

Session 7 God’s Loving Discipline and Safe Leadership (Song 3)

I. REVIEW OF SONG 2:8-17

- A. The Bride received new insight into the King as the “Lord of all” who conquered the mountains. She saw Him like a gazelle that could easily leap over all obstacles. Then He called her out of the comfort zone to join Him on the mountains of risk (2:10). This poetically refers to embracing difficult areas of obedience and ministry assignments that challenge our sense of comfort.

⁸**Behold, He comes leaping upon the mountains...** ⁹**My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.** ¹⁰**My Beloved spoke, and said to me: “Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away...”** (Song 2:8-10)

This is session seven in a twelve-part series of the Song of Solomon. In twelve sessions you can only abbreviate what this book is about, but it is enough to get you started. If the Lord touches your heart, then you can go deeper. Again concerning this natural love song, the only truths that we are focusing on are those that can be established in the New Testament. So some people wonder if that symbolic thing really means “this,” and I would say that maybe it does not, but as long as it is a New Testament principle, then you are on solid ground to lay hold of it.

A quick review of our last session, Song of Solomon 2:8-17: The Bride, or sometimes I refer to her as the young maiden, received a new revelation, a new insight into the King. She saw Him as the Lord of all, having power over every obstacle. This was a new insight because she had grown to know Him as the One that sits with her under the shade tree, at the table, behind the wall, and just interacting with her in a private way as she is discovering the beauty of God, discovering her identity in the beauty of God, discovering the delightfulness of the presence of God.

The last thing that was said about her in that section was for nobody to disturb her. That is Song of Solomon 2:1-7. Then in verse 8, after some time passes, He disturbs her. He says, “Now that you are established in this beginning revelation of the beauty of God, the love of God, your identity, the presence of God, now I want you to rise up and partner with Me. Do not forsake that interaction with Me at the table. You are going to maintain that grace all of your days, but I want you to add to it. I want you to partner with Me and go forth with Me in the mandate the Father gave Me to disciple the nations.” That is the general flow of what is going on.

So here in Song of Solomon 2:8, she sees Him. “Behold,”—it is a brand new revelation, a brand new insight! He is not sitting at a table under a shade tree. He is leaping on mountains. She says, “I do not like heights; I do not like mountains. This is remarkable! He is like a gazelle, a young deer leaping on the mountains!”

Then in verse 10, He looks at her and says, “I want you to rise up and come with Me.”

She replies, “Rise up? No, I want to stay here at the table. I do not want to rise up and go on mountains.” He called her out of the comfort zone. He called her out of that place of familiarity, the comfort zone to join Him on the mountains of risk. Again we looked at that with a little bit of detail in the last session.

- B. The Bride refused the King’s command to arise to join Him on the mountains. She told Him to *turn* and go to the mountains without her (2:17). She struggled because of fear. Her fear was an expression of her spiritual immaturity, not of her rebellion towards God.

¹⁷**Until the day breaks...turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle...** (Song 2:17)

In verse 17 she refuses Him. She says, “No, I cannot. I cannot.” She tells Him in verse 17, “Turn, and You go jump on the mountains without me.”

He answers, "No, I want you with Me." Now the Lord **does not need** us in order to manifest His power in the earth, He **wants** us. He desires partnership. It is His desire to use us. Not that He cannot display His power without us, He just does not want to. He says, "I want you with Me when I conquer the mountains."

She draws back because of fear, and this fear is an expression of her spiritual immaturity. It is spiritual immaturity, which is very different from rebellion. Sometimes when we wrestle and struggle, the enemy comes and says, "You are just a rebel."

We draw back in shame. We give up in despair, thinking, "It is not worth it. It is not going to work anyway. I am just a rebellious sinful person."

The Lord whispers and He says, "No, you are struggling. Ask Me to help you. Let Me stand with you. You are immature, you are afraid, and you are hesitating in fear. You are not rebellious. I love you, My beloved! I will help you." That is what He is doing here in Song of Solomon 3. He is helping her. He is breaking in to help her.

- C. We see the King's response to the Bride's compromise in Song 2:17. He lovingly disciplined her by withdrawing His manifest presence from her heart. He was not angry with her, but jealously desired her to share His values as a mature Bride who enjoys deeper partnership with Him.

¹By night on my bed I sought the One I love; I sought Him, but I did not find Him. (Song 3:1)

What happens in Song of Solomon 3:1 is that He responds to her with loving discipline, and that is actually His help on the front end. He is not angry at all with her.

She says, "By night on my bed I sought the One I love. I sought Him but I did not find Him." Well, she is still in her bed!

He says, "I want you on the mountains. What are you doing back at the camp? I do not want you at the base camp. I want you with Me, not in the garden, but on the mountain."

She answers, "I am going to keep seeking You like I have always done."

He says, "Well, that is good, but you are not going to find Me because I am trying to wake you up. So I am going to withdraw some of my manifest sense of My presence on your heart to disturb you, to trouble you, to make you ask questions. The very hunger for My presence will cause you to discover the place of obedience that is the only place of safety."

So she is seeking Him like in those previous months, but this time she is not finding His delightful presence. Something is different. How come? I am doing the same thing. I am talking to You. My Bible is open.

He says, "Because I am charging you, I am wooing you to a greater place of obedience, and I want to get your attention." This is His loving discipline, but He is not angry. That is not what is going on. All through Song of Solomon 3 He is communicating His love. He is jealous that she would rise up in maturity.

I tell you, when the Lord is jealous for us to mature, there is no argument we are going to have with Him that is going to cause Him to let go of that goal. He is going to stay with it. I have seen people try to wrestle with the Lord, and I want you to know He is state champion wrestler plus some! He is going to win every wrestling match because of love, not because of power. He could easily pin us, but that is not the point. It is because He loves us. He says, "I am going to keep wrestling with you until you wake up, until you rise up and believe Me. You will see that I really will be there to help you and show you more of Myself."

