



The Bride's Faltering Love

(Growing in Marriage, Part 4)

Song of Solomon 4:1-16

THRIVE! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life

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livinghopechurch.net

“Let us but feel that God has His heart set upon us, that He is watching us from those heavens with tender interest, that He is following us day by day as a mother follows her babe in his first attempt to walk alone, that He has set His love upon us, and in spite of ourselves is working out for us His higher will and blessing... and then nothing can discourage us.”

– A. B. Simpson

1. No Expositors class today
2. Evening service 5pm
3. Ladies' Tea, Saturday at 10am

If you don't have a Bible, there should be one in the seat in front of you. Open your Bible to **Song of Solomon**. The title of our message this morning is “The Bride's Faltering Love” This is part 4 in our series “Growing in Marriage.” We are looking at Song of Solomon 4 today.

Newlywed Questions

For you married people, let me give you a quiz...

1. Husbands, what was the first meal your wife cooked you.
2. Wives, where did your husband take you on your first date?
3. Husbands, what is your wife's favorite color?
4. To all married people, what was the first special name your spouse called you?

We are soon forgetful aren't we? What about your relationship with Christ?

1. What was the first book of the Bible you ever read?
2. What was the name of the first sermon you heard after you were saved?
3. What was the first significant answered prayer you remember?
4. Who was the first one to tell you the Gospel?

We are Soon Forgetful

We soon forget of the preciousness of Christ don't we? We often go to great mountaintops and then so quickly descend to the ash heaps of spiritual defeat.

Outline

What should we do when our love for Christ falters? Realize...

- We often **falter** in our love for Christ, 5:1-8
- We should often **fix** our gaze on Christ, 5:9-16
- We should often **fellowship** with Christ to grow in maturity, 6:1-3

What should we do when our love for Christ falters? Realize...

I. We often **falter** in our love for Christ, 5:1-8.

1. WE FALTER IN SPITE OF RICH FELLOWSHIP, 5:1

Song of Solomon 5:1

"I came to my garden, my sister, my bride,
I gathered my myrrh with my spice,
I ate my honeycomb with my honey,
I drank my wine with my milk.

Others

"1b Eat, friends, drink,
and be drunk with love!

Inconsistent Spiritual Intimacy

We falter even if you feel you have the best marriage. It is true that the greatest breaches in a relationship can sometimes come on the heels of the greatest seasons of intimacy.

You may have experienced that in your marriage. Whether you're married or not, you surely have experienced this inconsistency in your relationship with the Lord. I mean, I can go from the mountaintops down to the depths of the sea, in a very brief time, it seems.

A Special Place

Solomon was exceedingly rich and had many gardens, but this garden seems to be a special place where only he and his bride would have access to. The garden theme recurs over and over again in this love poem.

The garden is important. It represents the growth of love between Solomon and his bride. It is also important because it symbolizes our growth in Christ.

When we first come to the Lord, there is a great joy and deep growth in grace. But soon we face difficulties and discouragements and even demonic attack.

So let me ask you: What's the condition of your garden? I don't mean the one outside your house. I mean the one inside you. Not the condition as it once was or as you wish it were . . . but what is the condition of your heart, the place where you commune with Christ, right now?

Sudden Backsliding

Have you ever had a great mountaintop experience and then just slowly begin to backslide? Have you wondered how quickly we can lose our first love? We have an amazing time with the

Lord, and then suddenly, we lose our focus! We so easily replace His love, and turn His gifts and blessings into idols.

How Quickly Fervor Turns to Coolness

One writer said, “It’s alarming to discover how quickly fervor can give way to coolness.” And so as we come to **Song 5:2**, the bride says,

2. WE FALTER BECAUSE OF SPIRITUAL SLEEPINESS, 5:2a

HER

Song 5:2a, “I slept, but my heart was awake.
A sound! My beloved is knocking.”

Solomon’s Words

Song 5:2b, “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.”

