

*The
Sacredness
Of
Sex*

God's Design For Biblical Marriage

Burley W. Moore

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Of Sex
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All scripture references are taken from the KJV

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my Bride, Serena Ann Tolley Moore. As of this year, we will have been married fifty years. The year in which this book first goes to press, we'll celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary. This happens to be the second book which I have dedicated to her. The first book that I wrote was also dedicated to her, but I feel that it's most appropriate for me to do it again as I address a most sacred subject in this 50th year of marital bliss.

It was on August 25, 1968, that we said our "I do's" and entered into marriage covenant with one another in the eyes of God. Looking back down memory lane, it seems to have gone by in a flash. Being a pastor's wife, she had more than her share to deal with, but she always has been and remains my best friend and strongest supporter. I can't help but believe that there will be a special place in heaven for pastor's wives, or at least, a special reward.

She knew when we were married that God had called me to preach and that I aspired to be a pastor. We were married in August and the following October, I took my first full time ministerial position with the Greater Greensboro Youth for Christ. The next year, in August, one year from the time we were married, I took my first pastorate. God knew that I was going to need her. She not only was a wonderful Mother to our three children, but the best wife that any man could ever want.

Like all couples, we've had our ups and downs along with trials and troubles from all directions, but God has been more than faithful to us. The Lord gave us to one another and has sustained us in every area of our lives. To God be the Glory!

Introduction

I only wish that I had written this book many years ago so that I could have given it to young people in their teens. Also, I would have used it with those whom I counseled regarding either their upcoming marriage or in their troubled marriage. However, to be honest, I could not have written it previously like I've written it now. I've lived long enough and witnessed enough in and out of my pastorates, to know how people live in the real world. We can bury our heads in the sand and pretend that things are not as they are, but it changes nothing. We're living in a morally rotten world with no regards to the Holy standards of God and no respect for His written Word. Those of us who hold to God's teaching on sex are looked upon as old-fashioned or old fogies and out-of-step with modern culture.

We're certainly living in a time like that of the Judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25). I never dreamed when my wife and I were married fifty years ago this year, that we would witness the spiritual and moral degradation of our society to what it is today.

May God use this little book to help challenge and restore some moral decency back into the family. I trust that God will use it to encourage young people to guard themselves, protect their virginity, and present themselves to their future mate on the marriage night so that they will enjoy a honeymoon the way God intended it. You'll be glad you did!

Preface

I never thought that I would ever write a book on the subject of sex. Years ago, when Christian authors were beginning to broaden their writings into this subject, my wife said that we ought to write a book on sex because sex sells, and we could make a mint. Well, those of you who know my wife, know that she is the witty one. In my case, I normally don't sell any of my books because there are very few people who would purchase them. Therefore, I usually give them away and use all my books as teaching tools, trying to get people into the Word of God in hopes they will be enriched in their spiritual growth.

This is certainly not a book dealing with sex education nor merely a sex manual on how to have a better sex life. However, I'm going to share with you from my perspective God's Word on this very vital subject and guarantee that if sex is practiced God's way, then husbands and wives will most definitely have a better sex life. Following God's guidelines will give married couples a more fulfilling relationship. We're living in a perverted world. It always has been and will be until Jesus comes. Sexual perversion is nothing new, but I can only speak to this during my lifetime living in the United States of America. I remember the time when homosexuality was in the closet. It hasn't been all that long ago when living together outside the bonds of holy wedlock (cohabitation) was taboo. Having children outside of marriage was considered a disgrace.

Just recently, our local news reported in two separate stories about a twelve-year-old girl getting pregnant and a fourteen-year-old boy charged with rape. It's not unusual to hear of sex between students on the grounds of both middle and high school. To make matters even worse, it's not uncommon to hear of school teachers being charged having sex with students.

Sex is nothing new. It's been taking place ever since Adam and Eve. Perversion is nothing new; however, in our culture it has taken a turn for the worse during my lifetime and seems to be escalating rapidly with the passing of every year. As I think back

over the past ten to twenty years, it's unbelievable as to how fast attitudes have changed for the worse regarding moral behavior. I remember a man, who was a well-known spokesman on family values, saying that at the rate things were changing, marriage would soon go out of style in America.

I never thought that I would see that day come, but it has. Most younger couples see nothing wrong with living together and even having children without getting married. But, let's not forget how even the older generation has changed. The number of older couples who are looking for a heterosexual relationship without marriage is growing. Often, they claim that the laws of the land do not make it feasible to have a marriage license because of what it would cost them financially in the long term. Therefore, they choose to live together outside of holy matrimony and sacrifice their morals for the almighty dollar.

It's also sad to see the number of sexually transmitted diseases increasing among youth, adults, and even more shocking among the older and senior population. Recent advertisements on TV are telling baby boomers that they need to be vaccinated for Hepatitis-C. A medical doctor has informed me that people who have had more than one sexual partner in their lifetime need this treatment. Today's movies portray people having sex like animals and going from person to person. These movie producers present pre-marital and extra-marital sex as having the "pleasure of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). But, what they do not picture is the hurt, heartache, and disease that goes along with sexual sin the rest of one's life.

Recently, I was watching an older season of a popular TV crime program. The woman detective was talking with a teenager concerning charges against her. The teenager was claiming that she had sex with a fifty-two-year-old rock star to irritate her mother. The young detective was trying to console the teen, by making light of the teen boasting about losing her virginity. The detective proceeded by saying that her own mother was old fashioned because she thought that sex was only to be between a husband and wife.

Also, as I write this book, the other night I was walking my treadmill switching TV channels waiting for the news to come on when I discovered a program that appeared to be a modern-day dating game. The woman was to choose which man that “she wanted to spend the night with on a date.” On another night, the same scenario occurred except this time there were three men involved and one man was to choose which man he wanted to “spend the night with on a date.” To emphasize what was involved, it showed the hotel bedroom that they would occupy and champagne glasses awaiting them. When the date was selected, the TV showed this gay couple kissing on the lips. This program, along with many others on TV, are literally making a game out of dating and marriage as well as promoting sodomy. It appears to me that many who go out on a date in this day and time do so with the expectation of ending up in bed before the evening is over.

I mention the above simply to illustrate how the modern media is brainwashing today’s youth when it comes to what they call “old fashioned” virtues. Well, if you have any question as to where I’m going in the writing of this book, let me say that I’m one of those old-fashioned Bible believing Christians. Movies and TV programs today are filling the minds of our youth, and the entire public, that sex outside of marriage is normal and acceptable. Those who value and keep their virginity until marriage are not just frowned upon, but mocked.

These are just some of the reasons why I feel led to write a book that I never dreamed of writing. It’s my prayer that God will use it to encourage young people to save themselves and remain a virgin until God leads them to the spouse of His choosing for that very special “honeymoon night.” I know this sounds “old fashioned” and is certainly not a popular thought today, but it is the teaching of Scripture. For those reading this book and who have already violated the hopes of virginity, let me say that God’s grace is greater than our sin (Rom. 5:20). For some of you ladies, you might not be able to wear a white dress down the aisle to symbolize your virginity, but hopefully, you’ll be able to do so to symbolize that you’ve been washed in the

precious atoning blood of Calvary's Lamb. Likewise, you men who have lost your virginity can find the same forgiveness in Christ. There is no such thing as secondary virginity, but there is forgiveness in Christ for those who confess and repent, even Christians who mess up.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(I Jh. 1:9)

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

(Isa. 1:18)

There is an old joke that asked the question, “How do porcupines make love?” ANSWER: “Very carefully.” Without doubt, sex is no joking matter, but unfortunately it is taken far too lightly in today's culture. I realize that it has always been taken lightly, but in my lifetime, I've seen its degradation in the land in which I live since the time of my youth. Things are accepted today that were not accepted just a few years ago. Sex is serious and we need to see that love making the way God intended it should be engaged “very carefully” and well pleasing to God. TV shows have literally made a game out of sex.

May God help us to see anew and afresh the “sacredness of sex.” The writing of this book comes from my heart that is broken over the moral corruption that is found all around us in the world. Unfortunately, it has spilled over into the visible local churches. Couples don't think anything about living together outside the bounds of holy matrimony and then march into a church service on Sunday morning, grinning from ear to ear instead of heads bowed low with shame written all over their faces. How can a truly saved person do this without feeling remorse? I didn't say that a saved person couldn't commit immorality. But, I can tell you on the authority of Holy Scripture,

that Christians cannot willfully and intentionally continue in sin without the Holy Spirit's chastisement (Heb. 12:5-11).

Mankind has desecrated God's deign for human sexuality. We're living in a day where the spiritual and moral consciences of humanity, for the most part, has become "seared with a hot iron" (I Tim. 4:2). I want to remind church leaders of local congregations about Paul's rebuke of the Corinthian Church because they failed to discipline a member who fornicated with his step-mother (I Cor. 4). Church discipline isn't pleasant, but it's biblical and it must be practiced in order to maintain the purity of a local assembly regardless of the sin that brings it about. Most pastors don't want to deal with it because it will not be well received by their congregation, many if not most of which are unregenerate. I would ask pastors this question. Do you want to please men or God? Do you even believe in a regenerate church membership? If so, then members ought to be held accountable when it comes to maintaining a Christian testimony.

"It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and

wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

(I Cor. 5:1-13)

Chapter 1 Ordained Of God

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” (Gen. 1:21-31)

“And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and

brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (Gen. 2:18-25)

There is nothing wrong nor sinful about sex when it is seen from the biblical perspective. God is the One Who ordained sex. It is His creation to be practiced only within His boundaries. Man is the one who has perverted sex under the influence of Satan’s lies. To step outside of God’s perimeters for sexual conduct is to fall into the devil’s trap and fall for his deception. Satan wants to rob humanity of God’s best and steal from you what you’ll someday regret.

Let’s go all the way back to the origin of sex. When God created Adam and Eve, we have the story of not only when, but why God ordained sexual conduct between a husband and wife. There may be some extreme ideas that sex is only for procreation, or in other words, for having children. That is certainly a major factor for sex without debate, but that is not the only reason. God made man and women with the need for one to compliment the other. Now, before I go any further, let me say that there is nothing wrong with singleness if that is the way God has programed you. However, most people are not gifted with celibacy. At this point, let me refer you to my book on *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage* where I speak on this subject.

When God created Adam and Eve, He made them with sexual desires which only the opposite sex can satisfy and fulfill. In fact, God made the male and female anatomy in such a way that the two bodies can be joined and fit together to become one flesh in the appropriate physical places. That is exactly what the Word of God teaches. In the Gospels, Jesus simply reiterated that which is stated in the first Book of the Bible.

“And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matt. 19:4-6)

This word, “cleave” in the KJV simply means to stick to or be joined together. It applies to the oneness of a husband and wife relationship in every area of their lives, including sexually. Notice that immediately following the statement on cleaving is the mention of a husband and wife being “one flesh.” “Cleave” is a strong word that emphasizes the completeness that ought to be found in the marriage relationship. I remember one church that I pastored some years ago that wrote a history of their existence. Included was a record of their former pastors. This area of the country had their own unique way of using words and we could not help but be overtaken by the way they described the offspring of their former pastors. They said that the “connection” of the husband and wife produced their children. Well, that is putting it rather bluntly, but it was the truth and it certainly is in keeping with the KJV of the word “cleave.”

There are some who will tell you that it is permissible for a married couple to engage in oral sex and even anal sex. I don't see that as acceptable. I believe that God created the male and female anatomy in such a way for the husband and wife to properly fix together in a “one flesh” relationship. Anything other than that is not proper and legitimate sex from my vantage point. What I'm saying gives no couple the right to engage in oral and anal sex because, in my opinion that is perversion and totally contrary to acceptable conduct under all circumstances. God made the mouth for a purpose and God designed the rectum for a purpose. Those purposes ought not to be violated, but respected in God's created order for the human body.

I firmly believe that one of the reasons why people are looking upon homosexual behavior as acceptable is because many heterosexual couples are doing what homosexuals are practicing regarding their sexual activity. But, let me remind you that perversion is perversion regardless of who is involved. God made a place in the body for a male and female to be joined together. No such provision is made in those of the same sex. To try and alter God's design is perversion. Also, this most certainly applies to those who try to alter their bodily identity in transgenderism whether it be by cross-sex hormone therapy, gender reassignment surgery, or whatever such action.

Perversion means the act of perverting or the state of being perverted. It's a sexual practice or act considered abnormal or deviant. Now, let's break that down a little further and see that the word, pervert, means to cause to turn away from what is right, proper, or good. It means to corrupt, to bring to a bad or worse condition, debase, to put to a wrong or improper use, to misuse. Taking it a step further, I point out that the word, deviant, is referring to differing from a norm or from the accepted standards of a society or one that differs from a norm, especially a person whose behavior and attitudes differ from accepted social standards.

As a Christian, I can add to this defined list, saying that which is not acceptable to God according to His standards found in the Holy Scriptures is perverted deviant behavior. Social standards change, but God's doesn't. After looking at those definitions, we must establish that the standard of right and wrong, sin and righteousness, has been set by God. When a society establishes their own standard of behavior then they will be like the Israelites who "did that which was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

Chapter 2

The Song Of Solomon

Like the Book of Psalms, the Song of Solomon can be called a hymn book with some of Solomon's best songs. It's a beautiful book of poetry set to music depicting the love life of a husband and wife. Apparently, Solomon was quite a song writer having written over one thousand different "songs" (I Kings 4:32). In the Song of Solomon, we discover a song that Solomon wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This Book is filled with symbols and poetic images that require spiritual maturity and discernment to understand.

As we'll discover in a brief survey of this Book, the language is very sensual, but should never be misinterpreted as vulgar or carnal. It appears that the language is so graphic that ancient Israel would not allow Jews to read The Song of Solomon until they were either thirty years of age or married. Today, there are some Orthodox Jewish homes that will not let it be read until their bar or bat mitzvah. Keep in mind as you read this lengthy chapter, that God devoted an entire Book in the Bible with sexual innuendo that also conveys spiritual truth.

At this point, we need to remember that the Bible is filled with many different types of stories (which are all true from which we can learn literal truths). For instance, there are stories of battle and conflict such as when David fought Goliath and the Midianites. There are stories of science such as the day when the sun stood still for Joshua and the moving of the sun's shadow back ten degrees for Hezekiah. And "yes," there are also stories of romance such as is found between Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Boaz and Ruth, and Solomon and his lover.

Two of the most famous books in the Bible dealing with the theme of romance are the Books of Ruth and The Song of Solomon. Just as the Book of Ruth paints a picture of Christ's love for His Church, so does the Song of Solomon. There is no question concerning the sexual overtones found in The Song of Solomon, but failure to look beyond the story of physical

romance and discover the spiritual application is to do injustice to God's message found in this Book.

