

***"I Love You With
All My Heart!
Always,
Jesus"***

**A devotional commentary on the Song of
Solomon**

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DEDICATION

***"To the only wise God
our Savior, be glory
and majesty, dominion
and power, both now
and ever! Amen."***

Jude 1:25

IN MEMORY OF

***The lady Jesus told us to never forget!
He said that wherever the gospel is
preached her story was to be told.***

Mark 14:9

She loved Him no matter
what it cost her!

Mary of Bethany

***"Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is
preached in the whole world, what this woman
has done will also be spoken of in memory of
her."***

Mark 14:9

***The gospel is infinitely and eternally important. The
gospel miraculously transforms people. Mary of Bethany
is a beautiful example of what Jesus desires in us as
believers.***

THREE BOOKS IN ONE!

1. A PRAYER - PRAISE BOOK

The author becomes so moved while meditating upon certain verses that he must stop and pray. The prayer of the writer's heart is written out and he asks you to pray with him. This happens over ninety-five times. There are over 350 praises for our Beloved from A to Z to be used after reading each chapter. They appear at the end of the last chapter.

2. A VERSE BY VERSE DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY

The heart of this study is life application and a love adoration for God. The Holy Spirit will reach into your heart. You will reach up to the Lord and reach out to others. The thoughts presented in each verse are to lead you into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord and His people.

3. A SPIRITUAL SHORT STORY

Woven throughout this book is a hypothetical short story of the bride, her friends and the Lord. The purpose is to spiritually illustrate what a particular verse is teaching. In this short story you will be allowed to hear the Beloved Bridegroom and the Holy Spirit speak to the bride. You will listen to her heart speak through many circumstances.

THIS IS ALL ABOUT SURRENDERED LOVE TO HIM!

You become so completely in love with the Lord causing you to trust your whole being to Him including all your circumstances!

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

Psalm 103:1

Because of this Holy Spirit filling of love for your Bridegroom you will actively believe with your whole heart that He keeps His promises. You will wholeheartedly rest your daily life on Rom. 8:28,32; II Cor.1:20 and Isa.63:9! Without hesitation you will actively do what the Holy Spirit declares in Prov.3:5,6. With that you will completely rest in Phil. 4:6 and experience v.7!

If you find yourself attacked with doubts, then continually be reminded of the above scriptures and rest in your Bridegroom's heart Who will absolutely keep Deut. 31:6,8! Pray for the true filling of your Bridegroom's Spirit where He will develop this private, intimate love relationship between you and He, your heavenly Husband. You will begin to say, "I am consumed with love for You dear Lord, increase my capacity to love You more!"

LORD JESUS, HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU WHEN...

...You looked inside of my heart and saw what was absolutely repulsive to Your pure soul, my sin nature which was dead in trespasses and sins (**Eph.2:1**) - DEAD! DEAD! DEAD? These dead things were spiritually decaying and putrid smelling! Only God could handle that horrible, eternal stench. Jesus, You saw all of my filthy deadness in the cup You were offered by Your Father in the Garden of Gethsemane and in tears began to sweat great drops of blood. You willingly took that horrifying cup and drank it up fully for me! *OH MY SOUL THAT IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE, INFINITE, GLORIOUS LOVE!*

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You saw my sin nature and said *I will be judged and punished for this horrible spiritual filth?* This polluted ocean was filled with things lurking to be fulfilled even though I had not acted on all of them. You saw all of the following swirling around in my heart tempting me, waiting for me to say "yes" to: negative thoughts and desires, critical spirit, unforgiveness, disobedience, hypocrisy, gossip, cursing, strife, slander, bitterness, intolerance, unbelief, resentment, sexual impurity, vanity, uncaring, pouting, manipulation, faultfinding, judging, spite, selfishness, addictions, stubbornness, immorality, malice, coldness and so much more (**Rom.1:28-32**)! *"BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD!"* (**1John 3:1**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

... You actually became my sin and my curse (**Gal.3:13; 2Cor.5:21**)? Jesus, You not only took the above spiritual filth but BECAME IT! You felt inside all that was in that sin nature of mine! Dear God, that overwhelms my heart that on the cross You were completely flooded by what You hated. **Heb.12:2** declares, that You endured the cross and DESPISING THE SHAME! The old hymn says it all; *THE LOVE OF GOD IS GREATER FAR THAN TONGUE OR PEN CAN EVER TELL...*

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You were blamed for what I was and had done? Jesus, You were punished for the guilty me in Your spirit, soul, as well as Your body. You took all my punishment! *"...I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE..."* (**Jer.31:3**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You said, *"My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?"* Jesus, You knew that the judgment for all those who die not receiving Your sacrifice would be separated from You forever. They would confess their own words, *"I DID IT MY WAY!" "I didn't need You or Your sacrifice."* And You, King Jesus must say in response, *"IT WAS NOT ENOUGH!"* You were totally forsaken so that I would not be forever forsaken to a place where only evil exist. *"IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS."* (**1John 4:10**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You made the offer of Your salvation a completely free gift to me so You alone would receive all the glory (**Rom. 6:23; Eph.2:8,9**)? *"BUT WHEN THE KINDNESS AND THE LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US..."* (**Titus 3:4,5**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You live to watch over me (**Heb.7:25**)? You love me so much that You came to live inside of me and will never leave me (**Gal.2:20; Deut.31:6,8**). You actually felt all the pain that I would go through in this life (**Isa.63:9**). You give meaning to the troubles I would go through (**2Cor.1:3-5**) so that I can help others. You give Your promises to limit the temptations (**1Cor.10:13**). *"WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US."* (**1John 4:19**)

HOW CAN I NOT LOVE AND OBEY YOU LORD WHEN...

...You love me so much that You discipline me to keep me on the right path of Your plan for me. (**Phil.4:6,7; Heb.12:6**)? You experienced everything I would go through to sympathize & be deeply touched in all my weaknesses (**Heb.4:14,15**). *"AND WALK IN LOVE, JUST AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED US, AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR US..."* (**Eph.5:2**)

PRAY WITH ME: Dear Lord, the choice of my heart is to surrender all things each day to Your loving, caring, guiding and protecting heart. My choice is to have You daily change my life. I do not want to go back to the old life. I want more of Your life Lord seen in me. I don't want to lead my life. I no longer own my life! You have all the rights to it! You died not to just save me but that You would be Lord and Leader of it (**Rom14:9**). As I present myself each day to You (**Rom.12:1-2**), I will proclaim these words, *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. You make me to lie down in green pastures; You lead me beside the still waters. You restore my soul; You lead me in the paths of righteousness for Your Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."* Lord, I love You even more now because of how far You would go to save me! Always, for Your Name's sake alone Lord Jesus, AMEN!

