

Session 14: God's Loving Discipline

We will look at Song of Solomon chapter three in session fourteen (Song 3:1-5). We are in session fourteen in twenty-four classes in this course on the Studies of the Song of Solomon. Well, Song of Solomon 3:1-5, you cannot understand that passage unless you go back to the last class or the passage just before which is Song of Solomon 2:8-17. I will give a very brief snapshot of what happened in the passage just before this one in Song of Solomon 3. What had happened is the bride, or the maiden—the Shulamite maiden which is a picture of the Bride of Christ as she is in love with King Solomon who is a picture of King Jesus.

REVIEW OF SONG OF SOLOMON 2:8-17

So, it is a love song that depicts the glory, and the beauty of married love. It is a natural love song. It is meant to be understood that way, but it is not meant to only be understood that way. It is also a picture of the love song between the Bride of Christ, and the Bridegroom King Jesus Himself.

So the parallels are quite obvious. They are very helpful and meaningful in terms of our spiritual journey with the Lord. In Song of Solomon 2:8-17 which is the passage we covered in our last session, the maiden received a new revelation of Jesus. She saw Jesus leaping and skipping on mountains and hills. Mountains and hills in the Bible speak of obstacles. They speak of governments. Jesus is effortlessly leaping and bounding over all obstacles. He is presenting Himself as the Lord of everything, as the sovereign King of the nations.

There is nothing that can stand before Him as He effortlessly bounds upon mountains which speak of human governments, demonic governments or God's government as well. Mountains speak of government. He is over all authority, all power, and has all dominion. He comes leaping and skipping on mountains like a gazelle in Song of Solomon 2:8-9. This is an entirely new insight. The only King that she knew was the one who sat under the apple tree feeding her, singing love songs. Now, He comes bounding from mountaintop to mountaintop, and she is thinking this is new insight. Well in Song of Solomon 2:10, He calls her to arise from the table, under the apple tree, resting on the bed, and He is asking her to come with Him to the mountains.

She is thinking, “Well, I do not like heights. I do not want mountains. I do not want this.” He is disturbing her, and her place even before Him, because He is going to require, in this season, a new measure of faith, and a new measure of obedience. He is bringing her to a new place of intimacy with Himself, a new depth of partnership. In order to bring her to this new depth of partnership, this new faith, this new obedience, this new relationship with Him on the mountain tops, He requires that she rises up. So He challenges her sense of security, and her comfort zone. The Lord does this in key seasons of our life. We are just—everything is right, it is all settled—and suddenly the Lord comes as the God with power over all obstacles, over all dominions, over all authority.

JESUS CALLS HER TO RISE UP AND COME AWAY TO THE MOUNTAINS

He says in Song of Solomon 2:10, “Come away”—with Me—in other words, come to a new place of obedience. Come to a new place of faith, and He challenges the way that things have been. We say, “Oh no, I am not ready for that,” and what happens, as we looked at in the last class in Song of Solomon 2:17, she tells the Lord to turn, and go to the mountains without her. She says in essence, “No, I am not going to go with You. Go to the mountains without me.”

Now, she is not refusing Him in defiance. This is not rebellion. This is spiritual immaturity. This is fear. She is saying, “I cannot.” The Lord even urged her to cry out for help. She cried out, “Lord catch these little foxes”—these little areas of compromise (Song 2:15). Yet, her heart is unable to go or her heart does not respond. Let us say it that way: fear is in her relationship with the Lord. That fear is going to be conquered. Now everyone of us understand what it means for the Lord to call us to a new depth of obedience or a new challenge of faith, and to say “I am not quite ready for that new depth.”

The Lord is saying, “If you do not go with Me, you are going to loose out in your relationship with Me. We cannot stay the same in our relationship with the Lord. We are either gaining ground in our obedience in faith, or we are loosing ground. There is no such thing as a static place. You are either going forward, or you are going backwards in both your faith, and your obedience. You know sometimes it would be nice to think that we gain a certain plateau in the Lord. We can put a flag on the mountain or that hill that we just conquered and forever, we will be there. It does not work that way. A year later, we maybe have lost ground in the Lord, or

we maybe will gain ground, but one thing is for sure—certain. We do not stay exactly the same place that we are today.

