

***Session 7: The Bride's Identity in the Beauty of God (1:12–2:7)***

***SONG 1:12-17***

- 12 While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance.***
- 13 A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.***
- 14 My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.***
- 15 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.***
- 16 Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green.***
- 17 The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir.***

***SONG 2:1-7***

- 1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.***
- 2 Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.***
- 3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.***
- 4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.***
- 5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.***
- 6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.***
- 7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.***

**OVERVIEW OF SONG 1:12—2:7**

She experiences the joy of knowing God's affectionate love and passionate desire for her. This is an exhilarating time in her life. She experiences the superior pleasures of the Divine romance.

The problem is that she is not fully balance and is still self-absorbed but does not know it. This is to be expected in the early seasons of her spiritual childhood. She thinks of the Lord mostly in terms of her own spiritual pleasure instead of what the Lord receives from her.

During this season of her life, Jesus is a means and not the end of her life. She has discovered that this happiness is most deeply experienced when God's presence seems near to her. Being obedient to Jesus is not yet the highest goal of her life.

**I. THE 2<sup>ND</sup> REVELATION OF JESUS EXPRESSING THE FATHER'S HEART**

A. She receives a fresh revelation of what He provided for her through the cross

***While the king is at his table (1:12a)***

1. Jesus the King, expresses the revelation of the affectionate heart of the Father. He provided a table. He embraces and affirms her at His table.
2. He feeds her spirit on the revelation of who He is and what He did. His table is the revelation of the cross. She partakes of the free gift of redemption. The table of salvation is taught to her in the beginning of her spiritual growth (Rom. 3-8).
3. There is an abundance of food at His table. When we forget the King's table, then our spirit starves. Shame and guilt begin to weigh us down.

***Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead (Romans 6:13)***

- a. In other words, worship God as one who is fully accepted and embraced by the affection of God.
- b. She is not striving with condemnation or with fear of rejection.

B. She sits and rests. Sitting is the key idea. It is also used in 2:3

C. In all of His kindness as the tender Lamb of God, He is still the great King. He is not just the Lamb, but He is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, that roars with great passion for us. The Lion and the Lamb come together in 1:12. It is important to see that there is a glorious King at the table.

1. She has her first glimpse of Jesus as the King who has all authority.
2. It is from this authority that He speaks of His affection. Therefore, we can trust that His affection will actually prevail because He is a king.

D. The question in 1:7, "Where will You feed me?" is partially answered in 1:8-11. He is feeding her at His table with the fruit of His redemption. She is being fed by the truth.

**II. HER 3-FOLD RESPONSE TO THE KINGS' PROVISION.**

*My spikenard sends forth its fragrance a bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts. My Beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi (1:12b-14).*

- A. Her fragrance worship ascends to God as perfume. The Lord enjoys the aroma and fragrance that emanates from her spirit when she is sitting at the Lord's table.

*My spikenard sends forth its fragrance (1:12).*

1. "Spikenard" speaks of her spontaneous worship.
2. While she is sitting at the King's table feeding on the truths of the cross her spontaneous worship and adoration ascends to God as fragrance. The revelation of the King's provision at His table produces a response of perfume that ascends before God from her spirit.
3. Her fragrance or perfume ascends to God and man when she freely receives all that Jesus provides. The church at Corinth was the one of the most carnal churches in the New Testament, but Paul declared to them, "We ARE the fragrance of Jesus Christ to God the Father" (2 Cor. 2:15). In other words, "When God smells the fragrance your life, He smells the literal fragrance of His Son. Jesus Christ has a literal fragrance that is a part of His divine Person. That fragrance is so sweet to the Father.

*God who...through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. (2 Cor. 2:14-16)*

- a. The Lord enjoys the fragrance that emanates from our spirit when we are focused on the Lord's provision. What He feeds her produces a perfume that ascends from her spirit to God.
- b. When the revelation of His table touches us, our perfume ascends spontaneously and effortlessly to the Lord.

4. What kind of fragrance is coming forth from your spirit to God? What does God see when He looks at you? Does He smell the fragrance of rest and gratitude in the cross, or the stench of religious striving and legalism?
    - a. The revelation of the cross causes great gratitude. Prayer effortlessly comes forth out of our spirit in this context.
    - b. We will spontaneously cry out from our heart, through the day, "Oh, I love You, I love You, for loving me." This "worship perfume" sends forth its fragrance to God. When we feel embraced, His fragrance spontaneously rises up to God instead of the fear fragrance.
    - c. Many of God's people are overcome with condemnation and accusation. They feel no security in the presence of God. Therefore they can not enter into worship. They can sing songs, but they can not open their heart, because they are afraid they are going to be judged by God. They are always guarded in the presence of God.
  5. In Luke 7, the prostitute ran into the house of Simon the Pharisee. She broke the alabaster vial of perfume upon Jesus' feet. The natural perfume that filled the room was a mere token of the spiritual perfume that Jesus saw in her devotion. The perfume that filled that room, in the natural, was a picture of the perfume that God receives from us when we worship Him.
- B. She understands the abundance of Jesus' suffering on the cross. Myrrh is referred to 8 times throughout the SONG. Myrrh is a sweet perfume, which speaks of the sweetness that comes out of death.

***"A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me" (1:13)***

1. Myrrh is an expensive embalming fluid that often speaks of suffering and death. It was also a very expensive and strong perfume used by wealthy people. The common person could not afford it.
  - a. Jesus was born with myrrh. The 3 wise kings brought this embalming spice to Jesus' birth as a prophetic symbol of His death. They brought 3 prophetic gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. They spoke of 3 different things: His deity, His ministry and His death.
  - b. Jesus was buried with myrrh. When Mary went to see the tomb, she brought more myrrh and spices to put upon His body.

