



# Biblical Manhood

Remembering Our Legacy, Fulfilling Our Destiny

November/December, 2015

## What Is Love?

In **Song of Solomon 8:1-4**, the wife is still desiring a greater intimacy with her beloved. Without this, she cannot be satisfied. Her words manifest her passion. Now, she expresses her love for Solomon. The words in **Song of Solomon 8:5-7** are some of the most stirring in this entire book, even in the Bible. The love spoken of here can be descriptive of the relationship between husband and wife and between Christ and his people. This section answers the question, “What is love?”

### Love leans (8:5)

In this verse, the daughters of Jerusalem speak, asking a question, “Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?” (8:5a). They see Solomon and his bride returning from their getaway (7:11-13). They see them riding in the royal chariot in full public display. What they primarily see is the wife leaning on Solomon. It is an intimate,

confident, adoring, and loving lean on her beloved Solomon.

This lovely couple has now come home, “Under the apple tree I awakened you. There your mother was in labor with you; there she who bore you was in labor” (8:5a). Solomon’s mother’s home is now his home. They have returned from their retreat in the wilderness. The primary thing that the daughters of Jerusalem see is the wife leaning on Solomon her husband.

This is what love is all about! It’s about leaning on your husband. It’s about being the kind of man that your wife can trust to lean on. Leaning is a sign of affection, trust, and security. It is a sign and act of dependence.

This also the way a believer is to respond to Christ. We are to lean on Him – to depend on Him, to find our security in Him, and to trust in Him above all others. I am reminded of the old hymn “Leaning On The Everlasting Arms”:

Leaning, leaning,  
Safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Jesus is so loving and lovable that we can lean on Him. We can trust Him for eternal salvation. We can depend on Him for our daily burdens and needs. We can rest in Him when chaos surrounds us. We can have His help in the trials of life. We can “lean” on Him. Are you leaning on Jesus? Are you casting all your cares and burdens on the One who loves you more than anybody else can or does?

The way that a Christian leans on Jesus is similar to the way that a wife is to lean upon her husband. A wife does not lean upon her husband for everything. However, she should lean on him for loving leadership, which includes affection, provision, and protection. That’s what it means to be a husband, to love your wife like Christ loves His Church. Every husband has to ask himself, “Am I lovely leanable?” In other words, am I the kind of man that my wife can lean on?

### **Love assures (8:6-7a)**

In **Song of Solomon 8:6**, Solomon’s wife makes this request of him, “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm.” In the ancient world, a person’s seal was the guarantee of his identity. It’s like a photo ID or a signature today. They were often made of precious metals and engraved with ornately carved inscriptions.

She willingly gives herself to Solomon. She wants to be his permanent possession. She longs to be his inwardly

and deeply (heart) and publicly (arm). His bride craved a fresh and firm assurance of her permanent place in his heart and life.

She then compares love to death, “for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave” (8:6b). Death is irresistible, unshakable, and resolute. Nothing can stop death. Yet, love is stronger than death! Yet, as she says, love is more determined, more tenacious, than death itself. The “jealousy” spoken of here is the single-minded devotion to someone. It is a desire for someone that tolerates no rivals. Jealousy is as strong or stronger than the grave. It lasts and cannot be defeated.

She then compares love to the fire of God, “Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it” (8:6c-7a). Here are two antithetical elements. When fire and water go up against one another, which wins? If there is enough water, water always wins. But here fire wins! Why? It’s because this is no ordinary fire. It is the “very flame of the LORD.” It’s a powerful image – fire and smoke ascending through tons and tons of water. That’s love!

Love is like death and the flame of the Lord. It has this permanence about it. True love is tenacious and determined. External forces cannot quench or drown it. Love is all consuming.

In these verses, the woman beseeches the man to take full possession of her. She wants the assurance of this

tenacious, determine, and permanent love. As a man, this is something that your wife needs. She needs the assurance of your love. This calls for the godly man to pray for wisdom and strength to assure his wife of his love for him. Then, with God's help, labor with all his might to give her assurance of this love. Love seeks to give assurance.