Tomorrow, we are actually a little bit different one way or the other. We are a little further, or we have lost a little ground. Let us get a quick overview of what is happening in Song of Solomon 3:5. The Lord's response to her, we see it, He disciplines her.

THE LORD DISCIPLINS HER IN LOVE

Now, He disciplines her in love. Now, He lifts His presence off her heart in order to pry her fingers away from the things that are hindering her relationship with the Lord. I mean in our relationship with the Lord, often we hold onto the very things that keep us in bondage.

The Lord has to pry our fingers, just finger by finger, He says, "Trust Me if you let go it will be better for you."

We say, "No, I am in the comfort zone. I am where I finally have things the way that I want them." He disciplined her not because He was angry at her. He disciplined her because He knew that He had a better place for her in the Spirit under the Spirit's leadership, but she could not go there without willingly obeying Him. This is such a graphic picture of what takes place in our life. He is not angry with her. He is jealous to bring her forward.

That is how He relates to us in our life as well. The Father loves us too much to let us stay where we are short of the maturity of the glory that He has called us to walk in as the Bride of Christ. You have often heard about the cost of obedience.

DISOBEDIENCE IS FAR MORE COSTLY THAN OBEDIENCE

Obedience is costly, but let me submit to you: disobedience is more costly than obedience is. Discipleship costs a lot, but non-discipleship costs more. It really does. The time it takes, the money it takes, the relational dynamics involved in sinning and getting a demon, keeping the demon, then getting tired of the demon, then paying to get rid of the demon is really expensive—time, money and relationally.

I mean people pay a lot of money to get their demons. They pay a lot of money to feed them, and all their addictions. They pay a lot more money to get rid of them when they get tired of them. It is the same in loss of time, relationship, and

opportunity: it is very costly to disobey the Holy Spirit. Now God knows that in a way that we do not really know that. So it is in His zeal, that He disciplines us. He lifts His presence from our hearts for several reasons. First of all, one reason that He lifts His presence from our heart to discipline us—to alert us to the seriousness of compromise.

REFUSING HOLY SPIRIT'S LEADERSHIP REALLY HURTS OUR LIFE

When we refuse the Holy Spirit's leadership, it really hurts our life. It injures our relationship with the Lord. The second reason He lifts His presence from our heart is to humble us.

He does that sometimes unrelated even to sin and compromise to show us that He is the source, and that we cannot make it without Him. He shows us our need of Him. Another reason His Spirit lifts from our heart is an entirely different reason, to awaken a new tenacious hold, and pursuit of Him, to awaken a new hunger in our heart. Sometimes, we will experience His presence, and then we will go for a time when we do not experience it the same way. We really become resolved to press in, in a deeper way. It actually awakens hunger in us. God's discipline of us, we are going to look at the passage in a minute verse by verse, Song of Songs 3:1-5. We are going to look at it line by line in just a moment, but just a couple foundational principals.

GOD'S DISCIPLINE OF US IS NOT THE SAME AS HIS REJECTION OF US

God's discipline of us is not the same as His rejection of us. Now, the message of the Song of Solomon for those of you who are just new with us in joining this course the message of the Song of Solomon, one of the messages is that God enjoys us even in our weakness.

God makes a distinction between rebellion and immaturity. Now, God is angry at persistent rebellion, but immaturity God is not angry with. He actually enjoys us while we are growing in the Lord. He does not only enjoy us once we reach full maturity. As a father and a mother enjoy their children while they are growing, the Lord actually enjoys us along the journey of growing up not just after we grow up, however, the fact that He enjoys us does not mean He approves of every issue in our life.