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

- A. In God's jealousy for us, He requires that we walk in the light as He gives more and more to us. As we respond to obey more light, it results in our experiencing a deeper relationship with Jesus.

²⁴**He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. (Mk. 4:24)**

⁵**Do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?" ⁶He gives more grace... ⁷submit to God. Resist the devil... ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands...and purify your hearts... (Jas. 4:5-8)**

The Lord's discipline is not the same as His rejection. When the Lord disciplines her, He is not rejecting her, He is not angry at all. As a matter of fact, He is disciplining her because He is so committed to her.

In God's jealousy for us, He requires us to obey the light we have before He gives us more light. On a scale to one to ten, we start off at level one. We have light at that level, and we say, "Wow, we are obeying all the light we have." Then level two, He brings more light. It is like a magnifying glass. Or He turns up the power on the microscope, so to speak. Oh, we thought everything was clean, but now we have more light. We see more areas that need to be changed or we see greater challenges. First it disturbs us, and then we say yes. Then we get to level two. So then He gives us more light. He keeps giving us more light, but in that greater light we have a greater capacity to experience Him as well.

So somebody might say, "Well, if more light means more response required, why don't I just stay dumb and unconnected and not have to respond more?" Remember, if you get more light, you experience more too. Your capacity increases, not just the requirement of partnership with Him at a deeper level.

Jesus said in Mark 4:24, "If you respond, I will give you more." That is, "If you use what I give you, I will give you more. You walk in the light you have, you will get more light and you will experience more of My heart."

James 4 is such an important passage related to Song of Solomon 3. It says in James 4:5 that the Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously for us. The Holy Spirit in you is jealous. That is, He says, "I am not letting you go until you rise up on My terms because I love you. I see the glory that God has planned for you. I see the relationship the Lord wants with you, and I am going to help you."

Beloved, when the Spirit jealously yearns for you to respond more, and you love Him—now if you do not love Him that is one thing, but if you love Him, which I believe the vast majority of everyone in this room does—that jealous yearning is going to prevail. He will give more grace. Look at verse 6, "He gives more grace," and verse 8, "if we draw near, He will respond and draw near." We say yes, and He will release more and more to us and through us.

- B. One key message in the Song is that God enjoys His relationship with us, even in our weakness. This does not mean that He *approves* of all that we do. Some mistake divine correction for divine rejection, but it is proof of His love. God hates the sin, yet delights in the one He disciplines. The Lord can disapprove of an area in our life without being displeased with us as a person. He can be displeased with a certain behavior in our life without despising the relationship with us.

¹²**Whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)**

⁵**Do not despise the chastening of the LORD... ⁶for whom the LORD loves He chastens... (Heb. 12:5-6)**

One of the key messages in the Song of Solomon is that God enjoys His relationship with us even in our weakness. That He actually enjoys His relationship with us, even in our weakness, is one of the profound messages of this

book. Of course, that is the doctrine of grace. He not only enjoys us after we mature, He enjoys us **while** we are in the process of maturing. That is what gives us courage to keep moving forward—He enjoys us!

Now just because He enjoys us does not mean He approves of everything we are doing. Some people get confused because when they hear that God enjoys them, they think He approves of everything they are doing. He can disapprove of an area but still enjoy you as a person. There are areas in my life over the years, where He says, “I do not approve of that, but I do enjoy you, and because I jealously yearn for you, I am not letting you go. I am going to hem you in. I am going to get your attention.”

There are times He even withdraws the sense of His presence from our heart. His presence is always there, but it is that discernible feeling missing, and we say, “O God, I cannot live without it!”

He would say, “Now we are talking, because I knew you loved Me.”

“I will do anything now.”

He would respond, “Okay, now we are talking because I want you and I know you want Me. Come on now, rise up.” That is what is going on.

The Lord can disapprove of an area of our life without being displeased with us as a person. He can be displeased with an area, but enjoy the person. Beloved, when you feel enjoyed, you run to Him; you do not run from Him in your struggle. This was, one of the most significant life-changing points of understanding that the Lord helped me with some years ago when I began to understand He actually likes me. Then I did not want to run from Him and hide from Him and come up with Bible verses to validate carnality. I wanted to run to Him because I had this understanding He really liked me.

I really like people who like me. How about you? There is just something about someone who likes you that warms your heart. I tell you nobody likes you more than He does. He actually likes you. He did not just stamp your passport into heaven. He actually enjoys the relationship. That is one of the most difficult things for some people to grasp. They just cannot go there. They restrain, they hold back, and it hinders their spiritual growth until this truth really gets anchored in their heart.

C. He corrects the areas of our life of which He disapproves to remove all that hinders love in us.

¹⁰**He [disciplines us] for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. (Heb. 12:10)**

D. Jesus loves His people even as He rebukes them and calls them to repent. Then He invites these very people to rule with Him (Rev. 3:21).

¹⁹**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent...**²¹**To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:19, 21)**

Jesus loves His people even as He rebukes them, even as He calls them to repent. Did you know He can rebuke you and call you to repent, but still have feelings of love and enjoy the relationship? Look what He says right here in Revelation 3, “The people I love that I rebuke.” He says, “I chasten you, I discipline you because I love you so much. I am so committed to you, and that is why I rebuke you.”

In our human experience, typically a correction means a rejection, but not so with God. Correction does not mean rejection with Him. It is the opposite. It means He is committed to the relationship. I tell you when you need to get nervous is this: when you are living in sin, and you do not feel any correction, then you are in trouble. When He is silent, that is trouble; when He is intervening, you are on safe ground.

There is a time, though, if we continue to ignore His chastening, when the Lord says, “Okay, I will let you have your way. Go on.” It is a disaster when a person is in trouble spiritually to the point where the Lord quits talking.

I do not mean when you cannot discern His voice, because in the early days of our spiritual life there are all kinds of reasons we cannot connect with His voice. I am not talking about a new believer, the first couple of years in the Lord, and you are having a hard time discerning His presence. I am talking about something different than that. I am talking about a believer who has been walking with Him for years, and now is living in persistent sin consistently, and they say, “I do not feel any rebuke.”

