He is doing in their lives. Something special happens at this time. He reveals Himself as never before, "**For where two or three are gathered together in my name (The Lord Jesus Christ) there am I in the midst of them.**" (**Matt. 18:20**). What does this mean? We know that He is omnipresent. However, when He becomes the topic of conversation and the focus of fellowship, He allows us to sense His presence as at no other time. What comes out of our sharing heart will flow over His nailed scarred feet, washing them with pure spiritual water springing up out of our innermost being (**John 7:38,39**). O the joy of "**companioning**" with those who love Him. As each shares from the Word and in testimony, each will begin to "**hear His voice**" in what is revealed. It will be spiritual thoughts and spiritual ideas you have never had before. They are a gift from Him to the companions who have come together.

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Lord, I love You with all of my heart! I love the deep things that You reveal to me. Thank You for exposing the beauty of Your loving heart to me and through others. You love to work through the two or three gathered together in Your name. You just love to give that little extra blessed thought or revelation through them as we talk together about You. In the most holy name in the universe, Jesus my Lord, amen."

V.14 "Make haste, my beloved and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."

There is no hesitation in her voice as in **chapter 2**. She says. "**Hurry, come and be in the midst of us as we gather together in Your name. We will lift up our voices, full of love and praise to You. As we gather together let us feel Your holy presence. Come quickly and listen to us with Holy Spirit filled hearts, 'speaking to (ourselves) in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in (our) heart to (You); giving thanks for all things unto God and the Father in (Your name) the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'**" (**Eph. 5:19-20**).

The bride gathers together with other lilies to talk about the Beloved. They sit, praising Him and contemplating out loud all the wonderful things that make up His eternal character and attributes in great wonderment and revelation. The bride said, "**I didn't see it until now! He just becomes more wonderful all the time.**" One of the virgins excitedly asked, "**Well, don't keep it from us, what is it?**" The bride responded, "**Remember way back when we first went to the Beloved King and asked Him to kiss us spiritually (1:2) Another answered, 'Who could ever forget that, we were all changed and especially you?'**

The bride, glowing with joy said, "**Not until this very moment did I realize how He has spiritually kissed me with precious revelation all through every phase of my surrendered life. At first He compared me with Pharaoh's choice horses and said that I had dove's eyes. What a kiss (1:9,15)! Then there was that special kiss when He allowed me to see Him skipping in victory over the troubled mountains and hills of life (2:8). And how could I ever forget the kiss He gave to me as I went to sleep and then dreamed about His wonderful power, it was so glorious (3:6-11). And there was the kiss of the three mountains, Amana, Senir and Hermon. I was never the same after that (4:8). Also, engraved on my heart is the flood of descriptions that came to me in my darkest moment, what a tender kiss it was (5:10-16). I still am amazed at His description of me, comparing me to Jerusalem and an army with banners (6:4)."**

"**The dear Holy Spirit kissed me with the magnificent vision of Him when I knew in my heart that His desire was for me totally and eternally, it caused me to be actively bold and truly have His mind (7:10-11). But Oh, no kiss was ever greater than taking His nail scarred hand in mine and placing it over my heart and arm (8:6). He really, really loves us with all of His heart!**" An unspeakable presence of glory begins to fill the room. For a long time there was a hushed holy silence, then at the same moment each whispered, "**He's here! I know He's here!**" In their spirit each heard His voice encouraging them, "**...I will never leave you, nor forsake you.**" O how they longed for Him to return in person.