The Holy Spirit now desires to take your heart even deeper into how much His great love endured for you at the cross. He wants you to know just how low God would go to save your soul and make you His bride. The answer, dear bride of Christ, is overwhelming!

HE BECAME A WORM – HE SAID SO!!

"This is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:10

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Abba, Father, what an incomprehensible sacrifice You made by sending us Your heart, the Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son to go through infinite suffering for me. Cause my heart to know just a small portion of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of Jesus' love and suffering for me His bride, that I may become all that He desires in me, from me and for me! Amen!"*

HOW COULD THE LORD SAY, HE BECAME A WORM?

He said in **Psalm 22:6**, *"But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people."* On the cross the Lord spoke verse 1 and what was on His heart continued.

JESUS SAID THAT HELL HAS WORMS THAT WILL NEVER DIE!

He said in **Mark 9:47,48**; *"And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into HELL, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED."*

THE WORM IS RED! THE WORM IS SIN! THE WORM IS CRUSHED!

Isaiah 1:18 states, *"Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet (Hebrew shani), they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson (Hebrew tolaath – worm), they shall be as wool."* The Hebrew word "tolaath" refers to the worm from which the color crimson or red is obtained. The other Hebrew word "shani" is the product (red dye) which comes forth from the crushed eggs of this worm-like creature. So the Hebrew word has two meanings: "scarlet" and "worm". Keep in mind that in **Isaiah 1:18** the color red represents "sin" and it also means "worm"!

THE JOY OF GOD WHO BECAME A WORM

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the JOY set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
Hebrews 12:2

Jesus had just gone into the Garden of Gethsemane, He fell on His face and cried out to the Father, *"My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."* What was in that cup? God's anger and all of our horrible, stinking sin worms! He would drink that cup of sin-worms and His pure soul would become full with our sin worms!

Yet, in Hebrews **12:2** it says that *"who for the joy set before Him endured the cross"*. What joy? Seeing you and me saved, changed and out of the clutches of Satan; seeing the devil defeated and knowing that in the future Satan would be locked up forever never to hurt anyone again; seeing that there would never again be any more death, sorrow, sickness, crying, pain, or curse (**Rev. 21:4; 22:3**)! HALLELUJAH!

Jesus hated the cross but the joy of what the future would hold for all of us sustained Him. All of our sin worms would disappear forever except for those who would reject Him. Those sin worms would live on forever crawling all over them (**Mark 9:44,46,48**). Can you imagine Jesus loving us this much that He would go to such depths to suffer for us? To help us understand this the Holy Spirit uses the illustration that Jesus became an ugly, sin-filled, meaningless, humiliating, powerless worm.

HOW HIGH AND AWESOME IS OUR GOD?

Never forget that our God created the universe! I can't understand that He is greater than that which He created. HE IS BIGGER THAN THE UNIVERSE ITSELF. Think about these words from the old hymn:

"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul my Savior God to Thee How Great Thou Art."

How low would God, the One who created the universe, go to save you and me? From the highest heights of His glorious throne in heaven to an excruciating death on a cross, He became a WORM! Yes, you heard right! Let's begin this amazing journey through the Word of God. After considering these scriptures, ask yourself this question, "Do I love Jesus more?"

THE WORM REPRESENTS OUR SINFUL, WEAK CONDITION

Here are some instances where the Hebrew word "crimson" is also translated in the Bible as "worm" in the following scriptures:

Job 25:6 – *"How much less man, that maggot, and the son of man that worm."*

Isa. 41:14 – *"Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel."*

Worms are lowly and have no power. There is no beauty in them. The worm is ugly. They live, crawling around in the darkness of the earth. Spiritually, God sees our soul in the same condition. Jesus became a human being so that He could have all of our filthy sin worms put in His soul on the cross.

That is what He sees in us! Who would ever want to touch even one of those sickening things? He decided to have all the world's worms placed in His pure holy soul for you and me.

WORMS ARE SEEN AS DESTROYERS OF LIFE

In **Deut.28** the Lord pronounces the curses which come upon God's disobedient children. **Verse 39** states, *"You shall plant and cultivate vineyards but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall devour them."* **Deut.28:39**

From the very beginning of life, the sin nature within us begins to eat away at our soul. Sin destroys relationships, joy, love, peace, unity, life, fullness and so much more! THE VERY THING WHICH DESTROYS US, JESUS HAD TO BECOME! Glory to God! In a few minutes you will see this from the Word of God itself. It says so!

THANK YOU LORD - YOU BECAME OUR SPIRITUAL SIN-WORMS FOR US IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE DEADLY, ETERNAL RESULT OF DYING WITH THEM ON OUR SOULS!

SATAN TRIES TO HIDE IT BUT WORMS ARE HIS TRUE IMAGE

Although Satan is able to transform himself to appear as an angel of light (**II Cor.11:14**), His downfall is revealed in **Isa.14:11-16**. In **v.11** he is described as being covered with "worms" (sin), *"Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you, and worms are your covering."* So Satan is filled with sin (worms)!

Some Bibles in **Isa.14:12** used Satan's former name "*Lucifer*". Other Bibles say "*O star of the morning, son of the dawn!*" Why the difference? The first is his name the other is the definition of Lucifer's name. No matter how Satan tries to hide it or cover it up, underneath are horrible slimy worms that represent the ultimate filth of sin! Without Jesus' blood to cleanse us we look the very same way!

FRIGHTENING! OUR SIN-WORMS WILL NEVER DIE IN THE LAKE OF FIRE

The last verse in **Isa. 66:24** declares, *"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."*

Remember this verse in **Mark 9:48** where Jesus spoke about the eternal place called "Hell" where souls will suffer for eternity and *"...where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."* The spiritual sin "worms" infesting their souls will never die. Jesus had to become the worm in order to defeat Satan and defeat every worm that crawls all over our souls and then give us His righteousness (**2 Cor.5:21**).

Keep in mind that Jesus said hell was made for the devil and His angels (**Mt. 25:41**). Those who die without having Jesus in their soul look just like Satan, and it will be for all eternity. Their bed and covering in the Lake of Fire will be crawling with the worms that will never die just like we found out about Satan in **Isa. 14:11**. Jesus said that those who do not belong to Him have the devil as their father! **John 8:44**.

LET'S REVISIT PSALM 22 - JESUS, GOD THE SON, BECAME A WORM!