The Lord can enjoy us, but still disapprove of a specific area that He is going to discipline us in order to free us because He sees the benefit in our life of us being

free. He has other reasons as well. The Lord's discipline in our life is not the same thing as God writing us off. He does not despise us. He does not look at us in disdain because He disagrees with an area of our life. He still enjoys us. He still loves us while He deals with those areas. It says in Proverbs 3:12 that God loves the people He corrects in the way that a father loves the son in whom he delights in. God delights in us while He is correcting us. He does not delight in the correction, but He actually delights in the people that love Him.

TO BE DISCIPLINED BY THE LORD MEANS GOD HAS NOT GIVEN UP ON US

They need correction, therefore, there is immaturity in their lives, but He still delights in them. He only corrects us because He loves. To be disciplined by the Lord actually means He cares for us. It means He has not given up on us. The most terrible thing that can happen is if God no longer disciplines you—that means He has given up on you. He has given you over to your sin. So the fact of divine discipline does not mean God is angry, and it is over. It means that He is committed, and He is focused on you. He wants to bring you forth from one degree of faith and glory to the next.

It says in 1 Corinthians 11:32, "When we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord." The reason the Lord chastens us is so we do not end up condemned along with the world. So the fact that we are being chastened or disciplined, that is the same idea, is so that we do not end up under greater judgment. It means God has not given us over. He has not given up on us. So, the discipline of the Lord as painful as it is, is actually a statement of God's zeal and commitment to us. Even when we are in seasons where we are not repenting in the way that we should, in the depth that we should He still has patience.

JESUS REBUKES BELIEVERS TO CALL THEM TO REPENTANCE

He says this about Jezebel. He is talking about the church at Thyatira in Revelations 2. He says that He gave her Jezebel. This is not the Jezebel that was married to Ahab in the days of Elijah. That was about a thousand years before this Jezebel. Now this poor gal, her mom and dad named her Jezebel, I mean she had a tough beginning. Here is what the Lord says about her:

She is functioning in the church as a prophet, a prophetess and a teacher. The Lord says, "I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways" (Rev 2:21-22). They are living

in immorality. He wants to give them time to repent, and then He is going to create an increase severity so that they will avoid judgment, a greater judgment in the days to come. But I think it is an amazing reality that God gives us time to repent.

But the time He gives us is not to be misinterpreted as God's approval with our life when we are in a season of God's divine patience. I have seen people, they are living in compromise knowingly, and the blessing of God is on their life. They mistake it.

THE PATIENCE OF THE LORD WITH US IS NOT HIS APPROVAL OF US IN SIN

They mistake the patience of the Lord for the approval of the Lord. I say, "No, it is His patience. It is His great patience." In Romans 2:4, some of the believers in Paul's day he had to exhort them not to despise the riches of God's forbearance or His patience, the riches of God's longsuffering.

Do you know what longsuffering means? It means suffering long. Sometimes we despise or we think little of the fact that God suffers long with us. It wounds God's heart when we resist Him, but He does not give up on us. It pains Him. He says, "I am going to suffer long with you. I am going to give you time because I really want it to be easier on you. But I am so committed to you, I will break in and get your attention to save you from greater trouble in the days to come."

Then you can enter into your full inheritance which requires that we walk under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. So he tells them here in Romans 2:4: "Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" In essence, Paul is saying do not despise the long suffering of the Lord, the patience of the Lord, knowing that when you understand He is being patient, it is suppose to motivate you to repent. If you misinterpret His patience as approval, then we despise it.

We think little of it, and we continue in our compromise. When I understand God is giving me time, it motivates me to repent, if I am thinking right. I do not always do it that way over the years, but when it dawns on me I think, "Wait this is Your patience. Thank You, thank You, thank You. I love You. Wait You are still giving me yet another period of time before You turn the heat up because You are committed to me."

GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE IS WITHDRAWN FROM THE MAIDEN

Now, we begin in the verse-by-verse section of Song of Songs 3. What happens is the maiden which is the bride, the Shulamite bride (I call her the maiden as she is maturing), the young Shulamite maiden that King Solomon is in love with that is a picture of the Bride of Christ in this love song. She says, "By night on my bed I sought the One I love" (Song 3:1-2). "I sought the one I love. I sought Him but I did not find Him. 'I will rise now,' I said"—she said in her own heart—"I will go about the city. I will go in the streets. I will go in the squares and I will seek the one I love" (Song 3:1-2).

I sought Him, but I did not find Him. She is in a point of confusion here because in Song of Solomon chapters one and two, whenever she sought Him, she found Him. She found the sweetness of the Word. She found the sweetness of His presence particularly in Song of Solomon chapter two, but also in Song of Solomon chapter one as well. So she is not accustomed to this new reality of seeking Him, but His nearness does not touch His heart. She is confused. She basically is saying, "I sought Him and I know I love Him. I realize I refused Him a few minutes ago." In Song of Solomon 2:17, she told Him to go turn and jump on the mountains by Himself without her.

He invited her to come with Him on the mountain tops. She goes, "I still love Him." It was true. Her love was true. She says it four times. She refers to Jesus as the one whom she loves, and it was real. Beloved, our love for Jesus is not false because our obedience is immature because we have fear in our heart. This is not rebellion in this case. To some people, it is rebellion.

THE NIGHT HOURS, THE NIGHT OF PAIN, THE NIGHT OF TEMPTATION

But here, she really wants to have the fullness of God, but she is still immature in her faith, in her revelation, and in her obedience. She says in Song of Solomon 3:1, "By night on my bed, I sought the One I love; I sought Him." I have four different nights in which we must seek the One we love: there is the nighttime hour. Here in Kansas City, we have the night watch. They seek the Lord through the night. In this song, the night hours meant the inconvenient place. They went above and beyond like our night watch does in their desperation for God.

The only thing the night watch does differently than the bride here is that the bride was on her bed in the night, and hopefully our night watch is sitting in the chairs,

pacing, studying, or in classes. But there are times—there are the nighttime hours—when the Lord awakens us in the night.

Sometimes when the Lord awakens people, they do not have enough discernment to know what to do, or they have a little insomnia they just channel surf for six hours. It is the Lord. It is the Lord wanting to draw you to Himself. I mean even with natural reasons take advantage of that time. Do not just channel surf for six hours. In your desperation, seek the one whom you love. Well, there is the nighttime of pain. I am using this obviously symbolically. I highlight David and Joseph who had tremendous difficulty.

Beloved, in the nighttime of trials, we must seek Him. Many people give up in the night time. When the trials come they just give up, but she says in the nighttime I seek You because I love You. We cannot stop seeking the Lord, and conclude that His Word and His promises are false because of the nighttime of pain. Well, there is the nighttime of temptation. When we actually stumble and fail what happens? We have condemnation, we have guilt, and we just want to quit.

We feel like a hopeless hypocrite. The Lord says “no” even in the night time of your struggle, even in the night time of your struggle, you must believe the Word of God, receive His forgiveness and run to Him not from Him.

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Then the final one, which is a little different than most think much about, it is, what they called in the Middle Ages, the dark night of the soul. Of course, there was a man known as St. John of the cross who originated this term and made it popular. The dark night of the soul was when he lost the ability to sense or discern the Lord's presence. He could not discern not because of disobedience, but in obedience, and the Lord was withholding His presence from him in order to bring Him forth in ways we will look at later.

This is what happens to her in Song of Solomon 5:6, where she is obedient, yet the Lord's presence is lifted from her for a short season to see if the Lord is a means to an end, or if the Lord is the goal of her life. To some people Jesus is just a stepping stone. He is the one we use to get blessing. But to others, Jesus is the goal of our life, and He happens to bless us. So in the dark night of the soul that is a—we will look at that in a few class times from now—it is when we are going to be obedient to God because He is enough. The very fact that He is ours is enough.

