

**Maturing in Love**  
**Song of Songs 5:2 – 6:13**

This is the fourth message in a series on the Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon. I was very much impressed to learn that the Hebrew title can be read: “Of all the songs this is the Song!”

The **Song** is a drama with two soloists. The female voice is “the beloved” and the male voice is “the lover.” The transitions between the two soloists are sung by “the daughters of Jerusalem.”

The scene is Solomon coming home from a trip. He has been thinking about his wife all the way home. He wants to be with her in love’s embrace. But when Solomon arrives home she is already in bed and half asleep and disinterested. This results in a struggle to rekindle the romance.

While Solomon is away, Shulamith oversees the servants and all of the affairs of the household; she puts out the lights and goes to bed alone. She learns how to live without his attention and help. When Solomon comes back he finds that she is getting along just fine without him.

So we find the married lovers in Solomon’s Song facing a dangerous time in their relationship because of his absence and her indifference. This could have been the end of their marriage, but they realize it and set out to “find each other again.”

**1. Reality of Married Life**

For four chapters the love struck couple have seen nothing but perfection in each other. Now we find that they are human after all. In the process they reveal important principles that may apply to our own slightly less than perfect marriages.

**a. A Problem of Absence and Indifference: Song 5:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> I slept, but my heart was awake.  
A sound! My beloved is knocking.  
"Open to me, my sister, my love,  
my dove, my perfect one,  
for my head is wet with dew,  
my locks with the drops of the night."  
<sup>3</sup> I had put off my garment;  
how could I put it on?  
I had bathed my feet;  
how could I soil them?  
<sup>4</sup> My beloved put his hand to the latch,  
and my heart was thrilled within me.

We are not told how much time has elapsed between verse 1 and verse 2 but it must have been long enough to matter to Shulamith. They are no longer newlyweds. He does not call her his "bride" as he did six times on their wedding night.

The time is very late and Shulamith is alone. What she must have feared has happened; Solomon's business as king has kept him away from her. She has no idea when he will come back and she does not wait up for him.

"I slept." She says, "but my heart was awake." This may be a metaphor for her indifference, although her affection for her husband is still strong.

When two people live together for a long time, their feelings change towards each other. This is not necessarily all bad; it is simply the way things are. It is part of "Maturing in Love." By now they know each other better. At first secrets about each other were exciting and new but now they are commonplace. The mystery that made courtship so thrilling is no longer a mystery.

She hears Solomon knocking on the door. He is late but he has romance on his mind. His "Honey I'm home," is expressed with,

"Open to me, my sister, my love,  
my dove, my perfect one,  
for my head is wet with dew,  
my locks with the drops of the night."

Solomon is locked out; his hair is wet with the dew that waters the vineyards in the dry summer season. She is already in bed:

**<sup>3</sup> I had put off my garment;  
how could I put it on?  
I had bathed my feet;  
how could I soil them?**

She has taken off her clothing, washed her feet [a bedtime necessity when you walk in open sandals] and she is asleep. Her, “how could I soil them,” sound to Solomon like, “It’s too much trouble to get out of bed, don’t bother me!”

But when Solomon puts his hand through the latch opening he cannot release the lock. His action triggers a break in her indifference:

**<sup>4</sup> My beloved put his hand to the latch,  
and my heart was thrilled within me.**

The KJV translation, “My bowels were moved for him” is technically accurate but is not a very attractive thought in today’s language. The Hebrew word means “to soften.” When used figuratively, the term indicates compassion, pity, or sexual arousal.

**b. Who’s Sorry Now? Song 5:5-8**

**<sup>5</sup> I arose to open to my beloved,  
and my hands dripped with myrrh,  
my fingers with liquid myrrh,  
on the handles of the bolt.**

**<sup>6</sup> I opened to my beloved,  
but my beloved had turned and gone.  
My soul failed me when he spoke.  
I sought him, but found him not;  
I called him, but he gave no answer.**

**<sup>7</sup> The watchmen found me  
as they went about in the city;  
they beat me, they bruised me,  
they took away my veil,  
those watchmen of the walls.**

**<sup>8</sup> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
if you find my beloved,  
that you tell him  
I am sick with love.**

She gets up to open the door, but he is gone. She has delayed too long! He decided that she was serious in her rejection of him and he leaves. He did not try to manipulate her with guilt or anger, and he did not try to force his way in. Love does not do that! But by the time she changes her mind and decide that she wants him he has given up and gone away.

“My soul failed me when he spoke,” is Hebrew idiom for “I almost died.”

Notice that the lovers do not cling to their resentment and allow it to last. They show how it can be when two people love each other and do not hold grudges.

Now Shulamith realizes that her indifference has aggravated the problem and she tries to close the gap between them. She goes out into the night to find her lover. This is a dangerous thing for her to do but it shows that she is willing to take risks to save the marriage.

A lesson is that one partner must be willing to take the first step in order to bring peace and reconciliation.

In her search she has an unpleasant encounter with the watchmen of the walls. They treat her roughly probably because they think she is a prostitute. The women of Jerusalem indicate that the breach between the couple has already become gossip in the royal court.