Then one of the lilies touched something - it was a box wrapped up as a gift. It was addressed: "**A gift for My bride.**" All of the lilies gathered round with great expectancy. As it was slowly being unwrapped a light shown from within, lo and

behold it contained sixty-six love letters written for His bride. The note on the cover said, "Dear bride of My heart, you didn't think that during this time of My physical absence I would leave without giving something of great value to you, My precious bride? I have been writing all of these love letters just for you. As you hold them close to your heart, you are really holding Me. My Words will guide you, change you, protect you!" He finished the note with these Words, "I love you with all My heart, always Jesus. I'll be back soon!" With eyes filled with thankfulness she glanced at the final Words in His last love letter, "**He who testifies this says, 'Yea, I am coming quickly.' Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!**" (Rev. 22:20)

PRAY WITH ME: *"Make haste and continually fill me! Make haste and search me. Let me know if there is anything unpleasing to You in my life (Psa. 139:23,24)! Make haste and continually revive and renew me! Make haste to sit with me in the very private and quiet times. Let me feel Your presence right away! Make haste and place Your left hand under my head and Your right arm around me. Make haste to receive my love and praise for You alone! Make haste, my Beloved, my Love, my Lord, my King, my Satisfaction! I desire nothing but You and You alone Lord Jesus! Sweep me up on wings of glory to the mountains of spices where nothing will ever interrupt our eternal love affair with each other. I long for those spices that come from You alone. I long to be with those who love You alone. How wonderful, my Love, will be the fragrance emanating from those mountains. Just like the anointing oil of the high priest with its four separate ingredients; each one of us coming and anointing Your feet with our particular fragrance. O the joy of combining our individual perfume and making heavenly incense for You our Beloved! One spiritual thought is combined with others. Is this what Rev. 5:8 is all about dear Lord? O to feel the breeze of Your blessed Holy Spirit on those mountains, lifting me up in holy ecstasy, with a heart bursting with pure holiness to be poured out on You, my Spouse! You lavished Your love on us fully (Rom. 5:5) but now, on the mountains of spices we will return it totally back to You as it floods Your Blessed soul! I love You, I love You, I love You with all of my Spirit-filled heart! Cause me to grow in a greater capacity to love You my Beloved!"*

"...upon the Mountains of spices."

"Lord, Your spices are spiritual endowments which beautify and change me into Your blessed image through the power of the Holy Spirit! These are the spices emanating from the garden of my heart." For those who are sold out to Jesus there are mountains of spices waiting for you! The mountains are not barriers but blessings filled with His personal aroma of spiritual spices. Oh how joyful it is on these mountains. "This is where You planned to take me when You beckoned my heart so long ago to, '**...Rise up...and come away...**'" to mountains of new spiritual adventures with Him (2:10)." They will now leap and skip together over the mountains and hills (2:8) in His strength while holding her hand!

There's one last thing on her heart that needed to be done. Her mind went back to the beginning when the Holy Spirit came and filled her with that blessed longing for intimacy with Him. Looking wistfully in the distant past she said to herself, "I wonder how Marybeth is doing? I must write and thank her for leading me to ask to be kissed by My Beloved and share all the other kisses He has given me."

Taking out paper and pen she began to write a thank you note, "Dear Marybeth, so much has happened since you shared your heart with us. Thank you for obeying the Holy Spirit and showing me how to have our Bridegroom kiss me, and by it, spiritually igniting a flaming, panting desire for Him alone. The day after you left I..." She continued to write and write and write wanting Marybeth to know it all. She stopped for a moment and the Holy Spirit said, "Marybeth already knows but don't stop writing, she'll weep for joy hearing about all that has happened to you." A few pages later, she closed the letter, "With all of my love, filled up with our Beloved, your sister, Ruth."

P.S. If you haven't caught it yet, let me let you in on a little secret, I chose the name "Ruth" because the real Ruth of the Bible was a Gentile not deserving any consideration from the Lord. Our bride was a Gentile also (1:5). And the name "Marybeth" was a play on the term "Mary of Bethany" who truly understood our Beloved Bridegroom more than anyone else. And the Holy Spirit is still allowing her to teach us even in our day, twenty centuries later! We began so long ago, in this devotional commentary with the Words of Jesus, "**Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel is preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.**" (Mark 14:9). We have obeyed His desire and passed it on to you! Be blessed by the Bridegroom and pass along the name and precious character of Mary of Bethany.