Look again at **Psa. 22:1-6,16**. Hundreds of years before Jesus' crucifixion, it was prophesied in **v.16**. This is a Psalm about crucifixion. On the cross Jesus cried out in **Matt.27:46**, *"My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?"* The first six verses tell us about what was on Jesus' heart while dying on the cross.

From this Psalm, the precious Holy Spirit allows us to get a glimpse of what was going on in our Lord's heart while He was dying for our sins. Listen to His heart cry out for help but His Father will not respond! *"O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season (darkness on the cross), and am not silent."* Why? His Father had always heard His cries before (**Heb.5:7**). The answer is in the next verse. **Verse 3** tells us that the Father is holy. Jesus was now unholy because He had become all the putrefying sin-worms of the world.

Keep in mind that **2 Cor. 5:21** says that Jesus became sin for us. He didn't just take it but actually became it. *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* So He became our sin-filled worms. **Gal. 3:13** tells that Jesus didn't just take the curse that was on us but actually became it. *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having BECOME a curse for us..."* He became the curse of our sin-filled infested soul.

He didn't just take the curse HE BECAME IT! Oh the awful stench of His soul! It was the trash heap of our sin! How utterly awful that the pure, holy, righteous Lamb of God became all of our spiritual and soul filth before the eyes of His Holy Father!

No wonder Jesus cried out in **Psa. 22:4,5**; *"Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed."* Then comes the powerful, unimaginable cry of Jesus as the awful realization of what He had become pierced His holy spirit and soul. In utter despair He cries out, **Psa.22:6**, *"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people!"*

He was saying, *"I have become a repulsive, helpless, naked and defenseless worm! I am not even a man whereby You may answer My cry to You, Father. I am all that You hate. I have become worthless! Father, You cannot answer my prayer."* The Worm was about to experience the most agonizing and tormenting pain that ever could be known. As you meditate upon the following paragraph, remember how the red dye was obtained - by crushing the worm!

NEVER FORGET THE CRUSHING OF JESUS, YOUR SAVIOUR AND LORD

Once again, remember that to obtain the redeeming scarlet, crimson dye (His blood) Jesus had to become the sin-worm, in order to be crushed! The Worm, Jesus, now was crushed by God, for it says in **Isa. 53:5** *"...He was crushed for our iniquities...."* (heb. "daka" - means to "crush, beat or break into pieces, destroy, shatter, to be oppressed, to be smitten, to be made humble or contrite").

All of those words describe what was happening to Jesus, the Worm! And who crushed Him? It was His Father! *"But it pleased the Lord to crush Him!"* **Isa.53:10**.

It pleased the Father because Satan would be defeated once and for all. It pleased Him because there would be a new spiritual family that would love God forever! It pleased the Father to crush Him because Adam's race would now be restored to its rightful place of rule (see **Rev.5:9,10**).

FROM FILTHY WORMS TO GLORIOUS NEW GARMENTS

The original garment of our soul is seen as a *"filthy rag"* (**Isa.64:6**). Praise God, that as the Father crushed His Son, the cleansing, saving blood came forth for His people. It would be used in giving her a spotless spiritual garment.

The moment our souls cried out for salvation; the moment we realized just how rotten our sin nature was within us; the moment we turned to Jesus and confessed our sin and received Him, He came rushing in and ripped off the stinking, worm-infested rag which was enwrapping our soul and placed His own glorious, pure and righteous garment on us.

Hear the joyous cry of one who had received this glorious clothing from the hand of God. *"I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness."* (**Isa.61:10**; see **Rev.19:7-9**)!

"And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in - That on the cross my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin! THEN SINGS MY SOUL - 'HOW GREAT THOU ART!' " Oh, dear redeemed one, bow down your heart and soul and simply worship the King who became a worm! As love pours out to Him, you will desire to keep (obey) His word. **John 14:23** *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word....' "*

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear, dear Lord, my heart is full of love for You. I am overwhelmed by Your love that would become so ugly for me who was unlovable. I ask only one thing of You, cause my heart to want to obey Your Word as never before. May that show just how much I do love You. Thank You, thank You, thank You with all of my heart, for Your name's sake, Amen!"

Let's close by meditating on the blessed words from the hymns of the past:

WHO IS HE?

Nailed upon Golgotha's tree, faint and bleeding who is He?
Hands and feet so rudely torn, wreathed with crown of twisted thorn.
Once He lived in heaven above, happy in His Father's love!
SON OF GOD, 'tis He, 'tis He on the cross at Calvary!

Nailed upon Golgotha's tree, mocked and taunted who is He?
Scorners tell Him to come down, claim His kingdom and His crown!
He it was who came to bless, full of love and tenderness!
SON OF MAN, 'tis He, 'tis He on the cross at Calvary!

Nailed upon Golgotha's tree, as a victim, who is He?
Bearing sin, but not His own, suffering agony unknown!
He the promised sacrifice, for our sins has paid the price!
LAMB OF GOD, 'tis He, 'tis He on the Cross at Calvary!

Throned in glorious majesty, Lord triumphant, who is He?
He's the One who came to die, now in heaven, exalted high!
With adoring hearts we now, At His blessed feet now bow!
LORD OF ALL, 'tis He, 'tis He, throned in glorious majesty! *author unknown*

WAS IT FOR ME?

Was it for me, for me He wept and prayed, My load of sin before Him laid;
That night within Gethsemane, was it for me, that agony?
Was it for me He bowed His head, upon the cross and freely shed
His precious blood that crimson tide, was it for me the Savior died?
It was for me, yes, all for me, O love of God, so great so free,
O wondrous love, I'll shout and sing! He died for me my Lord and King! *J.M.Whyte*

WAS IT FOR ME?

Was it for me, the nails, the spear, the cruel thorns, the mocking jeer,
That rugged cross, 'twixt earth and sky—was it for me He came to die?
Was it for me, that opened tomb, dispelling fear and death and gloom?
So vast a truth proclaims to me that I through Him can victor be.
Yes, all for me—the cross, the grave, A risen Lord with power to save!
My joyful heart is filled with praise As songs of happiness I raise.
He loved me so! He loved me so! Dark Calvary He chose to know,
To vanquish sin and death and woe; 'Twas all because He loved me so. *Rose N. Coull*

Child of God, do you really know who you are?
REJOICE, YOU ARE GOD'S BRIDE!

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." II Corinthians 11:2

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready. And He says unto me, 'Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' These are the true sayings of God." Rev. 19:7,9

"For thy Maker is your Husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called." Isaiah 54:5

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying... 'I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.'" Revelation.21:9

The Lord even uses the analogy of a bride and bridegroom in giving us the garments for salvation as seen in the following verse:

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10

Welcome bride of Christ, to a very special devotional study which will draw your heart closer to your Beloved Lord as never before. It is to be read as the Holy Spirit leads you to sit for a time with your Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.