**<sup>9</sup> What is your beloved more than another beloved,  
O most beautiful among women?  
What is your beloved more than another beloved,  
that you thus adjure us?**

## 2. Remembering the Key to Reconciliation

“What is so special about him?” the women ask. “How is he better than others?” “What makes you think that you can order us to tell him anything?”

### a. Remembering the Good Things: Song 5:10-16; 6:1

<sup>10</sup> My beloved is radiant and ruddy,  
distinguished among ten thousand.

<sup>11</sup> His head is the finest gold;  
his locks are wavy,  
black as a raven.

<sup>12</sup> His eyes are like doves  
beside streams of water,  
bathed in milk,  
sitting beside a full pool.

<sup>13</sup> His cheeks are like beds of spices,  
mounds of sweet-smelling herbs.  
His lips are lilies,  
dripping liquid myrrh.

<sup>14</sup> His arms are rods of gold,  
set with jewels.  
His body is polished ivory,  
bedecked with sapphires.

<sup>15</sup> His legs are alabaster columns,  
set on bases of gold.  
His appearance is like Lebanon,  
choice as the cedars.

<sup>16</sup> His mouth is most sweet,  
and he is altogether desirable.  
This is my beloved and this is my friend,  
O daughters of Jerusalem.

**6** Where has your beloved gone,  
O most beautiful among women?  
Where has your beloved turned,  
that we may seek him with you?

Shulamith praises Solomon as the epitome of male physical beauty, character, and charm.

He is radiant and ruddy and manly [10]

He is distinguished among men [10]

His head is purist gold; a brilliant mind [11]

His black wavy hair is the sign of the prime of life [11]

His eyes are like doves, peaceful and gentle [12]

His face is handsome and his kisses are sweet as lilies [13]

His arms are priceless [14]

His figure is perfect [14]

His legs are like pillars of marble set in gold [15]

His appearance is tall like the cedars of Lebanon [15]

His speech and kisses are utterly desirable [16]

In summary, everything about him is delightful.  
He is more than her lover; he is her friend [16]

The city girls are convinced; they will help her find him.  
“Which way did he go?”  
She knows where to find him [6:1]

**b. Remembering His Love and Commitment: Song 6:2-3**

<sup>2</sup> My beloved has gone down to his garden  
to the beds of spices,  
to graze in the gardens  
and to gather lilies.

<sup>3</sup> I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;  
he grazes among the lilies.

Shulamith remembers that one of his favorite places is the palace garden.  
In 4:12 – 5: 1 her “garden” was his “garden” referring to her sexuality.

**I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;**

This phrase is often applied to the believer and Christ and it is certainly true.  
What a comfort it is to have the assurance that you belong to Christ and in  
a true sense He belongs to you.

**c. Reconciliation Made Easy: Song 6:4-10**

<sup>4</sup> You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love,  
lovely as Jerusalem,  
awesome as an army with banners.

<sup>5</sup> Turn away your eyes from me,  
for they overwhelm me—  
Your hair is like a flock of goats  
leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

<sup>6</sup> Your teeth are like a flock of ewes  
that have come up from the washing;  
all of them bear twins;  
not one among them has lost its young.

<sup>7</sup> Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate  
behind your veil.

<sup>8</sup> There are sixty queens and eighty concubines,  
and virgins without number.

<sup>9</sup> My dove, my perfect one, is the only one,  
the only one of her mother,  
pure to her who bore her.  
The young women saw her and called her blessed;  
the queens and concubines also, and they praised her.

<sup>10k</sup> "Who is this who looks down like the dawn,  
beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun,  
awesome as an army with banners?"

Solomon repeats much of his praise that we saw in chapter 4; her flowing black hair and full set of teeth, etc.

A secret that Solomon and Shulamith had learned is to be ready with honest praise and confession of their love for one another. It doesn't matter who was right or who was wrong and it does not need to be brought up again.

She is special. Compared to all of the queens and concubines and more young virgins than you can count, she is "the one and only."

Now the women of Jerusalem are no longer jealous of her but echo his praise of her breathtaking beauty and character.

**d. The Garden of Reconciliation: Song 6:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> I went down to the nut orchard  
to look at the blossoms of the valley,  
to see whether the vines had budded,  
whether the pomegranates were in bloom.  
<sup>12</sup> Before I was aware, my desire set me  
among the chariots of my kinsman, a prince.  
<sup>13</sup> Return, return, O Shulamite,  
return, return, that we may look upon you.  
Why should you look upon the Shulamite,  
as upon a dance before two armies?

When handled properly, painful strains in the husband-wife relationship can help love mature. The garden of nuts is probably walnuts. The outer husk is bitter but the inner meat is sweet.

The pain of indifference has been bitter, but it has produced a renewal of commitment and a revival of romance that is sweet.

Verses 12-13, according to the scholars, are the most difficult phrase in Song to translate. The phrase may be an obscure Hebrew idiom. We don't know which of the lovers said it. The common idea of the translations is that of excitement, imagination, desire and a willingness to make up.

May it be so in our marriage.