

Session 12: The Bride's Identity and Life Purpose

In this session, session twelve in the Studies in the Song of Solomon, we are going to be looking at Song 2:1-7. This is one of my favorite passages in the Song of Solomon, although I have about eight or nine favorite ones. It is ok to do that.

The theme of these seven verses is the bride's spiritual identity, but more than that, or in addition to that, it is a revelation of her life purpose. As we begin to establish this identity and come into this kind of clarity about our life purpose as described in this great love song, it radically changes the way we view life and the way that we feel.

THE BRIDE'S IDENTITY AND LIFE PURPOSE: BEING JESUS' INHERITANCE

Roman numeral I. Jesus' identity, I mean the bride's identity and her life purpose are found in understanding that she is Jesus' inheritance. One of the foundational premises of the kingdom of God is that God the Father has been planning from before the ages to give His Son an inheritance.

This is very important to the Father's heart, and obviously, it is very dear to Jesus' heart. The Father has thought through this with all of His wisdom, and has determined the choice inheritance that would absolutely ravish the heart of His Son, the Second Person of the Trinity.

This is a heavy idea that the Father has discovered and has come with clarity. There is a better way to say it: the one thing that Jesus longs for that He wants is the great prize of all the ages is the very thing the Father has ordained to give His Son.

Now, one aspect of the inheritance is what I call the mandatory obedience of all of creation. Every demon and every angel will bow its knee in obedience. The demons in Hell and the angels in Heaven, every believer and unbeliever will obey Jesus' leadership and His authority forever. Jesus wants more than the mandatory obedience of all creation. As awesome as that is, He wants something more. He wants voluntary lovers. He wants a people who choose of their own free will not only to obey Him, but adore Him, and love Him in the way that He loves them.

JESUS LONGS FOR AN ETERNAL COMPANION EQUALLY YOKED IN LOVE

God the Father has a plan to raise up equally yoked lovers of God, and beloved, this is the most dynamic reason for which we were created and redeemed. This is our greatest purpose in life, although many believers never connect with that reality in this life. It is something they connect with in the age to come, but even in this age, God would that we would connect with this. It significantly changes the way that we think, and the way that we feel about life. The affections of the human heart are the most prized possession to God. They are the only thing that God wants that He does not yet have—the affections of the human freely given to Him. It is what the devil is going to war with God for.

Who controls the affection of the human heart? Jesus died in order to redeem us, to gain our affections, to put us in a position before God where we could receive His affections, and where He could gain ours. Now, the reason that the devil is always attacking our heart is because he wants to destroy Jesus' inheritance. Beloved, when we walk in darkness, the enemy is taking something that belonged to Jesus, between the Father and Jesus. He is getting in the way of it and disturbing it. Of course, it is only temporary, but the great cosmic warfare is a war for the human affections.

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

Matthew 22:27-28: The last thing that Jesus said in His public ministry to the people besides the condemnation of the Pharisees. In Matthew 22:27-28, the last positive thing that He said to Israel—He gave them a prophecy. He said to Israel, “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your mind.” He called this the first and great commandment, but it is more than a commandment. He was actually declaring it as a prophecy. He was quoting Deuteronomy 30:6. Moses prophesied that Israel in the end times would love God with all of their heart. Of course, this prophecy extends beyond Israel to all of the redeemed. God will have a people who love Jesus with all of their mind, and with all of their strength.

Now, the reason Jesus called it the first commandment is because it is the commandment that has first priority to God. It is not yet the first priority in the Church. As a matter of fact, when somebody is zealously focused on the first commandment, it seems a little strange to the Church. It is as though the

commandment to love God with all of our heart is the fifteenth or twentieth commandment. Jesus declared it clearly that it is the first one.

It is the commandment that God cares most about. It is the highest priority of God in your life, and in God's plan for your life, this is the highest priority for your life to develop this reality in your heart. It is the highest way to live. You know as believers, we want to be the most radical. We want to go for broke. We want to do it all. We want to go all the way.