At times you will find yourself so touched in your spirit you will need to set the devotional aside, and sit quietly in His presence, with no words spoken except the love of your heart flowing to His.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord, my heart belongs to You alone! Take me now and let me be the bride who will bring You great joy. Cause me each day of my life to walk so closely to You that I will experience Your intimacy which will begin to change me into Your blessed image forever."*

To get a real glimpse of this bride's heart, turn to chapter 8:6 where her Bridegroom asks her to give Him a very special gift. He says, *"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm..."* With a heart overflowing with love for Him, she gladly obeys knowing this will give Him greatest joy of all! And you too will be asked the same question by your spiritual Bridegroom when you reach chapter eight!

Listen, dear bride of the Lord Jesus, to the following words spoken by Him to you as He looks deep into the eyes of your soul saying with overwhelming love and joy:

"Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of your eyes, with one chain of thy neck." **S of S 4:9**

"How fair (beautiful) is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of your ointments than all spices!" **S of S 4:10**

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah... Turn away your eyes from me, for they have overcome me..." **S of S 6:4,5**

With a great longing in His heart, Jesus desires for you not to know Him just as Savior but as your Bridegroom! You are His eternal joy!

He wrote this wonderful, spiritual Song to reveal the innermost thoughts of His heart to you. Why? So that you may be able to grow deeper in the fullness of His love!

AND NOW A MYSTERY TO BE SOLVED!

?

Consider what the bride declares about her Bridegroom in 2:16:

"My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feeds among the lilies."

Compare the above with what she proclaims in 6:3:

"I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine: He feeds among the lilies."

What caused her to reverse the first declaration? The difference will lead her life into a defining moment of intimacy and service that she had never experienced before.

This most powerful spiritual moment takes place in the 7:10 where she proclaims:

"I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me."

May the Holy Spirit bring you into this same life-changing moment where your heart will never again turn back!

THE SONG OF SOLOMON: WELL KNOWN BELIEVERS TESTIFY

C. H. SPURGEON (the great 19th cent. preacher) on the Song he said,

"The true believer who has lived near to his Master will find this book to be a mass, not of gold merely, for all God's Word is this, but a mass of diamonds sparkling with brightness; and all things thou canst conceive are not to be compared with it for its matchless worth. If I must prefer one book above another, I would prefer some books of the Bible for doctrine, some for experience, some for example, some for teaching, BUT LET ME PREFER THIS BOOK ABOVE ALL OTHERS FOR FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION (my emphasis). When the Christian is nearest to heaven, this is the book he takes with him." (From the book, "The Most Holy Place" – Christian Focus Publications)

CHARLES FINNEY (the great 19th cent. revivalist) shared his heart:

The moment Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) entered into the power of this love relationship with Christ he said, *"...The whole Scripture seemed to be all ablaze with light, and not only light, but it seemed as if God's Word was instinct with the very life of God...At this time it seemed as if my soul was wedded to Christ, in a sense in which I had never had any thought or conception of before. The language of the Song of Solomon was as natural to me as my breath. I thought I could understand well the state of mind he was in, when he wrote that song...I not only had all the freshness of my first love, but a vast accession to it. Indeed, the Lord lifted me so much above anything that I had ever experienced before...."* (From the book, "They Found the Secret" – Zondervan Publications)

HUDSON TAYLOR (famous 19th cent. missionary) wrote a wonderful little book on the Song of Solomon entitled "Union and Communion" dealing with our spiritual relationship with Christ, the Bridegroom.

JOHN GILL (One of the great Puritan theologians of the 18th century preached 122 sermons in 1724 on the Song of Solomon.)

"...The subject of this song...is Christ, the true Solomon, of whom Solomon was an eminent type...the transcendent glories and excellencies of His person; His inexpressible love unto, care of, and concern for His church and people, together with the nearness of access unto and sweet communion and fellowship with Himself, which He indulges them with, are here particularly expressed and set forth, so that it may be called the Song of Songs." (From the book "An Exposition of the Song of Solomon" - Sovereign Grace Publishers)

JONI EARECKSON TADA (well known 20th century Christian writer)

"When I approach the Lord in prayer, I relate to Him in different ways. Occasionally I talk with Him as my elder brother, which He is. If I'm under spiritual attack, I'll go to Him in prayer as the Captain of my soul. He is my friend when I want to pour out my heart. I even have single friends who look up to the Lord as their husband, as it says in Isaiah 54:5. Lately, I've enjoyed relating to my Savior as the lover of my soul. And when I want to tell the Lord how much I adore Him, I use the language of love in the Song of Songs. This beautiful book of the Bible is more than just a love poem; it's a picture of the love relationship between the Bridegroom and His bride. From your heart, tell Jesus that He is the fairest of ten thousand. Praise Him for being altogether lovely. Let Him know that His love is better than wine. He is the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley." (From "Women's Devotional Bible" and "Diamonds in the Dust" – Zondervan Publishers)

THE HEART OF HIS LOVE SONG

- I. The Desire for Intimacy: 1:1 - 2:7**
- II. The Depths of His Power and Desire: 2:8 - 2:15**
- III. The Decision for Self: 2:16 - 3:5**
- IV. The Dream of His Strength and Power: 3:6 - 11**
- V. The Discovery of Full Acceptance: 4:1 - 5:1**
- VI. The Danger of Hesitation When He Calls: 5:2 - 5:6a**
- VII. The Desperation & Depression of Loneliness: 5:6b - 8**
- VIII. The Drawing of Her Heart Back to Him: 5:9 - 6:3**
- IX. The Delights of His Heart Revealed: 6:4 - 7:9**
- X. The Dying to Self: 7:10**
- XI. The Devoted Life: 7:11 - 8:14**

TESTIMONIES FROM THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BLESSED

Shalom Esher – in the name of the Beloved,

This devotional has affected my life so deeply- words cannot say. Thank you – for putting your years of time with Him on paper – so those of us who long to peer into His heart more deeply have access to the revelation He has given you, and in turn us! Hallelujah! Through the S of S my walk with Him has been transformed, and continues to be. No other book has affected me the way this gift has. May the Lord continue to bless you more and more in the reality of His unfailing love.

Shalom in Y'shua,

Brandy

Dear Esher,

What a book, far more appealing, interesting, explanatory, revealing, captivating and stirring than any spiritual book I've read. I've just started to read this book very slowly, **taking time to feel the heart of Jesus for me**, relishing and delighting in that feeling and letting it have its effect on me to make me desire to do His will for His good pleasure. ***I've been teaching men and women little thoughts from the book and they end up staring at me with so much more understanding of the love Jesus has for them. Where it has been difficult to get them to move for evangelism, just sharing the thoughts from this book has caused them to want to move.*** May God bless you abundantly for sending me this book and those that are on the way.

