



Biblical Manhood

Remembering Our Legacy, Fulfilling Our Destiny

September/ October, 2012

True Love

In **Song of Solomon 2:3-7**, the Shulamite, the beloved, Abishag, speaks. She reveals her longing for Solomon and her marriage to him. She speaks tender words concerning Solomon.

These tender words give us insight into what true love is. It shows us how distinct godly love is from the love of the world. Her love for Solomon provides us with insights on the kind of love that is to characterize Christian marriage. It also gives a model for what single Christians should strive for in preparation for marriage.

These words also offer us insight into the love that we are to have for our Savior. The Song of Solomon addresses the love between a man and a woman. Yet, it also speaks about the relationship between Christ and His people (**Ephesians 5:32-33**). This text calls us to

love our Savior. We can see what is to characterize our love for Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

What are the characteristics of Christian love that we learn from this text?

True love highly esteems the other.

(Song of Solomon 2:3)

In the previous verses, Solomon spoke tender words about his beloved Abishag. He refers to her as a “lily among thorns” (**2:2**). Now, Abishag describes her view of Solomon, “As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men” (**2:3a**). An apple tree in the midst of a forest would stand out. You would expect to find it in a garden or an orchard, some of its more natural habitats.

Abishag is saying that Solomon stands alone. No one can compare with him. The rest of the trees in the forest are common and stand for the other men, who seem so ordinary in the presence of Solomon. She sees him as unique!

She also finds contentment in him. Through her relationship with Solomon, she found *protection*, "With great delight I sat in his shadow" (2:3b). She also received *provision*, "and his fruit was sweet to my taste" (2:3c). Abishag cherishes this relationship. She holds Solomon in the highest esteem. She sees him as unique; she receives from him what she cannot receive from anyone else. She has eyes for no one else!

In the marriage relationship, the man and woman must see each other as unique. Each one must have eyes only for the other one. Everyone else must seem ordinary in his or her eyes.

How do we apply these verses to marriage? First, it reveals that one must work at becoming the kind of person that one can highly esteem. Men and women should pray and work that they will be the kind of person that is unique in the eyes of the other.

Christian men must seek God for His help in this matter. The man is to offer protection and provision for his wife. Call on God to become a man who gives both to your wife. If you are single, seek God to develop you into a

unique man of God that can offer these things to your future wife.

This text also should stir men to ask for God's help in dealing with a wandering eye. You are to highly esteem your wife. Every other woman should pale in comparison to your wife. Call on God to enable you to repent of a wandering eye and to focus solely on your wife.

How do we apply this relationship to our relationship to Christ? This text should drive us to ask some tough questions. Do I see Christ as unique? Do I cherish and love above all others, making everyone and everything else pale in comparison to Him? Do I find in Him my protection and provision?

We have a tender picture of Jesus. He is our faithful fruit Tree. We find shade from the pressures and struggles of life in Him. We receive provision from Him, because God meets all our needs through Him. Christ can protect you from harm and feed your soul. Do you run to Him for these things? Are you seeking to find these things everywhere but in Christ?

This text is a reminder that we must highly esteem Him. He must be precious to us! Ask God to make Christ increasingly precious to you. Plead for the grace to run to Him for your protection and your provision.

True love longs for intimacy. (Song of Solomon 2:4-6)

The beloved, Abishag, expresses her longings for intimacy as she looks forward to that coming point in her relationship with Solomon. She is full of anticipation as she looks forward to such familiarity. How eagerly she looks forward to what is ahead! She waits with confidence, with aching and with longing.

She declares, “He brought me to his banqueting house, and his banner over me was love” (2:4). Solomon marches her in as a person of great importance. The “banqueting house” was a large area, usually occupied by many people. He heads a procession with a streamer declaring his love for her. The “banner” is a sign of authority and possession (**Numbers 2:2**).

Solomon wasn’t at all ashamed to let the entire world know that this woman belonged to him – that he loved this woman. He has marked her out as his own. He has stamped her with public displays of his love.

This overwhelms Abishag with love for Solomon, “Sustain me with raisins; refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love” (2:6). The intensity of her love for Solomon makes her weak! The emotional turmoil in her heart has an effect on her body. She is so

desperate for Solomon that it makes her ill.

