

## The Shulamite's Feminine Strength

### Additional Notes to Message 11 - The Courtship: 1:1-2:17 by Shirley Shirock

#### **1. She had an accurate view of her worth and dignity.**

A. She could AFFIRM SOLOMON'S FAME along with the other 100's of women without feeling INSECURE. Solomon had MANY ADMIRERS!

*"Your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you... How right they are to adore you" (1:3,4).*

B. She BELIEVED IN HER OWN WORTH and had COURAGE DECLARE HERSELF as 'LOVELY' to the 'Daughters of Jerusalem' although she was NOT LIKE THEM.

*"Dark am I, yet lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon" (1:5).*

C. She endured MISTREATMENT in her BLENDED- FAMILY which IMPACTED HER DAILY LIFE and HER PERSONAL APPEARANCE. Yet she had SELF-RESPECT and CONFIDENCE as to WHO SHE WAS as a WOMAN.

She was not a 'throw-away', rather she valued herself.

*"Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun. My mother's sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I had to neglect" (1:6).*

*"But my own vineyard is mine to give" (8:12).*

(She uses the IMAGERY of a VINEYARD to describe her 'FEMALE BODY and PERSON-HOOD' in CH. 1 and at the END of CH. 8).

#### **2. She was not afraid to express her love and longings to Solomon.**

As she approached her wedding day she longed to be alone with Solomon, away from Jerusalem and the harem of Queens and Concubines and virgins and to enjoy THEIR ROMANTIC LOVE. She was not intimidated.

*“For your love is more delightful than wine” (1:2).*

*“Take me away with you - let us hurry” (1:4).*

*“Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love. Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love” (2:4,5).*

### **3. She knew her boundaries and affirmed them.**

*“Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires” (2:7, also 3:5 and 8:4).*

3 TIMES she exhorts other women to use SELF- RESTRAINT with their EMOTIONS and ROMANTIC PASSIONS until they can be fully expressed in marital love.

She MODELED it herself as was affirmed by SOLOMON and THE OTHER QUEENS.

*“You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain” (4:12).*

*“The young women saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her” (6:9).*

Throughout the SONG she was praised for her beauty, BUT she was able to guard her purity AND do HER PART to NOT AROUSE THE PASSIONS OF MEN.

Men need to do *their part* to “not arouse love” by respecting a woman’s heart, boundaries and body. *Keep the brakes on!* Opening her heart will pen her desire for physical intimacy.

## GOD WITH US

### Part 4: The Life and Writings of Solomon *Love and Longing – Song of Solomon*

#### Message 12 – The Wedding Song of Solomon 3:6-5:1

##### Introduction

There is a great deal of mystery surrounding the actual storyline in the Song of Solomon. What scholars are almost universally agreed upon, however, is that there is a wedding pictured in the middle of the book (3:6-5:1). Those who interpret the Song literally see here the wedding of Solomon and his Shulamite bride, leading to the physical consummation of their marriage in their private wedding chamber. The Song of Solomon is *not* a manual on sexual technique in marriage. It is, on the other hand, *endorsing and celebrating* the gift of emotional, spiritual and physical intimacy within the bounds of marriage. This is what the Shulamite longed for in her relationship with Solomon – a full-orbed intimacy that included, but went beyond, sexual union. Her two dreams (one just before the wedding scene, and one immediately after) seem to picture her heart-longings for intimacy. Would her longings be met in her relationship with King Solomon?

##### The bridal procession arrives in Jerusalem: 3:6-11

*“Who is this coming up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and incense made from all the spices of the merchant? Look! It is Solomon’s carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel, all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night” (3:6,7).*

Solomon sent a royal procession to fetch the Shulamite from Lebanon and bring her to Jerusalem. (Some scholars think that Solomon went with the procession, while others think he stayed in Jerusalem to await her arrival.) The processional arrives, the splendid, custom-made carriage escorted by 60 warriors who doubled as both security-force and bridal party. Solomon appears, wearing a special wedding-day crown given to him by his mother. The daughters of Jerusalem are invited to come out and celebrate the moment when Solomon appears to receive his bride.