I reply, “That is an absolutely dangerous place to live! That is a sign of danger when you are there.”

E. God feels the pain of those whom He disciplines and still considers them His dearly beloved.

⁷I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies. (Jer. 12:7)

⁹In all their affliction He was afflicted...in His love...He redeemed them... (Isa. 63:9)

The Lord feels the pain of the people when He disciplines them. The people He disciplines He still considers His dearly beloved. Look what He says in Jeremiah 12. This is fantastic about God’s heart. He is bringing the most severe judgment on Israel in the Old Testament—the Babylonian captivity in the time of Jeremiah. There was nothing more severe than when the nation of Babylon came in and destroyed the city of Jerusalem.

*Here is what God says about this most horrific judgment on the city of Jerusalem. “I have given **the dearly beloved of My soul** into the hands of her enemy”—the Babylonian army—only to wake her up, but she is ever and forever the dearly beloved of My soul. What a statement! Then look at Isaiah 63; He was afflicted when they were afflicted. His heart was pained when they were in this pain. He says, in effect, “My heart hurts that you are hurting, but I love you, and I am not backing away. I am not backing away.”*

F. If we neglect to confront sin thoroughly in our life, *we are not loved less by God*, but we do suffer loss in several ways—it minimizes our ability to experience the joy of our salvation, to receive more understanding, to enjoy godly fellowship, and to receive eternal rewards.

¹⁴If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved... (1 Cor. 3:14–15)

*If we neglect to confront sin in our life, we are not loved less by God, but we do suffer loss. Beloved, if you live in a season of sin—I am not talking immaturity, I am talking about an area where He is challenging you, and you are not just concerned with obeying the Lord in it—He does not love you less. You are not earning His love by obeying Him, but I want to assure you, you **will** suffer loss. **There are things that you could have experienced and could have had in God that you will not have in that season of your life.***

Paul talks about standing before Jesus on the last day. He is talking about believers with resurrected bodies on the day of the judgment seat of Christ. He says they will be saved, but they will suffer the loss of that which was within their reach, even in their weakness. Beloved, I do not want to live in any sense of regret. Remember, Jesus has such grace; He is not talking about immaturity, He is talking about these believers who take a year or two or three or four to camp in sin, maybe in immorality for a while or they camp in resistance against Him, and they know what they are doing. Paul says, “Man, you will suffer loss from those years.”

Now the relationship can fully recover, but you will never regain the years that you lost. I have heard preachers say many times that you will recover everything that is lost. Not so. In terms of His love, you never lost it. But you cannot recover three years of sin as a believer. There is no recovery of those three years; they are lost. You can

learn from it and take the next three years to go harder, but there really is loss. Some people do not like that idea because it bothers them. It is suppose to bother them! That is the point of why it is in the Bible.

III. GOD’S MANIFEST PRESENCE IS WITHDRAWN (3:1-2)

A. The Bride sought God, but did not find Him (3:1-2). This was a very new experience for her.

¹***By night on my bed I sought the One I love; I sought Him, but I did not find Him.***
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. (Song 3:1-2)***

Here is a brand new experience for her. “On my bed I sought the One I love”—here is the new experience—“but I did not find Him.” I sought Him. I am reading my Bible, I am talking to Him, doing all the things I have done the last few years, but now I cannot find Him. Why? He told her in the last passage to rise up and come with Me. So look at verse 2; she begins the process, “I will arise.” There you go. She says, “Okay, okay, I will arise. I will go to the city. I am not ready for the mountain, but I will go to the city. I will come out of the garden, and I will take the first steps.”

Here in Song of Solomon 3 is her beginning of obedience to this new challenge. It is partial obedience. She is moving forward. It is real. It is going to bring change in her life. But it is not until Song of Solomon 4 that she goes all the way to the mountain. Here is Song of Solomon 3, “I will arise now.” I love that word, **now**. I will go, I will leave the garden, I will go to the city, I will interact in the midst of the purpose of God and the people of God, and I will get involved in serving and believing and take the risks.

Man, you know what the risks of ministry are about? When you endeavor to serve people, you will disappoint them. People get a sense of future failure. They say, “What if I start to serve, and I get the disapproval of the people I am trying to serve?” The truth is if you do serve, you will get criticized. I know a lot of believers through my nearly forty years of pastoring who say, “No, I am not doing that anymore. I tried that serving and the ‘thanks’ I got for it.”

Beloved, that is part of the risk of serving. We get overlooked, we are unappreciated, and we get passed by. Things go wrong, things do not work out the way we think, it is harder than we thought, and we get criticized. We feel like, “You know what? I am going back to the garden and just push delete on everything. Just going to watch some TV and read my Bible a little bit, just me and the Lord.”

What the Lord is saying is, “Do not do that. I want you to rise up and bear the rigors and the risks of being involved in the midst of what I am doing.” There will be pain, there will be difficulty, and there will be sacrifice because we are in a fallen world interacting and ministering with fallen people to fallen people. There are all kinds of struggles in that.

B. ***By night I sought Him:*** She continued to seek God with perseverance through the night.

C. ***I did not find Him:*** She sought the Lord, but could not find Him after she refused Him (2:17). He sometimes withdraws a measure of His manifest presence from our heart if we neglect to respond, so that He might get our attention. She continued to seek God through prayer and meditation on the Word (2:3-5). She is now learning that prayer is no substitute for full obedience. The Father loves us too much to allow us to come up short of being mature in love.

She says, “I did not find Him.” Sometimes He withdraws a measure of His manifest presence on our heart, just a measure. He never leaves us, never ever, but I am talking about that discernible feeling of His presence. I cannot live without that feeling of His presence, though I do not always have it in an intense way. In my early years I

loved the Lord and I had a sense of His presence. I remember when I lost that sense of His presence, and I was really panicked, really panicked. It went a few months, and I just could not have any sense that He was even real. There I was preaching Bible studies and witnessing to people, and I could not sense Him, and then another season came, and it recovered again.