FROM MY HEART: "Thank You, dear Bridegroom of my heart that there are no mountains of Bether (division) between us anymore (2:17) but only mountains of spices. Thank You for this wonderfully, unsought journey through Your 'first love' love in this Song! O how You sang it to me early, early in the morning hours. Just You and I alone; sometimes sitting for quite a while thinking about the verse before us that day. Then You would reveal Your heart in that verse; tears flowed from my eyes in astonishment at the preciousness You were sharing! You sang it just for me in those hours. You kept telling me just how much You loved me and at times I could not handle the streams of love

flowing through every note sung to me in Your Song. I never dreamed that anything like this was ever possible! But O how my heart rejoiced in Your arms!"

"What an amazing, tender Lord You are. My Beloved, You took me by the hand so many years ago and led me on this indescribable, intimate journey through Your eternal "phileo" heart in this Song. You chose me: the weak, the unworthy, the failure, the unskilled and began a new work in me. By taking such a person You would get all the glory! You desired a book to be written through me. It never dawned on me for five years after writing down the thoughts You gave me that it was to be a book given freely without cost so that others would experience Your intimacy of love. Each morning You filled me with a love that made it irresistible. Many times, as You flooded my soul, I could only fall at Your feet and weep uncontrollably."

"Your exquisite, all consuming 'first love' love gave daily life and joy to me! Lord, there is nothing like it! It is indescribable! What heights of joy; what depths of love; what breadths of peace; what lengths of fullness; what glorious experiences of Your grace and mercy You have shared with my innermost being! But it was never meant for me alone. To all who read this devotional with a surrendered heart You have given the same experience. Dear Bridegroom of my heart You are so amazing – You intend this love for all those who belong to You but You make it so private, so personal - a one on one intimacy with each one of Your bride! When those who have finished this journey through reading and listening to Your Song, when they have read the last verse and then closed the book, - they will say..."

"And when I had lifted up my eyes, I saw no man, except Jesus only!"

(Matt.17:8 – It was changed to make it personal)

**In His love and for His praise,
Esher Shoshannah**

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:14-19

"But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." I Corinthians 2:9

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

"Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ." 2Thessalonians 3:5

1. With a heart of love praise Him - Heb.13:15. It brings joy to His heart.
2. You will learn how great your Lord is through these A to Z praises!
3. Also praising the Lord is a weapon to

fight off the enemy. Psalms 8:2; Mt.21:16
You are my Abba Father answering prayer
You are Altogether lovely my Beloved
You alone are infinite Authority Lord Jesus
Lord You Asked me to bear other's burdens
I cast All my burdens on You dear Lord

Lord Jesus You Adopted me by Your Spirit
You send Angels to help and protect me
You are the Judge and Avenger of all evil
You are Afflicted in all my afflictions & hurts
You're the Amen to the promises in the Word
Lord You are my soul's Anchor of stability