We will look at that at another time. Her heart is set on loving Jesus even in her struggle. She is under divine discipline right now, but she does not give up under divine discipline. It says in Hebrews 12:5-6, "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." It says to not despise the discipline of the Lord. In other words, do not just disregard it as nothing. It also says do not give up under the discipline of the Lord. Do not loose heart. Some people when they are under divine discipline, they loose heart. In Hebrews 12:3, we are not to give up and give in. We are to continue to seek the One we love because I tell you that the discipline is temporary. The Lord only releases discipline in order to reverse it, and in order to establish us in a new depth of obedience to the Holy Spirit's leadership in our life. I love this way that she refers to Jesus. She says, "I sought the one I love" (Song 3:1).

WEAK LOVE IS NOT FALSE LOVE, IT IS STILL REAL

Sometimes when we are in a struggle, the devil comes and tells us we are a hopeless hypocrite, and our love for Jesus is not real. Well, she is clearly in a struggle. She is clearly under divine discipline, but she calls Him "the one that she loves" (Song 3:1). Beloved, your love is not false because it is weak. Weak love for Jesus is not false. It is still real. You can still say, "I love You. I love You. I love You" to Jesus even when you are in the midst of the struggle.

When we are in the valley, you know what a valley is. There are two mountaintops. When we are not on a mountaintop, you know the goal is to go with the Lord on those mountains, those places of risk, those places of challenge. It is a place of obedience, but sometimes we are in between the mountains, and the mountains have challenged us, and we are in the valley.

In the valley which means, in this case, in this analogy, it is in her time of—where she is still struggling to get to a place of full obedience for the light that she has in that season of her life because we only could walk in obedience to the degree that we have life in any given season.

I mean we get to a place of obedience, we think we have arrived. The Lord doubles the amount of light. You know the microscope goes from ten power to a hundred power. Then, we get obedient, and all of our light He turns it up to thousand power.

The microscope slide that is underneath you know we think we get it all cleaned up, and then the Lord turns it to ten thousand power. We think Lord. He says, "I only ask you to obey to the light that I give you but I will keep increasing the light." Well when we are not fully obeying the light, and we are in the valleys in this analogy. We are struggling to obey. We are still lovers of God. I am talking to people who sincerely care about the Lord.

Of course, there are plenty of people who name the name of Jesus. They do not really care about obeying them. I am not talking to them. They are careless in their relationship with the Lord. I am talking about sincere believers because the love song when we understand it, empowers us with confidence to go hard after Jesus. While we are maturing with confidence that He loves us, and our love for Him is real even though it is still weak. It has been a great blessing in our life to have the confidence that God sees me as a genuine lover of God, while I am maturing. It makes the journey seem—it makes it powerful in our hearts because we are not always on probation, or about to be yelled at by the Lord, and rejected. We feel loved, adored by the Lord, and enjoyed while we are growing.

I tell you when you feel that way, your spirit is wide open, and you just feel far more confident to pursue the Lord in a diligent way. She says: "I sought the one I love; I sought him, I did not find Him" (Song 3:1). The reason is that she is seeking Him according to the familiar ways that she did in Song of Solomon one and two.

GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE IS WITHDRAWN FROM THE MAIDEN

What she has not figured out is that things have changed. The Lord really does require a new level of obedience. She is doing the same schedule, the same patterns, she is in the Word, she has a fast day, you know she is in her prayer times. She is doing her normal routine in God that is important to have, and it was working. She felt the sweetness of the Lord in Song of Solomon 2:3. She said, "I sat at His table with great delight, but now she is doing the same approach of seeking Him but it is not working." She does not understand why.