I thought, "Oh, that was terrible. I was so afraid. That was so horrible." Then some time passed, I do not know how much time, some months, a year or two, and it happened again—that sense of that dark hole again. Dark hole maybe a little exaggerated, but where I could not feel Him. I could not sense His heart. Reading the Word did not touch me at all, and worshipping did not move me, and I panicked again, and then it recovered again.

Since that time I have learned that when there are those times of staleness and barrenness, I search out my relationship with the Lord, and I stay with it because the sense of His presence always returns. The first time or two, it freaked me out. I thought, "I do not even know if I believe this anymore." Then the Lord's sweetness came back, and I said, "Whoa! What was all that about? Lord, I do not like that feeling!"

I know that most of you have had that feeling a time or two, but I want to tell you, having stayed with it for some years, that sense of His presence will return if you stay with it. He wants us to experience that, but on His terms. He says, "I want you to relate to Me on My terms, and when I give you new challenges of obedience, I want you to take hold of them and not draw back on your own terms." So sometimes He withdraws a measure of His presence to get our attention.

The Bride is now learning that prayer is no substitute for full obedience. Some people think if they pray more and throw in a fasting day, then they can dabble in immorality and cast off humility. That if they go to some prayer meetings and lead a worship team, then they can disobey in some areas and just stay with it. Hey, I am going to pray a little bit more. I will just read the Bible more.

Beloved, prayer is no substitute for saying yes to Him in your heart. Some folks, it takes them a while to figure that out. He wants partnership. Prayer is not just an activity He wants you to do. Prayer is about partnership. He loves the relationship; that is what He is into.

- D. **The One I love:** Her heart was set on loving the King, even in her struggles. She is not a hopeless hypocrite. We can continue to call Jesus *the One I love* even before we have the full victory in every area in our life. Our love for Jesus is still real during our struggle to arise to the mountain.
- E. **On my bed:** She had been called to leave her bed to arise and go to the mountains with the Lord.
- F. **I will rise now:** The Bride added obedience to her prayer by arising as commanded in Song 2:10. The pain of losing a measure of His manifest presence on her heart moved her to arise off her bed.

She says, "I will arise now." The Bride added obedience to her prayer, the spirit of obedience. Again, it is only partial obedience. He did not say to rise up to go to the city. He said to come to the mountains. She does not do that until the next chapter, but she is moving in the right direction. She is conquering her fear. She is willing to bear the risks and the rigors of these new challenges of obedience and this new involvement with people where there is pain, and there are times of rejection and misunderstanding. and people say wrong things about you.

Again, over the years I have seen so many people retreat from an active involvement in the Body because they did not get the reception they thought they should have received. They spend years on the sidelines in their spiritual life instead of being engaged. The Lord would say, "I want you rising up, get in the city, go on to the mountain, which are different word pictures of getting involved with what I am doing. Do not draw back because it is difficult and there are rigors to it and there is risk to it and those kinds of things."

The pain of losing a little bit of the sense of His presence moves her to get off her bed. I mean the Lord has me because I love Him. So if there is a lifting of His presence, I have no option. What is going on? I have to find Him. He says, “I knew you loved Me! I knew you would press through.” Because you love Him more than you love staying in the comfort zone. You love Him more than the comfort.

On the front end our fear makes us hesitate. It’s a little wrestling match. We break through when we press in. You want to be one of those people who is resolved, “I am going to press in. I am not going to settle and camp out in a spirit of compromise and lethargy and just kind of living on the outer edges of obedience.”—Or less than that, I am being generous—No, we are not going to be that way, we are going to press in. We are going to go to the city, go to the mountain, and we are going to be involved in what He is doing, no matter if we do not get the kind of responses from God or from people that we think that we should get.

- G. **The city:** She arose to go about the city among the streets and squares—where people interact. Getting involved with new people in a new city may require risk and result in more pressure, etc.

IV. THE BRIDE FOUND THE KING (3:3-4)

- A. After the Bride arose to the city (church), then she requested help from the watchmen or shepherds (leadership). Immediately after that, she found the King (3:3-4).

³The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, “Have you seen the one I love?”⁴Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the One I love. I held Him and would not let Him go, until I had brought Him to the house of my mother... (Song 3:3-4)

Now the Bride found the King after she arose to the city. There she asked for the watchman, the shepherds to help her. I have a bit more of this in the additional notes. On most of these messages I have a longer document of ten or twelve pages where I break these verses down a lot more detail than I am giving you in these notes here.

In verse 3, the watchmen who go about the city speak of the leaders in the city, the spiritual leaders. She relates, “They found me and I said, ‘Have you seen the One the love?’” That is, can you help me connect with the Lord? She is talking to the spiritual leaders. Can you help me connect with the Lord? In New Testament language that is what she is saying. “Scarcely had I passed by them, I found Him, and when I found Him, I would not let Him go until I brought Him into the house of my mother.”

So there are two things that have happened here. Number one, she has arisen off her bed. She is in the city and is interacting with the spiritual authorities instead of neglecting them and living in isolation. Immediately after she takes a few steps in the right direction, it is like I tell people, you take one step towards the Lord, He will take ten steps towards you.

She rises up. She casts off this spirit of independence from the spiritual leaders. She says, “I am going to be involved. I am going to be in a spirit of connective-ness. I am going to go in the right direction.” Back in Song of Solomon 1 He talked about her needing that. I have this on the additional notes or back in Song of Solomon 1:8 you can review it. When she said, “Where will you feed me?” He said, “I will feed you in the place where you are feeding other people, where you are following in the footsteps of the flock, and you are involved in the Body of Christ. Where you are by the shepherds’ tents, you are in a spirit of right relationship with spiritual leadership.” All these things are necessary in order for us to be fed and to go forward in a right way.

Well, she is rising up and she is connecting with the watchmen with a right attitude and a right response. Immediately, number two, it says in verse 4, “scarcely had any time gone by and I found Him.” Again you take one step in the right direction, the Lord will take ten to meet you.