**“Daughters of Jerusalem, come out, and look, you daughters of Zion. Look on King Solomon wearing a crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced” (3:11).**

### **Solomon praises her beauty: 4:1-7**

The wedding day is, typically, the day when a woman looks her very best. The Shulamite was no exception. Solomon takes the time to appreciate his bride’s beauty. The section begins and ends with the refrain:

**“How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful” (4:1).**

**“You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you” (4:7).**

He speaks very passionately of his desire to consummate their marriage in physical union.

**“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of incense” (4:6).**

Men are wired by God to enjoy female beauty. When God brought Eve to Adam, he said: WOW! Yet, a woman longs for so much more in the relationship; a much deeper level of intimacy and exclusive commitment. In that relational context she will, over time, feel safe to open up her mysterious feminine soul.

### **Bride and groom in the wedding chamber: 4:8-5:1**

Alone together, Solomon is totally captivated by her and expresses his feelings openly.

**“You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace . . . How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume more than any spice . . . Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride . . . The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon” (4:9-11).**

At the same time, he praises her for keeping herself pure for her wedding night.

**“You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain” (4:12).**

He rejoices in the fact that *he* now gets to enter her garden and taste of her choicest fruits.

**“Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits, with henna and nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices. You are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon” (4:13-15).**

In highly figurative terms, she invites the wind to come and spread her fragrance throughout their chamber, to captivate her husband. Then, she invites him to consummate their wedding sexually.

**“Awake, north wind, and come, south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread everywhere. Let my beloved come into his garden and taste its choice fruits” (4:16).**

The pronouns in this section are important. She declares that her body is (still) hers to this point; but she invites her husband to call her body “his” garden. 1Corinthians 7:2-5 teaches that in marriage the husband and wife no longer claim their bodies exclusively as their own. Marriage (“becoming one flesh” Genesis 2:24) involves the willingness to offer your body (mind, eyes, affections, availability, your whole being) to your spouse so that over the years your exclusive marital love will deepen and bring each other satisfaction and joy. Offering yourself as a gift to your spouse is a lifetime commitment, fulfilling your marriage vows and covenant before God.

After having made love, Solomon expresses his delight with her.

**“I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk” (5:1a).**

As the wedding-day sequence comes to a close, the chorus of friends encourages the lovers to enjoy one another to the fullest.

**“Eat, friends, and drink; drink your fill of love” (5:1b).**

## The Shulamite's Deepest Longings

### Additional Notes to Message 12 - The Wedding: 3:6-5:1 by Shirley Shirock

#### 1. Longing for Connection (1<sup>st</sup> Dream-3:1-5)

##### **A. God Created Women to Invite Relationship**

"God made them MALE and FEMALE" (*Genesis 1:26,27*).

Female Image Bearer: One who invites. God invites all people to relationship with Him.

"Come, all you who are thirsty..." (*Isaiah 55:1*). "Come to Me..." (*Matthew 11:28*). (Additional Scriptures at end of this section.)

Male Image Bearer: One who remembers and then moves relationally. One who initiates like God.

"God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out..." (*Genesis 19:29*).

The Shulamite longed for Solomon to share her desire for exclusivity. In her recurring dream she anxiously realized that he was not with her and she sought him in the night until she found him and wouldn't let him go. He was NOT remembering and moving toward her but rather she had to move to find him.

##### **B. The Core Fear of a Woman**

Will my invitation be rejected? Will I be invisible, or dismissed? Do I matter? Am I worth sacrificing for? Am I replaceable?

The Shulamite feared that she would not be able to keep him. Love can't control another person. SHE (not Solomon) is the one dreaming and searching for him and then holding him tightly, not letting him go. She represents GOD'S longing for OUR faithful love, yet often experiencing being replaced by other affections.

The core fear of a man: to feel 'weightless', not having masculine strength RELATIONALLY.

##### **C. A Woman Desires to be Known**

*Jesus prayed, "This is Eternal Life, that they KNOW you (Father), the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3).*

We can know things about another person, but not really KNOW

them at a deep, satisfying level. If a man opens up about himself, and also takes time to explore and 'know' his wife, or girlfriend, then she will open up like a flower, slowly testing his reactions: IS HE SAFE? IS SHE SAFE? (This applies to ALL relationships). 'TRUE KNOWING' is a life-long choice because we are continually changing.