You Abide in me to fill me with Your fruit
Lord I Abide in Your Word to love You more
You Anoint my head with oil to empower me
You are my All in All there is nothing else
Being Addicted to You breaks addictions
You are All that I need to walk in Your ways
I Adore the beauty of holiness that You are
You are the Alpha of my day to lead me
You are the Author my faith to trust in You
You are the Almighty Anointed One Lord
You are the Arm of intimate love around me
Lord You are my Advocate who defends me
Lord You made Atonement for all my sin
You are Always present knowing all I do
Lord Jesus You alone are the Awesome One
Lord You are the Answer to living a holy life
Your riches of glory are my Abundant life
You give me Assurance in Your promises
Soon all will Bow down at Jesus' Name
Bless the Lord O my soul & all that is in me
In Humility You became a Bondservant
Your Word is the Belt of truth for battle
You Build up my life to look & act like You
Jesus You are the Brightness of God's glory
Lord Your Banner over me is love forever
You have a new Body waiting for me Lord
I'm a Branch in Your vine to bear fruit
You Bind Your mind to mine to obey You
You are the Bondage Breaker of my sin
Lord You are the Beauty of holiness in me
Jesus You are the Beloved of Abba, Father
You are the One who Blesses me daily
To live for You only – my Bridegroom
I'm the Bride of Christ to give You full love
You are the Bread of Life that sustains me
Lord Jesus You are my Burden Bearer daily
You are the Bright & Morn. Star Lord Jesus
Your Word heals all the Broken Hearted
You Blot out my sin by Your blood Lord
You are my Blood sacrifice the Lamb of God
You Chose me in You to honor Your Name
Lord You are the God of the New Covenant
Your Spirit Convicts me of sin to confess
Lord Your Commandments are pure to obey
Lord You are the Christ the Son of God
You Correct my thoughts and ways Lord
Lord You drank the Cup of wrath for me
You are my Commander who fights evil
Take my life & let it be Consecrated to You
You are Choice and precious to my heart
You are Coming for me very, very soon
You Created me unto good works in Christ
You are the Comforting One I lean upon
You are the Chief Cornerstone of my life
Lord You always Care with loving discipline
Your promises cause me to be Content Lord
Lord You never Compromise, help me not to
Lord You are the Considerate One to help me
Lord You Conquered my enemy at the Cross
You Committed no sin yet became my sin
You Communicate to my heart Your wisdom
I am Your Companion for You to share with
You Constrain me to walk in obedience Lord
Lord You Cheer me up in my difficult valleys
My worries Cease in Your promises Lord
Lord Jesus You were Crushed for my sin
You Complete me so others see You in me
You are my Confidence that I have worth
Lord You give me Courage to stand for You
You became my Curse & now I give you joy
You are a Consuming fire of love & passion
Lord You Dispel my darkness and doubts
Lord You Discern all of my ways to guide me
You Disclose my sin for me to repent Lord
Your laws (teachings) are my Delight Lord

Lord You Demonstrate God's infinite power
Lord You change me with Your Correction
You are the Destroyer of sinful habits Lord
You are the Door to all that's good for me
You are my Defense against enemy attacks
You are the Designer of a glorious universe
You Decrease my selfishness so as to fill me
You Delivered me from Darkness to light
You Drew my soul so I could be saved Lord
Lord I'm Dressed up in Your righteousness
You Drank the cup of wrath for me Lord
Lord You are the Eternal One – the I AM
You are Emmanuel, God always with me
You Enlighten me to know Your mind Lord
Lord Your blood gives me Everlasting Life
You are the Exalted One to be worshiped
You Establish my footsteps by Your Word
Lord You Embrace me in Your arms of love
Lord You Empower me by grace to obey
You Endured the Cross for me Lord Jesus
Your Word Endures forever in my heart
You are my Example in how to truly live
You are Enthroned on my heart as Lord
You Equip me to love the poor & needy
You Execute righteous and just judgment
Lord You are Excellent in all Your ways
Your Eye watches over me at all times Lord
I Escaped the Lake of fire because of You
You Expose wrongs and reveal truth in me
You are infinitely Exquisite in all You do
You Encourage me when I'm discouraged
You are my Friend for precious fellowship
Lord You are my Fortress against the enemy
You are Heaven's precious sweet Fragrance
The Earth is Your Footstool – Lord over all
Lord Your universe is Exceedingly glorious
You are Faithful to me in all things Lord
You Forgive me as I repent & confess to You
As You forgive cause me to forgive all others
Fellowship with You dispels my loneliness
The Fear of the Lord is to hate all that is evil
Lord You are Full of glory, honor and power
You are the Fountain of Life of living waters
You Fill me with Your Spirit to walk as You
You are the Author and Finisher of my faith
Lord You give me Faith to trust in Your Word
I Fear to hurt You Lord Jesus the One I love
You Feed & refresh me with Your Word Lord
I'm Forever in Your hands to change me
Lord You alone bring Fulfillment in my life
You will never Fail me or Forsake me Lord
You are my Foundation & Cornerstone Lord
Lord I worship and bow down at Your Feet
You bore all my Grief so I can lean on You
You are the Gate to Heaven and blessing
You're inside of me so I can feel your Heart
Lord You Give more Grace to the humble
You are Gentle with me, may I also be Lord
Lord Jesus Your Greatness is unsearchable
Your beauty and Greatness are Glorious
You are the Giver of mercy may I also give
You are the Gift of everlasting life to me Lord
Lord You are God the Son I love and worship
You are my Gladness and heart's joy Lord
You are my Garment of Salvation Lord Jesus
You give me Godly sorrow to turn from sin
You are the Great Physician healing my hurts
Lord You suffered my Guilt on the Cross
Your Word is my Guide to grow closer to You
You gave me Your Glory to be one with You
You Gather me to sit & listen at Your feet
You Guard my soul through a humble spirit
Your Hands reach out to draw souls to You
Under Your wings You are my Hiding place
You Humbled Yourself to die for me Lord