She says, "I held on to Him." I love this verse, "I held Him, and I would not let Him go." She says, "I held on to Him tenaciously, and I was not going to let Him go until I brought Him to the house of my mother."

- B. ***I found the One I love:*** The Lord will respond to any who draw near to Him (Jas 4:8). It is His desire to draw near to us. Yet He wants us to value the relationship enough to draw near to Him.

⁸***Draw near to God and He will draw near to you... (Jas. 4:8)***

- C. ***The watchman:*** The watchmen and keepers of the walls speak of the spiritual leaders who guard the walls of God's city to protect His people. They are those who go about the city watching over it. The watchmen speak of the elders of the church who are to *watch over* believers (Heb. 13:17).

- D. ***I would not let Him go:*** She had a new resolution to hold on to the King with a determination that resulted from her painful season of spiritual struggle. She "never lets go of Him" throughout the remainder of the Song. Seasons of "spiritual wrestling" can birth a deep resolve in us to never allow compromise to be tolerated in our lives.

She said, "I would not let Him go." She had this new resolution or you could use the word, determination. She says, "I am never ever going to go back and camp out in compromise. I am never going there again. I do not like the way my spiritual life was when I was drawing back from what He was telling me. I do not want to live that way. I am never going to let go of Him. I am never ever going to be half-hearted in my response again."

- E. ***The house of my mother:*** Often the most difficult places to bring Jesus can be among familiar family relationships. A prophet has no honor in his home. Bringing Jesus to her home is an expression of her obedience to "arise." Home can also represent smallness. We are to bring Jesus to the small number in our home. The "mother" is a picture of the church as those who do God's will (Mt. 12:46-50) and those used as God's vessels to bring people to the new birth. God is our Father; the Church can be spoken of as our mother or the agency in which people are given a witness of truth leading to their new birth. Paul spoke of the New Jerusalem as our "mother" (Gal. 4:26). Israel is pictured as a "mother" who gave birth to the redeemed (Rev. 12:5, 17).

⁴***I held Him and would not let Him go, until I had brought Him to the house of my mother...***
(Song 3:4)

You can read the notes here about the house of my mother, with more on the additional notes. The mother speaks of the Church in the Body of Christ. She is saying, "I am going to hold on to Him, and I am even going to bring Him into the house of my mother, into my most familiar relationships." Because in the most familiar relationships it can be sometimes the most difficult to be a faithful witness to the Lord.

Sometimes if you know the folks a little bit, you can say what you believe and take a stand, but sometimes in those most familiar relationships they roll their eyes and say, "Hey, you don't really know all of this stuff about God. Why are you acting like you know what you are doing?" So it is really easy to draw back in that context.

She says, "I am so tenacious that I am going to bring Him even into the most difficult situations, the most familiar relationships, difficult in the negative sense where I might have a tendency to draw back on my convictions. I am going to take a stand even in the house of my mother, I am going to bring Him where I typically have not brought or ministered or took a stand for His name."

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT GUARDS US IN STRATEGIC SPIRITUAL SEASONS (3:5)

- A. The Spirit ordains strategic seasons in each one's spiritual life (3:5). I see the Spirit as speaking in verse 5. There are seasons when He desires to establish us in new experiences and insights.

⁵***I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up [disturb] nor awaken love until it pleases. (Song 3:5)***

- B. ***Do not stir up***: The Spirit charged other believers not to disrupt or disturb the Bride in this season with their opinions and judgments. The Spirit tells those who were insensitive to His ways not to disturb the Bride in this particular season of sitting at the table to grow in the Word. In the phrase, *until it pleases*, the Hebrew can be translated as *it, he, or she*. The NASB accurately translates the phrase as “do not awaken love until *she* pleases.”

VI. OVERVIEW OF SONG 3:6-11

- A. King Jesus is revealed to the Bride as a “safe Savior.” She gains insight into His safe leadership. This does not mean that we will not have difficulties. It means we are in a *safe place where our heart will mature* in obedient love for God. The safest place for our heart is in seeing Jesus as the King who enables us to walk in hundred-fold obedience and faith, even when facing the mountains. The devil lies to God's people about Jesus not being a safe leader.

Now she is awakened in her obedience and is connecting to the watchmen. She is moving in the right direction. She is involved in the Body. The idea is she is serving people. She has a right relationship to spiritual authority. I tell you spiritual authority is an important reality. The whole kingdom of God has a principle of honoring authority, whether it is honoring the authority in the home, the authority in the marketplace, the authority in the Church, the authority in the society, in the government. God is a God of authority. The enemy's strategy is for lawlessness to fill the earth. That is what he wants to happen. But God wants us to honor delegated authority. He delegates it in numbers of ways. In the family, in the marketplace, in society, through government, in the Church, there is recognizable delegated authority. It is important that our spirit is right, that it isn't resistant and independent with a rebellious attitude.

Now that is not a truth that a lot of folks focus on, but it is a powerful New Testament truth. It is not really popular today. It is easier just to throw off government. The same in the marketplace. For example, your employer is looking one way, no one sees you, and you neglect the things you have committed to under his authority pertaining to the job. I am talking about honoring authority as long as it is not calling you into any area of compromise; we honor authority in all the different spheres of life and society. In the case that we need to challenge government, we do it with respect to authority. Even though things might not be right in the home, we can honor authority even while we challenge the problems in a right way.

Now King Jesus is revealed to the Bride as a safe Savior. See, He was Lord of the nations. He was the One leaping on mountains in the last session. Now He is revealing Himself as the safe Savior, meaning the One whose leadership is good, whose leadership is safe. She is going to find out that the only place of safety is the place of obedience. There is not another place of safety. Again, I am not talking about our immaturity and struggling because even when we are reaching for obedience, we have a spirit of obedience. Even though we are wrestling it through, from the Lord's point of view, that still is the spirit of obedience. I still am considering that in the vein of a spirit of obedience.