Sold out for Jesus,

Helga

Dear Esher,

Thanks so much for this wonderful devotional! I have been blessed beyond measure! I have been spending time with the Lover of my soul like I have never done before or even knew I could. I have been a believer for over 25 years and have always spent time in discipleship classes and personal studies. I have continually tried to put into practice what I have learned. **This devotional is far more than what I expected. I have been taken to the most intimate relationship with my Lord! It has given me confidence to really know who I am in Christ.** I look forward to sharing this book with my friends and whoever will listen. I am requesting a copy for my daughter-in-law and her mother. I can't wait to hear and see the change in their lives as they pursue Him with this wonderful life changing experience.

Thank you and God bless you,

Linda

Good morning Esher!

I want to take time to let you know how much the Holy Spirit has spoken to me through this devotion guide! I have been hungrily working my way through it since March! I can tell you, I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit as I study and look up each verse!! **I have learned a deeper and deeper understanding of who Jesus is and how MUCH He loves and cherishes me!** I have such a fervency to serve Him as I have never had before. I now want to start having study sessions with my three teenage daughters. They have seen the change in me and they are hungry to learn who Jesus is on a more intimate level.

God Richly Bless You!

Dawna

For Additional Testimonies Please Go To The Website

THE SPIRITUAL VISION OF THIS BOOK

THE GOAL OF THE GOSPEL: JESUS DESIRES FOR EACH BELIEVER TO BECOME A MARY OF BETHANY

"Never forget this Lady!" a lady who only spoke twelve words in the New Testament! Who is this very important, mysterious lady? It's Mary of Bethany. Every time she appears in the Word of God she is at Jesus' feet. First, she listened to His WORD; second, she witnessed in her WOE; third, she quietly poured out WORSHIP on Him. How important is she? So important that Jesus instructed us to speak about her wherever the gospel is preached! Jesus clearly declared it in **Mark 14:9**, *"Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."* What makes Mary of Bethany so special, so significant to the Lord that He insists she must be mentioned wherever His Gospel is preached? She is extremely important in learning what the truly consecrated, surrendered spiritual life is all about! Do you really want to know what will please the Lord? Learn from this lady!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, cause my spiritual eyes to observe the actions of this precious lady's heart. May her desires be my desires. May my heart please You as much as her heart did so many years ago. 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law' (Your Word – Psa. 119:18), in Jesus precious name, amen!"*

I. SITTING AT JESUS' FEET TO HEAR HIS WORD

Please read **Luke 10:38-42**. Martha desires to do something very good. She invites Jesus into her home to make Him a meal. Martha wants Jesus to feel special. However, it would be on her own terms. Nothing was to get in the way of her plans, not even Jesus! Martha represents the busy believer, always doing and seldom pausing just to sit quietly, with undivided attention, listening to the Lord speak through His Word to the heart. Mary had been helping but chose to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to Him. To be a Mary of Bethany is a choice. Under enormous emotional pressure, Mary chose between her sister and Jesus. She had counted the cost (**Luke 14:26-28**). She took advantage of the moment! Mary is teaching us that it is necessary to drop all activities and sit at Jesus' feet and have our spirit fed, comforted and strengthened by His Word. By stopping all activities Mary was saying, *"Lord, You and Your Word are much more important than my activities."*

Martha had an inflexible agenda. There would be a meal and it would be served when she planned it to be served. Why didn't Martha ask Jesus if He wanted to eat at that moment? What began as a heartfelt, loving act turned into an emotional nightmare for the whole household! Martha became distracted on the task itself. In **Luke 10:40** the Greek word for *"distracted"* carries with it the idea of being drawn in different directions; going around in circles! This verb is passive, meaning that she is controlled by the circumstances.

Satan approaches Martha in the kitchen and whispers to her, *"Look at all you have to do and nobody cares!"* In verse 40 of the text, the Greek word *"left"* is a strong word meaning *"to abandon; to utterly forsake"*! Evil seeds of irritation are planted in Martha's heart which turn into anger. Infuriated and outraged, a root of bitterness is implanted in her heart (**Heb. 12:15**) and would attempt to defile the very act of service meant to bless. Martha waits impatiently for Mary to come and help her. You can hear Martha thinking, *"She hates me, look at her there sitting with Jesus as if I don't exist!"* Mary was fulfilling a requirement of a true disciple of Jesus, to be so in love with Him that it looks as if she hates her sister (**Luke 14:26**).

Having had enough of Mary's seeming lack of concern, Martha bursts in on them in anger, questions whether Jesus cares for her, scolds Mary to Jesus and commands Him to do something about it. Wuest's translation gives us a true picture of Martha's demeanor in approaching Jesus. *"And bursting upon Jesus she assumed a stance over Him and said...."* She is so aggravated that she cannot speak to Mary directly. Martha had welcomed Jesus into the heart of her home but not into the heart of her activities. So many welcome Jesus into their soul for salvation but few welcome Jesus into the circumstances of their life.

Through Martha, Satan is attempting to rob Mary of receiving precious truth from her Lord and robbing Jesus of the joy of her fellowship. Martha allowed the enemy to bring in a tense, angry, negative, hatefully charged atmosphere into the home. The word *"troubled"* or *"bothered"* used by the Lord is another very strong Greek word meaning, *to: "disturb; throw into a tumult; set in an uproar; make a noise or disturbance, especially the noise made in lamenting the dead."*

What can we learn from Mary? She sits quietly and does not respond. There was no angry reaction from her! She was completely focused on her Lord. Mary allowed Jesus to take care of this very volatile situation. Jesus said that, *"...Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."* What Mary received at Jesus' feet

(**Luke 10**) will give her strength when her brother tragically dies in (**John 11**). When death comes to Lazarus, Martha will be crushed but Mary will be comforted.

Martha was into service alone. Mary was into the Lord Himself. Mary's heart is summed up in these words, "**The Lord is my portion, says my soul....**" (**Lam. 3:24**). Sacrificing time for Jesus alone opens to us precious revelation from God's Word. Precious to His heart is this very real act of love!

What was it that Mary had which would not be taken away? It was her absolute confidence in the Lord, her love for Jesus, faith in Him, and the emotional and spiritual strength that would remain in her heart when the family tragedy would strike. Mary had no idea that her brother would die in the not too distant future. When Lazarus died Martha would have none of those qualities. Mary will handle it in total faith and trust. Martha will lose her peace and will let fly an accusing attitude to the Lord in **John 11**. Do you want to please the Lord? Be a Mary of Bethany by sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to His Word.