The Song of Solomon is a wonderful and beautiful picture of physical human romantic love and sexual expression of that love. It's a reminder that sex the way God intended it is not ugly nor sinful, but ordained to be used in a way that honors Him. The bold language in this Book not only reminds us of the sacredness of sex, but it paints a glorious picture of a believer's personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Sex is the most intimate of human relationships and salvation is the most intimate of spiritual relationships

In order to properly understand The Song of Solomon, we need to look at it from several different standpoints. First of all, we need to view it literally as we see the beauty of wedded love. Far too many people know little about real love because they don't know God Who is "love" (I Jh. 4:8,16). If you don't know God in the sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, there is no way that you can know the kind of love that I'm talking about in this book or the love of which the Bible speaks. That which the world calls love is nothing more than lust because worldly love is not the love of which the Bible speaks. God-ordained sex is limited to the bonds of marriage and outside of holy wedlock, it becomes sin which carries a high price tag for disobedience.

Holy matrimony is a sacred God-ordained institution that spiritually describes the relationship of Christ and His Church. Therefore, we need to view The Song of Solomon reverently with respect for its spiritual message. God has always had a people. That applies both in the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament saint was saved by looking toward the cross and the New Testament saint is saved by looking back at the cross. There has always been only one way of salvation and that is through "Christ Jesus ... by grace ... through faith" (Eph. 2:7-8).

The marriage relationship is used both in the Old and New Testaments to describe God's relationship with His people. In the Old Testament, God often accused Israel of spiritual harlotry and

adultery when they forsook Him for the ways of idolatry. The Book of Hosea literally acted out God's great love for His people through the lives of Hosea and Gomer. In that Book, Israel "played the harlot" (Hos. 2:5) by turning her back on her "beloved" and flirted with the ungodly world. The figure of the bride and bridegroom is used in both the Old and New Testaments to picture God's relationship with His redeemed people (Eph. 5:22-23). Just as the husband and wife physically become "one flesh" (Matt. 19:6), so does Christ and His Church spiritually. Every believer needs to see himself as one who is spiritually wedded to Christ and stands in danger of being seduced into sin by Satan. Sometime in the future, Christ will return in great glory in His second coming where He and His bride will observe the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7-9).

Having said all this, I remind you that The Song of Solomon must be viewed spiritually. It is a book dealing with commitment. Husbands and wives must be committed to one another, but for that commitment to be what it ought to be, they should first be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The redeemed child of God ought to be a committed follower of his Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest lesson to learn from The Song of Solomon is that of faithful love. Not only does one need to know about Christ with his mind, but be committed to Christ with all their heart. Dating couples may have a warm feeling for each other, but it's not until they enter marriage that they fully commit themselves to one another. I guess, that it's at this point where we discover one of the reasons, so many couples today are shacking up and not getting married. There is no commitment! In a God-ordained marriage, all that a couple is and all they have belong to each other. Even their bodies are no longer their own (I Cor. 7:1-5). Likewise, a Christian must recognize that his body is no longer his own, but is to be a "living sacrifice ... unto God" (Rom. 12:1). Whenever Satan tries to tempt the relationship of either a husband and wife or Christian and Christ, then we're expected to remain true and faithful (II Cor. 11:2).

The Song of Solomon is not a mere drama recording a continued story, but a series of love lyrics that is probably at times out of chronological sequence. The dialogue in this song shifts back and forth between the Shulamite maiden and her beloved. This is called an antiphony. It's where one character speaks and the other responds. The main setting is the palace in Jerusalem with some occasional flashbacks to a previous time.

"Solomon's ... song of songs" is a love story where a triangle of people is involved. The family of the maiden appears "angry" with her and forced her to keep the "vineyards" and tend the "flock" (1:6,8). The lovely maiden probably fell in love with the king when he was on one of his travels through her part of the country. The king was "Solomon" who fell in love with the maiden and promised to return and take her back to the palace to be his wife. Rather than examining The Song of Solomon in great depth, I'm going to give you a birds-eye view of the entire Book. We're going to see it as one of the greatest expressions of God's love for His people and at the same time, we'll discover the high view God places on marital love between a husband and wife.

Solomon has become known for having many different lovers. In fact, the Bible tells us that he had a total of "seven hundred wives" and "three hundred concubines" (I Kings 11:3). Eventually, they "turned away his heart" (I Kings 11:4) from the Lord. In The Song of Solomon, the woman's lover is referred to as a "shepherd" and also she sees him as her "king." There are various views as to why she does this, but nevertheless, it is generally believed that the two names refer to Solomon. Most likely, the story recorded in this Book is written by Solomon in reference to his first wife. Some of it was probably written in the period of his marital purity before the days of his lustful downfall (Heb. 13:4). The first few chapters of The Song of Solomon are best understood to be that of the bride dreaming of her future encounter with her bridegroom as she looks forward to the consummation of their marriage following the wedding.

The Craving for Intimacy

The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love *is* better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name *is as* ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee. I *am* black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I *am* black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; *but* mine own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents. I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows *of jewels*, thy neck with chains *of gold*. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver. While the king *sitteth* at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. A bundle of myrrh *is* my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. My beloved *is* unto me *as* a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes. Behold, thou *art* fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed *is* green. The beams of our house *are* cedar, *and* our rafters of fir.”

(Song of Solomon 1:1-17)

This chapter begins; thus, The Song of Solomon begins, dealing with the subject of kissing. How would you define a kiss? A dictionary definition of kissing is to touch or caress with the lips as an expression of affection, greeting, or respect. To engage in mutual touching or caressing with the lips. A caress or touch with the lips.

There are different types of kissing that may be done with the lips, such as a peck on the cheek or hand. When we think of romantic kissing, our thoughts turn to two people kissing on the lips of each other. When Solomon wrote “kisses of his mouth,” it was no doubt referring to romantic kissing. Mouth to mouth kissing, in my opinion, should be reserved for the romantic relationship. I’ve seen parents kiss their children on the mouth and I’ve seen married people kiss others to whom they are not married on the mouth. To me, that is inappropriate. For a husband and wife to kiss, it should be not only a show of affection, but a reminder to one another of their commitment. That kind of kissing ought to be a profound touch of love for one another. A kiss on the mouth ought to be something special and not freely given to just anyone.

The “kisses” spoken of in our text were desired by the bride from her bridegroom. It should be a symbol of affection that speaks of their desire to be close to one another. Likewise, the desire of every Christian ought to be one of living near to our Lord. The greatest joy of my life is knowing and serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Next to that, it would be time spent with my wife.

“Wine” in this passage speaks of joy, telling us that fellowship with Christ, our Bridegroom, is the greatest of all joys. No one can know the joy of Jesus until he has been absorbed in His love. The “chambers” of God are the secret places of His presence where we get to know Him more personally and are made “glad.” The bed-chamber of a husband and wife is where they celebrate their marriage relationship and know each other intimately. It’s one of the ways they grow closer to one another. As Christians, we should enjoy times of intimate relationship with our Lord as we grow closer to Him spiritually. In the marital

relationship, this is done not only sexually, but spending time with one another and nourishing each other emotionally. Spiritually, we draw close to the Lord through His Word and prayer.

In our text, something strange is said of which we can only speculate. The bride-to-be refers to herself as being “black.” With reference being made to the “sun” makes us wonder if she was tanned from working outside. Some have suggested that in those days it was a disgrace for a woman to be sunburned because it expressed manual outdoor labor. Women in the king’s court took pleasure in keeping their skin as fair as possible. Today, the exact opposite is true with more people becoming victims of skin cancer from the dangerous rays of the sun. Regardless of this skin issue, she must have been very attractive and was found beautiful to Solomon. One day when passing through the town where she lived, he met and eventually fell in love with her. The time came when he promised to come back and take her to be his wife.

These verses reflect upon the time when she first met her “beloved” as she reminisces over the past. Perhaps it would do us well, as husbands and wives, to look back down memory lane and remember what attracted us to one another. As Christians, we need to reflect upon our first love encounter with Christ and see how much we have grown in that relationship through the years. A big problem with many Christians today is that they have “left” their “first love” (Rev. 2:4) and lost the “joy” (Ps. 51:12) of the Lord and His “love.”

While in the beautiful palace they appeared fascinated with each other. Not only should husbands and wives share their bodies with each other (I Cor. 7:1-5) and be committed to each other, but they should converse with each other regularly and enjoyably. Someone once said that good sex begins in the kitchen. That doesn’t mean that the actual act occurs in the kitchen, but the groundwork is laid for good love-making before the husband and wife ever get to the bedroom.

One of the strongest messages in the Song of Solomon is how communion ought to exist between those who love each other.

We're living in a modern age of mass communication, but I've never seen communication between individuals worse than it is today. It seems like everyone has a cell phone and many households still have a land-line phone. Most folks have a computer where they use email and facebook messaging. All of this is at our fingertips. However, actual simple communication stinks. People who do texting usually end up using only letters instead of typing out the words. It's one thing to say something, but an entirely different matter to explain yourself in such a manner that people will know and understand what you're trying to tell them. It's like trying to read a set of directions, knowing what it says, but not knowing what it means.

Husbands and wives ought not merely talk at one another, but communicate plain and clear from the depths of their hearts. In other words, they ought to bare their souls to each other. The truth of the matter is that husbands and wives ought to be one another's best friend. Too many homes of today have become no more than boarding houses with ill words exchanged in a hostile environment.

In the same way that husbands and wives lovingly talk and communicate, believers will want to converse with their Lord. If we're saved, then we shouldn't forget our relationship and responsibility to either our spouse or to our God. Husbands and wives must never forget their commitment to each other and neither should believers forget their commitment to God. Husbands and wives should never lose their fascination with one another and neither should Christians ever lose their awe of Christ in failing to worship, adore, and glorify Him.

As I've stated previously, it's believed that Solomon wrote this poetic Book of the Bible. Let's not forget that we accept it into the cannon of Scriptures as the inspired Word of God penned through the human vessel of Solomon. If we understand it correctly, then these first few chapters were either dreamed or fantasized by the maiden who was to be Solomon's future wife, a wife that unfortunately turned out to be one of his many wives. Therefore, this means that God used her dreams or thoughts as she revealed them to Solomon to write under divine inspiration.

Marital Compatibility and Difficulty

I *am* the rose of Sharon, *and* the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so *is* my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so *is* my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit *was* sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me *was* love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I *am* sick of love. His left hand *is* under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please. The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over *and* gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing *of birds* is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines *with* the tender grape give a *good* smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, *that art* in the clefts of the rock, in the secret *places* of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet *is* thy voice, and thy countenance *is* comely. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines *have* tender grapes. My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his: he feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. (Song of Solomon 2:1-17)

The imagery in this text is that of lovemaking which is common throughout this particular Book of the Bible. The

manner in which they would enjoy each other sexually is depicted with drinking wine and eating fruits. In order for this kind of enjoyment to take place, it must be more than physical attraction, but genuine love for one another that is saved and reserved for one's spouse. True compatibility extends beyond and deeper than physical attraction. When God joins a couple together, He will equip them for life's journey through thick and thin.

Husbands and wives certainly should be compatible and support each other through all the conflicts of life because life is not lived without difficulty. You will not find roses without thorns. It's always a joy to be in the presence and converse with those whom we love. A husband and wife should look forward to their beloved coming home at the close of a day's work. That means we must look beyond life's "thorns" and major on God's blessings.

Likewise, for us to have sweet communion with Christ, we must forsake the "thorns" of this world and separate ourselves unto Him alone. The "lily among thorns" pictures God's sanctified people who have turned from the world to Christ (Matt. 13:24-30, II Cor. 6:17). Christians have been called to bear the lovely image of Christ to an unlovely world. This can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. In turn, Christ becomes "as the apple tree" giving His people shelter and refreshment under the "shadow" of His care (Ps. 17:8). It pleases God to supply our needs and for us to allow nothing to interrupt fellowship and communion with Him.

According to our text, there was a time (in this supposed dream) when the husband had to go away and be apart from his future wife. There is an old saying that goes like this, "absence makes the heart grow fonder." That is so very true when a couple truly loves each other. It reminds me of our Great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ Who gave Himself for His sheep. He has currently gone away, but has promised to come again and receive us unto Himself (Jh. 14:3). He's going to do this because He loves His sheep. Just as the maiden in our text was expecting her

Bridegroom to say, “arise my love, my fair one and come away,” the church is expecting Christ to come again.

During the Bridegrooms absence, we need to be preparing ourselves for His future coming. We need to be resting “in the clefts of the rock” as we rely on the divine promises of our Lord. Daily, we need to come face to face with God in His Word and let Him hear our “voice” in prayer as He sees our “countenance.” As the maiden served as a vinedresser and shepherdess, she admitted that she must look out for the “little foxes that spoil the vines.” Spiritually, if we don’t guard our fellowship with Christ, then there are things that will come along to hinder and prevent our sanctification. Some of these “little foxes” that “spoil” our fellowship with Christ are envy, strife, pride, evil speaking, impurity, carelessness, and negligence. Failure to destroy these “little foxes” that creep into our lives will destroy one’s testimony for Christ.

These same “little foxes” that hinder us spiritually, will also hinder a marriage relationship from being all that God wants it to be. Therefore, husbands and wives need to stay on guard and keep a watch for the damaging “little foxes” that can creep into your marriage. There may be “little” things that we allow to become bigger than they ought to be. Have you ever heard it said that you can make a “mountain out of a molehill?” That is so true, especially when we bite into the devil’s lie as he tries to hurt a marriage relationship. One such lie is when he tries to convince either a husband or wife that the “grass is greener on the other side.” When people fall for that lie, they’ll only discover that the grass is not fit to eat.

Difficulties will come in a marriage just as surely as they will come in every Christian life. But, Christ has given every believer the promise of power from the indwelling Holy Spirit to overcome life’s greatest challenges (I Jh. 4:4). Herein, we’re reminded of the importance of marrying only those where you can find compatibility as Christians (II Cor. 6:14). Many will tell you that they’re a Christian, but after marriage turn out to be in name only.

I'm reminded of the old negro spiritual that goes something like this, "Not everybody talking about heaven aint a-going there." It's one thing to profess Christ, but another to possess Christ. If one does not possess a new nature that only Christ can give, then there is no new birth (Jh. 3:1-8). In other words, if a person does not give evidence (II Cor. 5:17) and bear fruit (Gal. 5:2-26) of having been made a "new man" (Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10), then we have no reason to believe that they are "saved" (Acts 16:31) regardless of how many churches they've joined or how many times they've been baptized (Eph. 2:8-9).

Trials and Triumphs

"By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: *to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please. Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned*

him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.” (Song of Solomon 3:1-11)

On her “bed” at night, the maiden continues (assumedly) her dream of when she would make love to her future husband. She was longing to not only see him again, but looking forward to the consummation and conjugal relations thereafter. Intercourse between a husband and wife creates a special bond between the two; however, there is more to marriage than love-making. Along with everyday life comes the reality of troubles, trials, and triumphs.

Throughout Scripture we learn of the various trials of God’s people. That means, not even Christians are exempt from the testing experiences of life. There are ups and downs in life, as well as in marriage, and its through them that we grow stronger in our love for the Lord and for one another. From our text, it was probably in a dream that the wife thought of the anguish of being separated from her “beloved.” Absence of the bride from the bridegroom brought a realization of their true “love” for each other.