I'm an Heir of all things through Your blood
You are my Helper guiding in the right path
Lord You are the Holy One, perfect & pure
Your Helmet of Salvation protects my mind
You heal my hurts to Help others in theirs
Jesus May Your Name be Hallowed in my life
You are the Head of the Church, Your body
You are my High Priest interceding for me
You are my High Tower watching the enemy
In great & small things I see Your Handiwork
You are my Holiness to live a separated life
You are the God of Hope coming very soon
You are the Father's Heart to know and love
In my weakness Your embrace Holds me up
You Humbled Yourself, may I walk humbly
Lord You alone are to be Honored at all times
Lord You are Infinite beyond comprehension
You are Inseparable to me, I'm Your bride
You are the Immortal, wise God living in me
May Your Image be seen by others in me
You ever live to make Intercession for me
You Indwell me to fellowship with me Lord
You are Jesus, God the Incarnate One
Lord I'm Your Inheritance and Your portion
You are Intimate with my heart and soul
Lord You must increase, I must decrease
Lord Your Word is Incorruptible, pure & holy
You alone are Just in all Your decisions
You anoint my head with Your oil of Joy
You are Jealous over me with great love
You are Jesus – my Lord and my God alone
Lord You Justify me by faith in Your blood
Lord You will Judge all humanity one day
You are the King of kings to rule my heart
Lord You are Kind to me that I may be kind
For Thine is the Kingdom, Power & Glory
You're the treasure of wisdom & Knowledge
Your Love bears all things, thinks no evil
You are Lord of lords, all must bow to You
The fear of the Lord is a fountain of Life
Your Laws are perfect restoring the soul
You poured out Your Love into my heart
Your Love causes me to surrender to You
You are God's spotless, sacrificial Lamb
You Laugh at the plans of the enemy Lord
Your Word is a very bright Lamp to my feet
Your Word is the Light to my path ahead
You are the only Light in this dark world
You, the Father of Lights give good gifts
You are the Lion of Judah to rule forever
You are my Liberator from sin and sorrow
You Lead me in the paths of righteousness
Lord You are my Beloved, Lover of my soul
You Listen to my heart of praise and prayer
You are Longsuffering slowly changing me
You are the Lifter of my head when I'm down
There is no Limit to how far You go to save
My name is written in the Lamb's book of life
I kneel before the Lord my Maker to worship
Lord You Manifest the future in Your Word
You are Marvelous in all Your works Lord
Lord You alone give true Meaning to my life
You are the Master of my heart to teach me
You are the Mediator between God & man
Lord Yours is the victory and Majesty alone
You are the Mighty God who keeps my heart
You are the Most High and only true God
In You is grace, Mercy & help in time of need
You are my heart's Melody & my life's song
You give me Your Name to honor in my life
You are always Near to guide & protect me
Lord Jesus – Your Name is above all names
You will Never leave me nor forsake me Lord
You are the Noble One of all that is good
You were Nailed to the cross because of me