Beloved, there is no clear revelation of what radical Christianity is, of what going for the highest. There is this commandment, and yet it seems weak. It seems kind of strange to many in the Body of Christ that we would put this kind of priority upon it. It is an end in itself; if you did nothing other than love God with all of your heart, that is impossible because if you love Him with all of your heart, you will overflow in loving people, loving the lost, and a lot of other things. It is in itself an end. It is good enough in itself, and again, it is the highest lifestyle that we can live. It is called the great commandment because of its great impact on the heart of God. Jesus as God told us that this is the commandment is greatest to God. It is not only the greatest in impact upon our heart. It is upon our heart as well. This will have the greatest impact on our life, on our heart, our emotions, our ministry, our eternity, but it also has the greatest impact on God's heart Himself.

THE BRIDE IS PICTURED AS BEAUTIFUL ROSE AND A PURE LILY

Well, getting to Song 2:1, she stands before the Lord with a confession. It is a two-fold confession. She says, "I am the rose of Sharon." That is part one. Then number two, she says, "I am the lily of the valleys." So she is picturing herself standing before God as a beautiful rose, which speaks of her love for God and as a pure, white lily, which speaks of her obedience to God.

Now, the rose is chosen in this poetic love song because of its beauty and fragrance, and the rose is clearly the love flower in history. People celebrate marriage with a rose or an anniversary. They celebrate love. When somebody is wanting to make an impression upon a woman even in a secret way, they give a rose to them, and make them wonder. I never gave a rose to my football coach. It just never happened. A rose is clearly the flower that communicates love, and it is meant to. It speaks of the beautiful fragrance of love that God sees when we love Him. She goes, "I am the rose. I know what my identity is. I know what my purpose in life is. It is to function before You as the rose, but not only as a rose."

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE ARE ONE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD

She also is the lily. The lily speaks of purity. She walks in purity. She does not only set her heart to love God, she sets her heart to walk in purity before God. Now there is no distinction between those two in God's sight, but in man's sight and in theological circles, those are sometimes really separated from one another. It is a false separation. There is no reality of loving God that does not have obedience in it.

She is the lily of the valleys. The valleys speak of the low, and the dark places in this fallen world, and here is what she is saying, "In the midst of a dark world, not just in eternity, but now, I will love You by showing forth purity." Beloved, it is a miracle when God takes a person in this world, forgives us, cleanses us, and then causes us to walk purely in the midst of defilement everywhere. I mean even in the midst of the Body of Christ there is so much compromise and defilement. It is difficult to live purely in the midst of the people of God.

Those who do are often ridiculed. Obedience is often disregarded and put down even by the Church. The favorite word that the Church uses to dismiss purity is legalism. Anything that disturbs somebody in terms of a standard or height of purity is just dismissed as legalism. That is the great word to dismiss the crying out and the longing for purity. Well, I want to say that by the grace of God, we will be a people who will live as the rose that offers fragrant love and as a lily that offers fragrant purity. We are not ashamed of purity even though purity is not popular in the Church today. You will be ridiculed for standing for purity. It is far more cool to drop the standards to be accepted in the Church. You would think that the battle is in the world, but there is a bigger battle to stand for righteousness within the Church of Jesus Christ.

THE BRIDE'S PRIMARY PURPOSE IN LIFE IS BEING JESUS' INHERITENCE

Song of Solomon 2:2: The king, well this is Jesus spiritually speaking, and it is King Solomon in terms of the natural love song. He affirms this confession of the bride. He says, "You are like a lily among the thorns" (Song 2:2). She said a lily among the valley in terms of the low spots of this fallen world, but when the king says it, he says, "You are like a lily in the midst of thorns." Of course, throughout the Bible in a number of places thorns speak of sin. Even in the midst of sin and sinful longings, it is not just temptations, but it is our own longings in the midst of

the thorns of this world, Jesus sees the setting our heart to live in the purity of a lily in the midst of hostility, in the midst of contrary desires. Peter said that lust wars against our soul. It wars against us, but he says, "You are seeking purity as one who is among a life and a world of thorns." Beloved, the Lord honors this. The Lord esteems this.

OUR LOVE AND OBEDIENCE INTOXICATES JESUS' HEART

Paragraph G. We are the rose. We are the lily whose love and obedience arise like fragrance, and it intoxicates the heart of Jesus. It is the only thing that He longs for and waits for. It gives the clearest definition to the meaning of our life and for the purpose of our life.

I often ask people what their life vision is, and almost always they describe a future function in the marketplace or in ministry or having a certain kind of family. Almost never have I heard someone when I asked them what their life vision is, almost never have I heard anybody describe their life vision in terms of the development of their heart, and that is the primary vision God has for our life in this age. We want to think first as a rose and a lily, and secondly, what our function, our assignment is, and what we are going to do with our hands. We are going to first think about what God has called us to do with our hearts.