Because of her being sick with love, she longs to be near him, “His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me” (2:7). She longs for his embrace. She craves his support in the midst of her weakness. She needs him to uphold her.

How do we apply this to the marriage relationship? First, Christians need to make their commitment to their spouses known. This is to be done both by words and actions. The love between a man and a woman does not have to be accompanied by fanfares and the full glare of publicity, but it should be something that is known, that is in the public domain. There are two reasons for this. It is a great encouragement and comfort to your spouse. By your words and actions, you are to let everyone know that this person belongs to you. You are to make it clear that this person belongs to you and you belong to her. This is a rich blessing to the spouse. It can strengthen and bless the relationship.

The second reason is that it is a roadblock to adultery. When you make it clear where you stand, it slams the door on inappropriate relationships. When a man publicly displays his love for his wife by words and actions, it sends a powerful message that there is no room for adultery. When a man

draws a line in the sand and makes it clear that this is his wife and he loves her above all others, it offers a defense against the temptation to inappropriate relationships.

This text also should encourage men to pray for wisdom in this matter. Ask God to enable you how to show your love for your wife, even in public. Pray that you will show her respect and kindness in public and private. Plead that you will make it clear that you love her and no one else can compare with her.

At the same time, some might read this text and say, "This is the exact opposite of my relationship. We don't have this kind of intimacy." Time and neglect can weaken the intimacy in a relationship. This text calls husbands and wives to work hard at maintaining their intimacy. It has to be guarded. This verse teaches believers to pray that God will increase and protect the intimacy of their marriage.

This text also speaks to those who are single. When a couple first begins their lives together, the intimacy is strong and rich. Yet, it can decay over time. You have to remember that intimacy has to be maintained. Pray that God will give you the wisdom and strength to build a relationship and to maintain that relationship through the years.

How do we apply this text to our relationship to Jesus Christ? Many know what it's like to be lovesick on a human level. Yet, have you ever been lovesick for Christ? Have you ever been almost ill because you are so desperate for Jesus and to spend time with Him?

More than anything in the world, we should want Him. We are to long for His presence. We are to desire to know Him, "As the deer pants for the streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. Where can I go and meet with God?" (**Psalm 42:1-2**).

Jesus Christ is not ashamed of you (**Hebrews 2:11**). He died for you and was raised from the dead for you. He intercedes in heaven for you. He reigns as Lord over your life, directing and protecting you. He has placed you under the banner of His love – His own cross. Shouldn't we long to be with such a Savior? Shouldn't we desire Him above everything and everyone else in this world?

Do you cry out to Christ, "O for a closer walk with You?" We should pray as Fanny Crosby did:

"Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer,
blessed Lord,
To the place where thou hast died,
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed
Lord,
To thy precious bleeding side."

These verses also teach us that there ought to be an openness about our love to Jesus Christ. Christ is not ashamed of us. We should not be ashamed of Him in this sinful, fallen world. Because of who He is and what He has done for us, it should be apparent that we believe Him and love Him.

Our words and actions ought to point others to Jesus. By the way that we live our lives, people should understand that we belong to Jesus. They should know by the way we carry ourselves and respond to people and situations that we confess Christ as our Lord and Savior.

There is a definite spiritual problem if our belief and love for Christ is not evident to others. Do people know by the way you live that you belong to Jesus Christ? Plead with God that your life will be a living testimony to Christ and your commitment to Him.

True love is patient. (Song of Solomon 2:7)

Abishag, the beloved, doesn't feel that she can bear living alone any longer. She is impatient for her marriage to Solomon. Yet, she knows that she must be patient, "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you

not stir up or awaken love until it pleases" (2:7).

She urges the daughters of Jerusalem to make a promise – a commitment. They may want a relationship with a man. They may want to be married. Yet, they are not to force a relationship. They are not to hurry. They are to wait for love to blossom.

Interpreters are divided on the meaning of making a promise "by the gazelles or the does of the field" (2:7). I believe that the phrasing refers to fertility and devotion. She is asking them not to seek improper relationships before marriage. They are to wait and marry a man whom they love and can be devoted to for a lifetime.

Abishag is anxious to be intimate with Solomon. She is waiting for her marriage day. Yet, she knows that she has to wait. She has to exercise patience. At the right time, it will happen. If she is patient, it will be a blessing. She couldn't get in a hurry. Love is patient – it waits!