## **2. Longing for Commitment**

Why does God confine sex to the covenant relationship of marriage? Because a covenant begins the process of building a secure environment in which the relationship can thrive.

**Covenant:** A vow before God and to each other to be faithful and committed for life. This provides a secure relationship for opening up and entering into the deep soul of each other. (Malachi 2:14-16)

Covenant > Commitment > Security > Vulnerability >  
Soul oneness > Body Oneness

INTIMACY= IN-TO-ME-I-SEE. (Self-awareness, self-disclosure) which leads to an opportunity for the other person to also be able to say: IN-TO-YOU-I-SEE.

Give each other PERMISSION to express a NEED for EMOTIONAL and EXCLUSIVE QUALITY TIME for CONNECTION. This is the foundation that leads to loving touch and a willingness to be 'naked and unashamed' with each other.

## **3. Longing for Consummation**

She loved Solomon and celebrated the wedding night by inviting him into her 'garden'. She declared that her body was now "his garden." She had waited, and sadly Solomon had already given himself away to many women.

*"But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Corinthians 7:2-5).*

Our body is no longer exclusively our own. We choose to give our body as a GIFT to OUR SPOUSE.

Selfishness or Selflessness? No couple is the same. Honest dialogue about expressing love for each other physically is essential. Emotional and relational problems WILL surface in the bedroom.

*"God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7) doesn't just have to apply to our financial giving!*

**WOMEN:** Gift = willingness to be more open, available, inviting, and take pleasure in lovemaking.

**MEN:** Gift = willingness to be more sacrificial, loving like Christ! To not demand, but exercise tenderness, respect and self-restraint, yet be honest.

### **Additional Scriptures concerning aspects of God's nature that are reflected in male and female natures:**

#### **God Invites – ‘COME TO ME and ENJOY ME.’**

*“But the Lord called out to the man, where are you?” (Gen. 3:9).*

*“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; Listen, listen to Me... Give ear to Me; hear Me, that your soul may live” (Isaiah 55:1-3a).*

*“Come, follow Me,” Jesus said (Mark 1:17).*

*Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me” (Matt. 19:14).*

*“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).*

*“Come (draw) near to God, and He will come (draw) near to you” (James 4:8).*

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often I have longed to gather your children together, but you were not willing” (Matt. 23:37).*

#### **God remembers and moves – ‘I WILL NOT WITHDRAW.’**

*“God remembered His covenant...and was concerned about them...and called Moses” (Exodus 2:24,25; 3:4,8).*

*“When Jesus saw His mother there (by the cross), and the disciple*

*whom He loved (John), He said to His mother, 'Dear Mother, here is your son...and here is your mother'" (John 19:26.27).*

### **God wants to be Known – ‘KNOW ME, not JUST ABOUT ME.’**

*"If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways that I may know you" (Exodus 33:13).*

*"Philip, have I been with you so long and you still don't know ME? If you have seen me you have seen the Father" (John 14:9).*

*"This is Eternal Life, that they know you (Father), the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3).*

*"Woman, I don't know Him!.. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter... Then Peter remembered the Lord's word... And he went out and wept bitterly' (Luke 22:56-62).*

*"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better'; 'how wide, long, high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love (in experience) that surpasses (just) knowledge" (Ephesians 1:17; 3:18,19).*

### **God makes Commitments – ‘I AM HERE TO STAY.’**

*"Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6 and Hebrews 13:5).*

*"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand... no-one can snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (John 10:27-30).*

### **Books Referenced**

*And the Bride Wore White - Dannah Gresh*

*Fully Alive - Dr. Larry Crabb*

*Biblical Femininity - Chrystie Cole*

*Intimacy Ignited - Jody and Linda Dillow & Peter and Lorriane Pintus*

*The Heart and Soul of Preparing for Marriage - Bridge to Life Ministries, Don Smith*

*Gift-wrapped by God - Linda Dillow & Loraine Pintus*