Often, God allows us to go through such a time of testing so that our “love” and dependence in Him will grow deeper and stronger. Like the maiden in our text, we should be determined to “seek him whom my soul loveth” until he is “found” (Matt. 6:33, 7:7). I’ll never forget those times when I was separated from my wife and children while away on ministry. When I first traveled to Haiti, the devil kept telling me that I would never see my wife and children again. I placed my faith in God, trusted Him, and that was close to forty years ago. Another time, I was away for an extended period on an evangelistic crusade in South Korea. I’ll never forget how home-sick I got for my family and for my wife especially. It reminds us of how husbands and wives ought to strive to maintain an unbroken fellowship in their marriage.

Likewise, we ought to strive to maintain an unbroken fellowship with Christ. It requires effort on our part by staying in the Word of God, prayer, submitting to the authority of Christ, and submitting to one another as husband and wife (Eph. 5:21).

It's so easy to allow worldly things to crowd out time with Christ, family, and spouse. I remind you, that even though a Christian can never lose his/her salvation (Rom. 8:33-39), he/she can lose fellowship with Christ (I Jh. 1-2), and the joy of his/her salvation (Ps. 51:12). A Christian's relationship with Christ never changes, but fellowship with Him can change when sin takes its toll.

In our text, a picture of triumph is portrayed in kingly fashion in a parade that marches into the city of "Jerusalem" bringing the maiden "out of the wilderness." It was "King Solomon" himself who escorted this bridal procession which no doubt brought comfort, security, and delight to his bride. After winning her heart as a "shepherd," he returns in the fashion of a "king" for the wedding. The wedding day is a day of excitement as should be the honeymoon. Unfortunately, in today's culture, I'm afraid many if not most couples are having the honeymoon before the wedding.

All this reminds us that the honeymoon needs to continue following the wedding. Now, in all reality, the newness of being married will change as time goes on, but the thrill of each other ought to be nurtured and the love grow as the years pass. After fifty years of marriage the husband and wife should be able to say that they love each other more than they did on their wedding day. The wife ought to feel security in the man whom she married, just as the Christian realizes security in this life and all eternity through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bride and the Bridegroom

"Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. Thy teeth *are* like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none *is* barren among them. Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech *is* comely: thy temples *are* like a piece of a

pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck *is* like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Thou *art* all fair, my love; *there is* no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, *my* spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, *my* spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O *my* spouse, drop *as* the honeycomb: honey and milk *are* under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon. A garden inclosed *is* my sister, *my* spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” (Song of Solomon 4:1-5:1)

It appears most likely that the wedding occurs in the last portion of chapter three and that by the time we begin chapter four, it has taken place and their first night together is at hand.

Now, sexual fantasy has ended, and actual conjugal relations take place. The imagery in these verses may sound rather comical to us in the way it is translated from the KJV, but poetically it is profound as Solomon describes the beauty of his wife. He likens her fabulous beauty to the magnificence and splendor of God's lovely creation. Part of his description of her is referring to her virginity and fertility saying that she is "a garden inclosed" (NKJV is "a garden enclosed").

The ESV translates this to be "a garden locked" and how it is about to be unlocked in sexual intercourse. Her being "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" continues the sexual innuendo of her virginity that will no longer be a sealed fountain following intercourse. When they lie together in marital relations, then she unlocks her "garden" and lets her husband come in unto her and says, "let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits." Their sexual union causes the "garden" to belong to both of them (I Cor. 7:3-5). Therefore, he says, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse." Eating and drinking are sometimes pictures of love-making as we find in this poetic material. Calling her his "sister" does not mean they were blood relatives like brother and sister, but was a term that was sometimes used by lovers expressing endearment. In this case, he clarifies it by saying that she was his "spouse."

The physical and sexual expression of this text is profound, but we also need to recognize the spiritual truth implied to the people of God regarding their personal relationship with Christ. As Solomon gazed upon his wife, he saw her beauty and was overtaken with his desire for her. As we gaze upon Christ, we see One "without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:19). The stain of sin has polluted us, but the gracious sinless blood of Jesus Christ washes His Bride "white as snow" (Isa. 1:18) in His sight. Just as surely as the day came for Solomon to come for his bride in marriage, there is coming a day when Christ will return for His bride in the consummation of His eternal kingdom.

Solomon saw his bride as a “garden,” speaking of her fertility, but it reminds us of how God expects His people to live a life that will glorify Him and produce spiritual “fruit” (Gal. 5:22-26). In creation, God created the various kinds of animals and ordained them to bring forth “after their kind” (Gen. 1). God saves us to be fruit bearing Christians so that we can be a blessing to others for Jesus sake. If we’re not touching others for Christ, then we’re not being very productive for the Lord. We are to demonstrate “fruit” after the likeness of our Lord.

Interrupted Communion

“I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped *with* myrrh, and my fingers *with* sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I *am* sick of love. What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, O thou fairest among women? what *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved *is* white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head *is as* the most fine gold, his locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven. His eyes *are as the eyes of* doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, *and* fitly set.

His cheeks *are* as a bed of spices, *as* sweet flowers: his lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands *are* as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly *is as* bright ivory overlaid *with* sapphires. His legs *are as* pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance *is* as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”

(Song of Solomon 5:2-16)

It sounds like when the bride’s “beloved” knocked at her door, she was so sluggish in responding that he left before she “opened” to let him in. Most likely, this presents the picture of an argument or disagreement between husband and wife. She realized the hurt that she had brought her “beloved” and searched throughout the city for him, even suffering abuse by the “watchmen” in the taking “away” of her “veil.” This “veil” was a woman’s head-covering that represented her purity and modesty. An unveiled woman was marked as immoral and unchaste. She even pleaded with the “daughters of Jerusalem” to tell her “beloved” how she yearned for him and that she felt “sick” (perhaps “sick” of heart) because of his absence from her. To her, he meant “more than another beloved” because she wanted no other man but him.

They had become one flesh and she missed her other half. How many times do husbands and wives find themselves separated for whatever the circumstances only to discover that absence makes the heart grow fonder? There will be times in marriage when the husband and wife will quarrel, disagree, or be physically separated due to various circumstances. These ought to be days when they realize anew and afresh how much they love and miss one another and long to be back together. The truth of the matter is that all marriages will have their moments of stress, but love will hold the marriage together. Some have even said that romance in marriage keeps the wheels oiled and running smoothly.

Regardless, a good rule of thumb is for the husband and wife never to go to bed without making up after a feud. Most of the time, all it will take is a simple, "I'm sorry." There is an old joke that tells of a couple who had been married over fifty years and the husband boasted that they had never gone to bed angry with one another, but admitted there had been times when they stayed up all night.

I'm afraid that Christians have a similar problem as did Solomon's bride when we fail to promptly respond in obedience to our Lord and we allow ourselves to become preoccupied with less important things. There is no Christian who has not, to some degree, experienced a time of interrupted fellowship with our Lord. If we're not careful, we can allow Satan to interrupt our fellowship with our God. In times such as this, a genuine believer will realize how he misses communion with his blessed Redeemer, confess, repent, and be restored to fellowship (I Jh. 1:9). There is no communion and fellowship like that of Christ because it is a soul satisfying relationship that brings internal joy and peace which the world cannot offer.

Restored Joy

"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine: he feedeth among the lilies. Thou *art* beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as *an army* with banners. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead. Thy teeth *are* as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and *there is* not one barren among them. As a piece of a pomegranate *are* thy temples within thy locks. There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my

undefiled is *but* one; she is the *only* one of her mother, she is the choice *one* of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; *yea*, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. Who is she *that* looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, *and* terrible as *an* army with banners? I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, *and* to see whether the vine flourished, *and* the pomegranates budded. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me *like* the chariots of Amminadib. Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.” (Song of Solomon 6:1-13)

It appears that The Song of Solomon begins with an account of Solomon’s first sexual encounter with his first wife. As the Book continues, we learn of conflict within the marriage. We’re not told directly what it was, but from within this text, we learn that it could have been jealousy between his first wife and all the other wives and concubines that Solomon had acquired. With the continuation of The Song of Solomon is the continuation of his love life through the years and his reflection upon his first love. We don’t know how many years that the writing of this “song” covers. But, one thing is for certain, as we find in other portions of the Old Testament, conflict always erupted in homes where there was polygamy. From the very beginning of creation, God ordained that a husband have only one wife (Gen. 2:24).

Where there is polygamy there is jealousy, discord and a violation of the one wife and one husband relationship. We must remember that God allowed divorce because of how unresolved sin can enter a marriage (See my book on *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*). Bigamy is not in God’s design for marriage as we see in the third chapter of First Timothy when God stated that a pastor was to be a ONE WOMAN MAN (I Tim. 3:2). That means, he is to have only one wife and not be a bigamist. During biblical days, bigamy was not uncommon. In this section of The

Song of Solomon, we are reminded of the problems caused by such a relationship, but at the same time, the fond reflections of Solomon's first wife regarding their intimate sexual relationship.

In search for her "beloved," she assumes that he has gone down "into his garden." Prior, in The Song of Solomon, the "garden" symbolizes intimacy; therefore, in my opinion the same interpretation applies. However, in this text as time progresses, Solomon had increased his "gardens" and was giving himself to other women.

"Threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number" are mentioned. Some believe that Solomon is saying that his first wife is above all other women while others believe that up to this time, he had accumulated 60 wives, 80 concubines and a huge harem of women waiting for their first night with the king. As I've already pointed out, Solomon had collected a total of 700 wives and 300 concubines (I Kings 11:3) throughout his entire tenure as King.

His sexual encounters with all these other women was described by his first wife as having "gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." She cherishes her memories of intimacy with her "beloved" and considers herself special as having been his first love. He returns to her for intimacy and looks for the offspring of her fertility. It sounds like Solomon never forgot her and longed for her as she did him.

The "Shulamite" said, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." Can you say today that you are the Bride of Christ and that Christ is your Bridegroom? Can you say today that you are walking and living in fellowship with Christ? The Bride's election is confirmed by the Bridegroom as is portrayed in The Song of Solomon. Scripture makes no secret of the fact that Solomon was a lover of "women" (I Kings 11:1-13). The Bible doesn't tell us this in approval of his lifestyle, but warns us against adopting his same evil habits. His many "wives" were his ruination in turning "away his heart after other gods." However,

above all his other wives, the “Shulamite” maiden, his first wife, was his favorite choice and was “praised” by all the other women in his harem.

This reminds us of another Old Testament man by the name of Elkanah who was married to two wives, Hannah and Peninnah (I Sam. 1). Peninnah had children and Hannah was unable to bear any until God intervened and she gave birth to Samuel. It seems that Elkanah loved both his wives, but favored Hannah.

This also reminds us that God loves all His creation, but it’s with a special love that He loves His Chosen Bride (Eph. 1:4-7). God never approves of bigamy, adultery, fornication, or lust but He is gracious to forgive any sinner who will confess and repent (I Cor. 6:9-11). There had been an interruption in the fellowship of Solomon and his first wife, the “Shulamite,” yet he bids her to “return,” which she does and along with it comes restored joy of their relationship.

Sex outside of marriage is lust, but within marriage it is the celebration of their oneness in the sight of God as husband and wife. Every time a husband and wife engage in sexual intercourse, they enjoy the pleasure of the occasion that no unmarried couple can realize. That is why Scripture admonishes a couple to abstain only by “consent” or for reasons (such as spiritual or medical) that is beyond human control (I Cor. 7:5). The “Shulamite” longed for oneness with her “beloved” after time away from him. It was a joy for her to see him walk through the door and enter into her life.

I’m afraid that time and again, the church has failed her Bridegroom, but she remains a living testimony of God’s love and forgiveness. Much different than Solomon, our Brideroom will never fail us nor be unfaithful to us. Some believe that this “Shulamite” maiden was from a place called Shunem and others have various speculations about her background. It’s possible that “Shulamite” can mean Solomonite and be a feminine form of “Solomon” indicating that the bride took the name of her husband.

That's certainly the case with New Testament believers. In the same manner in which she could have taken the king's name, the early Christians took the name of Christ (Acts 11:26). Whenever a wife takes her husband's name, she assumes new responsibilities just as we do when we become Christians (I Pet. 2:9). When we fail our Lord, He chastens us because He loves us (Heb. 12:5-11) and restores us to the "joy" of our salvation (Ps. 51). To be a Christian means that we ought to enjoy spiritual intimacy with our Savior.

Satisfaction and Service

"How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs *are* like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, *which* wanteth not liquor: thy belly *is like* an heap of wheat set about with lilies. Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes *that are* twins. Thy neck *is* as a tower of ivory; thine eyes *like* the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose *is* as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus. Thine head upon thee *is* like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king *is* held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters *of grapes*. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth *down* sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak. I *am* my beloved's, and his desire *is* toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, *whether* the tender grape appear, *and* the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves. The mandrakes give a

smell, and at our gates *are* all manner of pleasant *fruits*, new and old, *which* I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.”

(The Song of Solomon 7:1-13)

Once again, the poetic language compares the beauty of God’s creation to the beauty of Solomon’s wife. The “king” uses one expression after another to describe “his desire” and delight in his wife which gave her assurance of their restored fellowship. Despite her feelings toward him during his absence, her “beloved” assured her of his continued love. He does not refuse to make love to her as the imagery of love-making unfolds in this chapter. In return, his wife happily responds by saying, “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages there will I give thee my loves.” The very mention of “mandrakes” that she had “laid up” were for her “beloved.” Mandrakes are believed to have been used in biblical days as an aphrodisiac, which was a food used to arouse or intensify sexual desire (Gen. 30:14-16).

It’s God’s plan for husbands and wives to satisfy the sexual desires of one another. That means they should not look for such satisfaction or fulfillment elsewhere. Fornication is to have sex outside of marriage. Having sex with someone with whom you’re not married, while married to another person, is what the Bible calls adultery.

Under divine inspiration, Paul wrote, **“Nevertheless, *to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife”* (I Cor. 7:2-4).**

There is an old song that says, “I am satisfied with Jesus, But the question comes to me, As I think of Calvary, Is my Master satisfied with me?” If a Christian becomes unfaithful to God, then he/she is guilty of spiritual adultery. That ought to challenge

us to grow in our love for the Lord and seek to satisfy Him in our spiritual growth and faithfulness. Just as these two lovers in our text went out into the “field,” we need to see that our field of service for the Lord is the world where we ought to be demonstrating His love (Jh. 3:16). The love of Christ toward us should motivate us to service. Unless we have a right relationship with God, we’ll not be able to render joyful service unto the Lord.

There is no question that “God is love” (I Jh. 4:8,16) and that he loves us because the Bible tells us so. But, He does not merely tell us, He has demonstrated how much He loves us by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Therefore, we must not only give Him our service, but learn that “the love of Christ constraineth us” (II Cor. 5:14) to give Him our all.