HER

“3 I had put off my garment;
how could I put it on?
I had bathed my feet;
how could I soil them?
4 My beloved put his hand to the latch,
and my heart was thrilled within me.
5 I arose to open to my beloved,
and my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with liquid myrrh,
on the handles of the bolt.
6 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.
7 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.
8 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved,

that you tell him
I am sick with love.”

Lovesick in Barrenness

She says, “Tell him that I am lovesick!” The first time she said she was lovesick was back in chapter 2:5, and then it was because she was full and overflowing. She could hardly contain all the love that she had received from her beloved. Now when she says it, she’s speaking from a **place of dryness and barrenness**. She longs to have the intimacy restored that she had experienced in the past with her beloved.

How Did This Happen? (Indifferent & Unresponsive)

How does she become **indifferent** and **unresponsive** to her beloved? The peasant princess says, “I slept, but my heart was awake” (5:2a). This scene takes place at nighttime. The bride is at home in bed. She’s just falling off to sleep, and notice she’s not out running around with other men. She’s not doing anything flagrantly immoral or sinful that causes this breach in the relationship. She’s just half asleep. She has become **indifferent** and **unresponsive** to the advances of her beloved one.

Are You Indifferent to the voice of Christ?

What a picture we have here of how spiritual sluggishness and decline takes place in the Bride of Christ, in the Church, in us as believers. So often we find ourselves half asleep, **not out there doing something flagrantly wicked**, but just complacent, indifferent to our Beloved’s voice.

Eye Surgery / Spiritually Numb

A couple years ago I had a corneal transplant. I had a disease called Keratoconus that deteriorated the cornea in my left eye. In order to replace it, they had to remove the defective cornea with a laser, and surgically affix the donor’s cornea.

I was awake, but my eye was asleep. I was conscious for the whole thing. I remember every part. But my eye was numb.

That’s ok when you have a medical professional to numb the affected area. But it is not ok to be spiritually numb!

What Has Lulled You to Sleep?

Have you grown spiritually sleepy or complacent? If so, what kinds of things have “lulled you to sleep” and dulled your responsiveness to Jesus? What are some ways we become spiritually complacent?

1. Absence of Christian fellowship (1 John 1:7, “If we walk [together] in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”
2. Love for this world. 2 Tim. 4:10, Demas forsook Paul being “in love with this present world.”

3. Wrong associations/friendships. Example: Solomon loved many women who drew his heart away from God. **I Kings 11:4**, “When Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.”
4. Worldly success can cause you to forget God if you love it. The love of money which often comes by worldly success is the root of all evil. **1 Tim. 6:10**, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.
5. Shallowness. You start to make excuses which dull you to the Holy Spirit’s conviction, and like stony ground hearer, you receive the Word with joy and then never change (Lu. 8:13). **James 1:23-24**, “if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.”
6. Idleness and a lack of service for Christ. If you are not accountable to serve Christ in the local body of believers, you will become complacent and wander into the world.

Spiritual Complacency: Filled with Excesses

It’s so easy to become spiritually sluggish. We get lulled to sleep with all kinds of things. We become more enthralled with God’s extravagant gifts than our amazing God!

We become satisfied with our **excesses** here in comfortable America. We become filled with rich food, with million-dollar entertainment, with professional sports.

We replace our fellowship with God with so much meaningless conversation, meaningless plots of television and movies. We even fill our heads with rich theology and our hearts with shallow prayers to placate our consciences.

Where is Christ? Lost the Realization of His Presence

But where is Christ? He is absent. Where is our ravishing love for Christ? What happened to it? We have rich theology, but where is our precious Christ? He is with us, but we’ve **lost the conscious realization of His presence**.

Stuffed Full / Can’t Move

All of that can fill us up so that we become satiated with **cotton candy** instead of **real food that nourishes** our souls. We’re just stuffed so full we cannot move. We are filled with spiritual cement. We don’t have room for Christ, don’t really have a desire for Him, become complacent.