*So she gains new insight into His safe leadership. Now when I say that His leadership is safe, I do **not** mean you will **not** have difficulties. Some people think that safety means everything goes their way. No, it does not go your*

way, but it will be safe for your heart spiritually. Meaning in the place of submission to His leadership your heart will be safe. You will not draw back in bitterness, you will not fall into a spirit of compromise as a lifestyle, and your heart will thrive and be vigorous in the things of God. That is what I mean by safety. It does not mean everything will go right, and all the money will come in just like you want it, and everybody honors you, and everybody treats you right. That is not the safety I am talking about. I am talking about spiritual safety. Of course the Lord does give safety in other ways as well. But there really are martyrs who really die physically in full obedience to the Lord while their heart is completely safe; there is no trace of compromise in them. When they stand before the Lord, their testimony is so glorious. **That** is what I mean by safety.

- B. The Spirit asked a question (3:6), then provided a two-part answer along with an exhortation. First, He used military language to reveal how safe we are under Jesus' leadership (3:7-8). Second, He used a royal wedding procession as a picture of His safe leadership in (3:9-10). The pinnacle of our salvation is in knowing Jesus as our Bridegroom King (3:11).

In this next section, verse 6-11, first the Holy Spirit asks a question, then there is a two-part answer to the question, and then there is an exhortation. So there are really three different things going on here. There is a question, a two-part answer, and then an exhortation.

VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT ASKS A SEARCHING QUESTION (3:6)

- A. A question is asked about the identification of the One coming up out of the wilderness (3:6). The King is described as perfumed with myrrh, frankincense, and merchant's powders.

⁶Who is this coming out of the wilderness [of this fallen world] like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders? ⁷Behold, it is Solomon's couch, with sixty valiant men around it... (Song 3:6-7)

The Holy Spirit asks a searching question in verse 6. I believe this to be the Holy Spirit through this poetic language. I have a little bit here as to why and a little bit more on the additional notes. Three times in the book this unnamed person asks a question representing the King and wooing the Bride to obedience to the King, but nobody knows who is asking the question. All through the Scripture the Holy Spirit is this invisible One who is always representing the King, wooing us and reasoning with us to obey Him by showing us His beauty.

So the question is asked, and the answer is, it is all about the King. It is about the Lord Himself. Who is this coming out of the wilderness? I mean who is this One? He was on the mountain; now He is coming through the wilderness. Who is this One? It is the safe leader is the answer. It is the safe leader who is going to walk us through the wilderness of this fallen world without us having compromise and defilement in our lives. Again there are those stumbling moments, but that is not the same as a spirit of compromise for years in your life.

Who is this coming out of the wilderness? He looks like pillars of smoke. The idea is that there is this entourage coming in the wilderness. It is the King being escorted and leading the pack through the wilderness, and there is this big pillar of smoke.

Who is this? He is perfumed with myrrh and frankincense. As a matter of fact He has all the fragrant powders of the merchant who sells the perfume in the marketplace. Who is this one? Verse 7 gives the answer. It is the king; it is Solomon. It is the king on his couch, his palanquin it goes on to say with sixty valiant men around him.

- B. **Coming out of the wilderness:** Who is the One who leads us out of the wilderness of this world? Jesus came up victorious out of the wilderness of this fallen age. Israel's journey through the wilderness for forty years is a picture of our struggle in this fallen world on our way to the Promised Land. In Song 8:5, the Bride comes up out of the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved.

The question is asked, who is this One coming up out the wilderness? Jesus came up victorious out of the wilderness of this fallen age. When we look at who He is, He is the One who came up out of the wilderness in total victory. That is the One who is going to lead us through the wilderness. That is the idea using this picture language with the agricultural grid of this poetry.

- C. **Solomon's couch:** King Solomon is a type of King Jesus in this Song. Solomon's couch or palanquin (3:9) was a chariot used in his royal wedding processions. It was carried on the shoulders of the royal guard. His couch is where his bride sat near him to keep her safe through the wilderness journey.

She speaks of Solomon's couch. Now we know that Solomon is a type of King Jesus. King Solomon is in this love song. Solomon's couch was the chariot. Or, the couch that is on his chariot is the idea. This was the chariot used in his royal wedding processions. What he is doing is coming on his couch, on his chariot, his palanquin to get the bride.

He is coming through the wilderness. He has already gone through the wilderness for thirty-three years. He comes to get her, the Shulamite, from her little hometown and bring her back to his palace in Jerusalem. He journeys with her back through the wilderness, protecting her at every angle from all the schemes of the enemy. That is the idea of the word picture.

- D. **Like pillars of smoke:** Solomon's couch went to and from Shunum (the bride's city) through the wilderness to bring her to his palace in Jerusalem. The town's people saw a cloud of dust as the royal procession approached. The pillars of smoke poetically spoke of God's glory. John saw smoke from God's glory (Rev. 15:8). Speaking poetically, Jesus is pictured here as "coming up from the wilderness of this age" in the glory of God pointing to His resurrection and ascension.

⁸***The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God... (Rev. 15:8)***

Like pillars of smoke, Solomon's couch went to and from the bride's city of Shunam. So all the town's people see this whole procession coming through the wilderness to get her. They are thinking, "What is this?" It is this big cloud of smoke and perfume and all of these soldiers and this king on his chariot, and they are thinking, "Wow!"

Well, beloved, the King on His chariot has already come to you and beckoned you. He says, "Come with Me." Then He brings her back through the wilderness to His palace in Jerusalem, and that is where you are right now. You are going back through the wilderness. You are with Him. You are connected with Him, you are in partnership with Him, and you are seated with Him in heavenly places. The Holy Spirit is in our midst helping us. The enemy is trying to take us out, but the Lord says, "I will protect you as I journey back with you through the wilderness on the way to My palace in Jerusalem." That is the word picture. It is pretty obvious how that would apply to us as believers.