Lord You are always Needed daily by me
You supply all my spirit and soul's Needs
You still have the Nail scars to remind me
Nothing is impossible trusting in Your Word
Lord You Nourish my spirit with Your Word
You are the Narrow way & the only way Lord
You are my Offering to those around me
You bless me as I Obey Your Word Lord
Your Word gives godly Order to my steps
You were totally Obedient, may I be to You
Lord You Observe all that I do as Your child
Lord You Overcame the devil by Your blood
You are the Oracle of God speaking life Lord
You are Abba Father's Only Begotten Son
You completely Own me & all that I have
Lord You are the Omega of my day to rest in
You are Omniscient, You know all about me
You are Omnipresent in all places at once
Lord Jesus You are Omnipotent, all powerful
Your love Overwhelms me to love & obey
There is only One God and I worship You
Lord You Opened my spiritually blind eyes
Lord Jesus Praising You defeats the enemy
Always are Your thoughts Precious to me
Old things have Past away, new have come
Your Crown of Thorns crushed the curse
Lord You are my Passover from death to life
They Crucified You Lord the Prince of Life
In Your Presence is fullness of joy Lord
You are the Potter to make me like Jesus
The commandment of the Lord is Pure
Your Spirit is a Pledge to my soul Lord
You Prayed for me while nailed to the Cross
Lord You Purchased me at unspeakable cost
Lord You Protect me as I trust and obey You
Your Word is Pure, holy, alive and endures
Lord You bore my sin's filth, Pain and shame
You are Personal knowing all I say and do
You are my heart's Pleasure to give You joy
Lord You are the only Purpose for living
You are my Provider in my spirit, soul, body
You are the Prince of Peace for my heart
Lord You Purify my thoughts by Your Word
You Prepare me for each day to live for You
You are absolutely Preeminent to be obeyed
Lord One day, no more Pain, sorrow or death
Lord You Pardon my sin freely as I repent
You are Patient with me so I can learn Lord
You are Precious to me and I am to You
Lord You Possess me by Your Holy Spirit
I'll never Perish for I'm in Your strong hand
You Prosper me to give to Your kingdom
Your Plans are to make me a blessing Lord
All Your Promises are yes and amen Lord
You made me a holy Priest to worship You
Lord You are Quick to bless in faithfulness
You Quiet my storms with Your Holy Word
You Quench my thirst with Your living water
You never Quit on me, may I not quit on You
You alone are my Robe of Righteousness
You are my glorious, victorious Redeemer
You Root me in the fullness of Your love
You Lord Resist the proud, keep me humble
Lord You are my Rock of safety to rest upon
You are Lord and Ruler of my daily walk
Lord You are my Refuge in all my storms
You are the Rewarder of an obedient servant
You created and Reign over the universe
You Lord, perform Righteous deeds alone
You give my soul Rest in Your promises

Only in You Lord is the Resurrection & life
May I experience daily the resurrected life
You Rescue me from the enemy by the Word
Jesus You are the Radiance of God's glory
You Ransomed me to make me Your own
You are the Rejoicing and joy of my soul
You Revive my life to live for You only Lord
Only You Restore my soul & spiritual vigor
You Renew me by confession & repentance
You Refresh me in Your glorious presence
You Relieve my burdens daily by holding me
Lord You Release me to love You and others
You Reconciled me to God to be Your child
You Regenerated me by Your Holy Spirit
You are Returning for me to take me home
Lord You are the Refiner's fire to purify me
You became poor that I might be Rich Lord
Lord I am Rich in Your grace, glory and truth
You are Risen from the dead to rule over me
Your Word is the eternal Seed for true life
Lord Your Words are Spirit and they are life
You Lord are my Shield of Faith for battle
You taught us how to be a bond Servant
You Secure my path to follow Your ways
You bore all my soul's Sorrows and Shame
You alone are Supreme and just in judgment
You Settle my quarrels and calm my heart
Your Word is Settled in Heaven and in me
Jesus You were mocked, taunted and spit on
You're the Good Shepherd who died for me
You're the Great Shepherd who equips me
You are the Chief Shepherd who rewards
Lord You Sanctified me to live for You alone
Your rod and Staff they comfort me Lord
You give me Your Strength through praise
You're the Same, yesterday, today, forever
You Serve & help hurting people through me
You Sow good Seed in me thru Your Word
Lord You are my Shield of faith against evil
Lord Jesus Only You truly Satisfy my heart
You're the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace
You carried my Sorrows and bore my griefs
Dear Lord Jesus You are Sovereign over all
You Search my heart to cleanse it thank You
Lord You Still the raging waters in Your time
You are my Salvation – my deliverance Lord
Lord You Sustain me every minute of the day
Your bride is to be Pure, Holy & Spotless
Lord You keep me Safe by Your power alone
On the Cross You Suffered the Lake of fire
I'm Seated with You Lord in the heavenlies
You are the love Song of my heart and soul
I'm Sealed by Your Spirit to have His fruit
My Bridegroom is the Song of all songs
Lord, I'm Sheltered in Your arm's embrace
Your Scriptures are life & health to me
Your Shadow and wings protect me Lord
You are the Secret keeper in whom I trust
Lord You are Slow to anger filled with mercy
Lord You Sought me when I was dead in sin
I offer You a Sacrifice of praise & thanks
Your grace Spared me to live for You alone
Abba, You Spared not Your Son for me
To sin against others is to Sin against You
Thank You for cleansing me of those Sins
You give Spiritual gifts according to Your will
Lord You are my Strength in my weakness
You cried out in Tears on the Cross for me
Lord You & Your words are True and faithful
Lord You Transform my life to be seen in me