3. WE FALTER BECAUSE WE TAKE OUR BELOVED FOR GRANTED, 5:2b

Solomon’s Words

So in that state of complacency, she hears the voice of her beloved. He knocks saying, **Song 5:2b**, “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.”

He speaks to her with great tenderness and affection. She means the world to him. He calls her “my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one.”

Matthew Henry: “he not only gives her no hard names, nor upbraids her with unkindness in not sitting up for him, but, on the contrary, studies how to express his tender affection to her still.”¹

“Those that by faith are espoused to Christ he looks upon as his sisters, his loves, his doves, and all that is dear; and, being clothed with his righteousness, they are undefiled. This thought should induce this peasant princess to open to him.

And Christ’s love to us should engage ours to Him, even in the most self-denying instances. *Open to me.* Can we deny entrance to such a friend, to such a guest? Shall we not converse more with one that is infinitely worthy of our friendship, and so affectionately desirous of it?”²

The Bride’s Excuses

And he asks her to let him in. He’s been outside toiling, and his head and his hair are drenched with the heavy dew of the night. He wants to commune with her.

But listen to the Bride’s excuses...

HER

“3 I had put off my garment;
how could I put it on?
I had bathed my feet;
how could I soil them?”

What is she doing? She’s making excuses. “It’s not convenient.” Now, her response to his call is so different than the responsive, love-struck bride that we’ve seen earlier (4:16), where she says, “Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its pleasant fruits.”

The Issue is Our Focus

Here’s the real issue, she has taken her focus off of her **Beloved**, and put her gaze on her own **self** and her own **comfort** and **convenience**.

“3 I had put off my garment;
how could I put it on?
I had bathed my feet;
how could I soil them?”

I, me, and my. She’s left her first love. If you’ve read the paragraph before, at the end of chapter 4, you’d think: *“This could never happen.”* But it does happen.

There are times in our walk with the Lord when we think, I’ll never not love Him. That’s what Peter said. Right? *“I’ll follow You even though everybody else forsakes You.”* “Peter said emphatically, ‘If I must die with you, I will not deny you.’ ” (Mark 14:31).

¹ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1067). Peabody: Hendrickson.

² Ibid.

Gethsemane – Watch and Pray

When I read that passage, it brings to my mind the picture of Jesus in Gethsemane who sweat as it were great drops of blood, and the disciples – what are they doing? They are sleeping and sluggish in the hour of their greatest trial. Remember Jesus warned the disciples to “Watch and pray.” **Matthew 26:41**, “**Watch and pray** that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” We read about His travail and the anguish of soul as He was about to fulfill his Father’s will and the plan of redemption.

Sleeping Disciples – Ephesian believers

Sometimes we are like those sleeping disciples who take their master for granted. We are like the Ephesian church, who St. John has received a message from our Lord Jesus on the Isle of Patmos said that the Ephesian believers had “lost their first love.”

Revelation 2:4-5, “I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.”

If God wrote you a letter today, what might he say to you?

Excuses – Who Gave You Pristine Righteousness?

The man wanted to express his love, and all he got were excuses. “*I’m already in bed! I’m sleeping. I don’t want to get my feet dirty.*”

I have pristine feet! And you do! God has made you righteous in Christ! Isn’t that wonderful?

Who gave you your righteousness?

Sometimes we can allow that sweet righteousness of Christ to turn into a self-serving self-righteousness. Who gave you your righteousness?

We take Christ’s love for granted and become **proud** and **cold** and **self-righteous**. We begin to make excuses: “*I don’t want to serve Christ in the world. I just want to stay in my comfortable Christian bubble.*”

How about you? Have you lost your first love? Are you in the “Christian bubble” of ease and comfort? Have you drifted into **self-righteousness** and **pride** and **complacency**?

4. WE FALTER BECAUSE WE DON’T ANSWER RIGHT AWAY, 5:4b-6

Song 5:4-6a, “My beloved put his hand to the latch,
and my heart was thrilled within me.”