II. FALLING DOWN AT JESUS' FEET IN YOUR WOE

Please read **John 11:1-45**. The word comes to Jesus that His very close friend Lazarus is deathly ill. So important is Mary that the Holy Spirit mentions what she will be doing in **John 12:1-3** before it actually takes place in the narrative (**11:2**). The Lord sends a message back to Mary and Martha giving them the distinct feeling that their brother would not die. The emotional shockwave hits them. Each hour he grows worse. "*Jesus will get here in time*" they whisper to their dying brother. Then Lazarus dies! And Jesus is still outside the town making no move to help! Martha thinks that Jesus really didn't care about His friend. Instead of rushing to Lazarus' side, which was expected, the Lord waits two more days and then shows up.

Martha runs out in anger, and with an accusing tone says, "*Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.*" She tells Jesus she knew that when He prays the Father answers Him. But implied in that statement is, "*but You didn't pray for my brother did You!*" (**John 11:21,22**)

Then Martha returns secretly to Mary, she calls Him "**master**" or "**teacher**". Notice carefully that she calls Jesus, "**Lord**" to His face but now it is only "**teacher**". So many of us sing songs and hymns about Jesus being Lord, but when the circumstances of life turn sour, our heart is exposed and we find out that He really is not our Lord at all (**Rom.14:9**). He just taught us some nice Bible scriptural that have no real power in our lives.

In the deep trial of life, Martha had nothing. Why? She was so busy "*servicing*" Jesus that she had no time to receive from Him! What Mary had received in **Luke 10** was still there when the tragedy struck! She did not turn on the Lord. So many of us, deep in our heart, blame the Lord for not stepping in and turning things around when everything goes wrong. When the dark clouds of life sweep over our souls there is nothing to lean upon to carry us through. Having had no intimate time with Him, they fail to put into practice the promises in **I Cor. 10:13** and **II Cor. 4:7-9**.

So important is Mary's heart that the Holy Spirit, while talking about Martha, interrupts the train of thought and directs our focus to Mary. He wants us to see her sitting still in the house while Martha was acting in haste (**John 11:20**). Mary had formed a spiritual habit when all was going well and now she would apply it to the deep valley of her soul. Mary was doing what Jesus had taught in **Luke 21:19**, "***In your patience possess ye your souls.***" Her emotions were under control. Her actions fulfill **Psa. 37:4-5**, "***Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.***"

What Mary learned at Jesus' feet in **Luke 10** would be enough to get her through this ordeal of death and still love Jesus. The moment finally comes when Jesus calls for Mary. Only when Jesus gives the OK does she move, quickly and without a word. Do you wait for the Lord or do you rush out in the flesh to solve every problem? Those who were there to comfort her followed, not knowing where she was going. She kneels in front of the Lord.

Mary's body language speaks to all around and to the heart of the Lord. It was saying, "*I don't understand why You didn't come but I still love You. I know You could have healed him but that didn't happen. I will not blame You. I have faith in You even though I am confused. I truly am submitted and committed to You with all of my heart.*" The Holy Spirit makes note of all those weeping there. But Martha is not mentioned. At that moment I believe she was too angry to cry!

In **Luke 10** Mary surrendered her heart to hear His Word. Here, she is at Jesus' feet witnessing. Later, she is given the credit for having won the group to the Lord. The Holy Spirit says, "***Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him*** (**John 11:45**)."
He specifically singled her out. The Holy Spirit could have said, "*those who had attended Lazarus' funeral*" or "*those who were with Martha and Mary.*" But He didn't!

A surrendered Mary, consumed with Jesus, was used to lead the others to the Lord. She had surrendered to Him in her woe.

III. KNEELING AT JESUS' FEET TO WORSHIP

We now come to the most precious moment in Mary of Bethany's life. Read **John 12:1-6** and **Mark 14:3-9**. Mary is at Jesus' feet but now it is for worship. Here again was a choice made by her. Of all those there, she alone proved to be a real, true disciple by giving up her best (perfume) in worship (**Luke 14:33**).

Mary had saved the perfume for anointing His body, revealing that Jesus was on her heart and mind way before this act of worship. Had Jesus revealed to her, while sitting at His feet in **Luke 10**, that very soon He was going to die but would rise from the dead in three days? Here in **John 12**, she gave that which cost her something (sacrifice of time, energy, thought, substance - see **II Sam. 24:24**). What love! What devotion! What humbleness! That's worship!

She anoints Jesus' head and feet with a very, very costly perfume (worth 300 denarii). Her heart was saying, "*I am submitted to Your thoughts* (head) and *I am submitted to Your ways and authority* (feet)." Notice that Mary breaks it. It cannot be retrieved! She didn't save any of it! It was all for Him. The value could be at least \$16,800 in today's money (**Matt. 20:2** - a denarius is a day's wage, in our day it would be - 300 x 8(hrs./day x \$7.00/hr.). Here she is consumed in worship for Jesus. She is giving the Lord what He desires most (**John 4:23,24**). The fragrance permeates the house. As you break over His feet what is most valuable to you, your will, the fragrant, spiritual aroma of this living sacrifice will fill the place where you are and then follow you wherever you go that day!

What a blessing! Mary carried Jesus' fragrance with her all that day and so with us, when we surrender to Him. Then she is attacked by Judas with a biblical principle - the feeding of the poor. He says, "*What a waste Mary! Many could truly be helped who are in need. Look at you. You don't care about those who are perishing because of hunger.*" Judas wants all the attention placed on the poor. Mary directs all the attention onto Jesus! The disciples picked up on Judas' "*righteous*" thought and actually began to scold her. Today, we would say, "*Aren't there young girls in your neighborhood who would love to have just a little of that costly perfume? You then could witness to these girls and lead them to Christ.*" Why didn't the disciples notice that Jesus was not upset about the costly perfume being poured out on Him?

The disciples were angry with her for wasting the costly perfume. However, Mary is so focused on Jesus that she does not retaliate against them with angry words. As with the situation with Martha, Mary simply looks to Jesus to solve the problem. Mary was totally surrendered and dependent on Jesus in every circumstance. That is exactly what He wants you to do. Surrender all to Him, all the rights to your life.