The reason why is because God is jealous for us. Yesterday's obedience, though it was very important and meaningful, the Lord has just raised the standard of obedience. He has increased the light. The microscope has gone from ten power to a hundred power. We see more, and He requires us to obey the Lord's leadership at the new level. But beloved, when we obey at the new level we have a new

partnership with Him. We have a new intimacy, it is not just we obey, and that is it. We enjoy Him more. We experience more of Him.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR OBEIDENCE

I mean it is a glorious reality that He keeps wooing us to greater faith and greater obedience. Prayer and fasting is no substitute for obedience. There are some folks that undoubtedly, I do not have any examples in my mind, but there are undoubtedly join the IHOP staff, and they are a part. They have got their prayer times set for the week, and then the Lord intervenes. He comes as one skipping and leaping over the mountains, meaning He calls them to another level of obedience, another level of trusting Him, a new challenge, a new assignment at the heart level or at the hands level. He challenges us to a new depth of servant-hood, a new depth of humility, and we do not go with Him.

The same prayer meetings that were causing us to experience the presence of God a month ago, we do not experience His presence. We say, "What happened?"

He responds, "Something changed. I am calling you to a new height. I am calling you to a new challenge at the heart level and with your hands." Whether it is an act of service, a new assignment, a new relationship, He says, "I am requiring more of you for you to feel the same in your relationship with Me, and I am going to starve you out of your fear. He starves us out. The Lord knows He is going to win."

He takes His presence, the sense of His presence off of her heart in a very short term way. She says, "I cannot live without this."

He responds, "I know."

She says, "I will arise." That is the very thing she does. "I will get up. I will get up. I will arise and come after you."

He says, "I knew you would. That is the reason I took My presence off of you because I knew that you loved Me and it would awaken you."

EVEN WHEN WE FEEL NOTHING, WE MUST TRUST GOD'S WORD

It says in James 4:8 to "draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." James is saying you can draw near to God but you do not just draw near to God by going to

more worship times, turning on more worship music. We do have to confront the sin that is in our heart.

Our attitudes, the lack of servant-hood, the presence of pride, our unbridled tongue, our unbridled eyes, our wasted time that is not under the Holy Spirit's leadership, all these things count. You might have thought, "well, I am not doing any scandalous sins."

The Lord says, "but I have turned the light up. I have called you to a new mountaintop. I now require a new way with Me. You have to walk with Me in a new way. There is a new measure. There is a new level that I am asking of you but there will be a new release of My presence on your heart when you walk in that level." So He is saying in James 4:8, "Draw near to the Lord but cleanse your hands"—that means activities. Purify your hearts—that is attitudes. The predominant attitude that we need to purify our heart in is mostly the lack of servant-hood. Our time is not our own. It belongs to the Lord.

OUR TIME AND OUR LIFE ARE NOT OUR OWN

Our life is not our own. Well Lord, I wanted salvation and power, but I still wanted my time, and my heart to be my own mostly. I will not do the big stuff. But I want to control the little stuff. The Lord says, "No, I am the Lord of your life."

We respond, "Oh come on. Quit being so pushy about this, I am not doing the scandalous stuff."

He says, "I know, but I want to own your heart. I want you to be a servant. I want you to walk in humility. I want you to be free of complaining, and when you complain, call it sin, as it is grieving the Spirit. Come into a new level of leadership of the Holy Spirit in your life."

Just so you know, I am just talking to myself. This makes me miserable right now. I am just getting sick saying all this stuff as I am convicted. I am totally accountable. But He says, "Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you."

GOD REQUIRES THAT WE STIR OURSELVES UP TO TAKE HOLD OF HIM

Here is the promise: If you will draw near to God and cleanse the hands, the outward actions that He is shedding light on and you, cleanse the heart that is the

inward attitudes, particularly speech and pride, I mean wrong words and pride. That is really what it comes to which is the same thing as greater servant-hood. He says, "If you will draw near to me with new light that I gave you, I promise you," says the Lord, "I will draw near to your heart by My manifest presence."

But He says you really do have to cleanse your hands, and you really do have to purify your heart. A lot of folks think that verse means turn on more worship music, while they are just doing—going about their business. I think turning on worship music that is really awesome.