Calvary's Tree became my Tree of life Lord
Lord You are the Tree of life that bears fruit
You have a Tender heart in correcting me
Spirit led godly sorrow brings repentance
I'm the Holy Spirit's Temple to shine for You
You're the Truth from Genesis to Revelation
You are the Triumphant One over all evil
You lead me not into Temptation thank You
You are my guiding Teacher in Your Word
You are the Treasure in my earthen vessel
You are the Trustworthy One to lean upon
The Tribulation will come & you will Triumph
You Thirst for my obedience and my will
You Talk to me in the voice of Your Word
Your Word Tames my attitude and tongue
Troubles that come become Your victories
Lord You Touch my life daily to touch others
You alone bring true Unity to Your body
You Unveil Your beautiful heart to me Lord
You are the true Understanding to guide me
You Undergird me to protect me from falling
You're the Ultimate & only purpose for living
You Uphold me by filling me with Your Spirit
Your blessed thoughts are Unsearchable
You are Unparalleled greatness & goodness
Lord You were Unyielding to temptation
You are the fruitful Vine of sweet communion
Be glorified You're the Victor in all my battles
You alone give beauty and Value to my life
You make me a Valiant warrior by Your Spirit
You are Vast in Your love, grace & mercy
Vengeance is Yours alone against all evil
You Voluntarily humbled Yourself may I also
You were born of a Virgin to live a pure life
You Vitalize my life to please You each day
Lord Jesus You are the Visible image of God
I'm a Vessel for You to bless others through
Lord You Vanquish every foe by Your blood
Your Holy Word is the sword of the Spirit
Lord You are the only Way for true salvation
You make me Well by obeying Your Word
You are my all wise Wonderful Counselor
You are Worthy of praise, honor & glory Lord
You Warn me of danger in not trusting You
Your caring heart Wept over my sinful soul
You make me Whole to live a separated life
You are the Faithful Witness in Your Word
Lord I'm Your Workmanship to please You
You made me Worthy for You to live in me
You Wrap me securely in Your arms of love
You are Warmhearted to the orphan & widow
You are the eternal refreshing Water of life
To do good Works is to obey Your Word
Thank You for Warning of Your soon coming
Lord Your Will is the only good & perfect Will
To fear You Lord is the beginning of Wisdom
Lord Without You I'm lost – no purpose in life
You are the Worker of miracles in my life
Lord Your faithful promises stop my Worry
Lord You send angels to Watch over me
Lord I Worship You and not worldly things
Your Wrath will be poured out on all evil
When I'm Weary I rest my soul in Your arms
I'm cleansed by the Water of Your Word
You became a Worm in order to save me
You always Yielded to the Father, may I be
Lord You Yearn for me for I am Your Bride
Troubles come to show Your Yoke is easy
You are Zealous to love and correct me
Lord You are Zion's King of Righteousness