Can you imagine what this extravagant gift must have meant to Jesus as He was about to be unfairly tried, scourged and crucified? Within two days He would be taken from the Garden of Gethsemane and crucified. That powerful fragrance from the anointing on His head would still remain. As the false accusations were hurled at Him, and the whip of evil came crashing down on His back, and the hellish nails pierced His hands and feet, the sweet aroma of that precious fragrance still on His head spoke volumes to His heart - "*There are those who deeply love Me! There will be others down through the ages who will love Me with the fragrance of their sacrificed wills to Me!*" In the midst of the excruciating pain in His spirit, soul and body - love and joy were in the air! "*...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame....*" (**Heb. 12:2**).

MARY WALKED IN HOLINESS (separated to Jesus)! THE RESULT WAS A LIFE FILLED WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

1. **LOVE** – In every aspect of Mary's life Jesus was always the reason for living. Her heart was completely captivated by Jesus.
2. **JOY** - She knew how to spiritually humble herself and thus, she was highly exalted by Jesus resulting in unspeakable joy.
3. **FAITHFULNESS** - Mary counted the cost (being criticized, etc.) and always chose Him above everything and everyone else.
4. **PATIENCE** - She never lost her faith and trust in the Lord even during one of life's severest trials - death of a dear family member.

- 5. **KINDNESS** - Mary sought to worship Jesus with her precious gift of kindness and Jesus made sure she would be remembered!
- 6. **GOODNESS** - She was filled with Jesus and His word and the goodness of her spirit is still ministering today 2000 years later!
- 7. **PEACE** - With the eyes of her heart focused on Jesus, Mary was not emotionally rattled by difficult circumstances.
- 8. **GENTLENESS** – In all circumstances Mary's body language witnesses to us clearly about her beautiful gentleness.
- 9. **SELF-CONTROL** - Although her character and motives were severely questioned, she remained silent and did not retaliate.

THE SACRIFICE OF SUFFERING IN SILENCE

Mary of Bethany suffered the pain of silence in not reacting to her sister's outburst of anger and the disciples scolding her in front of Jesus. It would have been so easy and seemingly so right but she didn't. Jesus suffered in silence, so at times He calls on us to do the same and wait for Him to work. **Isa 53:7 "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth."** (see I Pet. 2:23; Matt. 27:12,14). Have you been wronged, yet God is asking you to remain silent and wait? Pray **Psa. 62:5 (NKJV) "My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him."**

WHAT ABOUT YOU DEAR BELIEVER? Mary of Bethany surrendered every circumstance to her Lord whom she loved with all of her heart. Right now, why don't you do the same? Pray this prayer, *"Dear Abba Father, It is no longer my will but Your will that I desire in my life. I surrender every person and every circumstance to You, now and for the rest of my life. I will totally depend upon You. In Your precious name Lord Jesus, amen!"* (**Rom. 12:1-2; Phil. 1:6**).

MARY'S HEART IS SUMMARIZED IN THE SPIRITUAL SONG **"AT YOUR FEET":**

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>At Your feet, praising You,
At Your feet, loving You,
At Your feet, hearing You,
At Your feet, at Your feet,
 anointing You!</i></p> | <p>2. <i>Take my heart, at Your feet,
Take my tears, at Your feet,
Take my will, at Your feet,
At Your feet, at Your feet,
 breaking me!</i></p> | <p>3. <i>Sanctified! set apart,
Sacrificed! was Your part,
Satisfied! is my heart,
At Your feet, at Your feet,
 adoring You!</i></p> |
|---|--|--|

Esher Shoshannah

The vision of this book is to have you curl up in the arms of your Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, and become more and more like Mary of Bethany, totally consumed with Him alone! This love letter was personally written to you from the heart of Jesus, your heavenly Bridegroom!

INTRODUCTION

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, I give You praise from a heart full of thanksgiving; You gave me to your Son to be His bride (John 10:29). I desire to be more than just an ordinary believer. My soul pants after Thee! There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. I long for a deeper, more intimate relationship with You, my God. Holy Spirit, fill me continually so that my heart will overflow in rivers of living waters. In the name which I adore and cherish - the Lord Jesus Christ!"*

The Holy Spirit teaches that there is nothing more important than love (**I Cor. 13:13**)! True love bears and endures any difficulty and never fails (**I Cor. 13:7,8**). Love fulfills God's law (**Rom. 13:10**). Love for God causes us to obey and keep His Word (**John 14:23**). It is through a love for Him that we are granted to know the secrets of His heart (**I Cor. 2:9,10**). All things, no matter how good or bad in your life, will turn out for good if you are in love with the Lord (**Rom. 8:28**)! The Song of Songs exposes the Lord's heart in all of its full, tender affection for you, His bride. It is a Spirit filled book on true surrendered love for the Lord Jesus Christ, your Bridegroom!

Do you need the Lord's encouragement and reassurance? You have heard from others how the Lord desires to be spiritually intimate with you, but doubts sweep over your mind. You think, *"I can understand Him desiring to be intimate with others, but surely not with me."* Get ready to have the Holy Spirit personally reveal to you just how loving, joyful, peaceful, kind, tenderhearted, good and gentle He truly is, even when Jesus, our Bridegroom, must correct you and me.

This book is filled with the Lord's tender affection for you. In the Word of God, the Holy Spirit speaks of *"agape"* love and *"phileo"* love. *"Agape"* has been defined as *"a love committed to the highest good"*. It is a love not dependent on the emotions. Praise God for that kind of love. Without it none of us would be saved (**John 3:16**). With *"agape"* God set aside His wrath against us and instead, poured it out on His dear Beloved Son. It was a love that could look at our dead, sin-sick, spiritually putrefying soul and actually become our sin and die for it! (**Eph.2:1-5**).

"Phileo" love is best defined as *"tender affection, love from the emotions in a person's soul"*. It is the love of true friends; love of a child for his parents or for another child; love between a husband and wife. This kind of love can be casual or intense. So often we relegate *"phileo"* love to only the human level. To the surprise of many, this word is used by the Lord Jesus in describing His Father's love for Him. **"For the Father loves"** (*"phileo"* = tender affection) **the Son...(John 5:20)**.

"Phileo" is used by the Holy Spirit in describing the Father's feelings toward His Son's disciples in **John 16:27**. The disciples had a deep, tender affection for the Lord Jesus and because of that very special kind of love, the Father Himself had a deep, tender affection for them. Read **John 16:27**, it is a *"because of"* love! Most frequently the word *"agape"* is used when describing love. **I John 4:16** teaches that **"...God is love..."**. Here the word for love is *"agape"*.