2. It was uncommon for a woman to have a bundle of expensive myrrh as a chain around her neck. What an extravagantly expensive gift from Solomon to this young Bride.
  3. A bundle of myrrh speaks of Jesus’ death as an "abundant death" that was extravagantly expensive to God. When she said, “You are a bundle of myrrh” she is saying, “I understand the abundance of your suffering, I understand a little bit of what You went through for me.”
- C. She consistently meditates upon the cross.

***"That lies all night between my breasts" (1:13b)***

1. This myrrh lies all night next to her heart and permeates her spirit, as she meditates upon it on her bed. The costly death of Jesus lies all night on her heart.
  - a. She ponders on the revelation of the Lord’s death until it becomes a part of her. This speaks of meditation on the provision of His atonement, meditating on the life of grace. It is forever a marvel to her that God would become a man and die for her sins. This is what the table is about. God feeds us at His communion table on the work of the cross.
  - b. Through the night she meditates on it. The night speaks of the time of darkness in her weakness, and it speaks of her consistency throughout all the ages. “The night” carries the idea of consistency.
2. Paul constantly gloried in the cross and she is saying the same thing here. She never grows weary of meditating upon the Cross. If it becomes boring to us, it is only because we have not understood it.

***But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of...Jesus (Galatians 6:14)***

3. That the eternal God could take upon Himself the form of a man is a marvel that is almost inconceivable. This is absolutely awesome. Through all of eternity, we will sing with fresh revelation of the cross of Jesus. One million years from now, we will still be overwhelmed and say, " O' the glorious death of Christ Jesus." For millions of years He will be a bundle of myrrh that lies upon our hearts throughout all the ages. When we really see who He is and what He did, for all of eternity our hearts will be awed and overwhelmed with gratitude.

D. Her third response is her declaration of His beauty.

***"My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms" (1:14a)***

1. Jesus is to her as a cluster of lovely henna flowers filled with sweet fragrances. In other words, He is not a burdensome God, but He is sweet and delightful to her.
  - a. When we see by revelation His personality that resulted in His work on the cross, then with an overflowing heart, we will also say, "He is a cluster of henna blooms, He is a cluster of fragrant flowers."
  - b. Religion has offered the people the image of a burdensome, angry God. He is not a burdensome, angry God.
  - c. We must preach with a full heart on the gracious God who is filled with kindness. The kindness of God will lead people to repentance. Repentance is the inevitable step 2 after we have called the people to God's kindness.

***Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)***

2. What our God has announced to us is indescribably Good News. We must tell the whole earth that He is as a cluster of henna blossoms
3. "His commandments are not burdensome" when we understand who He is

***For this is the love of God...His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)***

4. The yoke of God is easy if we come to this glorious Person instead of coming to religion.

***"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt. 11:30)***

- E. A perfumed garden is intoxicating. His indescribable sweetness was intoxicating to her. His tenderness, with full knowledge our sinfulness is totally unique intoxication of our heart.

***"In the vineyards of En Gedi" (1:14b)***

1. The vineyards of En Gedi had the greatest fragrances in Israel. It speaks of this most intense fragrance imaginable.
2. It was the place where the henna blooms prospered the most. It was a place that was famous for this particular plant.

- F. The principle of worshipping God without a guarded spirit.

***That we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment. But perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 4:17-18)***

1. The context of this passage is the problem that is caused by the fear of God's judgment in the life of a sincere believer. This fear produces torment in our relationship with the Lord. Mature knowledge of the love of God, drives tormenting fear out of the relationship. The fear of judgment has torment in it, which causes us to guard our spirit. All fear of rejection must be abolished. This is a very different fear than the fear of the Lord, which is wonderful.
2. Worshipping God without a guarded spirit is vital to spiritual growth. Many believers' worship God with their spirits' guarded. They reason, "Oh God, I love You, please give me one more chance before You destroy me" They are fearful that Jesus is rejecting and condemning them.
3. You can worship God for years in a lively Church, but if you are afraid that God is rejecting you, then you have torment in your relationship with the Lord. You could worship in sincerity for 5 years, but if your spirit is guarded you will not grow very much.

**III. FOUR KEY STATEMENTS OF PROGRESSION**

The SONG describes her progression from self-centeredness to God-centeredness in 4 key statements. Four times through the book she changes and redefines her experience. She starts from being only self-conscious and ends up with a mature God centeredness. We can follow her maturity throughout the SONG through these four statements, which are in strategic places. They are statements of the progression of her maturity. Notice the transition from a "self-centered" to a "God-centered" focus in the 4 inheritance statements (1:14; 2:16; 6:3; 7:10). In the beginning stages, her own enjoyment of Jesus is her only focus. She talks about what He is to her without much awareness of what she is to Him. In 2:16 and 6:3 and then finally 7:10, she uses this same language but changes the order to express her concern about what she is to Jesus. Jesus is her inheritance. However, it is equally true that she is Jesus' inheritance.

**IV. THE REVELATION OF HER BEAUTY TO GOD**

- A. In this season, Jesus very purposefully combines 2 aspects of the bridal paradigm to emphasize to her. He clearly speaks of her beauty in His grace and then He adds the revelation of the affection that He feels for her as the one He calls “My love”. The combination of these 2 truths is absolutely explosive to her.

*Behold, you are fair, My love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.  
(1:15)*

1. Jesus emphasizes her beauty to her in this season. God wants to impart His fragrance and beauty to His the Bride. He speaks directly to her. He specifically says it two times, “You are beautiful, you are beautiful.” We can not over estimate the importance of this season in her life.