When he could not prevail with her by persuasion he *put in his hand to the latch of the door*, to unbolt it, as one weary of waiting, v. 4. But in the end, though he wants to commune with her, he leaves – apparently to go to another part of the palace. We find out later that perhaps after some rest, he goes to their secret place – to a garden that is reserved only for them.

The Work of the Spirit

So it is that God knocks on the door of our hearts. This intimates a work of the Spirit upon her soul, by which she was unwilling made willing, Ps. 110:3. The conversion of Lydia is represented by the *opening of her heart* (Acts 16:14).³

The Stirring of God's Children

In verse 5, she has a change of heart which is evidence that she belongs to him. **If you don't belong to Him, your heart's not going to be stirred.** She is deeply stirred. She's moved. She realizes who she has rejected, what she has rejected, and she longs to be with him.

Solomon's Fragrance

She finally decides to leave her comfortable place of rest, put her robe on, get her feet dirty, open the door, and let him in. She says:

Song 5:5, "I arose to open to my beloved,
and my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with liquid myrrh,
on the handles of the bolt."

It seems that Solomon is frustrated here. He wants to commune with the one who has doves eyes – his "perfect one." He leaves, but he leaves a calling card on the door! These were special ointments and fragrances.

Christ always leaves His fragrance, the aroma of His love by His Holy Spirit. Remember, if you are being chastened by the Lord, it is because He loves you!

Even if it seems you have grieved His Holy Spirit, the fragrance of His love will never stop drawing you to Him!

She Should Have Responded Quickly

Song 5:6a, "I opened to my beloved,
but my beloved had turned and gone.
My soul failed me when he spoke."

She was **expecting him to be right** there as soon as she opened the door and everything to immediately get back to normal. But that doesn't happen, does it? **She was slow to respond** to his initiative, and now she loses the conscious awareness of his presence.

Dear saints, it's so important when we sense a call from the Lord in our hearts to come to communion with Him, to come serve with Him, whether in the middle of the night or the middle of the day. It's so important that we're **quick to respond** and say, "Yes, Lord."

As **Isaiah 55:6** says, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near."

She Didn't Answer Right Away!

She didn't answer right away, and missed him!

Song 5:6b, "I sought him, but found him not;
I called him, but he gave no answer."

³ Ibid.

There are such severe consequences of delayed responsiveness. If you want to see that fleshed out, read **Proverbs 1:24**. “Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, 25 because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof...”

Then that passage goes on to list serious consequences that will come about in our lives when we don’t quickly respond to the Lord’s call in our lives.

Harry Ironside Quote

Harry Ironside was the pastor of the Moody Church from 1929-1948, and he speaks as to why the Lord sometimes withdraws His presence.

“If you do not respond to His voice when He comes in tender grace, you may seek Him for a long time before you will enjoy fellowship with Him again. Such is the sensitiveness of love. He wants to make you feel that His love is worthwhile, and He wants to test you as to whether you are really in earnest when you profess to desire fellowship with Him.”⁴

Moses said to God in **Exodus 33:15**, “If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” That ought to be our attitude. I will not go forward without God’s presence.

5. WE FALTER BECAUSE WE DON’T CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF BACKSLIDING, 5:7-8a

Calamity to Get our Attention

Often our Beloved was trying to get our attention, and we weren’t paying attention, so He’s getting our attention. And sometimes He can use calamity and crisis to do that.

Something strange happens in this next verse.

The Watchmen Chasten the Bride

The watchmen of Israel were the spiritual caretakers. It seems they misunderstood her. They assumed that a woman of good moral character would not be out in the street in the middle of the night.

Song 5:7-8, “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.”

⁴ Harry Ironside. Commentary on Song of Solomon.

6. EVEN THOUGH YOU FALTER, DON'T GIVE UP, 5:7-8b

A Message for Her King

She finally turns to the daughters of Jerusalem, her friends, and enlists their help in finding him. And if they find him, she says, “Can you please give him a message for me?”

8 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved,
that you tell him
I am sick with love.”