BRIDE'S FIRST CONFESSION IS THAT SHE IS DARK OF HEART YET LOVELY

Paragraph H. The bride's first confession in the Song was in chapter 1, verse 5. She says, "I am dark in heart, but I am lovely to God." In other words, she is beginning to have confidence before God even in her weakness. In her spiritual immaturity, she understood that God saw her as beautiful through the cross of Jesus, so that she could be weak in her brokenness, I mean, she could have confidence in her weakness and brokenness that God is delighting in her while she was maturing.

Here is her second confession. It is far, it is a far greater revelation. She is not saying, "I have confidence in mercy when I fail." This is a far greater thing. She goes, "I know who I am. I understand my identity. I understand my life purpose. I know why I exist. I know why I am on the earth now." That is what she is declaring when she says, "I am the rose, and I am the lily."

Some commentators say that Jesus is the rose of Sharon, but it is clearly the Bride of Christ as the rose, and the lily evidenced by the very fact that in chapter two,

verse two we will take a look at the verse. Jesus affirms to her that she is the rose and the lily. They are clearly the same person or the same people.

Paragraph I. Ephesians 1:17—the most prayed, the most used prayer at IHOP that the Father of glory would give us a spirit of revelation. Why? It is for three things, but we are only going to look at one. It takes the spirit of revelation that we would know the wealth of the glory of being Jesus' inheritance. Beloved, when we see the wealth of this reality, this revelation, it radically reorders our inner life. The problem is that many people's main vision in life is something they are going to do, or something they are going to have. They are going to have a big house, or a big ministry, or be known, or they are going to have fun, or do things, or have things. We can never understand the mystery of our own dilemma and struggle in this world until we understand the revelation that our primary reason for existing is to be the inheritance of Jesus—to be loved and to be a lover.

WE CANNOT SEPARATE LOVE AND OBEDIENCE

Paragraph J. We cannot separate love and obedience. We do not ever want to try by theological craftiness. I have seen it many times over the years. Jesus' inheritance is a people who walk in purity. Here is what I want you to feel the weight of. This is a very heavy statement; at least I feel it in my own heart with God. Our life choices are a real part of the Father's plan of what He has committed to give Jesus.

The Father cannot give Jesus your heart, if you do not agree. Nobody else can give God all of their love. Only you can give God your love. The Father made a significant investment in our lives individually. He is investing in us, as He is cultivating in our life and in our heart this rose and this lily that He will present to Jesus, His Son, as the great reward of His suffering.

Beloved, your choices this week and next week and this year and next year are a significant and real part of this drama called God's inheritance for His Son. It takes revelation to see that.

Paul is the one who prayed that we would need revelation to see it. He said, "the riches of the glory of being Jesus' inheritance" (Eph. 1:17-18). Another way to say it is, "the wealth of the glory, the wealth of the glory of understanding this identity in this life purpose."

OUR IDENTITY IS DETERMINED HOW WE DEFINE VALUE OR SUCCESS

Paragraph K. Our identity—we go over this all the time here at IHOP and the Bible school, as I think it needs to be said over and over and over—everybody needs to know how to say these few sentences. Everybody needs to teach them whether you are teaching one-on-one, one-on- one hundred, or one on one thousand.

Our identity refers to the way that we define success, or the way that we measure and define value and success in our life. That is what our identity is, and it is most natural to measure success, and to measure value our life by what we do with our hands, how big our ministry is, how much money we have, how much influence we have, and to therefore think that we have more importance. The question of “who I am,” and how am I really successful is one of the most significant questions you could ask yourself. We need to ask ourselves that question regularly, but the Word of God gives us a clear answer.

OUR PRIMARY IDENTITY IS FOUND IN OUR INTIMACY WITH GOD

Paragraph L. When we confess, I love to give this confession. I have made this confession ten thousand times, way more than that in the last twenty plus years where I began to use this sentence. When things are going hard, things are not working right and there is difficulty, I ask the question, “Lord, why am I even exerting so much effort to press in, to reach for the highest things in Your heart?” So many things are not working in the way that I think they should work.