*"Behold, you are fair... Behold, you are fair!"(1:15)*

*"Behold, you are beautiful" (NAS/NIV)*

2. As long as we feel dirty or shamed we will draw back. Jesus now adds to her 3 fold experience in 1:12-14 as she experienced new depths of spontaneous worship, constant meditation and a new proclamation of His fragrance (1:12-14). This is very necessary groundwork before she can accept as far more difficult truth. The truth of her beauty to God. This truth is applauded in a quick yet superficial way. However, it is not grasped easily in the heart. We have a natural resistance to accepting that truth even though we like the idea of it. It is a difficult truth to establish in the private prayer life. We must not be content until God's people can say in private prayer with a spirit of liberty that, "I am so beautiful to Jesus, I am His true love." He emphasizes it because she is spiritually young and she needs this desperately in her life.
3. The revelation of the beauty of the corporate church heals relationships.
  - a. We sometimes feel the church is ugly. God looks at the very same people and proclaims, "Beautiful". Even the believers that bring grief to us are beautiful to God in Jesus. In seasons of relational difficulty, one of the most preserving truths in our heart is that God is ravished for all Christians, even the ones who mistreat us.
  - b. Some of us must reassess how we view the Bride of Christ, because she is dark of heart but still lovely to God. The more that I see God's heart for me, the easier it is to see God's ravished heart for others. When I understand that His heart is overwhelmed towards me, then I can believe that His heart is overwhelmed for others. The only reason I think I could even hear God was ravished for these others was because I was feeding on the truth that He is ravished for me. This gives us much greater patience for our brothers and sisters.
4. He convinces her of her beauty while yet in her spiritual immaturity. God is a God that sees weak people as beautiful to Him in the grace of Jesus.
  - a. She saw this in an introductory way in the beginning when she confessed, "I am dark in my heart of sin but lovely to Jesus" (1:5-6).
  - b. He says, "You are beautiful." We must emphasize this truth over and over. We must emphasize the truth of Jesus seeing weak people as beautiful in His grace. (1:8a).
  - c. He says, "You are My love." (1:9b).
  - d. He says, "Your cheeks are lovely." (1:10).
  - e. He is seen in His beauty to her (1:12-14)
  - f. He says, "You are beautiful." (1:15).

- B. Jesus views her as one with singleness of vision.

*"You have dove's eyes"(v.15c)*

1. The dove has been a picture of the Holy Spirit through Scripture starting with Noah.
2. A dove speaks of singleness of purpose because it does not have peripheral vision, but rather its focus is clearly set on the object in front of it. Also, it reveals singleness of devotion because they only have one mate.
  - a. Doves are totally faithful in mating. A dove will only mate with one dove throughout their entire life. If one of them dies, they never mate again.
  - b. A dove does not have peripheral vision. A dove can only see straight ahead. Dove's eyes can't focus on two things (Matt. 6:22).
3. The Holy Spirit has a single purpose to the glory of Jesus. It is impossible for the Holy Spirit to be anything but perfectly faithful
4. Her “dove's eyes” speak of her ability to see redemptive truths. They speak of her eyes of faith and vision. Her revelation in 1:12-17 is all about her believing in redemptive truths.
5. Single minded in grace instead of having security one moment, then condemnation the next. The Lord is saying, “I love you, your eyes see the truth.”

**V. HER 3-FOLD RESPONSE TO GOD'S AFFECTION (1:16-17)**

- A. This is her 3-fold response to the fact that God has just said, “You are beautiful, you are beautiful, you have doves’ eyes. She is overcome with how wonderful it is to be loved as expressed in 1:15.

*Behold, You are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters are fir (1:16-17).*

- B. Her revelation of Jesus' beauty and her spiritual pleasures in Jesus.

*"Behold, You are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant" (1:16 a,b)*

1. His loveliness penetrates her spirit. He is becoming more and more beautiful to her, the more that she sees Him. When the Lord says, "You are beautiful-I love you", it awakens a new depth of revelation of how winsome He is.
2. He is pleasant to the very depths of her heart. She is fascinated with Him as she beholds His beauty. There is an exchange of deep affection going back and forth between them throughout 1:12-17. They are fellowshipping in the Holy Spirit with a spontaneous flow of His heart to her, and her heart back to Him.
3. Things are so different now that she is introduced to the bridal paradigm of the Kingdom of God. She is having a wonderful time in the grace of God since she has come out of the time where her vineyard was not kept.
4. When Jesus appears handsome and pleasant to the soul of a believer, then full obedience seems so reasonable. When we connect with the fact that He enjoys us, we start to enjoy Him. When we have revelation of His beauty, then we begin to see our beauty in Him. With such revelation upon our hearts, we more easily give up things that once were distractions for us. No longer do we count them as great sacrifices to release, but rather we feel joy as we yield ourselves more fully to Him.

- C. Her abundant rest in Jesus.

*Behold, You are handsome...also "our bed is green" (1:16).*

1. The bed speaks of rest and security with no fear of judgment or rejections from Jesus. She says, "I'm resting in security on the green bed of the Lord." The New American Standard translates it as, "Our luxuriant couch." She is seated with Him in heavenly places on the Lord's bed or the couch (Eph. 2:6).
2. It is a green bed or a "luxuriant" couch (NAS). This speaks of abundance. The couch of the Lord is plush, green and filled with life. It is a rest in God that is flourishing and prospering instead of being parched and barren like a desert. She rests in the love of God, because of the abundance of His love.

3. It is "our bed". She is on His couch or upon His bed and it is now their bed. "Our couch" speaks of being joined together as co-heirs. "Our" speaks of being totally joined in God's grace as a co-heir (Rom. 8:17).
- D. Her eternal house of intimacy, fragrance and security with Jesus.

***"The beams of our house are cedar and our rafters of fir" (1:17)***

1. The beams and the rafters provide the structure for their house. They are made of hard and strong wood. Cedar and fir trees were both used in the building of the temple. Both are hard, strong and fragrant wood.
  - a. Throughout the temple symbolism, wood is a picture of humanity.
  - b. The house of the Lord is built securely with strong and hard wood. In other words, it is not going to rot and decay and break down under pressure. It is safe and long lasting in its beauty and fragrance. Jesus became a man and provided a safe and permanent house for His Bride.
  - c. Her dwelling with the Lord is strong, permanent and durable. There is no house more permanent than one of cedar and fir. Jesus' house is the most expensive and beautiful. His house is the most permanent and safe. She sees the riches of the cross and the security of being seated with Him in His house forever. God is building an enduring house.
2. "Our house" speaks of their most intimate dwelling together forever. The whole corporate church of Jesus has this stunning privilege to look forward to for eternity (1 Pet. 3:16).

