

The Song of Songs

LESSON 9: AFFIRMING HER BEAUTY

Intro:



BIG IDEA: The _____ we speak are part of how we _____ one another.

Behold, you are beautiful, my love,
 behold, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are doves
 behind your veil.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
 leaping down the slopes of Gilead.
² Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes
 that have come up from the washing,
all of which bear twins,
 and not one among them has lost its young.
³ Your lips are like a scarlet thread,
 and your mouth is lovely.
Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate
 behind your veil.
⁴ Your neck is like the tower of David,
 built in rows of stone;
on it hang a thousand shields,
 all of them shields of warriors.
⁵ Your two breasts are like two fawns,
 twins of a gazelle,
 that graze among the lilies.

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⁶ Until the day breathes
and the shadows flee,
I will go away to the mountain of myrrh
and the hill of frankincense.

⁷ You are altogether beautiful, my love;
there is no flaw in you.

- He wants her to _____ he finds her _____.
- This is a “*wasf*,” a song in which bride and groom _____ one another.⁶⁷
- This would be a _____ to love-making. It is a form of verbal _____.
- Age will _____ some of what you find to be _____. _____ => _____
- He is not being crass, but couches things in lots of _____.
- **Eyes:** they are like _____ behind the veil. Probably referring to their _____.
She’s coy, not _____.
- **The veil:** It heightens her _____ and _____.
- **Hair:** her hair is _____, like _____ on the lush territory of Gilead.
- **Teeth:** Her teeth are clean and none are _____!
Unshorn sheep _____ grass, twigs, poop and other debris. Her teeth are also _____ and _____.
- **Lips:** they are a beautiful red. We are not sure they are naturally red, or _____ transformed.
- **Mouth:** it is desirable. He, presumably, wants to _____ it (and _____ it?).
- Or, as Gledhill notes, the Hebrew word indicates the mouth as an organ of speech. Therefore what she _____ is lovely.⁶⁸
- **Cheeks or Temple:** Longman thinks this is her temple and isn’t sure what can be like a pomegranate.⁶⁹ Her cheeks could have the _____ color of pomegranates. They could also be full and _____.



⁶⁷ Longman, pp. 140-1.

⁶⁸ Gledhill, pp. 156.

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- **Neck:** the tower of David is an odd comparison. Longman suggests it is about a “transfer of value- her long neck is _____, dignified and _____. It may also be well-_____ like the tower.⁷⁰
- **Breasts:** They are like fawns, which may refer to her youth, her _____ maturity. He is struck by their _____. Gazelles imply their sleekness and _____.
- In 5:13 his lips are lilies. This may be an allusion to him _____ her _____.⁷¹
- Dillow points to the fact that gazelles were a _____ at Solomon’s table (1 Kings 4:23), with the implication they are _____ to eat.⁷²
- Myrrh and the mountains of Lebanon (smell of cedar) are both desirable. He is probably describing her breasts again, and his _____ of them.



“Not ten yolk of oxen have the power to draw us like a woman’s hair.” **H.W. Longfellow**

Allegorical Interpretation: Jesus is speaking well of His Bride, the Church in a 7-fold affirmation. For instance, sheep convey her gentle nature, and that we are white having been washed in His blood. The two fawns are the two covenants in harmony with one another. Her lips refer to her speech or prayer.

⁶⁹ Longman, pp. 145.

⁷⁰ Longman, pp. 146.

⁷¹ Gledhill, pp. 157.

⁷² Dillow, pp. 76.

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“Any attempt to interpret the book in a strictly literal way is a great mistake, and must lead to very great evil.” **Don Fortner**⁷³

Dramatic Interpretation: This is a remembrance of the wedding night. He sings a song of praise to her.

Wisdom Literature: Solomon’s model of love focused on wealth and craftsmanship. It left the focus on him. He, on the other hand, is caught up in her and her beauty instead.

Christological Focus: The relationship between husband & wife does point us our relationship with Christ. He does think well of the Bride. We see some of that in Scripture, and churches need to teach and embrace that as part of our identity in Christ.

⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, my bride;
come with me from Lebanon.
Depart from the peak of Amana,
from the peak of Senir and Hermon,
from the dens of lions,
from the mountains of leopards.

- This the first time she is called “*my _____*.”
- The focus is “*_____ me*”. He wants her to be with him.
- The other focus is “*_____*”: Lebanon (2x), the peaks of Amana, Senir & Hermon (tallest peak in the range- 9,200+ ft), lions’ dens & leopards’ mountains.



He does not want her to be distant, emotionally. He wants intimacy: physically & emotionally.

- Or, as Glenhill supposes, he sees her as _____, living among the ‘ _____ ’ and protected by the animals.⁷⁴

Allegorical Interpretation: Jesus calls us “to come along with Him as a faithful Bride to leave our own people and our father’s house, and to cleave only to him.”⁷⁵

⁷³ Fortner, pp. 86.

⁷⁴ Gledhill, pp. 160.

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Dramatic Interpretation: He wants to build her a vacation house.

Typological Interpretation: It is normal for a person to want their spouse to be available to them: physically, emotionally and spiritually. In a similar way, Christ wants emotional and spiritual intimacy with us. We are also to physically serve Him as a result of that intimacy.

⁹ You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride;
you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your necklace.
¹⁰ How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is your love than wine,
and the fragrance of your oils than any spice!
¹¹ Your lips drip nectar, my bride;
honey and milk are under your tongue;
the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.
¹² A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
a spring locked, a fountain sealed.
¹³ Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates
with all choicest fruits,
henna with nard,
¹⁴ nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
with all trees of frankincense,
myrrh and aloes,
with all choice spices—
¹⁵ a garden fountain, a well of living water,
and flowing streams from Lebanon.
¹⁶ Awake, O north wind,
and come, O south wind!
Blow upon my garden,
let its spices flow.
She
Let my beloved come to his garden,
and eat its choicest fruits.