That is not the same thing as drawing near to God. Some people think that it is just go to more prayer meetings. Not exactly, for we go to more prayer meetings while we deal with the new light that the Holy Spirit has given us related to our hands, doing thing differently with our lifestyle, and doing things differently with our heart.

It says in Isaiah 64:7, Isaiah the prophet said: "There is no one who calls upon Your name." He was looking around the nation of Israel, and He was troubled. He says, "No one, I am sure there were a few exceptions. He said there is no one who stirs himself up to take hold of God. For God, You have hidden Your face from them."

SOMETIMES GOD HIDES HIS FACE FROM US TO DRAW US CLOSER

Beloved, when God has hidden His face from us as believers it is because He is trying to get our attention—not because He is angry at us. There are times when God is angry, but I am talking about a sincere believer who is going on with the Lord.

We are trying to serve the Lord with everything, and the Lord intervenes in our life, raises the standard, He raises the bar of what He requires of us. We do not immediately adapt to it, and the sense of His presence wanes in our life because He jealously is calling us forward in what we are talking about. It is all because of His passion for us. Isaiah said: "There is no one that I know of"—when God hides His face—"who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities" (Isa. 64:7). Beloved, there is a place when we are in this time when the Lord is hiding His face, it is not going right, He has called us to a new standard. We have to cleanse our hands of whatever those activities are. Those behavior patterns we cleanse our hearts from—the attitudes, and the words. We press in. We stir ourselves up to press in

and the Lord says, "I will meet you, if you will do that. I promise you, I will meet you if you will do that" (Jeremiah 20:7-9, paraphrased).

THE JEREMIAH 20:7 PRINCIPLE

I like Jeremiah chapter twenty. I call it the Jeremiah principal. Jeremiah was just a young man. What he says in Jeremiah 20:7-9, I will not read it, but Jeremiah complains to the Lord. He is in prison in Jeremiah 20. He is a young man. He is in prison. He says, "I do not like this. You deceived me."

The New King James says, "You induced me," but the other translations say "deceived" me (Jer. 20:7-9). He says, "I was deceived," in verse seven. In other words, Jeremiah is basically saying, "You tricked me. You persuaded me to believe You." He is complaining to the Lord. He says, "You tricked me," He goes here, and he goes on to describe it. Jeremiah is saying, "You are stronger than I am, and You prevailed" (Jer. 20:7). What he means is he says, "I was a young man. You called me as a prophet. You showed me Your beauty. I fell in love with You. I could not live without You, and then You gave me the message. You said prophesy these things, and they were things against the leaders of the land." The leaders of the land were very hostile. They threw him in prison. In a pit, in a muddy pit actually, it was terrible. He was down in a mud pit by himself.

And it went on for an extended period of time. He is down there, and he says, "Okay, I am going to quit prophesying. I am just going to stop. And I said to myself in Jeremiah 20:9, I am not going to speak any more in Your name. I am going to get out of prison. I am still a young man. I do not—I did not want this. Okay, I am not talking anymore. When I quit talking, Your word was like a fire in my bones." The Word of God began to move in me and I began to say, "I love You God. I cannot live like this. You cause me to love You, and now that I love You I cannot live without Your presence. You tricked me. I did not know this was going to happen." So then, He spoke out again in obedience. Well beloved that is what is happening to the maiden.

THE MAIDEN SITS AT THE BANQUET TABLE ENJOYING THE WORD OF GOD

She sits at the, in Song of Solomon 2:3, the table enjoying the Word of God with great delight. She says in Song 2:5, "Sustain me, refresh me" with Your presence. The power of God is touching her. Song 2:5, she says (paraphrased), "I am lovesick. I love You. I love to feel loved by You."

The Lord says, "I have you all hooked now on My presence." Now, He comes and says I want more obedience out of You. Then His presence left. She says, "I cannot take it. Lord, I need Your presence. I love You." We could say like Jeremiah said, "You tricked me Lord. I love Your presence. I love who You are. I am addicted to who You are. I cannot live in disobedience. I hate not feeling Your presence. I know that is why it is working."