**VI. HER IDENTITY AS JESUS' BEAUTIFUL INHERITANCE (2:1)**

Her first great confession is, "I'm dark, but lovely" (1:5). She saw Jesus' beauty and then saw how Jesus gave His beauty to her. Then He gave her His couch and His house. Now she is prepared to grasp another dimension of her identity. She now makes her second great confession, "I am the rose of Sharon, I am the lily of the valley." She sees herself, as resting on their flourishing couch in a beautiful house that is eternally permanent and made in strength.

***I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. (2:1)***

- A. She discovers a deeper dimension of who she is in Jesus. She then proclaims her second confession; “I am the rose of Sharon.”

*“I am the rose of Sharon” (2:1a)*

1. This is her highest identity as the Bride of Christ. This revelation can only be discerned by first having a good foundation in understanding the redemptive riches in Christ (1:12-17).
2. Some commentaries say that Jesus is the rose while many others say that the Bride is the rose.
  - a. I am convinced that the Bride is speaking. She says, “I am the rose and the lily.” The rose and the lily have the same identity.
  - b. In the next verse, Jesus identifies the lily as the Bride.
3. The outlines and headings in the various bible translations differ widely. They are not necessarily inspired, but are the work of different commentators that write outlines that obviously reflect their own point of view.
4. Many commentators disagree with each other. They choose headings according to the natural interpretation and not the allegorical one. So, don't worry about different translations disagreeing with each other.
5. This confession is more than the fact that she is lovely and desired by God. It goes even higher. She is now the inheritance that the Father has promised His Son. It is one thing to deeply enjoy someone, but it is another thing when this person is your eternal inheritance. She comes to the understanding that she is THE only inheritance that the Father has promised His Son.
6. She knows that the Father has promised Jesus a great prize. She knows that this prize is a bride pictured as a rose. She says, “I am the inheritance God’s promised His Son. There is only one rose that Jesus Christ longs for. She sees that she is the rose that intoxicates and captures the heart of Christ Jesus. She sees herself as more than loved by God.

7. The Father has cultivated this rose for His dear Son. This rose is a bride that desires to fully love Jesus Christ. This is the prize that He enjoys more than anything. This rose is the fullness of everything that Jesus desires outside of the Trinity.
  
8. The maiden understands that she is the great prize. She says, "I am THE rose, THE inheritance the Father has promised the Son." When it dawns on you that you are THE rose, even in your weakness, something powerful takes place on the inside. She finally connects with the idea that this is her identity. She is the rose. It is more than the fact that we are loved, the angels are loved. We are co-heirs sharing the seed of God is in us. We will sit on the throne with Christ Jesus ruling creation far different from the angels. This is a very essential revelation even at the beginning of the journey.

B. Her new identity as the only pure Bride in Jesus

***"I am the lily of the valleys" (2:1b)***

1. Lily speaks of purity. She makes this next confession, "I am the only thing in the world that is pure in God's sight." There is only one lily in God's purpose. The New International Version says, "I am A rose and A lily." I would rather put THE rose and THE lily, like most of the other versions have done.
  
2. She is the lily of the valley. The valleys speak of the low and dark places in this fallen world. She says, "When God looks over all the earth, He only sees one thing pure in all the existence of creation on the earth. That is the Bride of Christ! She says, "I understand I am THE lily of the valleys in a world of darkness in the sight of God." She is not confused thinking all the darkness of her heart is gone. But the negative is not the predominant thing on her heart. The church (Bride) of Christ is the only thing that God esteems as innocent and pure in His sight in this fallen world. She feels clean, innocent and pure before Jesus.

3. She has 7 chapters to go until full maturity. The point is to understand how essential it is in the beginning of our journey to be established in the knowledge that we are the rose that God desires. Many believers cannot even image the boldness of such a confession.
  - a. Psalm 2:8, Jesus was promised an inheritance by His Father. Paul prayed that we would understand that we were the inheritance that the Father promised the Son (Eph. 1:18). The great prayer for the Ephesians was that the church would understand that they are the inheritance that God waits for. In other words, that the church would confess, "I am THE rose of Sharon".
  - b. When He prayed, “Open the eyes of their heart and let them see they are THE inheritance of God.” When you connect with that truth something just awakens on the inside of you that makes you powerful against the enemy. Paul knew that that understanding would make it happen.
4. This confession redefines her whole life. This will redefine your life. It will redefine what success is. It will redefine who you are as a person. We are loved of God and we are lovers of God. This is who we are. It makes our life very different when this connects with our heart.

## **VII. HER UNIQUE VALUE AND BEAUTY TO HIM**

- A. Jesus affirms her confession in 2:1 declaring that she is the lily.

*Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. (2:2)*

1. Thorns speak of sin, because in Genesis the thorns came forth because of sin. Gen. 3:18 speaks of thorns in the garden. Adam sinned and the thorns came in the garden. Heb. 6:8 also speaks of sin as thorns and thistles as the result of sin.
2. She is like a lily speaks of saints among the world of sin. She is seeking purity while living in a world of sin. Among all the religions of the earth the Bride is the lily among those thorns.”

- B. “God has crowned us with glory and honor.”(Heb. 2:7).