Growing in Love

“O that thou *wert* as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! *when* I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised. I would lead thee, *and* bring thee into my mother's house, *who* would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand *should be* under my head, and his right hand should embrace me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, until he please. Who *is* this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth *that* bare thee. Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if *a* man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts:

what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? If she *be* a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she *be* a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar. I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour. Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand *pieces* of silver. My vineyard, which *is* mine, *is* before me: thou, O Solomon, *must have* a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred. Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear *it*. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.”

(The Song of Solomon 8:1-14)

Like the other chapters in The Song of Solomon, this last chapter is open to interpretation. However, it could very well be a summary of their lives from anticipation of being united in one flesh to consummation and continual conjugal celebration of their marriage.

This chapter begins with the wife doing the speaking. The mention of her “brother” may refer to the way she behaved toward her husband in public “like a brother.” However, in private she described their love-making and how her “beloved” initiated it. As the chapter continues, it appears that the dialogue shifts back and forth between the wife and the husband with mostly the wife doing the speaking. She refers to her “little sister” with a “wall” of sexual purity about her. Then she speaks of her with “breasts like towers,” referring to her maturity and finding “favour” with her husband because of her moral purity. One of the greatest fulfillments in sexual relations is to know that the husband and wife remained virgins prior to marriage and saved themselves for each other. It’s a blessed thing to know that you’ve not shared the most intimate parts of your body with nobody else. For those reading this book and you’ve messed up

in this area of your life, let me remind you that there is forgiveness in and only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The closing verses of this chapter, thus the closing verses in The Song of Solomon, concludes with a reference to Solomon's "vineyard at Baalhamon." It's been speculated that this was a reference to his harem, but due to the location mentioned, it's most likely a literal "vineyard" from which he financially profited. She invites him to her "vineyard" where she will share with him the treasure of her love in conjugal relations.

When the sinner is gloriously converted to the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter into a spiritual relationship that ought to be continually growing in the "grace" and "knowledge" (II Pet. 3:18) of our precious Bridegroom. Doctrinally speaking, we call it sanctification. We can also call it growing in our love for our Lord. In this last chapter, we discover five characteristics of genuine love.

First, "love is as strong as death." Christ showed his love for His church by the way He "gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). "Death" was the price He paid for His "love." In the case of Jesus, His love was stronger than death because not even the grave could hold him. God's love is an eternal never dying love.

Secondly, "jealousy is cruel as the grave." Generally, when we think of jealousy, we think of something contemptible. However, there is a healthy jealousy that expresses a loving concern for those near and dear to us (II Cor. 11:2). Someone has said that "love is only genuine as long as it is jealous." Godly jealousy wants the best for others (Ex. 20:5). If you don't care about your spouse running around with someone else, it's because you don't love him/her. A loving husband will not want to share his wife with another man and a loving wife will not want to share her husband with another woman. Just as a husband and wife will want their spouse all for themselves, sexually speaking, God wants believers all for Himself without sharing them with the world and seeing them spiritually prostituting themselves.

Thirdly, “coals thereof are coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame.” What is this saying? I believe that it can remind us that real love burns with emotion. We need for God to kindle within our hearts a love that would stir us to living holy for His glory. You don’t want the flame to go out in your marriage and neither does a Christian want to lose the fire that gives forth light of a glowing testimony.

Fourthly, “many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.” Water has always been the best source to extinguish a flame of fire. Human love will fail us, but God’s love is eternal. Even as a born again believer, our repeated failures will never “quench” God’s love for us. God never gets tired of hearing about our troubles and sorrows and He welcomes our confessions and repentance. Scripture tells us that nothing can separate us from his love (Rom. 8:38-39).

Fifthly, “if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned (despised).” God’s love is beyond the value of material things. Most people think that if they have money and the wealth of this world they would be happy. Things don’t make you happy. Sex cannot satisfy your soul. All worldly “substance” is worthless when compared to God’s love. When God bestows His love upon us, then we will in turn love him and should surrender all that we have to Him, our mind, soul, body, spirit, money, service, and everything else. No price tag can be put on God’s love. A person cannot purchase love no more than he can purchase salvation. God’s love is not for sale because it’s a free gift, like faith and repentance. Without knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, one will never know love in its highest degree.

Currently, Christ is calling out His Bride from the world. As a matter of speaking, we could say that the “Holy Spirit” (Eph. 1:13-14) is the believer’s engagement ring. From Ephesians, the Holy Spirit is called “the earnest of our inheritance.” When Jesus Christ returns to this earth in the second coming, He will call out His Bride for the “marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9).

Every Christian ought to be anxiously awaiting in great expectation of our coming Bridegroom. I believe that it was with this type of excitement that John wrote the Book of Revelation where he said, “even so come Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

Back in chapter two of The Song of Solomon, Solomon’s bride unashamedly proclaimed, “my beloved is mine and I am his” (2:16). Can you say that today in regards to your spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ? If so, are you enjoying intimate spiritual communion with Him by walking and living in harmony with His revealed Word? Like the “Shulamite,” we sometimes are guilty of turning a deaf ear to the “voice” of our Lord that results in us suffering the consequences.

The Song of Solomon not only teaches the beauty of a husband and wife’s intimate relationship, but most of all the beauty of a believer’s intimate spiritual relationship with Christ. Blood-bought salvation is the only way one can have a spiritual love affair with Jesus. Have you ever come to a place where you can truly say that you “love Him because He first loved” (I Jh. 4:19) you?

Closing Thoughts on The Song of Solomon

If you were to do an in-depth study on The Song of Solomon, you would discover various views of chronology, different interpretations, and spiritual application. One thing is certain, it is a book of romance and sexual expression between a husband and wife. It reminds us of how God has placed a high premium on sex in a marriage relationship. But, we also need to look beyond the intimacy of marital sex and learn of the spiritual intimacy that God wants to have with His Bride. This Book could very well point us to the Romance of Redemption as we are reminded of God’s great love for His people and the costly price paid for our Salvation. In Christ, we are reminded that true love is more interested in giving than getting. It looks out for the best interest in another rather than oneself. Sex outside of

marriage is self-gratifying and does not think of the harmful influence bestowed upon the other partner.

The last thing that I would ever want to do is falsely teach the Word of God. Realizing that we are all currently seeing “through a glass darkly” (I Cor. 13:12), no one has all the answers to all the questions. Therefore, we must be attentive to the Holy Spirit (Jh. 14:26) as He reveals the Truth of God’s Word to our hearts in our study of Holy Scripture (II Tim. 2:15). At best, in these bodies of flesh, we’ll never have full understanding of everything in the Bible. Even with all the variations in time and interpretation by scholars found in The Song of Solomon, there is profound biblical truth we can apply in both the physical and spiritual arenas of life.

Chapter 3 Hosea And Gomer

“The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel. And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And *God* said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then said *God*, Call his name Loammi: for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your *God*.” (Hosea 1:2-9)

“Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of *her* friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim:

Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea 3:1-5)

As bad as adultery is between a husband and wife, there is an adultery worse than that. The spiritual adultery and spiritual fornication of God’s people is far worse. It breaks the heart of a spouse to learn of the unfaithfulness of their mate, but the hurt that is brought to the heart of God when God’s people are unfaithful to Him is unspeakable.

In the last half of the eight century BC, God raised up Hosea as one of His prophets. The days in which he lived were strong militarily, but morally decayed. It was one of Israel’s darkest days in its history. Immorality and drunkenness characterized the nation. Their worship was heathen, their priests were crooked, and family life was rotten. In fact, it sounds like the modern-day state of Christendom.

Things were so bad during the days of Hosea, that he often used the word, “whoredom,” to depict the spiritual wickedness of his day. Hosea’s message to the nation of Israel was one of love as he pleaded with his people to respond to God. The Lord called Hosea to do something that was most unusual. In fact, it blows our minds even to think of God’s calling upon Hosea. God called him to speak to Israel from his own personal marital experience. The Lord painted a picture to this wayward nation of His love for them through the life of Hosea. Therefore, the Book of Hosea is filled with God’s great love and mercy upon a nation that He wanted to bless and restore. In this brief look into the Book of Hosea, we’re going to major on chapters one and three. Chapter one tells us about the rise and fall of a home. Chapter three tells us about the restoration and fulfillment of a home.

The relationship of Hosea to his wife, Gomer, was part of his prophetic ministry that was lived out before the nation of Israel. God used the marital conflict between Hosea and Gomer as an object lesson for Israel to see themselves in their unfaithfulness

to the Lord. Hosea was a man who spoke under the divine orders of God. He did not ask for this job, but was divinely called as one of God's chosen prophets at this most difficult time to do a most difficult thing. The name Hosea means to deliver, set free, or save. He proved himself to be a man of courage, conviction, compassion, and surrender in obedience to God to do what he did.

God told Hosea to take a "wife of whoredoms." There are various views as to the interpretation of what that means. Some believe that Gomer was a pure chaste virgin at the time of their marriage and others believe that she was a harlot when they married. Most likely, their marriage began well, but went sour as the seeds of sin enticed Gomer into a life of vice, shame, and prostitution. Hosea was left with a broken heart, just like Israel who had spurned God's love and committed spiritual adultery. When God told Hosea to "take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms," most likely He didn't send him out to marry a prostitute. However, in His Sovereignty which includes His foreknowledge, God knew what would become of Gomer after their marriage. Knowing that she would become a prostitute, God chose to use this experience to symbolically picture His relationship with Israel.

According to God's instructions, Hosea married a woman that the Lord knew who would become unfaithful to Him. The name, "Gomer," means completeness or consummation. It's clear that she bore Hosea a son, but it's questionable if the other two children named in our text, belonged to him.

Nevertheless, the history of Israel can be traced in the names of these three children as they symbolize God's judgment. The first child was named "Jezreel" which meant, God scatters and was a hint of coming judgment. It spoke of a time when Israel would be scattered among the nations. The second child was named "Loruhamah" meaning no mercy which announced to Israel that God would withhold His love and mercy for judgment to take its course. In other words, God promised to judge Israel while

postponing judgment on Judah. The name of the third child in this text is “Loammi” which means not my people and warns that God would treat Israel like a foreign nation. It spoke of a time when Israel would be out of fellowship with God.

At some point and time in their marriage, Gomer deserted Hosea just like Israel had forgotten God. The “woman” mentioned in chapter three is believed to refer to Gomer. Hosea pleads for Gomer to return to fellowship with her husband and for Israel to return to fellowship with their God. In the same way that Gomer’s lifestyle was shameful to Hosea, so was the spiritual adultery of Israel to God. The word, “shamefully,” that we find in chapter two and verse five means to make one blush. There are things going on in our world today, that makes one with any degree of moral conscious, to blush just to think about, much less talk about. Such things as sodomy, premarital sex, extramarital affairs, child prostitution, pornography, and on and on we could go naming such things of disgrace.

The word, “adulteress,” indicates that Gomer could have been either a temple prostitute in Baal worship or else a common street walker. Either way, she played the “harlot.” God commanded Hosea to “love” her and take her back. Neither Gomer nor Israel deserved to be loved by God, but remember that this is a message lived out in the life of Hosea before the eyes of Israel. God specializes in loving the unlovely. The picture of Hosea’s love for Gomer is a picture of God’s love for His redeemed people (Rom. 8:35-39).

The price that Hosea paid for Gomer teaches us the costliness of God’s love. We have no reason to believe that Hosea was a rich man; however, he gladly paid the necessary price to redeem Gomer from off the slave market of sin. In fact, it appears that he did not have enough cash, so he paid partly in silver and partly in produce. In other words, it cost him dearly just like it cost God the death of “His only begotten Son” (Jh. 3:16) on the cross of Calvary.

After being “bought” off the slave block, Gomer was to “abide many days” in confinement for cleansing. It’s possible that this period was for her to learn how to control her appetite for lust as well as a period to examine her for sexually transmitted disease. (Hollywood likes to produce pictures portraying the “pleasures of sin for a season” {Heb. 11:25} with a lot of illicit sex, but they don’t show the aftereffects of sexually transmitted disease that goes with it) Following this time, it was Hosea’s desire for Gomer to willingly return to him. Hosea did everything that he could for Gomer’s restoration. Likewise, Christ has done everything that can be done which is necessary for our salvation and sanctification.

Normal marital relations were restricted for a time between Hosea and Gomer during this period of cleansing. That’s the way it was with Israel and God. The Lord would allow their rulers to be taken away. The nation would go into exile and be secluded until it responded to the love of God. Finally, we see a ray of hope when “afterward,” depicting a period of exile and judgment, they would “return, and seek the Lord their God.” Only God can “give repentance” (Acts 5:31) to a wicked heart and cause sinners to “seek the Lord.” From this point on in the history of Israel, we can look back and see them riding a spiritual roller coaster. Finally, the day came when Jesus stood on Pilate’s balcony and Israel shouted, “crucify him, crucify him” (Jh. 19:6). The gospel was first preached to the Jews, but later through the apostle Paul, it was taken to the Gentiles and the Jews, for the most part, were left in unbelief.

As we briefly summarize the story of Hosea and Gomer, we need to keep in mind that this was a most unusual situation that God used to teach Israel a lesson. God’s Word did and still does permit divorce due to the sin in human hearts (Matt. 19:8). It’s not God’s ideal, but we’re not living in an ideal world (see my book on *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*). The only divorce recorded in the Bible is when God divorced Israel (Jer. 3:1-11). We do learn that divorce is not the only alternative in marital

conflict. The best alternative is reconciliation based on love and forgiveness of the two parties involved.

The life of Hosea and Gomer is not to be looked upon as a pattern for husbands and wives to follow today unless that is the way God leads. The breakup of this home was used by God to teach Israel how much He loved them. The Lord did get their attention for a while, but it was short-lived. God's Word teaches us that marriage ought to be built on faithfulness, fidelity, and loyalty, but Gomer chose to disregard her marriage vows to Hosea in the same manner that Israel chose to rebel against God. Israel should have remained faithful to God, but instead went lusting after sin and committed spiritual adultery by forsaking the worship of Jehovah for idols.

Marriage is coming under great satanic attack, but we can rest assured that God has ordained this institution until Jesus comes again. There has never been a marriage that has not encountered conflict of some type. Some conflict is worse than others, but regardless of the problem, Jesus Christ can bring peace in the midst of the storm. If you have failed to live up to God's standards of sexual morality, or if you are living in a failed marriage, then let me remind you that Christ alone can grant forgiveness to those who will confess their sin and repent if you are the guilty party. He stands waiting with open arms to receive the prodigal who has wallowed in the hog pens of this world and slept with "harlots" (Lk. 15:11-32). When the prodigal came back home, he came with a broken heart and begged for mercy from the Father. God delights in granting forgiveness to those who have a heart for it.

King David is another perfect illustration of this. He was not only guilty of polygamy, plus having concubines, he slept with Bathsheba, another man's wife. Then, he had her husband, Uriah, killed in battle so he could take her to be his wife. That sounds like a man who was morally messed up big time. However, the Bible tells us that he was a man after God's own heart. Acts 13:22-23, **"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto**

them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.”

When God chose David to be King, while tending his father's sheep, He knew in His sovereignty the twists and turns that would occur in his life. David was a man with a repentant heart and a repentant heart pleases God. Not only is David known as the greatest king that Israel ever had, but is found in the earthly ancestry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Truly, our God is a God of great grace even to those who mess up and we all are a bunch of messed up sinners (Rom. 3:23, 6:23) in one way or another.