THE YOUNG BRIDE ADDS OBEDIENCE TO HER PRAYERS

Then what happens? She arises. She says in Song of Solomon 3:2: "I will rise now," I said, "And go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the One I love." I sought Him, but I did not find Him." She will arise now. She will seek the one that she loves. It worked. She is going to go about the city. She is going to go in the streets. She is going to go in the square.

The pain of losing His presence motivates her to rise up out of the comfort zone and take a—in her relationship to go for a new level of faith and obedience in her walk with God. Jesus knew that she could not live without His presence. She knew she could not make it. Now many believers I know they just acclimate to living with a dull spirit. Beloved, do not ever grow accustomed to living with a dull spirit. We feel a little bit of His presence. He says, "Oh I want to give you a lot more of that."

Then we get used to just living with a dull spirit. What we do with our eyes, what we do with our lack of servant-hood, what we do with our pride, what we do with our words and our complaining. Our spirit is dull. The Spirit is quenched. Our spirit is quenched.

Many people just say I am going to get accustomed to it. Do not ever; do not ever settle for living with a dull spirit because God has much more for you. He is only withholding His presence to get you to wake up to the areas in your life that the Holy Spirit is jealous about bringing His leadership over. It is not because the Holy Spirit wants to push you around. He wants to bring you into life and light. Sometimes, we get the idea well He just wants to push us around. No, He wants to bring us into light.

JACOB WRESTLED AND REFUSED TO GIVE UP UNTIL HE TOUCHED GOD

But we have got to wrestle through this season. Jacob did that. He wrestled through the night in Genesis 32. Jacob is wrestling with God through the night, and finally he breaks through. Beloved, we need to wrestle through the dark night of our own struggles and pain because God wants to give us a breakthrough.

A friend of mine, a good friend of mine named Michael Sullivan. He had a dream one night years ago, and in this dream he was wrestling with his son. His young son just three or four years old pinned him in the dream. Of course, he let his son pin him. The son was on top of him saying, "I win daddy I pinned you. I win." Michael said in the dream I had so much pleasure laying on the ground with my son holding my hands to the ground. I had so much joy in the fact that he prevailed.

The Lord spoke to him in the dream. He says, "I let you pin Me to the ground in the same way and I have great pleasure. I want you to wrestle because I will let you break through. I will let you prevail. But you have to wrestle with me. You have to press in because I want you to prevail. I have pleasure in you prevailing."

JESUS' PRESENCE RETURNS IN RESPONSE TO HER OBEDIENCE

Well, we are going to end here in just a moment. Song of Solomon 3:4 she says, "Scarcely had I passed by them"—the watchmen—"I found the One I love." Here it is: "I held onto Him and I would not let Him go" (Song 3:4).

Beloved, when we go through a season when the Lord's presence lifts because He is trying to get our attention, and we get that sense of His presence back she is basically saying, "I held on. I resolved in my heart I would never let a season of compromise touch me again. I am never going to let go of full present tense obedience with the Lord." Again, our obedience in the present tense in our faith is only to the light that He gives us. I mean we may think we are way up there, and time passes, and He double and triples the light.

You know, He puts from a tenfold power light He makes it one hundred power. So we never arrive in that sense in this age. We are always going from glory to glory. But she said, "When I found Him, I determined I was never going to let Him go. I was never going to let defilement, unbelief, and compromise get in between me and my intimacy with God." Beloved when we go through, I have gone through a

few seasons, of having it, losing it, having it, losing it. You go through a few seasons. I have been a slow learner, but eventually I said I am not going to do that again. I am not going to just spend six months at a certain way even praying, fasting and seeking God but not obeying in those more specific ways. I am not going to do that again.

I am going to hold onto Him in this new place that I have in the Spirit. Well let's just bring it to a close with that. There is too much to cover in the book in any given session. Let's go ahead and stand.