***"So is my love among the daughters" (2:2b)***

1. In our basic design, God built us in a way that God desires us. He crowned the human race with glory and honor. We are the queen that has been crowned in the court of God with glory and honor.
2. He built us in a way that only we draw the fullest love of God and the deepest love of God into full manifestation. He wouldn’t die for angels, He would only die for us. There is something in the way He built us that draws the deepest love of God into fullest manifestation

**VIII. HER UNDERSTANDING OF HIS UNIQUE VALUE AND BEAUTY**

- A. Her introductory experience of spiritual rest, spiritual enjoyment and spiritual pleasure in Jesus.

***Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, So is my beloved among the sons. (2:3)***

1. She has seen His unique value as the refreshing apple tree. In 2:5, the apple tree speaks of that which refreshes. She sees the Lord Jesus as a refreshing apple.
  - a. In 2:3, she is being introduced to the refreshing of the apple tree.
  - b. In 8:5, Jesus reminds her of the significance of the refreshing of apples.
2. “Trees of the woods” speak of all the other men of the earth. She sees that He is the most refreshing person in all of existence. He is the apple tree amongst all the trees of the woods.
3. Trees are often symbolic of humanity; like in the temple when they had a certain kind of wood covered with gold, it always meant humanity covered by the glory of God. So, wood is symbolic of humanity throughout the Old Testament, in a number of the prophecies, as well as in the picture of the Tabernacle.

**IX. SPIRITUAL REST AND ENJOYMENT IN JESUS.**

A. Her introductory experience of spiritual rest in Jesus.

*I sat down in his shade with great delight, (2:3c)*

1. “His shade” - This is just the beginning of the beginning. She has seven full chapters to go. It is because of who He is and what He did that there is shade for a fallen world.
2. His shade is refreshing. She didn't produce the shade that she would rest in. She is resting in His shade, not her own shade. It is because of who He is and what He did. That is the reason there is shade for a fallen world. She finds that shade and she understands it's His and not hers. The only shade in the world is His shade in reality.
3. “I sat down.” - She is sitting down, she is resting completely. She is not standing on my own legs and labors. We're sitting down because it's His shade not hers. She's not producing anything. She's resting. She's sitting. She's not laboring. She's not striving. In 1:16 she was resting on the bed (couch). She grows into the maturity described in 8:5 by continuing to sit under the tree relating to God on the basis of the cross not her maturity.
  - a. She is not trying to motivate God to love her through her good works. That is what a lot of people do. They are standing and working hard. Yet she is sitting down, and the reason for the shade is evident, she knows He is the only apple tree in all the earth. God is motivated 100% by who He is and what He accomplished on the cross.
  - b. Some people want to relate to God on the basis of their victory and maturity. When they have a good week, then they have confidence in their heart before God. When they stumble in a sin, then they feel unworthy. She is not relating to God on how much victory she had last week. No, she has been fed on the revelation of who He is and what He did. They are not relating to God by sitting in a shade tree. When they stumble in sin they feel unworthy. She is not relating to God on how much victory she had last week. No she has been fed on the revelation of who He is. He is the henna blooms. He is the apple tree. He is the fragrant one.

**X. HER INITIAL PLEASURE IN EXPERIENCING GOD’S AFFECTION**

A. Her introductory experience of spiritual enjoyment in Jesus.

*I sat down in his shade with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste. (2:3)*

B. “Great delight”—This is the beginning, it will really intensify throughout the book. She overflows from 1:12-2:2 by expressing her enjoyment of God. She expresses how much spiritual pleasure this knowledge has brought her. She enjoys God because of her new identity and from receiving such Divine affection. She begins to enjoy God, intermittently yes, but it is there. Even intermittent enjoyment of God makes a difference.

1. She experienced God's enjoyment of her. This experience has now awakened her enjoyment of God. You will never ever enjoy the Lord's presence more than you have a revelation of the Lord enjoying you in your weakness. I believe it is essential to have some of this spiritual pleasure. We will never have enjoyment of God without a more profound knowledge of God’s enjoyment of us.
2. Enjoying Him is essential to a consistent maturity. I’ve never seen anybody consistently grow over 10 years without enjoyment of fellowship with God. You can only grit your teeth and obey so long before you quit obeying.
3. There is no greater pleasure available to the human spirit, than when we feel enjoyed by God and when we are empowered to enjoy God in return. There are so many pleasures that God makes available to the human frame. There are mental, emotional, physical pleasures, but spiritual pleasure is the most profound pleasure. He built us in that way that the delight of being embraced by Him is the great delight of all the ages.
4. All believers can know this delight of enjoying God, but only when we sit in His shade tree. When we really believe this truth of His enjoyment over us something connects on the inside and we quit trying to drink from cisterns with holes in them, we try to drink from vessels that are broken, as Jeremiah said in Jer. 2.

- C. This is her introductory experience of spiritual pleasure in Jesus.

*“His fruit was sweet to my taste” (2:3d)*

1. His fruit is the result of relating to Jesus and receiving His redemption. It is the result of partaking of what He did. That is what she is talking about. In Song. 1:7, she says, “Where will You feed your flock?” She's being fed on the love of God right now. In Song. 1:12, she has been at the King’s table. But here in Song. 2:3 she is “tasting”. The metaphor of eating at the table is still before us.
2. Jesus was manifesting Himself to her in great sweetness to her taste. “His fruit was sweet to my taste.” “Sweet to my taste” is almost like “great delight,” but a little bit different.
3. When He's fragrant like these fragrant flowers 1:14, then His taste is sweet. When He is cruel, when He is the religious God of so many traditions, then we say, His taste is bitter to us. Discipline is a negative word. Having to bring our hearts in the presence of God, prayer and Bible study and meditation and worship is seems like a duty. The taste is burdensome, it directly relates back to our image of who God is.
4. Why is this true? Because God made us that way.
  - a. He has given us mental pleasures so that the knowledge itself of certain subjects is pleasurable.
  - b. He has given us emotional pleasure so that loving a spouse, a child, a parent, or a friend can be an intense pleasure. Sometimes our heart feels so full of love that we think it will break.
  - c. God has also ordained certain physical pleasures.
  - d. However, the pleasure of God revealing God to the human spirit is the greatest of all.
5. Enjoying God is important to consistent spiritual growth. I have tasted this pleasure in some measure but not in an uninterrupted way. There are moments when pleasure in God can erupt in our spirit. Even though this does not happen all day or even every day, nor do we necessarily feel this for extended periods of time, yet, a little touch of this pleasure does a remarkable thing in changing how we think and feel about life.