This is where the Bride pursues her focus! When we our love falters, we need to take our gaze off of our comfort, off of ourselves. You may feel proud and worthy (bad thing). You may feel unworthy and therefore not seek Him.

Either way, it’s dangerous to have your gaze fixed on yourself.

What should we do when our love for Christ falters? Realize...

II. We should often fix our gaze upon Christ, 5:9-16.

What’s So Special about Your King?

Daughters of Jerusalem

“9 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?”

Or as the NIV says there, “How is your beloved better than others?” “What’s so special about him? There are lots of other men around here. If you’ve lost him, go find another one.”

In response to that question, the bride begins to think about what makes her beloved so special. What makes him stand out from all other men? She sets out to explain to the daughters of Jerusalem what it is that makes him unique from all others.

Greatness and Goodness: The Bride Praises Her Beloved

“10 My beloved is **radiant and ruddy,**
distinguished among ten thousand.”

The word “radiant” speaks of a brilliant, blinding white. It reminds me of the picture of Jesus in the gospels, when He’s on the mount of transfiguration, as His clothes were changed to dazzling white as His glory and His deity shone through. I think this description of “my beloved” as “white” is shining, it’s brilliant, it’s dazzling. It’s a picture of the deity of Christ, the glory of Christ.

Then she also says he is ruddy—he’s white and ruddy. That has to do with a healthy complexion, a wholesome, manly appearance.

A Description of Her Beloved

Now, she wasn’t thinking this when he knocked on the door and said, “Let me in,” and she said, “I don’t want to get my feet dirty,” right? She’d forgotten how great he was, how lovely he was. So, in responding to the question of the daughters of Jerusalem, “What’s so special about your beloved?” she begins to remember what’s so special about him.

11 His head is the finest gold;
his locks are wavy,
black as a raven.
12 His eyes are like doves
beside streams of water,
bathed in milk,
sitting beside a full pool.
13 His cheeks are like beds of spices,
mounds of sweet-smelling herbs.
His lips are lilies,
dripping liquid myrrh.
14 His arms are rods of gold,
set with jewels.
His body is polished ivory,
bedecked with sapphires.
15 His legs are alabaster columns,
set on bases of gold.
His appearance is like Lebanon,
choice as the cedars.
16 His mouth is most sweet,
and he is altogether desirable.
This is my beloved and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.”

Glorious in All His Parts

We see:

- His **head**. 11 His head is the finest gold; He is the Head of the Church. His golden head depicts His kingship and His authority. He is worthy!
- His **hair**. his locks are wavy, black as a raven.” His hair represents strength, like Samson! His strength is stronger than the youth with black hair. Christ’s love for you never grows weary.
- His **eyes**. 12 His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pool.” In his eyes, she sees depicted gentleness, compassion, tenderness and grace.
- His **cheeks**. 13 His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs. The cheeks display the soul. His love is so great for you His cheeks turn red. In His

cheeks there's the fragrance of his passion and His suffering and His death. Look upon Him. He is love is so fragrant, He will go through death for you!

- His **lips**. 13b, "His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh." Myrrh is a fragrance of passion. With His lips he tells you, "you are my perfect one." "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Don't those words just drip with liquid myrrh? In His lips we see the **purity**, the power, the beauty of His words.
- His **arms**. 14 His arms are rods of gold, set with jewels. We see his strong arms, and with those arms He holds us safe and secure.
- His **body**. His body is polished ivory, bedecked with sapphires. In His body we see depicted the beauty of Christ, His perfection and His symmetry.
- His **legs**. 15 His legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of gold. In His legs, we see the kingly strength, the ability to support His people.
- His **appearance**. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. Is there anyone that can compare to Him? We now see in a mirror dimly, but one day we will see Him face to face!
- His **mouth**. 16 His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. O to be kissed by the Word of His mouth.