- Calling your wife “*my sister*” is _____ in ANE love poems (3x here).
- “*You have captivated my heart*” repeated for emphasis. “*One look*” & “*one jewel*” point to how _____ he finds her.
- Her love is _____, it is better than wine. He is _____ on her, so to speak, or her love (caresses: Gledhill).
- The word for “*spice*” is used in 4:14, 15; 5:10. This spice is one of the gifts given to Solomon by the _____ of

⁷⁵ Fortner, pp. 91.



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_____ (1 Kings 10), is part of the _____ process Esther underwent (Esther 2:12).⁷⁶ She smells intoxicating.

- He returns to her mouth: lips & tongue. Her kisses are _____ & desirable. He wants to explore her mouth.
- Even her clothing smells _____.
- He calls her a garden, a _____, a _____. Smells, beauty, taste => consumption.
- Gardens & fountains go together.
- Note the garden, spring & fountain are _____ or _____.
- In the ANE they often were sealed so they could only be entered by the _____ and/or _____.
- She has virtue and _____. He is most likely pointing to her virginity.
- He now describes the garden: pomegranates, henna, saffron... _____ indeed.
- An odd aspect is the _____ she sends out: legs, pubic hair, vulva (Longman)? Stretching?
- Henna: a shrub with _____ flowers. The _____ are used for a reddish brown _____ still used to color hair.
- Nard: a fragrant oil from a plant found in _____, China & _____.
- Saffron: a type of _____ with _____ flowers. It produces an oil with a sweet, spicy, floral scent.
- Calamus: probably sweet cane _____ which has a _____ odor.
- Cinnamon: the spicy _____ from some trees. Hebrew => Greek => English
- Myrrh: an aromatic _____ from the Balsamadendron tree in Arabia, Abyssinia & India.
- He then focuses on the spring or fountain. The source of the _____ is in the garden.
- He adds “*well*”, a deep, water _____ which is the focus of his interest.
- It is fresh, not _____ water, by virtue of “*living water*” and waters of Lebanon due to melting snow.



⁷⁶ Longman, pp. 154.

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- Her response: to allow him (represented by the winds) to blow upon her garden to let its spices flow. She is _____ him to _____ the garden.
- The time has come to “awaken” love! She is _____, not passive or disinterested.
- She wants him to come (standard Hebrew metaphor for sex) and “eat” the choicest fruit of his garden. Her garden belongs to him (1 Corinthians 7).
- Some take this as a reference to oral sex, _____ the garden refers to her body.
- Either way: a man should _____ until his wife is ready for sex. She dictates how long _____ lasts.

¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern,
flowing water from your own well.
¹⁶ Should your springs be scattered abroad,
streams of water in the streets?
¹⁷ Let them be for yourself alone,
and not for strangers with you.
¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
¹⁹ a lovely deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
be intoxicated always in her love. **Proverbs 5**



“The beauty of expression fits the holiest of all human relationships. Metaphor plays the same role here as the veil in the temple. Sinful man needs such to protect the mystery.” **Dennis Kinlaw**⁷⁷

He
5 I came to my garden, my sister, my bride,
I gathered my myrrh with my spice,

⁷⁷ Kinlaw, pp. 1230.

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I ate my honeycomb with my honey,
I drank my wine with my milk.

Others

Eat, friends, drink,
and be drunk with love!

- He mentions a _____: my garden, my sister, my bride. They are one and the same.
- He enjoys her in a triplet of _____: gathered, ate, drank.
- He partakes of the many _____ in her garden which is now his (see possessives).
- Their family and friends _____ with them, and _____ them.

“Ancient Near-Eastern love-poetry often uses the metaphors of a honeycomb and of ‘thicket’ to describe the private parts of the lower female genitalia.” **Tom Gledhill**⁷⁸

“What ones does with one’s sexuality is from a biblical perspective always more than a private, personal thing.” **Dennis Kinlaw**⁷⁹

Allegorical Interpretation: Christ has made us utterly beautiful thru His grace, and delights in the Church. It is our speech, or praise, that He desires. The garments point to our imputed and possibly imparted righteousness. The church flourishes with good works. Our heart is a garden He created by grace.

Dramatic Interpretation: He finds her to be a skillful lover. They are both in an elevated sexual state, ready for love. She is now accessible to him: visibly and physically. All their senses are engaged.

“Laughter should be an integral part of the marriage bed. ... To giggle and romp and play is what makes the day, whether or not the heights of the mountain peaks are scaled.” **Tom Gledhill**⁸⁰

Wisdom Literature: “Relational and spiritual truth are interconnected as a man only finds true joy in the arms of his own wife, so Israel could only find true delight and satisfaction in the arms of her own husband, the Lord, not by pursuing extra-marital affairs with the deities of other nations or through politically motivated alliances.”⁸¹ Sex is not a private matter between two consenting adults, but exists in the larger context of a covenant community that witnesses, affirms and supports a marriage.

Christian Typology: The marital relationship points to our relationship with Christ as one of mutuality post conversion. He longs for spiritual intimacy with us, and we long for the same with Him and only Him. There is a desire to delight in the Savior.

⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. **James 4**

Conclusion:

⁷⁸ Gledhill, pp. 167.

⁷⁹ Kinlaw, pp. 1230.

⁸⁰ Gledhill, pp. 169-70.

⁸¹ Duguid, pp. 117-118.