Perhaps you're a Christian who is not guilty of some sexual misconduct, like that in our text, but you've failed the Lord in not living up to His standard of obedience and not growing in grace and knowledge of His Word. Spiritual adultery is a sin that is committed by New Testament believers as well as Old Testament believers. Let me remind you of James 4:4, **“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”** Christians who become worldly break the heart of God just as Gomer broke the heart of Hosea. If there is a wall of conflict between any husband and wife or between any Christian and Christ, then it needs to be resolved before the seeds of sin takes its toll.

Chapter 4

Love Or Lust

“And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion. So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty

sheets and thirty change of garments: But if ye cannot declare *it* me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? *is it* not *so*? And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told *it* me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee? And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What *is* sweeter than honey? and what *is* stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.” (Judges 14:1-20)

The opening verse of this chapter begins by saying that “Samson went down.” This is true both spiritually and geographically. Rather than staying in the borders of Israel, he traveled south into the enemy territory of the Philistines. There, he fell in love, or at least what he thought was love, with a

heathen woman. Let me remind you, that if you fraternize with the enemy, then you'll discover a downward spiral in your life. The devil is our enemy and if we fall for his lies, then we'll suffer the consequences. Scripture makes it very clear that Christians are not to seek close relationships with non-believers.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you.” (II Cor. 6:14-17)

The story recorded of Samson tells us something about the fatal flaw in his character that proved detrimental in his life. Compromising with sin always leads to trouble and spiritual destruction. Samson is well-known to us for his great physical strength, but he also gave evidence of human weakness. One of his greatest weaknesses was his uncontrolled passion for women. On at least three separate occasions, he became improperly involved with a woman. The first time is recorded in our text when he took a Philistine “woman in Timnath” to be his wife. The second time, he “went in unto ... an harlot” in the city of Gaza (Jud. 16:1). The third time, he fell for another Philistine “woman in the valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah” (Jud. 16:4).

In this text, we need to first remember that God makes it perfectly clear in His Word that His people are not to marry pagans (Ex. 34:15-16, Deut. 7:14, II Cor. 6:14). In disobedience to God, Samson allowed himself to become infatuated with a

woman of the Philistines. It appears that his parents disapproved of this marriage, but Samson proceeded anyway. There is no question that Samson's desire was sinful, yet "it was of the Lord" for God to use it in judgement against the Philistines.

Without going into detail, let's briefly look at and try to distinguish the difference between love and lust. In the life of Samson, all we see in his dealings with women is lust. There was never any evidence of true love that comes from God. That is the point upon which I wish to major. True love desires that which is best for the other person. Lust wants to satisfy one's own personal passions.

In this opening introduction to Samson's life, we learn that his physical strength was far greater than his emotional and spiritual strength. He did not value his Nazarite vows nor the Word of God. It's generally believed that his engagement to this woman lasted for a year. When it came time for the wedding feast, she betrayed Samson and revealed her true colors. God used the situation to bring death to many of the Philistines and Samson saw his wife given to another man. It appears that God was looking after Samson when this marriage fell through, but his future proved him to be a slow learner.

Now, let me stop at this point and ask you a question. Do you think that you know how to select your future mate better than God? I want to challenge all single folk reading this book to pray for God to lead you to the spouse of His choosing and to obey God's Word (see my book on *My Life As A Pastor*). The Lord knows what is best for us and He's not trying to spoil our fun. In fact, He wants to give us pleasure like the world knows nothing about.

We're all plagued with human weaknesses and only the Holy Spirit can overcome them through His power (I Jh. 4:4). Every Christian must guard against misconduct with members of the opposite sex. Paul warned Timothy to flee "youthful lusts" (II Tim. 2:22) and admonished the Thessalonians to "abstain from fornication" (I Thess. 4:3). Do you remember what Joseph did

when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him? He took off out of the door as fast as he could go, leaving his coat behind (Gen. 39). She lied to her husband which got Joseph thrown into prison but he did not compromise his convictions. Do you remember John the Baptist who told Herod that it was a sin to have his brother's wife (Mk. 6:17-18)? It resulted in John being beheaded. It will usually cost you to stand upon Godly morals in our ungodly world.

Before we close this chapter on Samson, let's take another brief look at his other sexual escapades. He was a slow learner. God gives us His Word and records the stories of such people as I've just mentioned so that we can learn from them and avoid their pitfalls.

“Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her. *And it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put *them* upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that *is* before Hebron. And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces* of silver. And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. Then the lords of the

Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread. And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web. And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto death; That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she

called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people

that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life. Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years. (Judges 16:1-31)

We've already seen how Samson got into a lot of trouble with the Philistine "woman in Timnath" (Jud. 14). After serving as a Judge in Israel for twenty years, his lust caused him to fall again. The above text tells us about him going to Gaza and employing the services of a harlot. Prostitution has sometimes been referred to as one of the oldest professions. That, of course is questionable, but needless to say, it is an act of lust and immorality that has been around a long time. All the way back into the Book of Genesis, we're told of Judah who employed the services of a harlot (Gen. 38).

Samson's last fling with a woman that's recorded in Scripture was with Delilah. Apparently, he fell in love with her, was seduced by her, but never married her. Samson was strong physically, but not strong enough to resist the passionate pleas of an enticing woman. It's nothing new for a woman to use sex to get what she wants from a man. A perfect example of this is found in our text.

There are many people today who have sold out their morals, like Samson, by purchasing the services of a prostitute or fallen into some other trap of fornication. In the modern-day dating world, there are some who expect sexual favors after going to the expense of spending money for a meal or some other outing. Just like Samson, many people are selling themselves short by falling into lust and never realizing the beauty of true love. However, the result of such behavior never turns out for the good just like in the case of Samson who bit the devils bait of deception.

The Philistines convinced Delilah to persuade Samson to reveal to her his secret of strength. At first, he was reluctant to which

Delilah told him that he had “mocked” her because he would not tell her the truth. She even questioned his love for her over this matter. Herein, we find an age old satanic lie that men like to tell a woman, “if you really love me then you’ll do what I want, and you’ll give yourself to me.” In this case, it was a woman telling it to a man. This lie can apply to both genders. Many young people have lost their virginity by falling for this devilish lie. True love isn’t interested in getting, but giving.

Unfortunately, Samson finally broke down and told Delilah the secret of his strength which was his long hair. It was indeed a great disgrace to find this Nazarite head asleep upon the lap of a wicked worldly woman. After his hair was cut, Samson’s mighty strength was gone. Regardless of how Satan packages temptation, the results are always the same. To play with fire means that it will eventually burn you. Samson turned out to be a playboy with a weakness for wicked women which caused his final downfall. Illicit sex harms one’s character and tarnishes the reputation despite what the modern-day producers in Hollywood tell you.

It’s a terrible thing to sin and suffer the consequences, but even worse to sin and not learn any lessons from it. Previously, Samson told the secret of his riddle back in chapter fourteen to a crying woman. He did not learn from his mistake and repeated the same performance. He should have known by now that the “pleasures of sin” are only “for a season” (Heb. 11:25).

Once Samson was captured by the Philistines, they “put out his eyes ... bound him with fetters of brass” and made him “grind in the prison house.” There is no doubt that God used this in chastisement against Samson. However, let’s remember that God had a divine plan for Samson and even though Samson failed his God, the Lord did not fail Samson. As Samson’s hair began to grow, so did his strength. The vindication of Samson became the vindication of God’s call and purpose for him from the very beginning of his life. God used Samson in the closing moments of his life as he placed his hands on the pillars of the Philistine’s

pagan temple. In grace, God moved upon Samson for him to perform his last heroic deed and bring this pagan temple to the ground.

Regardless of how bad one may sin in the past, God will hear the prayer of the truly repentant. Samson was so sorrowful for what he had done that he was willing to die. It was not just his hair that began to grow again, but his repentant heart. Someone may be reading this book who has messed up big time when it comes to morals. Maybe you've messed up like Samson who has lived a life of fornication. There is forgiveness if you will turn to Christ in repentance. Regardless of the moral sins that you've committed, there is cleansing from our dark, black, vulgar sin in the precious atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Turn to Him today, confess, repent, and trust Christ for your spiritual cleansing. If you've never been saved from the penalty of your sin, trust Christ as your Lord and Savior (Rom. 3:23, Lk. 13:3, Jh. 3:1-16, Rom. 6:23, Rom. 10:9).

The only way for us to avoid making the same mistakes that Samson made is by keeping our eyes on the Lord Jesus and "make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). Uncontrolled passion destroys the effectiveness of a believer's testimony. It's possible for a believer to sin, but impossible to sin and escape God's "chastisement" (Heb. 12:8). The life of Samson could possibly be an example of a believer who committed "sin unto death" (I Jh. 5:16-17); although, there appears to be repentance. Just how long God will tolerate a believer who rebels is known only unto Him. However, the life of Samson is a reminder that God will only put up with a rebellious child for just so long and then even "in wrath," He will "remember mercy" (Hab. 3:2).

Samson portrays the kind of tragic end that will come to a believer who shakes his fist in the face of God and refuses to yield to God's correction. The closing days of Samson's life are filled with losses. He not only lost his hair, his strength, his eyes, his liberty, but his testimony. How sad for a Christian to take his

eyes off the Lord of Glory and mock the God that he professes. It's been asked if Samson was a true believer. I think that based upon Heb. 11:32 where Samson is listed in the Hebrews hall of faith, as well as God's "chastisement" (Heb. 12:6) of him, that we can conclude he was an Old Testament believer. Samson's life reminds us that it's possible for a believer to sin, but it's impossible for a believer to sin and get by with it nor escape being chastened by God.

As you can tell, I'm dealing with Samson as a believer who was chastened by God. Some will argue that he was not a believer, but from all indication, he was, but miserably failed his God. It can and does happen still today. I trust that it has not happened to you, but if it has, do like Peter and not like Judas. Both men appeared to follow Christ. One was a genuine believer and one was not. Peter repented, found forgiveness, and became one of the greatest followers of Christ in the New Testament. Judas was never a saved person (see my book, *The Twelve Disciples*). He went out and hanged himself and then went to "his own place" (Jh. 17:12, Acts 1:25). How you respond to your sin will give indication as to whom you belong. Are you spiritually a child of God or a child of the Devil?

I believe that it was in grace that God answered Samson's final prayer. But, in chastisement, Samson lost his life along with the judgment that fell upon the pagan Philistines. Perhaps, like Samson, you find yourself repeating the same sin over and over again. It may be of a moral nature as it was in the case of Samson. However, it could be some other sin, such as a sudden outburst of uncontrolled temper that has become hard to break. Regardless of the sin that might plague you, it can be conquered by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit (I Jh. 4:4).

Our greatest need is salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. In salvation, it is the Holy Spirit (Jh. 16) Who convicts us of our sin, draws us to Christ, gives us repentance, and faith to believe. The Holy Spirit births us into the family of God. It is what we call being "born again" (Jh. 3:3-8) and receiving the new nature

of Christ. That same Holy Spirit takes up residence within us and empowers us to live the victorious Christian life. When this earthly life is over, the Holy Spirit will usher the child of God into the eternal presence of our Blessed Redeemer. Do you have that “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13)? If not, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Chapter 5

Boaz And Ruth

The story of Boaz and Ruth is a beautiful love story about a Gentile widow who left the pagan country of Moab along with her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi, and came to Bethlehem in the beginning of “barley harvest” (Ruth 1:22). Gleaning was an activity of the poorest people who would follow the reapers into the fields and pick up the scraps that remained. It was supposed to be a guaranteed right to the poor and to the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow under the Mosaic Law (Lev. 19:9-10, 23:22, Deut. 24:19-22). Although, it was a legal privilege for the poor to glean in Israel, not all land owners adhered to the Law. Permission could be granted or refused based upon the good will of the owner. Sometimes harsh farmers would refuse the gleaners which meant that gleaning resulted in being a favor by the farmer more than a legal right. At this point, we are introduced to the wealthy Boaz who was kinsman to Elimelech, Ruth’s deceased father-in-law.

Similar to The Song of Solomon where a story is told about the love life of a husband and wife and then spiritually presents the love of Christ for His Bride, the same is true in the Book of Ruth. We are going to learn about the romance between Boaz and Ruth and how much Boaz loved her. Likewise, we’re going to learn from this Old Testament Book, how much the Lord Jesus loves His Bride. We’re going to learn about the value of love and the cost involved. The marriage of Boaz, an Israelite, to Ruth, a converted Moabitess, is a picture of Christ’s union to His New Testament Church. Boaz is a type of Christ, the Bridegroom, while Ruth typifies the Church as the undeserving Gentile Bride. (For more information on typology, see my book on *What Day of the Week was Christ Crucified?*)

Ruth was allowed to glean in the field of the wealthy Boaz. He was not only a man of wealth, but a man of spiritual integrity. While she was gleaning this left-over grain, Boaz noticed her in a very special way. There was something about her that drew his

attention. The bottom line is that God's providence led Ruth to the field of Boaz where the Lord gave him an eye for Ruth. It's a wonderful thing for a husband and wife to be able to say that God's providence led them to one another. It's been rightly said that true marriages are made in heaven. In going to the field, Ruth's purpose was to glean, but God's purpose was for her to meet her future husband. God has a plan for every believer which includes the right spouse. The only safe way to select a future mate is to let God do the choosing for you. For those who are still single and sometimes get impatient waiting for the right one to come along, just remember, it's better to be single than to be married and wish you were single.

Ruth won the attention of Boaz, not on some glamorous dance floor or a local bar, but in a simple harvest field. Her virtues of hard work, humility, and love for her mother-in-law is what attracted Boaz to Ruth. It's been said that a good daughter usually makes a good wife. How a person treats and respects their family will usually tell you something about how they will treat their spouse after the honeymoon wears off. For those of you searching for a marriage partner in the future, let me say that you had better look in the right direction and that spiritual beauty should always supersede physical beauty. Don't go looking for the right kind of spouse in worldly hell holes. Someone put it this way, "don't go fishing for trout in a herring barrel."

The Mosaic Law of that day stated that when an Israelite man died, the nearest kin was next in line to marry the man's widow (Deut. 25:5). Once again, there is indication of God's providence when we discover that Boaz was near of kin and one of the next kinsmen in line to redeem Ruth in marriage and perpetuate the family of Elimelech. The Hebrew word, GOEL, is actually KINSMAN REDEEMER. It was another Law under the Mosaic System wherein God made provision for Israel to keep property within the same family (Lev. 25). In the case of Ruth, it turns out that there was another man first in line to marry Ruth. Only if he declined, could Boaz act upon his proposal of marriage.

“Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, *I am* Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter: *for* thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman. And now it is true that *I am thy* near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, *as* the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a

woman came into the floor. Also he said, Bring the veil that *thou hast* upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and she went into the city. And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.” (Ruth 3:1-18)

Naomi explained to Ruth the Levitical system that would qualify Boaz as a potential husband. All of this sounds strange to us today, but it was the custom among the Jews at this point and time in history. However, some things don't ever change, and neither should our attention to personal hygiene. In preparation to present herself to Boaz, in what amounted to a marriage proposal, she was to bathe and properly dress herself before going to the “threshingfloor” where he was spending the night.

God's people ought to be a clean people, physically, spiritually, and morally. In fact, it's a commendable thing to enjoy being clean and a disgusting thing to enjoy being dirty. It's common to find dating couples spending time in front of a mirror because they want to be appealing and not appalling. Let me add, that these things ought not change after marriage.

When Ruth went to the “threshingfloor,” there was nothing inappropriate that took place. It does not say that they slept together. It does not even come close to insinuating that they made love. This was a public place and to “uncover his feet” was a primitive custom in which the woman would slightly pull back the edge of the man's robe to get his attention. I dare say, it would certainly get a man's attention! It was a gesture above reproach indicating to the man that he had been chosen by the woman as her kinsman redeemer. Laying at his feet was an act of

humility that reminds us of how we must come to Christ. Remember, this story of romance between Boaz and Ruth paints for us a picture of the Romance of Redemption. The only way that we can come to Christ in an acceptable disposition is humbly, like a little “child” (Lk. 18:17).

There was nothing sexually suggestive for Ruth to ask Boaz to “spread thy skirt over thine handmaid.” In doing so, she was making her legal claim for protection and care under the guardianship of a husband. Boaz promised to do all that he could to “redeem” her for marriage. It turns out that the nearest kinsman relinquished his opportunity and Boaz willingly and eagerly marries Ruth.

When Ruth presented herself to Boaz on the “threshingfloor,” they did not treat this as an hour of temptation and immorality like most Hollywood film makers of today would do. They treated it like a sacred hour of grace and holiness. Here is a good illustration of how one does not have to give in to the carnal passions of the flesh. I want to remind young people in particular that as far as sexual relationship is concerned, true love waits for marriage while lust does not. The sacredness of sex is being threatened today every way we turn. God’s plan of sacred sex is and always will be the same. You do not have to wallow in the cesspools of worldly lust before coming to the marriage bed.

The nearest kinsman wanted the estate, but he did not want to marry Ruth for whatever the reason. Boaz was willing to pay the necessary price for the estate of Elimelech to marry Ruth. It was because Boaz loved Ruth that he was willing to redeem her. She meant more to him than the estate. It’s because of God’s love for His Bride, that He was willing to redeem her. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus paid the ransom for His Bride. This ransom was not paid to the Devil, but to the Father in freeing us from the bondage to sin. Jesus Christ is our Heavenly Boaz. The union of Ruth, the Gentile Moabite, to Boaz, the Israelite, foreshadows the mystical union of Christ and His Church. To redeem means to release on receipt of ransom and that is exactly what Jesus Christ

has done in order to set us free from the stronghold of Satan (Titus 2:14). Until a person is redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, he will remain in spiritual bondage to sin.

The story of Ruth begins with a famine and a funeral, but it ends in wealth and a wedding. Ruth had to make a decision to either stay in Moab or go to Bethlehem. The decision that she made in chapter one led her to the beautiful ending of chapter four. It was nothing less than the Sovereignty of God in leading her to make the decisions that she did. It reminds us of Proverbs 3:5-8, **“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”**

Daily, we’re being confronted with all kinds of decisions and it’s important that we make the right ones if we’re going to please our God. That’s why we need to bathe ourselves in prayer and the Word of God. We need the mind of Christ. We need to learn how to think like He thinks and want what He wants. A major decision that most everyone must make is either to marry or not to marry and if we marry, we need to make sure that we do so “only” (I Cor. 7:39) in the will of God.

But, more importantly, what are you going to do with Jesus? Believe His Word, trust Him, love Him, and follow Him or reject Him. Unless we come to Christ, like Ruth came to Boaz, we’ll never know Him as our Personal Redeemer. There is nobody anywhere Who will ever love you like Jesus. God’s conquering grace is seen throughout Scripture just as it is seen in the life of Ruth, a Gentile Moabitess, whose first husband and second husband were both Israelites. Ordinarily, this was forbidden, but in this case God paints a picture of the marriage of Christ to His Bride composing all races, including gentiles (Rev. 5:9). Yes, God’s grace is greater than our sin and He does override our depraved wills by giving us the desires of our hearts that we ought to have in hungering after Him.

Chapter 6

The Loving Leader Of The Home

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence her husband.” (Eph. 5:22-33)

There’s nothing unusual about houses being characterized by certain aromas. In fact, all houses have odors of those living therein and we become so accustomed with them that we pay no attention to the unique smell. When you enter some houses, they may smell like a kennel, a greasy spoon café, or even a septic tank. Some may give off the aroma of cigarette smoke, a disinfectant spray, or a room deodorizer. Others may greet you with the smell of a pleasant bakery, or an appealing restaurant. Some houses may even smell moldy and musty.

Not only do houses give off an aroma, but so do the homes that makes up the households. How would you describe the spiritual aroma of your home? Do you claim to have a Christian home? Spiritually speaking, does your family life smell like something has crawled under the refrigerator and died or does it smell like a sweet pastry shop? Is it a “sweet savor unto God” (II Cor. 2:15)? I’m afraid that many homes today give off a spiritual stench that is worse than a skunk.

After living in parsonages contaminated with rats (see my book, *My Life As A Pastor, Shepherding God’s Sheep And Herding Goats*), I can tell you that offensive odors are sometimes hard to get rid of in a house. Also, after pastoring my share of problem churches, I can also tell you that offensive odors are even harder to get rid of in homes that comprise church congregations. In this **fifth chapter of Ephesians and verse two**, we’re told how Christians can give off a pleasing aroma to God. **“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”**

From the example of Christ, we can learn how to give off a “sweetsmelling savour.” When we “walk in love” that is sacrificial, we imitate the “love” with which “Christ also hath loved us.” A genuine Christ-like home will have an atmosphere that produces this type of spiritual aroma. Being harsh, unkind, resentful, abusive, demeaning, controlling, hateful, violent, and neglectful to each other, and being disobedient to God’s Word is not walking in “love.” You can attend all the marriage seminars and read all the marriage manuals that you want, but that alone cannot produce a godly aroma in your home. Just because you attend church services every Sunday will not automatically make you a “sweetsmelling savor” unto God. These things may be helpful, but unless husbands and wives are first committed to Christ and then committed to each other, there will be no godly obedience that procures an appealing spiritual aroma to the Lord.

Our text begins by saying, “submitting yourselves one to another.” This reminds us of how all Christians ought to see themselves in the body of Christ. Humbly, we should be following the leadership that God has ordained over us. Everyone is equal in the sight of God when it comes to value and worth, even in the marriage relationship. However, for any organization to function effectively, the leadership roles must be properly defined. This is true not only for a church, but for a marriage. In our text, we learn that God has assigned the “husband” with the responsibility of being the loving leader of the home (I Cor. 11:3, Col. 3:18-19).

The Husband as a Leader

Scripture clearly teaches that the Christian “husband” is God’s divinely appointed “head” of the home. Our text states that he “is the head of the wife,” meaning from the Greek that he is to be the leader of the home. Being the “head” doesn’t mean he’s not to talk things over with his wife nor be considerate of her feelings. It simply means that he’s to take the initiative in leadership. This means spiritual matters as well as household matters.

I’m aware of how many in today’s culture will balk at such teaching. Also, I’m aware of how many professing Christians in our modern world refuse to accept their God-given role. However, let’s stop to think about it this way. Every man in a household is a leader of some kind or another, be it good or bad. The example he sets will most definitely influence his family one way or another. A big problem facing the institutionalized church is the failure of so-called Christian men in setting a godly example before their family. These men refuse to accept and fail to carry out the spiritual leadership that God has assigned to them.

In this passage, God paints a picture of how “Christ is the head of the church,” by pointing us to the husband-wife relationship. A godly “husband” will be one that is growing in the Lord, leads his family spiritually, and able to give direction and council from

the Word of God (I Cor. 14:35). Being “the head of the wife” encompasses several different responsibilities upon the husband.

First and foremost, it means that he is to be the spiritual leader of the home (Gen. 18:17-19). God expects the husband to set the spiritual tone for his family. How sad it is that many if not most husbands fail to do this. However, this is foundational to all other aspects of his leadership role. His wife and children ought to know that Christ and the church are important by his example of Bible study, prayer, service, and holy living.

Secondly, the husband is to provide for his family (I Tim. 5:8). Paul’s words recorded in First Timothy deals with the care of “widows” within the local assembly and involves money management. However, the truth of this passage can certainly be applied to the household in general. The husband is to meet his family’s needs above his own. As head of the home, the husband is to meet the financial needs of his family and teach his children how to give their tithes and offerings unto the Lord and how to spend their money wisely. It’s not the job of the government to take care of your children. That’s the privilege given to parents. Furthermore, the husband should not only see that the financial and material needs of his family are met, but provide his time and attention to both his wife and children.

Thirdly, to qualify for a leadership role in the church, a man must learn how to “rule his own house” (I Tim. 3:4-5,12). This concept of ruling doesn’t give a man the right to be a dictator or tyrant (see my book on, *Godly Servants*). This Greek word for “rule” simply means to preside over. A wise husband will realize that he does not know it all and will rely upon the God-given abilities of his wife and children.

Fourthly, the husband should exercise good judgment and extend “honour unto his wife” (I Pet. 3:7). A compassionate considerate husband will have knowledge of the family’s needs and a desire to meet those needs. He will put just as much energy into his family as he does his occupational job. In public and private, the wife is to be respected and not downgraded because, as believers, they are both “heirs together of the grace of life” (Gal. 3:28).

Both husbands and wives are expected to be Christ-like in their demeanor toward one another. This matter of submission is a two-way street (v.21) when it comes to both submitting to God's authority. Let's remember that God wrote the Book of all books, Holy Scripture through divinely inspired human hands and it says, "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." God expects the Christian wife to be "subject" to a godly husband and "reverence" (v.33) him. The ESV translates this word, "reverence" to be "respect." It doesn't mean worship because that belongs to God alone.

Let's understand that there is no place in Scripture that teaches the inferiority of women nor their subjection to all men. This one flesh relationship of husband and wife means being "subject" to "their own husbands." The creation order (Gen. 2:18) teaches that "Adam" was not created for "Eve," but "Eve" for "Adam" (I Cor. 11:8-9). In the making of man and woman, God built into the husband the need of respect and into the wife, the need for loving care.

The Husband as a Lover

To begin with, let's look at what the nature of a husband's love ought to be. A husband's love for his wife should be patterned after Christ's love for the church. This Greek word for love in our text is AGAPA which expresses love to its greatest degree. It's a love that can only be known by those who know God's love personally through saving faith (I Jh. 3:16). Because of the divine nature of this love, being "filled with the Spirit" (v.18) is a prerequisite. For the Christian husband to love his wife according to God's command, he must be controlled by the "Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5). God's imperative to husbands is for them to "love your wives even as Christ also loved the church."

Jesus Christ Himself is the husband's pattern for loving his wife. From the price that Christ paid for His church, we discover just how costly love really is. Jesus "loved the church" so much that He died for her. Now, let me ask you a question. What wife

would not be willing to submit herself to a husband who loved her so much that he would literally die for her? Despite her faults and failures, a godly husband will keep on loving his wife.

An all-out effort must be put into keeping love alive in a marriage, even romantic love. The romantic attention given in courtship should mature and never diminish in a marriage. Keeping short accounts of each other's wrongs and being willing to quickly forgive is necessary in a healthy marriage where love prevails.

God likens the marriage relationship to His relationship with the church. Husbands and wives are to have the most physically intimate relationship that anyone can have on the face of the earth. It is a one flesh relationship according to Scripture. When the husband enters into his wife sexually, they literally become one flesh as they are joined physically together. There is no physical relationship greater than that. God wants a spiritually intimate relationship with His people that is most intimate of all. I call your attention to several passages of Scripture that emphasizes the very intimate preposition "in." Just as the Father and Son have a spiritual likeness of being two persons, but one in essence, Christ desires a oneness with His Bride. He is the "head" and the church is His "body" (I Cor. 12).

"At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (Jh. 14:20).

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a

branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (Jh. 15:1-10)

"Christ in you" is the "hope of glory" (Col. 2:27).

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (Jh. 6:56)

"I and *my* Father are one." (Jh. 10:30)

"But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him." (Jh. 10:38)

These verses tell us how much God loves His church and how much He wants fellowship with His Bride. It shows us the spiritual intimacy that God desires with His people. Just as "Christ also loved the church" purposefully, so should the husband love his wife. The purpose of Christ loving His church was to "sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." He does this so that He can "present it to himself a glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

True beauty for a woman is not necessarily outward, but inward (I Tim. 2:9). Scripture doesn't teach that it's wrong for a woman to wear jewelry, but it does teach that a woman who has a lovely spirit is genuinely lovely (I Pet. 3:3-4). A woman who is beautiful outwardly, but unholy inwardly is a "stench" (Isa. 3:24) to the nostrils of God. The Christian husband who loves his wife

will look for the internal beauty and will be concerned about her betterment and spiritual well-being.

Not only do we see what the nature of a husband's love ought to be, but also what the expression of that love ought to be. There is no normal man who would want to neglect or abuse any part of his own body, therefore, he should not neglect or abuse his wife. This word, "nourisheth," that we find in our text means to feed, strengthen, and build up to maturity. The word, "cherisheth," speaks of an attitude of caring, looking out for, to cherish with tender love. Both of these words are closely linked to the concept of biblical jealousy (Ex. 34:14, II Cor. 11:2). Jealousy motivated by bitterness, resentment, and malice is wrong and destructive. But, when jealousy is motivated by love, it is healthy and constructive. No loving husband will ever want to share his marital love for his wife with anyone else. That should be due to the godly jealousy he has for her.

According to God's Word, it is the responsibility of the husband to see that the wife is cared and provided for (Ex. 21:10-11). The wife is not to be treated like a piece of property, livestock, a hired hand, or a slave. A husband's love for his wife should be the same as what he would give "his own flesh." The physical consummation of the marriage relationship literally makes the wife a part of the husband (Gen. 2:24).

The unconditional and unbreakable love that Christ has for the church should become that which a husband has for his wife. The term, "joined unto his wife," refers to what ought to be an indivisible permanent union on this side of heaven. In the Greek, the word, "joined," means to cleave, to glue, or stick to. God expects husbands and wives to meet each other's sexual needs and be content with their own mates (Prov. 5:15-19, I Cor. 7:3-4). Unfortunately, there are many men who have consummated their marriage physically, but act like spiritual eunuchs in the home because they are spiritually impotent.

The type of love mentioned in this chapter is a "great mystery" that one can only come to know through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. It's a "great mystery" because it's a truth that is only revealed to those who are born into the family of God and

walk in fellowship with Him. It's a "mystery" that so few married couples of today yearn for and as a result, they don't know what they're missing.