**XI. NOURISHMENT AND PROVISION THAT LEADS TO REST AND JOY IN HIS PRESENCE.**

A. This speaks of nourishment and provision that leads us to rest in joy.

*He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.  
(2:4a)-*

1. Other versions use the word “banqueting table”.
2. Some of the older versions call it the “wine house”. The wine houses are where the celebration is, where we rejoice in the love of God.
3. The Lord brings us to the “celebration of His love” in the wine house. The church knows a little more about the wine house since the Renewal began in 1994. The total fulfillment of this is at the marriage table in Rev.19:7. This table reaches its fulfillment in Rev. 19:7. There is a table at the end of our journey, which is the fullness of the banqueting table.
4. She touched the banqueting house in 2:1 when she said; “I am the rose. I am His queen. I am His bride. I am His inheritance. It is that revelation that is bringing her to the banqueting table. It is the knowledge of how He feels towards her, that she is His inheritance.
5. The Lord’s table she was sitting at the King’s table in 1:12, is the marriage table of Rev. 19:7. The communion table speaks of it.
6. I believe this is what David had on His mind somewhat in Psalm. 23:5 when he said, “The Lord has prepared a table for me, even in the presence of my enemies.” That table is what feeds us in the presence of our enemies. In temptation there is nothing that will feed you like the Lord’s table, which speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb, the great banqueting table at the end of the age.

7. In 1:4, it is also the King Himself who brought or carried her into His chambers.
  - a. It is His work to carry us, when we are off the path like a lost sheep. In Luke 15:3, He left the 99 and pursued the one who went astray. He picked up the lost sheep, put it on His shoulders, and He carried it back to the path. God’s lost sheep often kick and resist for a season before they renew their repentance. She understands that HE brought her back to His table on His shoulders with a rejoicing heart. The Lord is rejoicing all the way. The sheep are typically kicking and screaming when they are being carried back to the path.
  - b. She sees that HE brought her to the celebration of His love. Sometimes He will discipline us when He brings us, but it is because of the gladness in His heart over us. He is jealous to remove that which takes us away from Him.
8. The young Bride says, “He’s carrying me, He brought me, He picked me up. Sometimes I didn’t even want to go in a certain direction, yet He was carrying me. He brought me to a table; it is to a house. It is the celebrating of the love of God. It is the revelation of our identity is the Bride of Christ and a love of God; which is really the same identity.
9. It is a wonderful thing when the Lord brings us to the banqueting table. He does it sometimes by shutting doors. Sometimes He hems us in and won’t let us go our own way. He’s bringing you to a table by shutting the door. Sometimes He’ll bring you to the table by the Word of God in your spirit; it is simply the sweetness of God on your heart. He’ll speak to you in revelation of the Word or sometimes revelation in dreams or visions. Sometimes it’s the embrace of a friend in the name of the Lord. In those ways He’s bringing you back to the reality of the love of God.

- B. This confession brings healing and refreshment to her.

***“His banner over me was love” (2:4b)***

1. This is the delightful banner that she sees over her life. This dialog is taking place after this awareness of her failure. This is her confession when she fails, and this is her confession when she is in a time of temptation; not just the shame of failure but present temptations. This is her confession when she's under great pressure. The banner of God is going to bring you love in all the difficult circumstances. His banner over you is love, not neglect.
2. “His banner” speaks of the flag that defines her life and experience in God. The ancient armies would march in battalions under a specific flag and color that described and defined who they were. When they returned victorious, they would march in the streets under their flag in the great procession under their particular flag. Each little fighting unit would have their own flag. It defines her life. It defines her experience.
3. The banner of His love defines her life in at least these 3 things:
  - a. Another version says, “The flag over me is love.” It is the same idea.
  - b. This banner or flag of love over her means that she has confidence in God’s loving mercy in her weakness. The banner over her life is not rejection when she fails. It is love. And she can stand before the Lord and say, “You love me. I am Beloved of God even when I fail.” She might have been ensnared in immorality, (1:6 veiled woman) but confesses God’s love over her failures. When we stumble, the banner is love. Some people live under the banner of religion. That's the flag they fly and they just live in shame all the time in the end it makes you disobey more.
  - c. This banner means that she sees that He overrules all the negative circumstances to work for her good (Rom. 8:28). God promises that He will either change the negative circumstance through prayer or He will change you in a significant way as He allows the circumstance to continue. Either way, He has promised to make your life richer because of the circumstance. This revelation brings great healing to our lives.

4. The banner over us is the love of God instead of sin to give us temporary comfort. The banner is the love of God not the false comfort in sin.
  5. We all have a unique design from the hand of God in our physical and our personality design. Therefore, we have unique value in the way that God created us. God chose the way we look, He chose our ethnic group, our gender, and our giftings, as well as, our gift mix. Not only did God choose the gifts He put in us, as well as, the ones He kept from us. In great love and wisdom, He chose the generation that we live in. He chose the family that we would be a part of and He chose our personality and temperament. He chose the way our face looks and the way our body works. David understood that the design of God had a purpose to it. He said, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me”! (Psalm 139:6,13-18).
- C. On that day when the great bride of Christ is before the Lord, the Lord says, “What do you think about His leadership?” The multitudes, in one voice, say to the Father on the wedding day of the Son of God, “Hallelujah! God omnipotent was reigning. He wasn’t neglecting me. He was reigning. He wasn’t overlooking me. He was training and ruling in my behalf. His banner over me is love”.