- E. **Who is this:** In the spiritual interpretation, it may be the Holy Spirit as an "unnamed person," representing Jesus, who on three occasions asks, "who is this?" (3:6; 6:10; 8:5). It is probable that the Spirit is asking the question in Song 6:10 and 8:5. Thus, it seems that it is also Him speaking in here in 3:6. The question points to Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.
- F. **Perfumed with myrrh:** Myrrh speaks of death. In the ancient world, myrrh was a costly, fragrant burial spice. The Father saw Jesus as "perfumed with myrrh" when He embraced death for us.

He is perfumed, this Man. This King is perfumed with myrrh. Myrrh speaks of death; we have seen that several times all the way through this song. Myrrh was a costly fragrant burial spice, and in this poetic language the Father sees Jesus as perfumed with myrrh. He embraced death. The fragrance of His obedience pleased the Father, and He accomplished the salvation for you and for me.

- G. **Perfumed with frankincense:** Frankincense speaks of Jesus' intercession (Heb. 7:25). As the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies with a censer of frankincense (incense), so Jesus entered the Holy of Holies in heaven with His censer filled with intercession. The golden bowls of incense at the altar in heaven speak of our prayers (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5).

He is not only perfumed with myrrh, He is perfumed with frankincense. Frankincense speaks of Jesus' intercession. He has the perfume of myrrh; He has embraced death because He loves us so much. It is more than He embraced death. He also continues to intercede for us before the Father. It says in Hebrews 7:25 that He lives forever to make intercession for us. Frankincense speaks of His intercession, as the high priest in the Old Testament went into the Holy of Holies with a censer of incense; it was frankincense.

So Jesus enters into the Holy of Holies with this censer of frankincense, of incense. Jesus is involved in the prayer ministry of His Church. Jesus is not just leading the Great Commission, the great missions effort, He is leading the prayer movement and the worship movement for the Father as well. So He has the perfume of intercession as well.

- H. **With merchant's fragrant powders:** The merchant's powders speak of Jesus' commitment to us. He is like a merchant who sold everything to purchase beautiful pearls (His Bride). A merchant's hands were scented as a result of handling (buying and selling) the perfumed powders in the marketplace. Jesus is the perfumed merchant who sold everything to purchase us in His love. His incarnation and death (3:6) prove that He loves us and is committed to our welfare.

⁴⁵*The kingdom...is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,* ⁴⁶*who, when he found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Mt. 13:45-46)*

He has more than that; He has the merchant's fragrant powders. The idea is that the merchant's hands, because he sells the fragrant perfumes by handling them in the marketplace, are scented with their perfume. So this speaks of Jesus' commitments to us. His hands are scented with perfume—everything He does, He does for love. I mean His death was a fragrant perfume, His intercession is fragrant perfume, the way He extends His hand to touch us is fragrant perfume. It speaks of His commitment.

In Matthew 13, Jesus said, the kingdom of God is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls. When the merchant found one pearl of great price, he sold everything and bought the pearl. Beloved, He is the merchant, you are the pearl, and He sold everything to buy you. He is the merchant with that fragrant incense and perfume in all that He does.

Now, of course, this parable can go the other way as well, where you are the merchant, and He is the pearl of great value. You sell all, not to gain Him because you get Him freely, but because you love Him in gratitude. You sell all because you want more of Him. So I believe you can take that parable both directions and fulfill what Jesus meant by it.

VIII. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY OF PROTECTION (3:7-8)

- A. The protection and security that we have in God's grace is described in military terms (3:7-8).

⁷*Behold, it is Solomon's couch, with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel.*

⁸*They all hold swords, being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night. (Song 3:7-8)*

This One perfumed with myrrh and perfumed with frankincense, this One with perfume on His hands coming up from the wilderness, he is the king on his chariot with all these valiant soldiers around Him.

I think the One speaking in verse 7 is the Holy Spirit, using New Testament language to describe the speaker. It is the One magnifying the King, revealing what He is like and wooing the Bride to Him. That is the perspective of Song of Solomon 3:6-11, this passage that we are in right now. Behold it is Solomon; he is on his couch. Again, in the seat of his chariot is the idea.

Notice he has sixty valiant soldiers around him; these are the valiant soldiers of Israel. These are not the mercenaries that are soldiers for hire. The idea is that these are loyal native born, loyal to the king. Because the king had the mercenaries whom he paid, and they would fight in certain kinds of battles, but only the native-born ones would you have closest to you, guarding your own chariot because of loyalty.

All of these valiant men were experts in war. Every man had his sword on his thigh. Now when you had your sword on your thigh meant you were girded for action. The sword was fixed in a way, strapped in and tied where you could pull the sword and be in battle. You would gird your sword at the time of battle; that means you are ready for action.

We know that famous verse in Psalm 45 it says, "Gird Your sword on Your thigh, O mighty One." That means it is all strapped in, the sword is available, and you are ready to pull it out and to go into war. You are in a posture of war is the idea.

- B. **Solomon's couch:** King Solomon's couch speaks of the "gospel couch" or the wedding chariot. The gospel was prepared by Jesus coming up victoriously out of the wilderness of a fallen world. Jesus rests on His couch in triumph over all His enemies (Ps. 110:1-3; Eph. 1:20-22).
- C. In the "gospel couch" we are seated with Christ in heavenly places, with access to His authority. The "gospel couch" provides all that we need for our hearts to be safe in our journey through the wilderness. It carries us as a Bride sitting next to the King as we travel through the wilderness of this age in the protection and safety that it provides for us from sin and Satan.

⁶Raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ... (Eph. 2:6)

- D. **Sixty valiant men around it:** Solomon had sixty valiant men surrounding his couch to guard or protect his bride from the enemy through the wilderness journey. This speaks of the Spirit's keeping and protecting ministry and is a picture of the Spirit's extravagant protection. Only a king could afford the abundant security of sixty highly skilled soldiers who were experts in war. Solomon used "tabernacle language." There were sixty pillars of support in Moses' tabernacle.