I want to remind you, that the institution of marriage is the first that God ordained. The ungodly world consistently attacks this institution because Satan knows that if he can destroy the home the way God has established it, then he can destroy a nation. That is exactly what's happening in America and around the world. Not only is today's divorce rate alarming, but so is the lack of commitment in every area of life, especially in the marriage relationship. The number of couples living together outside the bonds of holy matrimony are growing and becoming more acceptable by modern-day society. However, such a lifestyle does not change the truth of God's Word regarding the sacredness of sex in the marriage relationship.

For the most part, today's home is in a tragic condition spiritually. Whenever a couple ignores the teachings of God's Word for marriage and the family, they do so at their own peril. Unless there is a love for the Lord and a maturing in that love from both husband and wife, spiritual growth will be lacking in the home. Just as husbands and wives ought to have physical intimacy with one another and growing in their love for one another, they ought to have above all a growing love and intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ. The love that Christ has for His Bride (Rev. 21:9) is the supreme example for a husband to follow in loving his wife. There is no such thing as a perfect husband who will attain at such a goal, but that ought to be the desire and ambition of every Christian husband as he seeks and strives in trying to love his wife like Christ loves His church.

There is a beautiful old song written by B.B. McKinney that needs to be rediscovered in our day. Pay attention to the words and let it be a challenge to every Christian family. It's entitled, God Give Us Christian Homes. Pay close attention to the words and may it become a prayer from the heart of everyone reading this book.

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,
Homes where the Master's will is sought,
Homes crowned with beauty Your love has wrought;
God give us Christian homes;
God give us Christian homes!

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the father is true and strong,
Homes that are free from the blight of wrong,
Homes that are joyous with love and song;
God give us Christian homes;
God give us Christian homes!

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the mother, in caring quest,
Strives to show others Your way is best,
Homes where the Lord is an honored guest;
God give us Christian homes;
God give us Christian homes!

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the children are led to know
Christ in His beauty who loves them so,
Homes where the altar fires burn and glow;
God give us Christian homes;
God give us Christian homes!

Chapter 7

English Words And The Holy Word

There are many words that are used in the English language to express sexual behavior. Some of those words describe the numerous ways sex is misused in violation of God's commands.

As you've discovered in this book, I use the KJV. It's not because I'm a KJV only person, but that's what I "cut my spiritual teeth" on and it's the way I learned the Word of God; therefore, it comes most natural for me. There are other good versions and I often refer to them. However, I've come to the conclusion that one reason why there are so many versions today is because of the way people are trying to "dumb-down" the precious Word of God.

Yes, the KJV uses some rather crude terms (or at least it seems crude to some people), but it certainly gets the point across. For instance, it's nothing unusual to find, even some good translations, that no longer use the word, "fornication." Even the word, "bastards," is defined as illegitimate in newer translations. There's nothing wrong with that, but in all honesty, there is something about the words, "fornication" and "bastards" that better describes how God views sex outside of marriage. The words carry a connotation of something disgusting. It's like the word, "abomination" in the Book of Leviticus that means "disgusting thing" in the sight of God. It's not just "bad," but "disgusting." Very much like the word, "hell," the only time it is used today in public along with the word "bastard" is in profanity. These are profound words that depict how God views sin and there's nothing wrong with these words when used in the proper context.

Let's take a brief look at a few English words and their meaning.

Adultery-when a man and women are united in holy wedlock, but have sexual relations with someone else outside of their marriage union. God forbids adultery to protect the marriage relationship. Adultery harms and violates the most intimate physical union that a husband and wife can have.

Fornication-is generally when people who are not married to one another engage in sexual relations. Today when those of the same sex indulge in a sexual practice, it can also be considered fornication. It's a term that speaks of unlawful sex in the sight of God.

Divorce-when a husband and wife sever their marriage relationship in the eyes of the law and are no longer entitled to the privileges of sexual intercourse with one another.

Perversion-is a sexual practice or act considered abnormal or deviant. This can include homosexuality, lesbianism or even such things as anal or oral sex among heterosexual people. This may be called sex, but it's taking God's original design and changing it. If it's not God's design for sex; therefore, it's downright perversion. Sex is a creation of God and man has perverted it into something that it's not.

Heterosexual-people who are sexually attracted to those of the opposite sex.

Homosexuality and Lesbianism-when people of the same gender engage in their own conceived style of sexual relations.

Bisexual-people of one sex engages in sexual relations with those of both genders.

Transgender-people of one sex who undergo a sex change operation to alter their bodies in such a way that appears to be the opposite gender from their birth. God made people “male and female.” For people to try and change their gender is trying to play God; therefore, it’s not only an abuse to the body, but idolatry. The truth of the matter is that one’s gender cannot be changed regardless of how hard they try because your gender identity is the gender of your birth.

Hermaphrodite-refers to babies that are born with abnormal sex organs. This is due to chromosomal problems of which they had no control.

Bestiality-people who practice sex with animals.

Transvestite-people who dress and act in a style or manner normally associated with the opposite sex and sometimes referred to as crossdressers.

Jezebel-a wicked seductive woman known as evil and scheming. This name comes from the wife of King Ahab in the Old Testament who was queen Jezebel and led Israel into idolatry.

Harlot or Prostitute-is one who has sex for money or some other type of payment.

Slut-is a promiscuous woman.

Whore-a person who is regarded to be a prostitute or harlot and looked upon as sexually promiscuous.

Whoremonger-is a man who associates with prostitutes or a sexually promiscuous man, a male prostitute or fornicator.

Bastards-children born out of wedlock, simply meaning when the parents are not married to one another.

Promiscuous-people who engage in sexual relationship with a variety of partners.

Casanova-is just another name for a philanderer or a promiscuous man.

Philanderer-is a man who has the reputation of carrying on sexual affairs, especially, extramarital affairs.

Incest-is having sex with someone who is closely related by blood. It is usually considered today as a statutory crime of sexual relations with a near relative.

Rape-is a person forcing himself on another person sexually without consent.

Eunuch-was a man in biblical days who was castrated and employed to take care of the king's harem. It can also refer to a male who can not perform sexually or a man who chooses the life of celibacy.

Celibacy-refers to abstinence from sexual intercourse or the state of being unmarried and not sexually active.

Sexual Abstinence-is for either a male or female to refrain from having sexual intercourse. This is the biblical teaching for single people until marriage. Only after marriage is abstinence allowed for physical or spiritual reasons between spouses.

Conjugal-refers to the marriage relationship and the sexual bond that binds the husband and wife together.

Polyamory-is the state of having more than one sexual relationship at the same time with all the partners involved having knowledge and giving consent.

Polygamy-is the practice of being married to more than one spouse at a time which is against the law in the United States of America.

Bigamy-is considered to be the criminal offense of marrying a person while at the same time being legally married to another.

After looking at the English words above, we now turn to the Word of God and find the Hebrew and Greek translations of how some of these words often appear in Holy Scripture. Some of these words are mentioned directly, while others may be alluded to either directly or indirectly. Let's pause to let the Word of God speak for itself regarding sexual conduct as seen in the eyes of God. These are only a few passages that I've selected, but it's enough to let us know the mind of God regarding his design for sexual conduct.

We discover from the very first book in the Bible, that people have been violating God's standards for sexual behavior. The Lord has not hidden the sins of Bible characters, but has recorded their lives for us to learn from their mistakes and avoid the same sorrows. Scripture has much to say about sexual behavior and warns against misconduct. These passages that you're about to read are only a few which refer to sexual

matters, encounters, or sometimes even innuendo. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is filled with sex. Keep in mind that sometimes when the KJV uses the word “know” or “knew” it’s used in reference to sexual intercourse and can be distinguished by the context of Scripture.

“So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”
(Gen. 1:26-27)

“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.”
(Gen. 4:1)

“And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.” (Gen. 4:19)

“And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from

every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.” (Gen. 19:1-16)

“And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.” (Gen. 19:30-36)

“And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard *it*. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these *are* the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram.”

(Gen. 35:22-26)

“And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name *was* Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name *was* Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. And she conceived, and bare a son; and

he called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him. And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name *was* Tamar. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled *it* on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also. Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren *did*. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which *is* by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she *was* his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send *thee* a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it*? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand. And he gave *it* her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot, that *was* openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this *place*. And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*. And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her. And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she *is* with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these *are*, *am* I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more. And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins *were* in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *This* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah.”

(Gen. 38:1-30)

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” (Ex. 20:14)

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.” (Ex. 20:17)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: *I am* the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: *I am* the LORD. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover *their* nakedness: *I am* the LORD. The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she *is* thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it *is* thy father's nakedness. The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, *whether she be* born at home, or born abroad, *even* their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, *even* their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs *is* thine own nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she *is* thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she *is* thy father's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she *is* thy mother's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she *is* thine aunt. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she *is*

thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: *it is* thy brother's nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; *for they are* her near kinswomen: *it is* wickedness. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex *her*, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her *life time*. Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: *I am* the LORD. Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: *it is* abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: *it is* confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations; *neither* any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which *were* before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that *were* before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not *any one* of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: *I am* the LORD your God.” (Lev. 18:1-30)

“Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.” (Lev. 19:29)

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” (Lev. 20:10)

“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance. When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.” (Deut. 24:1-5)*

“And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this

Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, *I am* with child. And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess *of meat* from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house. And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the

letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him. And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David

sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD. (II Sam. 11:2-27)

“And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother. And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her. Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her. And *she had* a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying. And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth. And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar. And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant. And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him. Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee? But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled. And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left. Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent. And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead. But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes,

and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him. And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore. But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. And *the soul of king David* longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.” (II Sam. 13:10-39)

“Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with *other* things for the purifying of the women;) Then thus came *every* maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name. Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which *is* the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and

favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, *even* Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.” (Esther 2:12-18)

“*But* whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he *that* doeth it destroyeth his own soul.”

(Prov. 6:32)

“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Mal. 3:5)

“Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.” (Matt. 1:24-25)

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

(Matt. 5:27-28)

“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the

case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*." (Matt. 9:9-12)*

“And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”

(Mk. 10:2-12)*

“They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

(Jh. 8:3-12)

“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers.” (Rom. 1:29)

“It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.”

(I Cor. 5:1)

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” (I Cor. 6:9-12)

“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” (I Cor. 6:15-18)

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”*

(I Cor. 7:1-5)*

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal. 5:19-21)

“Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” (Heb. 13:4)

“Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?” (Jam. 2:25)

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (Jude 7)

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

(Rev. 17:1-5)

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

(Rev. 21:8)

Note: For more explanation and in-depth study on the passages dealing with divorce, see my book on *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, What Does the Bible Really Teach?

Chapter 8

Homosexuality

“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.”

(Lev. 20:13)

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.”

(Rom. 1:24-27)

I've chosen to address this particular subject because it perfectly illustrates how things that once were a “taboo” are now becoming widely accepted. Such acceptance describes the moral condition of our nation and the nations around the world. The devil is having a “field day” with his deception in every arena of moral behavior. If we don't soon have a spiritual awakening within the churches of our land, then very soon there will not be anything left that is worth having. Christ has left His church on earth to be “salt” and “light” (Matt. 5:13-14) in a corrupt and dark world of sin. May God help us as Christians to stand for the Truth in Love. We are not a bunch of bigots, who hate sinners of any type, including homosexuals, but people who love sinners enough to share with them that the only hope out of the slime pit of sin for any of us is Jesus Christ (Mk. 2:17).

God's Regulations Regarding Intimate Relationships

Before God dealt with the problems of sexual immorality, He reminded the people that He was the "Lord" their "God" Who was in sovereign authority over them (Lev. 18:1-2). He warned Israel that they were not to practice the sins of the flesh that were demonstrated in "the land of Egypt" and "in the land of Canaan" (Lev. 18:3). God expects the conduct of His people to be in direct contrast to the heathen humanistic culture of the world. Unfortunately, we're living in a day where it's becoming more difficult to see any difference between many so-called Christians and their modern society. But, notice that I said, "so-called" Christians. Those who profess, but do not possess. Many make a profession of faith, but do not possess God-given faith and are not indwelt with the Holy Spirit. To be a true follower of Jesus Christ means to possess a desire to "live" according to the "judgments, ordinances, and statutes" of God (Lev. 18:4-5). It means to possess the "nature" of Christ (II Pet. 1:4).

Sex outside of marriage is, always has been, and always will be sin in the sight of God. The Lord governed and regulated sexual intimacy between a husband and wife for the welfare and happiness of mankind. To protect the sanctity of marriage, God gives a list of sexual prohibitions, which are considered sins of incest (Lev. 18:7-18). Sex was forbidden with one's father or mother (v.7-8), sister or half-sister (v.9), granddaughter (v.10), a father's daughter by another marriage (v.11), aunt (v.12-13), aunt by marriage (v.14), daughter in law (v.15), sister in law (v.16), wife's daughter or granddaughter by a former marriage (v.17), or wife's sister (v.18).

Concluding God's list of sexual sins are unnatural acts that are divinely prohibited. The misuse of human "seed" (semen) is said to "profane the name" of the God of creation (Lev 18:21). God is the One Who put this world together and He alone has the right to declare what is right and wrong. I know that what I'm about to say will anger some, but today's sperm banks, modern methods

of artificial insemination, and genetic technology cannot help but cause me to question if man is not tampering with something that should be left alone.

When we come to Lev. 18:22, God calls homosexuality, an “abomination.” This word in the Hebrew means, a disgusting thing. God created “male and female” (Gen. 1:27) to perfectly complement one another to the point of actually fitting together sexually (Matt. 19:5). He made NO such provision for people of the same sex. Even in the world of plumbing and electronics, companies produce male and female plugs and connectors. This enables the parts to properly fit together so that the equipment will work as it should. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure this out, but our depraved world of today wants to argue the point. The fact is, two men don’t fit together and neither do two women fit together because God did not make them in such a fashion. A man is to be different from a woman, not only in behavior and sexuality, but even in his very appearance (I Cor. 11:14). In other words, males are to act, dress, groom, and perform sexually as men. Likewise, the same can be said of a woman. It’s an “abomination” to God for men to act like women and for women to act like men.

Last on the list of sexual prohibitions is the sin of bestiality (Lev. 18:23). Bestiality is committing a sex act with an animal. Someone has commented that after the sin of homosexuality takes over a land, the only thing left in way of sexual perversion is bestiality. As revolting as it seems, this was a common part of Canaanite worship and is known to still occur today.

God’s Warning Against Unnatural Sex Practices

These sins mentioned in the Book of Leviticus, were the very ones that caused God to judge the Canaanite “nations” (Lev. 18:24-30). Anyone who practices the sins of the Canaanites can expect to receive the punishment of God. The Lord used a foreign invader to drive them out of their land and cut their lives

short. Sexual sins have caused the most powerful empires to crumble. There should be no debate about having homosexuals or transgender soldiers in a nation's military. That is a recipe for disaster. Just look at the Babylonian, Grecian, and Roman empires. If homosexuality continues to prevail, it will also bring God's judgment upon any nation.