We need the same assurance in our walk with Jesus Christ. We need to pray for a healthy assurance of Christ's love for us. It's not because there is anything that is wrong with Christ's love. His love will never change or fluctuate. It is unquenchable and more powerful than death.

Yet, we are prone to doubt His love for us. We often yield to the lie that Christ does not love us completely and totally. We have a difficult time trusting that Christ loves us with such a deep and abiding love. We need to pray for this assurance. It should be one of our requests of Him to grant us a deep sense of His love for us. Call on Him to give you a fresh and firm assurance of His permanent place in His heart.

### **Love is freely and graciously given (8:7b)**

The closing phrase in this section reveals that true love can't be sold or bought, "If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised" (8:7b). This is the Old

Testament's version of the Beatles' hit, "Money Can't Buy Me Love." How foolish that anyone would try to put a price tag on love. This is a jab at Solomon who collected whatever his eyes desired (**Ecclesiastes 2:1-10**). In addition, it's a jab at our culture that teaches that love comes at a price.

How does this truth apply to marriage? Romance, compatibility, and sexual desire will come and go. However, love will remain. It remains because it is freely and graciously given. A person loves because he or she freely chooses to love.

There will be up and down times in your relationship. Compatibility may wane. Romance may come and go. Sexual desire may fluctuate and then slowly pass away one day. Yet, love stays. It stays because you choose to love. It remains because you make the decision to pursue this relationship no matter what. Plead with God to help you make the choice to love. Ask for His power to deny the flesh that will tell you to put yourself and your needs and desires first. Seek Him for the help to forsake self-centeredness and to love freely and graciously.

How does this apply to our relationship to Jesus? Jesus freely and graciously loves you. He will not forsake or fail you. He will be faithful in all circumstances. Rejoice in this. Revel in these truths. Rest in the love of Christ for you.

Yet, at the same time, do as Jesus does! Love others freely and graciously. Not just your spouse and family, but all those you in your sphere of influence. Become a conduit through which Jesus can love others. Forsake the lies of the world and its self-absorption and love others freely and graciously.

## World Prayer Plan January/February

### January

- 1-Afghanistan-The Church
- 2-Afghanistan-The Lost
- 3-Albania
- 4-Algeria
- 5-American Samoa
- 6-Andorra
- 7-Angola
- 8-Anguilla
- 9-Antigua
- 10-Argentina-The Church
- 11-Argentina-The Lost
- 12-Armenia
- 13-Aruba
- 14-Australia-The Church
- 15-Australia-The Lost
- 16-Austria-The Church
- 17-Austria-The Lost
- 18-Azerbaijan
- 19-Bahamas
- 20-Bangladesh
- 21-Barbados
- 22-Belgium
- 23-Belize
- 24-Benin
- 25-Bermuda
- 26-Bhutan
- 27-Bolivia-The Church
- 28-Bolivia-The Lost
- 29-Botswana
- 30-Brazil-The Church
- 31-Brazil-The Lost

### February

- 1-British Virgin Islands
- 2-Brunei
- 3-Bulgaria
- 4-Burkina Faso
- 5-Burundi
- 6-Byelarus
- 7-Cambodia
- 8-Cameroon
- 9-Canada-The Church
- 10-Canada-The Lost
- 11-Cape Verde Islands
- 12-Cayman Islands
- 13-Central African Republic
- 14-Chad
- 15-Channel Islands
- 16-Chile
- 17-China-The Church
- 18-China-The Lost
- 19-China-Persecuted Believers
- 20-China-Spiritual Warfare
- 21-China-Missionaries
- 22-China-Agencies Working in China
- 23-China-Provision of Bibles
- 24-China-Christian Literature
- 25-China-Conversion of Soldiers
- 26-China-Collapse of Communism
- 27-China-Taiwan
- 28-Colombia-The Church

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