Everybody can identify with that experience. Why not just draw back? Why not just settle down like others? I have committed to go hard, to exert energy, to press into God with all the different negatives of life, emotions, body and circumstances. Here is where the confession that I have used for many years comes in: I say, “I am loved by God, and I am a lover of God; therefore, I am successful regardless of whatever happens in ministry, circumstance and finance. None of that can touch the reality that I am successful by virtue of the fact that I am loved, and by virtue of the fact that I am a committed lover of Jesus Christ.”

If things do not work right, the effort is worth it because that is what determines success before God. In God's eyes, that is what makes you successful. You can have everything you touch break, but if He loves you (which He does), and you are responding back and maybe not even in a way that is satisfying your heart, but you are exerting your heart, beloved, you have ultimate success in this life. I have used

that confession so many times over the years, “I am loved and I am a lover, therefore, it is all worth it to press in hard and to stay steady through the years.” When you have that sense of success while you are on the journey, even though nothing is working in circumstances. It makes your spirit alive. It invigorates your spirit. We are most successful because God desires us and because we have chosen to love Him. That is why we are successful. Our greatest success will always be in terms of that reality.

DID YOU RECEIVE GOD’S LOVE? DID YOU LEARN TO LOVE IN RETURN?

When I stand before God, He is not going to ask me how big my conference ministry was, how many books I sold, how many people I touched on television. He is not going to ask me any of that stuff. He is going to ask me if I understood that He loved me and did I love Him in return? That is the measure of my life, and that is the measure of your life.

You can do that on a sick bed. You can do that in prison. You can do it with a minimum wage job. You can do it without a job on unemployment. You can do it regardless of the circumstances. You can grow in understanding that you are desired by the King of Kings, and you can set your heart to love Him and obey Him. Beloved, no matter what else happens, you are a profound success compared to the human race as before God’s sight.

THE BRIDE’S REVELATION: JESUS ALONE CAN SATISFY HER HEART

Roman numeral II. We are going onto Song of Solomon 2:3. I wanted to spend most of my time on that verse. I love that verse. I love that confession, “I am the rose. I am the lily,” and the Lord confirms it, “Yes, you are the lily among thorns. I see the cry in your heart to say “no” to sin, even the desires within your own heart. You are resisting them, and I see that. You are the lily among thorns. I affirm that.”

Well anyway, going onto Song of Solomon chapter two. We are almost running out of time here, and I have a few more verses to cover. She says, “Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons” of men (Song 2:5). She is saying that Jesus is, among all other human beings, the apple tree compared to all other human beings.

In just a couple verses later, in verse five, the apple tree is clearly defined as that which refreshes, there in chapter two, verse five, just a couple verses later. The bride is having a revelation. This is a significant revelation. This revelation will change your life, your ministry, your marriage, your business, your friendships. This revelation will change everything in all of your relationships.

It will change every relationships if you have this revelation, and if you do not have it, every one of your relationships will have a certain amount of damage in them because of a lack of this reality, all of your close relationships, I would rather say. It is the revelation that the only One, the primary source that satisfies the human heart is the God-Man Himself. It is not your spouse. It is not your flourishing ministry that is yet in the future that you can picture. It is not your best friend. That person cannot satisfy the deepest place of your heart because God created you in a way that it is impossible to.

ONLY GOD CAN REFRESH THE HUMAN SPIRIT AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

Paragraph C. There is only One who refreshes the human spirit at the highest level, and when we see Him as the apple tree, the primary source of refreshing, then we seek Him with a whole different focus. The reason many saints seek the Lord with such a diluted focus, and compromise is because they see another as the apple tree in their life. How many times I have seen this in thirty years of pasturing? How many young couples are seeking God, and going hard, they get married, year two or three, there is disaster because what they did was made an unholy transfer—man or woman, it goes both directions—to their spouse to be their all in all to them? They know better than to do that.

I have seen it happen timeless times. How about more than I can count? Where they are seeking the Lord, they get married, and all of a sudden, the strange, unholy transfer happens, and now the wife sees her husband as that which is to supply her deepest needs. This is absolutely outside the boundaries of the word of God. A man can never do that. I know he is cute, and I know he is cool, but he does not have that much power. He is not God. It also goes the other way around. The man looks to the wife to supply that or it is the best friend or the guy, or gal in ministry expecting the ministry prosperity to somehow meet that need in their heart or it is the guy or woman in business. There they are. The thing explodes, and they are as empty as they were before.