The punishment for committing homosexuality was to be "cut off from among the people." In other words, homosexuality was forbidden by God to the point that it carried the "death" (Lev. 20:13) penalty in Israel. Although, today's society doesn't carry out this execution of judgment, it appears that God has sent health invaders to plague those who are given over to such perversion. Those who practice any type of sexual perversion subject themselves to sexually transmitted diseases. Reports tell us that it's not uncommon for homosexuals to have a very high number of sexual partners.

Our nation is rapidly resembling "Sodom and Gomorrah" (Gen. 18:20) with people in high places treating the prohibition of God lightly (Gen. 19:4-11). The Book of Genesis records the first instance of homosexuality, which has been known from Lot's day to our day, as Sodomy. If you want to know what God thinks of Sodomy, just look at what He did to these cities that practiced it (Gen. 19:24-25). The judgment that fell upon "Sodom and Gomorrah" should be a warning for our generation. If we're not careful, we also can become like "Lot" by letting down our guard, tolerating sin, becoming complacent, and allowing the world to rob us of a Christian testimony.

No matter how many politicians and psychologists argue that any kind of sex is normal as long as it brings fulfillment and satisfaction, God's Word remains unchanged and God still feels repugnance for sexual perversion. The argument of a loving caring relationship sounds good, but if it's not practiced within the guidelines of Holy Scripture, then it's spiritually illegitimate.

Homosexuality is NOT just another lifestyle choice, but it's willful sinful perversion contrary to God's ordained husband and

wife relationship. No society can exist without a core of values and a set of limitations. The very God, Who created man, gave him guidelines by which to live. The Biblical model for the expression of human sexuality is provided in uniting a man and woman in a life-long faithful relationship of holy matrimony (Mk. 10:6-8). If one wishes to live outside of sexual expression, then the only other alternative is singleness and celibacy (Matt. 19:12).

God's Sexual Regulations and Warnings are Reinforced

In the New Testament, God's Word reinforces the moral teaching established in the Old Testament. Both idolatry and gross immorality are the result of rejecting God. Those whom God "gave ... up" (Rom. 1) refers to those guilty of idolatry and how God turned them over to sexual "uncleanness," allowing them to "dishonor their own bodies" through "lust." When scripture says, "God gave them up", it literally means that He handed them over to the demons of "lust." Sexual perversion always accompanies idolatry. Homosexuality is a symptom of idolatry and those who practice it have made sex their god.

For a person to be given over to "vile affections" is to succumb to the passions of perversions. Homosexuality and lesbianism are as despicable to God in the New Testament as it was in the Old Testament. The increase of homosexuality is simply a sign of gross depravity in our day and age. It's recorded in **Second Timothy, chapter three, and verses two through five, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."**

God's Word promises that those who engage in homosexuality will receive "in themselves that recompense of their error." To be given over to a "reprobate mind" means that God turns such people over to an un-approving and un-discerning manner of life and allows them to do what they want because of their corrupt heart.

A common assertion is that gays are born that way, but scripture declares that is NOT the case. The Greek word, "natural" that we find in the above text, means produced by nature or inborn. Nature speaks of that which is natural as opposed to what is abnormal or perverse or produced by man. These verses tell us that homosexuality and lesbianism is not inherited. It's true that we've all inherited a sin nature. However, scripture teaches that it's not "natural" to have sex with the same gender because that is not the way God programmed the human race.

Homosexual activity isn't caused by the brain patterns with which a person is born. Many years ago, it was Ann Landers that asked her homosexual readers to respond to her question, "Are you glad you are gay, or would you rather be straight?" In response, thirty-to-one said they were glad to be gay. She said that after writing her column (at that time for nearly 37 years) the homosexual topic generated more attention than almost any other.

God made people heterosexual and not homosexual. In the Garden of Eden, God made Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve. Even in the animal kingdom, God made them male and female, so they could produce "after his kind" (Gen. 1:24). Homosexuality is clearly a work of Satan who causes people to engage in this sort of thing through the power of his demonic forces. There is indication in scripture that demons are grouped in military-like structure and attack in particular moral areas (Mk. 5:9, 16:9). Homosexuals and lesbians are enslaved to the demons of immorality and only Jesus Christ can totally set them free.

I believe that demon possession can manifest itself in many different ways. Personally, I attribute homosexuality, lesbianism, and trans-gender issues to demon possession. As I see it, there is no way that one can exchange that which is “natural” for “that which is against nature” (Rom. 1:26) except they be demon possessed. It’s a dangerous thing for God to give people over to a “reprobate mind.” Such a mind is corrupt and unable to discern the difference between right and wrong and is in love with the devil’s lie. It’s a “mind” that not only commits sin, but approves of it, and enjoys seeing others commit their same sin. Yes, we’re all sinners in need of a Savior and the only remedy for any sin is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Just as Christ drove the demons out of the demoniac (Lk. 8:26-40), He can still do it today. He’s in the spiritual business of saving souls and changing lives to His glory.

Closing Thoughts To Ponder

The debate over gay rights should be no debate at all if only God’s Word was consulted and regarded as man’s absolute authority. There are times when discrimination is good, such as when sin is discriminated against for the well-being of mankind. According to Holy Scripture, homosexuality and lesbianism is morally wrong and is forbidden by our Creator.

Homosexuals are seeking to become more visible in society, hoping that the heterosexual community will become sympathetic to their cause. Helping them to achieve this goal, the news media in our country is doing a fantastic job of promoting secular humanism and breaking down all Christian barriers that have held our country together since its beginning. Unfortunately, polls seem to indicate that the media’s message is taking hold and many Americans are more willing to tolerate the homosexual lifestyle. Television programs, as well as all sorts of media, are flooding the airways and printed page with homosexual characters and homosexual agenda.

Like abortion, homosexuality is being displayed as a constitutional right and that every individual has a right to choose without any regard for the laws of God. Gay and lesbian advocates continue pushing for federal civil rights barring discrimination against homosexuals, legalization of gay marriages and laws enabling the partners of gay and lesbian workers to receive health insurance and other spousal benefits. I can remember the day when homosexuality was in the closet, but now it's out in full force, proudly parading up and down the streets of America and around the world. God's values are the values that civilization was built upon and to deviate from these values is to experience the destruction of everything decent in society.

Condoning homosexuality is offensive to God because it gives approval to that which He has forbidden. It's contrary to the biblical norm and presents a deviate lifestyle. Just because Christians uphold the teachings against homosexuality, in no way whatsoever means that we hate homosexuals. It is because of our love for their eternal souls that we want to warn them of their evil ways. Sin is sin regardless of what that sin may be, and we are all sinners, every one of us (Rom. 3:23). God's grace is sufficient to save the vilest sinner who will repent and by faith turn to Christ for forgiveness.

God specializes in changing people, even homosexuals. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul spoke of various types of sinners, including homosexuals, which had been converted to Christ. **First Corinthians, chapter six, verses nine through eleven, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (homosexuals), nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."**

Without apology, God's people need to take an unflinching stand for biblical sexuality and oppose anything and everything contrary to the revealed Word of God. Not only must we reject the idea of ordaining homosexuals into the ministry, but even the thought of performing same gender marriages, or accepting them into church membership. It's a shame for any church or individual who professes Christ to turn their freedom into a license to sin. Open rebellion against God is never, under any circumstances, permitted including the sin of homosexuality. It's apparent that those who practice homosexuality have a "seared ... conscience" (I Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:15). Homosexuals are living in open rebellion against God's design for sexuality and are like the "wicked" portrayed in the Psalms (Ps. 36:1-4).

The Bible makes it clear what God thinks about homosexuality. He hates it, deplors it, despises it, and promises to judge it. Don't ever doubt the fact that He is a God of great love and in grace He saves sinners, regardless of what the sins may be. As followers of Christ, we are to seek to believe and practice His Word. We should never exhibit any hatred toward people while at the same time not approving of what they may do that the Bible calls sinful. Love the sinner, but hate the sin. Extend a hand of love and compassion to any person who is willing to receive it. God has made the rules and set the parameters in which He intends for mankind to function. Those who engage in homosexuality need to be set free from their sin just like any lost sinner. The Christ of the cross delights in saving sinners regardless of their enslavement to whatever the sin.

God's will and purpose for human sexuality are to be realized only through the institution of marriage of "male" and "female." Sex is a gift from God that is to be enjoyed between a husband and wife within the sacred bonds of matrimony. Any abuse of sexuality (premarital sex, adultery, rape, incest, pornography, promiscuity, prostitution, homosexuality, etc.) is condemned by God in His Word. If there has ever been a time when Christians need to uphold the biblical standards of human sexuality, it is

today. Unless America turns from her wicked ways, God's judgment is inevitable as it was in Sodom and Gomorrah.

God Almighty is the One and Only True God Who demonstrated His Love for lost sinners by wrapping Himself in a body of Flesh (the incarnation) and gave Himself in atonement for sin. He came to do for us that which we could not do for ourselves. Sin will be judged in one of two places, either in the person of Jesus Christ on the cross or in the torments of an eternal Hell. Provision has been made for our salvation and once the Holy Spirit brings the sinner to Christ, the sweet peace of God's forgiveness can be realized. Our God is a great God of judgment, but He is also a great God of grace.

Chapter 9

The Woman At The Well

“When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is

not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.”

(Jh. 4:1-30)

The story in this text tells us about a time when Jesus was on His way to Cana of Galilee. There were three routes that He could have taken from where He was. The route “through Samaria” was the most direct, but ordinarily the Jews of that day didn’t want to travel that way because of racial tensions between the Jews and Samaritans. The reason Jesus chose to go this particular direction was because it was His Father’s will. He said that he “must needs go through Samaria.” God had sovereignly ordained for a Samaritan woman to meet Christ and to drink from the Water of Life. This woman had a bad moral reputation, but that didn’t stop Christ from offering her spiritual life.

Jesus made sure that He was at the well when she arrived to draw water. She was shocked that Christ would even enter into conversation with her. Jesus got her mind off the water in the well and got her to thinking about spiritual water. Back in John, chapter four and verse eleven, Christ is presented as “living water.” Until a sinner drinks from this “living water” then he’ll just keep on thirsting and never know eternal life.

There are multitudes of people today going to the water holes of this world looking for satisfaction, only to leave just as empty as they were when they arrived. It’s very evident that sex had never satisfied her because she had had five husbands and the man with whom she was currently living was not her husband. Jesus, being God in human flesh, knew all this about her and she was surprised and came to the conclusion that He was the Messiah that the Jews had long-awaited.

It appears that she had a life changing encounter with the Lord Jesus because she immediately began witnessing. She came to the well looking for physical water, but found spiritual water. She discovered a satisfaction like she had never known before. Her immorality did not stop Christ from confronting her and offering her the answers to life for which she had been searching. As I prepare to bring this book to an end, I’ve chosen this story to remind us that God’s best is for a man and woman to remain a virgin until marriage and then be faithful to one another till death. If sin has changed that picture in your life, then there is no such thing as secondary virginity, but there is forgiveness in and through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

I once again remind you of Isaiah 1:18, **“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”**

God’s Word is unchanging. He did not give us Ten Suggestions, but Ten Commandments. The Lord is not trying to

rob us from having any fun, but He wants the best for us. He has ordained for parents to set the moral tone in the family and give a good moral example to their children. When you shack-up and your children see you living with someone outside of the marriage relationship, what kind of pattern do you think they will follow? God warns against yielding to the flesh when temptation comes to fornicate or commit adultery. Listen closely to the words of Proverbs, chapter seven.

“My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou *art* my sister; and call understanding *thy* kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman *with* the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She *is* loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now *is she* without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, *and* with an impudent face said unto him, *I have* peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved *works*, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman *is* not at home, he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, *and* will come home at the day appointed. With her

much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong *men* have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” (Prov. 7:1-27)

Under divine inspiration, the writer of Proverbs warns against getting involved with a married woman and committing adultery. The language is very graphic and paints a picture of pain and misery. Everything may look good on the surface, but underneath is calamity and heartache. God warns against adultery, fornication, and all acts of sexual perversion because He wants us to enjoy sexual relations at its best the way He intended it. God is the One Who came up with sex and He has set boundaries and perimeters for its fulfillment in the one flesh relationship of husband and wife. It’s for our good and God’s glory.

Sexual immorality is in reality an expression of idolatry, worshiping the creature rather than the Creator. It’s bowing the knee to selfish desires instead of bowing the knee in obedience to the authority of Almighty God and His guidelines for sexual expression as given in His Holy Word. Pagans have always had their sex gods and goddesses (see my book, *On What Day of The Week Was Christ Crucified?*).

When people pervert sex, then they are basically saying that they know better than God. They usurp God’s authority and exalt themselves as being wiser than God. This can be said of any sin that we commit. But, when it comes to homosexuality and people who undergo transgender sex-change operations, then we have a living picture of the idolatry of which I speak. Our perverse sexually liberated society must never force the Church to waver

from Holy Scripture. We must stand in love for our Lord and Savior upon His unchanging Word regardless of the cost involved. In so doing, we'll be showing our love for those who have been caught up in such perversion, letting them know that there is a better way to live and that God has a better plan for sexual expression between a husband and wife.

Don't bite the devils bait. Listen to God's Word and trust what He is trying to tell us regarding all matters. This includes His plan for sex being only within the marriage relationship of husband and wife. He values it so highly that Christ used it as an analogy of His relationship to His Church. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). In salvation, we must come to Christ in faith (Eph. 2:8). We must learn the patience of faith in living the Christian life. Abraham had to learn this lesson the hard way and the consequences were severe. He became impatient and took matters into his own hands, only to make a big mess out of things. God had promised a son through Sarah, but he ended up having sexual relations with Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, and the world is still suffering from his impatience today (Gen. 16,21).

God's Word teaches that true love waits until marriage to have sex, but the devil says, don't wait. Obedience to God includes waiting for God to fulfill His promises to us, even those of a future mate who has never had sexual intercourse with another. Young people ought to settle for nothing less and refuse Satan's lies that will lead you contrary. I'm simply trying to admonish the youth of today to keep themselves pure until marriage.

I'm not saying that one shouldn't marry a person who has lost their virginity before marriage and found forgiveness. Neither am I say that one ought not to marry a person who has been previously married. I'm saying that it's a very special thing for a husband and wife to save themselves for one another. Those who have lost their virginity may marry, and those who have been previously married, may certainly remarry, but it is important to marry the person of God's choosing.

That which I'm trying to say is, two people who are virgins at the time of marriage will have something very special between the two of them which they can treasure for the rest of their marriage. It's a relationship like that of no other two people on the face of this earth if you marry in the Lord. Let God lead you to your future mate like Isaac waited for his Rebekah (Gen. 25). That's God's ideal! Don't sell yourself short. Treasure your virginity till marriage. Don't marry the wrong person for the wrong reasons. If you haven't lived up to this ideal, turn to Christ in confession, and repentance, and discover the joy of new beginnings. God's "grace" is greater than our "sin." The sin of Adam led the human race into a great deal of trouble, but the death of Christ on the cross grants forgiveness to those who repent and become recipients of His "grace."

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 5:19-21)

**"No matter how you have failed,
you can come home to God
right now"
A.W. Tozer**