ST. AMBROSE (333-397), "Therefore such a soul also desires many kisses of the Word, so that she may be enlightened with the light of the knowledge of God. For this is the kiss of the Word, I mean the light of holy knowledge. God the Word kisses us, when he enlightens our heart... It is with the kiss that lovers cleave to each other and gain possession of the sweetness of grace that is within, so to speak. Through such a kiss the soul cleaves to God the Word... She sought the kiss, God the Word poured himself into her wholly... that is, his teachings and the laws of the wisdom that is within, and was fragrant with the sweet fragrance of his ointments. Captive to these, the soul is saying that the enjoyment of the knowledge of God is richer than the joy of any bodily pleasure."⁵

- His **heart**. He is your friend. The Bride exclaims, "This is my beloved and this is my friend. O daughters of Jerusalem." He has not called us slaves or servants, but friends. We share the most intimate things with Him, and He reveals the hidden things to us. Dear friend of Christ, dear lover of Christ, do you share the heavenly delights with Him in His **Word** and in **prayer**?

And as we see this Old Testament description of the Beloved One, I can't help but think of the revelation of the ascended Christ that the apostle John saw on the Isle of Patmos.

Glorious Vision of Christ

We read it in **Revelation 1:13-17**, "And in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like

⁵ St. Ambrose. *Isaac, or the Soul* 3.8-9 in *Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947, 65:16-17.

burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”

Both in this Old Testament picture, and in this New Testament description of Christ, we see that everything about Him surpasses and excels everyone else. Every detail is magnificent, and overall He is magnificent.

He is magnificent in the parts; He is magnificent in the whole.

In Times of Spiritual Dryness

It’s so important that in seasons of spiritual dryness or separation from our Beloved, we take time to recall what He is like, to verbalize His features . . . by faith to praise Him for what you’ve known to be true of Him in the past, even when you’re not feeling those things at the moment.

Christ is Precious

Turn your eyes upon Jesus! As we get our eyes off of ourselves and on to Him, in praise and worship, we find that God revives in our hearts an appreciation of Christ in the present. I think of that verse in **1 Peter 2:7**, “To you who believe, [Christ] is precious.” As you focus on Him, as you fix your eyes on Him, as you describe Him, as you praise Him, you find Him to be precious.

III. We should often fellowship with Christ, 6:1-3.

Daughters of Jerusalem

6:1, “Where has your beloved gone,
O most beautiful among women?
Where has your beloved turned,
that we may seek him with you?”

Evangelism. The beauty of Christ is so great that others want to know Him. You don’t have to be a Bible scholar to be a good evangelist. You just need to know Him. More and more you will know His Word. Better to know Him than just cold facts about Him!

Fellowship. But it’s not just talking to lost people that makes an impact—it’s the value and importance of talking with other believers about Christ. What happens when we do that? It strengthens our own faith, but it also stirs up in others their affection and their passion for Him, and most important of all, it blesses the Lord when we praise Him.

Together in the Garden of Love

She

“6:2 My beloved has gone down to his garden
to the beds of spices,
to graze in the gardens
and to gather lilies.”

3 I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;
he grazes among the lilies."

Acknowledging His Presence

She's acknowledging His presence! She's no longer enjoying him just because he's satisfying her and blessing her. She's now loving him, not for what he is to her, but for how she can bless him. There's a difference there.

Now, God does give us good and gracious gifts that He wants us to enjoy: His presence, His peace, His joy—but He wants us to treasure Him above all of that. This leads me to say a word here about this whole issue of feelings and emotions in our relationship with the Lord.

Feelings

Can I just remind us that feelings have very little to do with reality. Feelings aren't bad, necessarily. Now, if we let them run our lives, that's another thing. But we have to learn to walk by faith when we cannot feel Him, and to trust when we cannot sense His presence.

There will be spiritually dry seasons in our lives, times when we don't have these warm, great, tender feelings toward the Lord. Sometimes it's maybe because of our lack of responsiveness in the past, and He's wanting to woo our hearts, to realize how precious He is.

Conclusion

You belong to Him! Nothing will ever separate you from the love of Christ.