There is only one apple tree among the trees of the woods. There is only one. There will forever be only one. This revelation of Jesus as more than a Savior, He is more than a Savior who forgives you. He does that. Thank God He is a Savior who forgives. He is more than a Healer who heals bodies. He is more than a Provider for finance and open doors for direction. He is the satisfier of the human spirit. He is the apple tree among all the trees of the woods. He is the only One among the sons of men of the human race who has the power to touch the depths of the human heart and fulfill them.

Beloved, we have so many young couples getting married. Do not injure your marriage by this unholy transfer. Do not make your wife the apple tree or your husband. Jesus understands that there is no possible way that another person can do this for you.

THE BRIDE ENJOYS GOD'S PRESENCE: SITTING BEFORE THE KING

Roman numeral III. The bride enjoys God's presence. This is critical. We have to enjoy God's presence. Here is why. We have to. If we do not enjoy God's presence, we will not stay steady with God for decades.

I have seen people stay steady with God for five years by the hope of revival, and more specifically the hope that they will be the leader of the revival or really significant. I have seen guys hang in there five years, fiery in intercession, because they picture five years from now that they will be the center of things. That is not enough. It always ends up a bit different than we picture it.

The only way I have ever seen anybody stay steady for ten, twenty, thirty years, and I have not seen very many, and what I mean by steady is seeking God, fasting, praying, reaching for Him with a vitality and a vibrancy of their faith and of their passion. I have seen very few do that for decades, and it is because they enjoyed His Word and His presence. This is not a small thing, and it is the picture of the bride, the secret of her endurance, the secret of her steadiness is that she enjoys Him and His Word.

IT IS SERIOUS AS CANCER IS THE WORD OF GOD IS BORING TO YOU

It is not a small thing if the Word of God is boring to you. If the Word of God is boring to you, then I would take that as serious as having cancer in my body. For many people the Word of God is boring to them, and it does not even register to

them as a problem. They think, “Well, I wish it was.” Beloved, that is more serious than cancer is to your physical body. You want to have a vision because it is your inheritance to be a person who enjoys, and feels the presence of God, not that you will feel Him all day, every day without ever a break, but there is no way we can go steady. I mean being steady in passion, decade, after decade, after decade going for the deepest things of God’s heart. You will never do that if you do not enjoy His presence and His Word.

Everybody can enjoy His Word. It is the inheritance of every believer. It has nothing to do with intellectual capacity. I am not talking about the ability to memorize scripture, or to know where Bible verses are. I have had people say, “Well, I do not know where that verse is.” That is not at all what I am talking about. I am talking about the ability to feel the presence of God in the Word of God. If you do not, which most believers do not, that needs to be ICU—Intensive Care Unit. You are sick and about to die, alarm, alarm. Turn off the movies. Turn off the phone. Turn off the computer.

Get the presence of God in your life, and a love of the Word. If you do not, be nervous, be troubled, be disturbed by it because you will get off course in a short amount of time, if you do not break through in this. When I say short amount of time, I mean some years. I mean the years go by pretty fast. I do not want to make myself the hero of my own story, but I will. In my early years—eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two—I was deeply disturbed because I did not like prayer and the Word. I did prayer and the Word, but it was so boring. I hated it to be honest. I was eighteen, nineteen years old, and I hated Bible study and I hated prayer meetings. The only thing that I hated more, spiritually speaking, was fasting.

If you would have told me back then that I would lead a prayer movement some day, I would say, “No possible way. I hate prayer meetings,” but I was troubled by it when I was twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three years old.

I said, “God, I cannot live this way.”

And I imagine the Lord was saying, I did not hear Him say, but I can imagine now, “Come on. Come on, son. Come on. You are doing it right.”

“I am sick about this.”

“Good, that is your safety. Be sick about this.”

I remember a lot of my friends at twenty-two, twenty-three saying, “Oh Bickle, calm down. It is legalism. It is religion.”

I said, “I am sick about this. I do not feel God. I do not feel His word. I do not like His Word.”

I can imagine now, looking back with the understanding that I have now, the Holy Spirit saying, “This is good. This is your life. This is your safety what you feel right now.”

Anyway, be troubled if you do not have a love for the word. You will have it in time if you stay troubled about it, but if it is the sort of thing, “Well, I just do not.”