**XII. CRYING OUT FOR A DEEPER EXPERIENCE OF INTIMACY (2:5)**

- A. This revelation and refreshment of the banqueting table, the shade, the bed, the house etc awakens deep desire in her. The revelation of the table in 2:3 - 4, awakens a cry for a deeper experience of intimacy.

*Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, For I am lovesick (2:5).*

1. In v.5 she begins to seek the Lord more fervently than ever before. In 1:4 she prayed, “draw me.” In 1:5-2:7, the Lord’s first answer to this prayer is to draw her to be an extravagant worshipper.
2. The drawing power of the Holy Spirit is very powerful and unique. In 2:8-4:16, the Lord answers the second part of the prayer to run together in partnership with Him.

B. She is seeking to enjoy more experience of the depths of Jesus.

***“Sustain me with cakes of raisins. Refresh me with apples” (2:5a,b)-***

1. In other words she is praying, “Give me more of God! ”
  2. The cakes of raisins speak of the Holy Spirit. Raisins are forms of grapes, which are used to make wine. This speaks of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
  3. It’s a lesser form of the flowing wine. She said, “Even give me the beginning work of the Holy Spirit. Give me even the shallow things.” Because her capacity is still very, very shallow.
    - a. She wants to be refreshed even with just the cakes of raisins. She can’t take the full wine and the wine house. She just needs a little bit of God, but she wants more and more and more. In v. 5 she begins to seek the Lord more fervently than ever before. The revelation of God’s affection for her has produced an earnest seeking.
    - b. The Lord is drawing her. He’s answering the “draw me” prayer by revelation. The drawing power of the Holy Spirit is powerful and unique. In 1:8-2:7 the whole focus is He’s drawing her to want more and she is lovesick, overflowing with delight. This reveals the bridal paradigm of the Kingdom of God.
  4. “Sustain me” reveals her confidence to ask for more. He’s not feeding me in harshness or neglect. She says, “Give me more! Give me more!” He said, “Well, in that case, I will.” In v. 6 He embraces her. “So sustain me with more of the Holy Spirit, refresh me with Jesus. The Spirit and Jesus. The Spirit and the Word. Give me more!”
  5. “For I am lovesick” (2:5c)-Two aspects:
    - a. He's making her lovesick to prepare her to press on to maturity. He is making her lovesick so she can never ever go back again.
    - b. “Feelings of love” - they can sometimes be intense. One aspect of seeking God involves the release of the presence of God upon our hearts. When our hearts are tenderized, we feel love from God and love back to God. I love to feel love for God. We were made in a way we love to feel that we’re giving ourselves wholeheartedly to God. This is a wonderful manifestation of the presence of God in us.
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- c. One aspect of seeking God involves the manifest release of feelings for God upon our heart. There are two things in “feelings of love”. She’s feeling His love and she’s feeling love back. Our hearts become tenderized so we *feel love from God* and than *back to God*. It is enjoyable to feel love for God. The highest crowning work of redemption is when a broken, shriveled up, little, weak human spirit gets washed and cleansed. It feels love from God and is empowered to feel love back to God. Then it overflows in love to other people, especially to our enemies. She is full scale lovesick right now.
  
- 6. “Spiritual hunger pains” are a different, yet valuable manifestation of the presence of God in us. These hunger pains are sometimes unpleasant involving feeling desperate as God withholds the manifest release of feelings for God. Most of us have had times where the Word of God has touched us and left us with this groan of having to have more. This is the feeling of being loved and being a lover.
  - a. He awakens a hunger in you, but He doesn’t immediately satisfy it. You have a vision for it. You’ve been stirred for it but the presence of God has not been released to answer this groan. We are miserable.
  - b. It is called “blessed are those that mourn for they will be comforted in due time.” Matt. 5:3-4 speaks of this work of God in us as we have poverty of spirit and mourning for more of God. When God lifts His hand, our heart can be very cold. Then we can understand the value of feeling hunger pains that lead us forward in deep pursuit of God.
  - c. When the Lord puts His hand on us, part of the manifestation of it produces in us an awareness we can have more, but we don’t get it immediately. When the Lord gives you the vision there is more He has for you, but won’t give it to you, this creates a painful, desperate, agonizing yearning. You can’t be satisfied with anything in life and that is part of lovesickness. This all works together, strategically pushing us deep into the love of God.
  
- 7. Both aspects of the Divine romance are valuable whether the feeling are released, or if the hunger pains are released. They are very different forms of love sickness that both bring us to the same place.

**XIII. EXPERIENCING GOD’S EMBRACE**

A. This describes the 2-fold activity of God in her experience.

*His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. (2:6)*

1. In verse 5 she says, “Sustain me.” She is crying out for more in verse 5 and in verse 6 she gets it. She cried out, “More!” He releases His embrace upon her now. There is a very powerful progression going on here. We don't know how much time is between those 2 verses. We just know that eventually the grace of God is discerned in time.
2. “His left hand is under my head”. He is still drawing her in. “His left hand is under my head, and His right hand embraces me.” She has so much confidence in the love of God right now.
  - a. This is the invisible activity of God. The left hand of God is away from your view and out of your sight because it is behind your head; therefore, you can't see it. It speaks of the activity of God in your life that you cannot see. The invisible activity of God in your life is a very important expression of God’s love for you. God is withholding and releasing events that you can’t discern.
  - b. The Lord is sparing you from troubles and pains that you are not aware of because it is away from your view. For example, the way God prepares someone’s future spouse is an unseen work of God. Like for instance we don't have any idea how many car wrecks that we were delivered from that we don't even know about. It is the left hand of God working. We don't have any idea when 10 years ago, hypothetically, we were at the crossroads and we ended up going right instead of left, we have no idea what we were delivered from if we had going left. Those are all realities that God can see but He spared us from.
  - c. The left hand of God is what is behind her and she cannot see it. She cannot discern it. The left-hand activity of God is something you accept by faith. But it really is an important part of our worship before the Lord. Not that we live in the daily recognition of it, but there are just so many things that were withheld from you that would have caused you anguish and pain. There were so many times when the Lord pushed you one direction versus another and the implications are so vast you can't begin to understand them.