How do we apply this to marriage? First, love is not to be a passing fling but a loving commitment. It would have been easy for Abishag and Solomon to have a lustful fling. Yet, they waited. They waited for marriage. They made a commitment to each other.

In our world today, people want to have a fling rather than make a commitment. They want sex without love, pleasure without marriage, and intimacy without commitment. These things are the exact opposite of what God desires and commands. God's will is for one man to marry one woman – to have loving, lifetime relationship.

Second, this text shows us that marriage can be a rather demanding and exhaustive relationship. Becoming one takes time and work. Just because you get married doesn't mean that you automatically have intimacy and become one in heart and purpose. Love is like a tender plant; it needs to develop in its own time. Plead with God to grant you wisdom and power to become one.

This text also speaks to singles. The world says, "If it feels good, do it." The world teaches to seek intimacy and sex apart from the marriage commitment. Difficulty and disaster, sadness and sorrow await the person who seeks this path. This text calls singles to patience. God desires that singles remain pure and wait on God's provision for a marriage partner. Living life on the basis on your lusts and feelings is a recipe for disaster.

How do we apply this text to our relationship to Christ? In this text, Abishag looks forward to her marriage. She longs for the day when she becomes

Solomon's wife. The believer has a similar longing. We look forward to the day when Christ comes to claim His bride!

We have come to know Christ. We walk with Christ. Yet, we desire that wedding day – when Christ comes for His bride, His church. Our Lord Jesus Christ is going to return. He is going to claim us as His own. He will openly acknowledge us as His bride – His own people.

This day is coming! Yet, we now need patience. We long for this day. Yet, we need patience to wait for Christ's return. We must wait in faith for Christ to come back. Patiently waiting for Christ means living for Him. It means striving to be holy. It means sharing the gospel with as many people as possible. It means that no matter what we go through in this life, we remember and anchor our lives in the fact that Jesus Christ is going to come back.

Are you patiently waiting for Jesus Christ to return? The Bible is clear: Christ is coming for His people! We believe this and trust this. Now, we must patiently wait. Plead with Christ to give you the grace and strength to wait for His coming.

World Prayer Plan

November

- 1-Turks and Caicos Islands
- 2-Tuvalu
- 3-Uganda-The Church
- 4-Uganda-The Lost
- 5-Ukraine-The Church
- 6-United Arab Emirates
- 7-United Kingdom-The Church
- 8-United Kingdom-The Lost
- 9-United Kingdom-Spiritual Awakening
- 10-England
- 11-Northern Ireland
- 12-Scotland
- 13-Wales
- 14-United States-The Church
- 15-United States-The Lost
- 16-United States-Spiritual Awakening
- 17-United States-Missionary Fervor
- 18-United States-Government
- 19-United States-Spiritual Unity
- 20-Uruguay
- 21-Uzbekistan
- 22-Vanuatu
- 23-Venezuela-The Church
- 24-Venezuela-The Lost
- 25-Vietnam-The Church
- 26-Vietnam-The Lost
- 27-Vietnam-Open Doors
- 28-Virgin Islands
- 29-Revival In Caribbean
- 30-Wallis and Futura Islands

December

- 1-Yemen-The Church

- 2-Yemen-The Lost
- 3-Yugoslavia
- 4-Bosnia
- 5-Hercegovina
- 6-Montenegro
- 7-Serbia
- 8-Macedonia
- 9-Zaire-The Church
- 10-Zaire-The Lost
- 11-Zambia
- 12-Zimbabwe
- 13-Africa
- 14-Asia
- 15-Caribbean
- 16-Eurasia
- 17-Europe
- 18-Latin America
- 19-Middle East
- 20-North America
- 21-Pacific
- 22-The Fall of Islam
- 23-The Fall of Hinduism
- 24-Bible Translation and Distribution Across the World
- 25-That The Glory and Power of Jesus Would Be Seen Across The World
- 26-More Missionaries
- 27-Believers With A Heart For The World
- 28-Increase In Giving To Mission Efforts
- 29-Destruction of Satan's Grip Over the Nations
- 30-Worldwide Prayer For World Evangelization

31-The Soon Return Of Jesus

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