If you say, “That is just how it is,” and you just go on with all of your entertainment, recreation, and business as usual, you know, kind of loose speech and compromise—even small compromises—you will never love the Word of God. The presence of God will never be strong in your heart, and the Word will always be distasteful.

LIKE MARY OF BETHANY, WE MUST SIT BEFORE JESUS

Paragraph B. Like Mary of Bethany, we must sit before Him and experience His refreshing shade. She says this, this is one of her confessions, she says, “I sat down in His shade with great delight.”

What an amazing statement, “I sat down in His shade with great delight. His fruit was sweet to my taste.” She is talking about the pleasure of the Word of God, and beloved, this is the inheritance for every single believer to have the delight and the sweetness of taste of the Word of God touching your spirit.

JESUS' BANNER OVER HER LIFE: HIS LOVING LEADERSHIP (SONG 2:4)

Roman numeral IV. She goes to the next confession, Song of Solomon 2:4, “He brought me to the banqueting house. His banner over me was love.” Incidentally, there are seven different confessions the bride makes. I have them at the end of the notes all written out.

There are seven distinct confessions she makes or declarations, confessions of faith that she makes when she worships or you can make confessions when you are being tempted to sin, or tempted to quit, and give up and give in, and just be the normal kind of run of the mill kind of Christian experience where you are content with very little. When I feel tempted, or I want to draw back and slow down, I declare these things before God, or when I worship before God I declare these statements of the bride. These are the bride's confessions before the Song of Songs. Tremendous power these will have in your heart over time. One of them is right here in Song of Songs 2:1-7.

Here is another one of her confessions, chapter two, verse four: "He brought me to the banqueting house. His banner or His leadership over me is love." That is what she means by banner, and I have that described in the notes. I will not go into that right now. Here is what she understands: Jesus is bringing her somewhere specific. Did you know that God has a wonderful plan for your life? You have heard that. There is a very specific plan that God has for your life in this age, and I can tell you what it is. He is bringing you to a banqueting table.

THE BANQUET TABLE IS A PICTURE OF THE LAMB'S MARRIAGE SUPPER

This banqueting table is a token, it is just a picture of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which is the ultimate banqueting table at the end of the age. He is going to by the Word, and by the Spirit to feed our heart on the truths related to the banqueting table—the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Here is the point I am saying: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb or the banqueting table is the truth or the place where we celebrate His love for us, and we celebrate our love and dedication back to Him.

That is the arena of truth that is identified with the banqueting table or the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the wedding table. That is where He is bringing you to—to a greater discovery so that you would feast in that reality. Now here is the difficult thing: A lot of people think that where He is bringing them is to personal comfort and greater riches, and they get really confused when the riches and the comfort do not come in the timing and the way they think.

Now God does give comfort and riches, physical comforts I am talking about, but imagine their whole Christian life mostly in terms of this. It does not say, "He is bringing me to ease and the American lifestyle."

He is bringing you to a wedding table—a marriage table. He has a plan, and He is taking you to the place where He will reveal love to you, His love to you, and impart love to you that you would give back to Him. That is where He is bringing you. Have no confusion about it.

GOD'S PLAN IS TO BRING US TO THE BANQUETING TABLE

God's plan for my life is not about the size of my ministry. That is a secondary reality. His primary plan for my life is that He is bringing me to a banqueting table in this age to prepare me for the age to come, the ultimate one.

He is feeding my spirit on how He feels about me, and He is feeding my spirit with impartation that I would love Him like the rose and that I would live with purity like the lily. This is what His plan for your life is at the highest level. His banner over you, or you could put the word "leadership," is love. What does that mean? His leadership is to reveal love to you and to impart love to you.

"I thought His leadership over me was to make my ministry big and to make life easy." He does that sometimes, typically for seasons, and then the next season gets a little bit different than we anticipated. We call it warfare, but then in the next seasons (there are all these different seasons, and I really love blessing). I love physical, circumstantial blessings, and I like things easy, big, and growing. I really do.

I vote for that every single time, but I could tell you one thing, His banner over me is not mostly that. It is mostly for Him to reveal His desire toward me, and to impart it to me that I would have it for Him and in an overflow for others. The goal of His plan for my life is to cause me to mature in love.