Solomon had these warriors, sixty valiant men, surrounding the couch or the chariot to guard it. Now the bride is on the couch with him going back to Jerusalem and he has these valiant soldiers to guard or to protect the bride as she makes her way through the journey back to Jerusalem. This speaks of the Holy Spirit's extravagant protection because only a king could afford sixty expert soldiers. I mean these are not sixty boy scouts! These are the expert soldiers. Only a king could have that kind of extravagant protection because of the sheer price it would take to get the best warriors in the nation to serve you in that way.

- E. **Experts in war:** They were seasoned, skilled warriors in contrast to being novices. The Spirit is an expert in war, knowing every scheme of Satan. He uses many agencies in the grace of God. For example, He may give us a prophetic dream, open or shut doors, stir someone to pray for us, send an angel, release the gifts of the Spirit through us, or give us insight into the Word to reveal God's affection or the power of Jesus' cross to lead us to safety. Therefore, the Bride is not afraid of the enemy's ambush against her because she sits in His couch. The Holy Spirit is able to keep us from falling into sin and backsliding. There is no sin too difficult for Him.

¹³**God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13)**

They were seasoned, skilled warriors. They were not novices, but were skilled warriors. Using the military language, the idea is that the Holy Spirit is an expert in war. He is with us, leading us through the wilderness. He knows every scheme of the enemy. He says, "You talk to Me; you stay close to Me. You will not be surprised by the enemy's schemes, I will unveil them, and I will empower you. Yes, you might have difficulty in circumstances, but your heart will be safe. You will live with a vibrant spirit, with a heart growing in love. I will protect you through the journey if you trust My leadership and you say yes to Me and come near Me."

The Holy Spirit has many agencies in the grace of God that He uses. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says that He is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted beyond anything that you cannot find a way of escape; He will deliver you from any major stumbling or falling if you are paying attention to Him.

IX. JESUS' SALVATION PROVIDES US GREAT SAFETY (3:9-10)

- A. The Bride's safety is described poetically as a royal wedding procession (3:9-10). Solomon's gospel couch (3:7) is now described as a palanquin (3:9). He made a palanquin or portable chair enclosed by curtains and carried by soldiers. Jesus provided an "eternal palanquin" for us.

⁹***Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the king made himself a palanquin: ¹⁰He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love by [for] the daughters of Jerusalem.* (Song 3:9-10)**

We will just end this in the next moment because I am out of time here, and you can read the rest of the notes. Of the wood of Lebanon, Solomon the king made for himself a palanquin. A palanquin is the chariot; it is the same thing as the couch and the chariot. It is the wedding chariot. Verse 10—you want to read the notes on this, verse 10 is so delicious, so wonderful!

*That gospel couch, that gospel palanquin, it is made with pillars of silver, its support of gold. Silver speaks of redemption. Gold speaks of deity. Its seat is purple, the authority of Christ. Listen, the whole gospel, its interior is paved by love. Everything He does, He does **for** love and He does **from** love. The whole gospel administration is paved with love. That chariot that you sit on with Him called the gospel, seated with Him is filled with love in every single dimension of it.*

- B. **Made himself:** Solomon designed and built a chariot to carry his queen. Jesus Himself made the gospel palanquin in which we rest. He became a man and bore our sin to redeem us.
- C. **Wood of Lebanon:** The cedars of Lebanon were used in building Solomon's temple, which housed God's glory. The wood in the tabernacle spoke of humanity, and the gold that covered the wood referred to Deity. The wood of Lebanon was the most beautiful, fragrant, expensive, and strongest wood. The gospel was "made" by Jesus—the strongest and most glorious Man.
- D. **Silver and gold:** Silver speaks of redemption, and gold speaks of divine character.
- E. **Its interior paved with love:** The inner lining or tapestry of the gospel chariot is paved or woven with God's love. The gospel was motivated by God's love. All that Jesus does is paved in love.
- F. **Daughters of Jerusalem:** The "gospel couch" is paved with love *for* the daughters of Jerusalem (instead of *by* them). The KJV translates this as *for* the daughters.

X. EXHORTED TO SEE THE KING AS CROWNED ON HIS WEDDING DAY (3:11)

- A. The Daughters of Jerusalem were called to see the crowned King on His wedding day (3:11). We are to meditate on Jesus’ beauty as the King crowned with all authority on His wedding day.
¹¹Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart (Song 3:11).
- B. **Crowned at His wedding:** Jesus has many crowns. A wedding crown is different from the crown a king gained by conquering a nation. The day of His wedding is described in Revelation 19:6-8.
- C. **His mother crowned him:** The Church can be spoken of as our mother or the agency by which people are lead to their new birth. In one sense, the Church “crowns” Jesus as King by responding in love to His kingship. When we love Jesus, we crown Him as our personal King. The wedding crown speaks of the accumulated response of the redeemed through history. Jesus has gladness about His wedding (Isa. 62:5)

Verse 11 is so wonderful as well. The Spirit says to the daughters of Zion, “See the king, see King Solomon, crowned with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of heart.” You can read a little bit of the details here, and more in the extended notes if you want. What the exhortation is—we are to see the King Jesus crowned by the love of His people.

Beloved, the Father crowns Him, and He gains many crowns as He is victorious over the nations, but there is that one sense in which the mother—the Church—crowns him. You crown Him with your love by the way you give Him your love in that most personal subjective way. You are crowning Him as King in your life in that personal sense by giving Him your voluntary love.

What the scripture is saying is, see the gladness of His heart when He is crowned or when He is greeted and responded to and celebrated by the love of His people—that is a crown. Beloved, that is—again in this picture language—His “favorite” crown. I mean you say that quote-unquote, favorite crown. It is the crown He receives when you crown Him with the love that you give Him voluntarily because you see the gladness of His heart.

He loves His people, and that is the day He is longing for, and that is the day that you were created for. Beloved, this is our story, this is our testimony, and this is why we rise to go to the mountain because He has this kind of leadership. He is worth it. He can keep us through the journey, and we can live this way before Him. Amen, amen, and amen. Let’s stand.