3. His right hand embraces us. This speaks of the “sweet” manifest presence of God that can be seen, felt and discerned. It pictures Jesus as standing in front of her in order to embrace her, therefore she can see and feel Him. These are the times when she feels “sweet” love for God. She feels her heart being tenderized. The right hand of God is more than desperate hunger pains. . She sees both the right hand and the left hand of God. The right hand of God is the part that embraces. This is something that you can feel and it is discernable. It is the cherishing embrace (Ephesians 5:29).
4. There is a certain mystery to God’s embrace. He releases His embrace and He withholds His embrace in very strategic ways. By embrace, I mean the “sweet” feelings of being loved and the “sweet” feelings of loving back. God wants mystery to be in the relationship. I’ve had seasons when I’ve pressed into God and couldn’t feel him and seasons when I felt as carnal as can be, but I felt the love of God. He lets you feel him one season then He withholds the right hand where you can’t feel him and see him one season. We call that the walk of faith.

**XIV. JESUS “GUARDS HER” IN THIS SEASON OF HER EXPERIENCE**

- A. Jesus sees the necessity of her experiencing this short season of personal satisfaction where she has no thought of embracing the cross in loving service for others.

*I charge you, O, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken My love until it pleases. (2:7)*

1. He is solemnly charging other believers not to disrupt her right now. God has in a strategic season. There are seasons in God where the Lord has establishing people in this sweet revelation and He doesn’t want them doing all the activity of the Kingdom. She is fervent, enjoying God but not yet mature. The Lord does not want her being judged by religious opinions.
2. “O, daughters of Jerusalem” represent immature believers who lack discernment in the Spirit. These believers do not understand the various operations of the Spirit nor the different seasons in God.

3. “By the gazelles” or “by the doe of the field” speaks of the importance of gentleness and extra sensitivity in relating to the young Bride in this season. This is in contrast to the harshness of religious opinions and legalism that will be detrimental to the maiden’s spiritual growth.
4. A gazelle or a doe is very easily distracted. A gazelle of the field can be easily startled, and easily scared. It is ready to jump or move at any moment. Anything will frighten them off. She has had a beating the last time she was in the body. He appeals to a metaphor of gentleness, because she is someone who can be very easily distracted.
5. In the phrase, “Until it pleases”, the Hebrew can be translated as it, he or she. The NAS translates the phrase as “Don’t awaken love until she pleases” instead of “until it pleases”. I believe the NAS says it best. The Lord is talking to the daughters; it is not the bride talking to the Lord. God is not saying, “I charge you, don’t awaken her until He, until the Lord pleases.”
6. If the Hebrew word was translated He then it would refer to the Lord being awakened or stirred to action by the daughters of Jerusalem. The Lord has no need to be awakened by the daughters of Jerusalem. The Lord has no need to be protected from harsh treatment by the gentleness as pictured by the gazelles or does of the field. Rather, the maiden has a need to be protected from harsh treatment by the gentleness as pictured by the gazelles.
7. Three times Jesus speaks this phrase, “Don’t arouse or awaken my love until it pleases.” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4)
8. In Song. 2: and 3:5 He adds the phrase “By the gazelles and by the does of the field.” In other words she is so sensitive, she is so easily distracted on the front part of her journey because she's not grounded on the love of God the way she's going to be. She’s easily frightened; thus she's easily distracted.
9. When He says not to disturb her at the end of the book, it is not because she is easily distracted like one of the gazelles. He has different reasons in ch. 8 not to disturb her. In 8:4 when He uses the phrase “don’t disturb her,” He embraces her just like the other 2 times. The third time He uses this dialogue with her, He omits the phrase “by the gazelles of the field” because she’s no longer immature and easily tossed to and fro (Eph. 4:14). She is solid and grounded and founded in the person of the Lord Jesus.

10. We must recognize the underlying principle that there are various seasons in God’s dealings with us. Each season has a different emphasis. I think of the four seasons in the natural calendar. In the Lord there could be many, many more seasons, but this gives you a general idea. Don't disturb her until she is ready, until she is agreeing with the grace of God.
  - a. There is the season of “spring” where new seeds of truths with new experiences are sown into our hearts. The spring seasons are exciting! New things are happening.
  - b. There is the season of “summer” where these new seeds of truth and experiences are cultivated (watered and pruned) as the weeds are pulled. There is growth in this season, but there also is the pain of pruning as well. Summer gets a little hot sometimes. Sometimes it will involve the labor of cultivating sometimes under a hot sun. The hot sun is coming down and we must be faithful to water the seeds that were sown in spring seasons. He sows them, and they need to be cultivated and watered and weeded all under the hot sun.
  - c. There is the third season of “autumn” which is the season of harvest. Everyone loves the harvest. This is when things come to maturity and we reap the benefits of our labors. The harvest is when they would have the Jewish festivals and the great feasts. This is when all the benefits are becoming obvious and the profits are made. This is a season when everyone is happy, dancing and celebrating.
  - d. There is the season of “winter” which is the season of death. After the harvest, comes the winter when everything dies. This season is just as important as the spring, the summer, and the autumn. The winter season prepares the ground for the next harvest time. Paul the apostle is in prison for 2 years in Caesarea in Acts 22 or 23. Two years as this incredibly mature apostle writes the Word of God. The Lord says, “I have him 2 years. It is not an accident. I’m doing something in Paul’s life. I’m bringing something out of him that he can’t have in just a perpetual autumn harvest season.” Paul had several seasons in prison for a year or 2, if you read his story.