THE LOVESICK BRIDE CRIES OUT FOR GREATER ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Roman numeral V. Well, she has been at the wedding table. She has been seeing the delight and the sweetness of the Word of God, so what does she say? She gets ravenous for God. I tell you, the rich get richer. When you have a little bit of God, you want more of God. She is ruined. She says, "I am lovesick," in Song of Solomon 2:5: "Sustain me, give me more, refresh me," she is talking about the ministry of Jesus, "Sustain me and refresh me," and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and you can read the details of that in the notes. She

is saying, “Refresh me and sustain me. I am lovesick.” Beloved, when God touches our spirit, it awakens a ravenous hunger in us for more of God. We were created to live lovesick for God.

The fact that such a small percent of the Body of Christ lives lovesick for God, it is millions, millions are, but hundreds of millions are not, and the millions who are sometimes are ridiculed and different ideas, thoughts, and opinions are spoken about them. Do not concern yourself with that. We were created to live lovesick. This is your destiny. This is the plan of God. His banner over you is love, and it works in her life because love explodes in her in the next verse, here in Song of Solomon 2:5.

She could testify, “Your leadership is working. You love me. I love You. You love me. I love You. It is working.” Beloved, things on the outside may be going really well, and things on the outside may be going really bad, but we can still be lovesick and His banner over our life and His leadership over our life is still effective.

EXPERIENCING GOD’S 2-FOLD EMBRACE (SONG OF SOLOMON 2:6)

Roman numeral VI. “His left hand,” she experiences the two-fold embrace of God in Song of Solomon 2:6. In this revelation of love, she can now see the thing she could not formerly see. Beloved, when our hearts are lovesick, we can see the hand of God in ways we could not see it before we were lovesick.

Before we felt this love for Him, we thought He was mad, angry, distant, and ignoring us, but when we grow in love, we have a new set of lenses, and we see His hand like we never saw it before. We see the left hand of God, and the right hand of God. The left hand of God, as I say in the notes that you can read on your own, is the invisible, indiscernible activity of God in our life.

Beloved, the Lord has done more things with His left hand, but it is behind her head. She cannot see it. He has done more things that you cannot see to preserve you, and protect you, and to set things up for your safety that you will never know until the age to come, but the lovesick bride begins to see the left hand of God in a way that she never did. Before she was just offended or mystified, “Where is God?” Now she goes, “I see it. My goodness, You were there all along. It was under my head. I could not see it with my eyes,” and of course, she knows the right hand of God, that is the discernable, released blessing of God upon her life.

Then the final verse, Song of Solomon 2:7, we will look at just for one moment because we are out of time. It is the Holy Spirit speaking here, and you can read the notes and fill in the blanks on it. The Holy Spirit is speaking here, "I charge you," He is speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, who are the undiscerning members of the Body of Christ in the Song of Solomon. He says, "I charge you by the gazelles or the does," in other words those animals whose nature is very sensitive. "I charge you to be sensitive. Do not stir this bride up from the season she is in" (Song 2:7).

The season she was in, as we know from Song of Solomon 2:1-6, is that she is in the place that is sitting before Him at His table, growing, becomes lovesick, feeding on His Word, understanding her identity, and here is what some in the Body of Christ do. They have no value for a dedicated season, a prolonged season to go deep in God, to go forward in God. They have no grid for it. The only value they have is doing more activity, and they will come and they will disturb anybody to get them out of the place of going deep with God to just do more. Now when we go deep with God, we still do the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We still do the works of God, but they would rather you, "Man, you have a bright countenance, you are dedicated, if you work this much? Why do we not just get you doing two or three times as much ministry activity."

DO NOT DISTURB SIGN ON HER DOOR

The Lord says, "Do not disturb her. I have her in this season. Do not awaken her. She is going deep," and beloved, it is right and biblical to have a vision, to have prolonged seasons where you are going deep in the Word and in God.

Many men of God in the Old and New Testament to Paul out in the wilderness and Moses in the wilderness and David, many of the great men and women of God in the Word of God had prolonged seasons of going deep. The religious spirit in the Body of Christ today will disturb you every time, and they will try to vex you out of it with every manor of logic and biblical mandate to get you out of a place of going deep in God. Yet, the Holy Spirit says, "I charge you, do not disturb her. Do not disturb her" (Song 2:7, paraphrased).

Amen and amen. Let's end with that.