Within *"agape"* is God's *"phileo"*! It is a very special love found within the all encompassing *"agape"*. For example, *"agape"* can reach out to anyone in spite of circumstances or how negative a person has been. *"Phileo"* is the kind of love which responds to love from another. Again, it is a because of love! There are times in this book that the Lord Jesus, your Bridegroom, pours out His *"phileo"* love to you, His bride. Praise God, we have a Maker who is emotional over us! He is a God of jealousy and a God of joy (**Exo. 34:14; Ezk. 36:6; Zeph. 3:17; John 17:13**).

How serious is *"phileo"* love to the Lord? Read **I Cor. 16:22**. *Phileo* shows the Lord that we truly *Agape*. *Phileo* touches our soul's emotions and we, with great fervor of love commit to serve and love Him. It is the sign that we truly *Agape* Him and are committed to the highest good no matter what the cost. That is what **Rev. 12:11b** is all about, **"and they loved not their lives unto the death"**. It was *"phileo"* love that drove them to give up their lives. Do you understand now why *"phileo"* is so important? **I Cor. 16:22!** YOU CAN COMMAND AGAPE BUT YOU CANNOT COMMAND PHILEO!

Let me illustrate the difference between *"agape"* and *"phileo"*. If my wife asked me, *"Do you 'agape' me?"* She is asking me if I am committed to her highest good. I would say to her with intense emotion, *"How could you ever doubt that I 'agape' you, look at me, I 'phileo' you!!!!"* My intense *"phileo"* indicates that I strongly *"agape"* my dear wife. **Read John 21:15-17**. The same is true with Peter when the Lord asks him twice, *"Do you 'agape' me?"* In response, twice Peter answered, *"Lord, You know that I 'phileo' You!"* The third time Jesus asked Peter if he had *"phileo"* for Him. Peter was emotionally grieved and said, *"Lord...You know that I 'phileo' You."* Let me put myself in Peter's shoes and say it this way, with intense emotion, **"LOOK AT ME! I PHILEO YOU WITH EVERYTHING THAT IS IN ME! I PHILEO YOU! I AM COMMITTED TO THE HIGHEST GOOD WHEREEVER YOU WILL SEND ME! LORD, I SAY IT ONCE AGAIN WITH ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME - I PHILEO YOU!"**

It was said by scholarly rabbis that all the scriptures are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies. They symbolically saw God's people married to the Lord (**Isa. 54:5** and **Jer. 31:32**). On the surface this book is just a love song written by a young King Solomon to a young foreign lady. Hidden underneath the surface of this love song is the heart of the Lord Jesus for His bride. When the Holy Spirit unlocks this precious, spiritual love letter to you, you will never be the same!

The Lord Jesus taught us that there are hidden meanings (types and shadows) behind Old Testament characters and circumstances. He did this by using the story of Jonah as an illustration (sign) of His own resurrection in **Matt. 12:39-40**. **I Cor. 10:1-4** will further illustrate the point. The Holy Spirit taught the writer to the Hebrews precious symbolism found in the Old Testament. He unlocks the secret types and shadows concerning the Lord's Tabernacle in the wilderness (**Heb. 9:1-28; 10:1,19,20**).

By allowing us to see the above examples, the Holy Spirit is encouraging us to go hunting throughout His Word for these wonderful spiritual nuggets (**I Cor. 2:9,10**). This will encourage us and cause us to love Him even more! Get ready!

This Holy Spirit inspired Song, into which you are about to venture, is filled with very spiritual secrets from the heart of your Bridegroom, Jesus, to us His bride. In it your Bridegroom reveals the innermost thoughts of His love for you.

These thoughts are very private, as all love letters are intended to be. Little by little the Holy Spirit will open up each passage to your heart. You will fall deeper in love with Jesus, the Beloved Bridegroom of your heart, as He whispers in your spirit. Your heart will burst forth from the deep well of Holy Spirit love poured out into your heart at salvation (**Rom. 5:5**).

Enter now into the deep love of your Heavenly Bridegroom. Why wait, since your relationship will be that of a bride to the Bridegroom the Lord Jesus Christ? What Jesus yearns for most from you is a bride's love for Him. Why not give Him that kind of love now? Most believers will give Him a child's love (**Matt. 18:3,4**); a servant's love (**Luke 16:13; John 14:21**) or a friend's love (**Prov. 17:17; John 15:15**). Praise God for these three important relationships of love. When you came to Him as a child He saved and delivered you. With a child's loving trust you begin to stand on His promises by faith and your loving Father meets all of your needs. As you learn of His heart from the Word a servant's love arises from within. You now see the wisdom of following all of His commands, for you know in your heart they are right and good.

One day you hear Him calling you "**friend**" from **John 15:13-15**! The Holy Spirit begins to give you revelation knowledge from the mind of your Friend, Jesus. The Lord's mind becomes your mind; His thoughts become your thoughts (**Rom. 12:2; Phil. 2:5**). From your heart a friend's love pours forth to this One who calls you His friend! He is preparing your heart to enter into a realm of love that few believers ever experience - His Bridegroom's love for you and your bride's love for Him! This is what He desires most to give you and to receive from you.

I will call this kind of love, "**first love**" love. Read **Rev. 2:1-5** and you will see just how important this kind of love is to your Lord. When a young couple fall in love they become consumed with each other. Nothing else seems to matter. What is thrilling to realize is that your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus still has a fresh, "**first love**" love for you, His bride. He is consumed with love for you dear bride (**Jer.31:3**). Think of how deep it is! He continually looks out for your welfare and intercedes for you (**Heb. 7:25**). He sent the dear Holy Spirit to live inside of you to take care of His bride (**Rom. 8:26-27**); you have every spiritual blessing at your fingertips (**Eph. 1:3**).

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear caring Shepherd, cause my heart to have a bride's love for You the Bridegroom of my heart. As I read this love letter from my heavenly Spouse, Holy Spirit open up the deep thoughts of His heart to me. I long to love Him as I have never loved Him before. Only You are able to teach me about it and empower me to give it back to my Beloved. 'No good thing will You withhold from those who walk uprightly.' (Psa.84:11). By faith I know that it has begun to happen while praying this prayer (Mark 11:24; Isa.65:24). In the glorious name of Jesus my Bridegroom I pray. Amen and Amen!"*

Allow His Word to reveal just how this bride - Bridegroom relationship is so important to the Lord: **John 3:29; II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9; 22:17; Isa. 54:5; 61:10; Jer. 31:32**. The Hebrews, God's people, saw themselves married to the Lord. The Holy Spirit tells us that we are the bride of the Lamb. Praise God!

The Holy Spirit proclaims this book to be the "**The Song of songs**". In other words, it is the best song ever written in the Word of God. Many would say **Psalm 23** is the best song, yet that is not what the Holy Spirit declares. For the Holy Spirit to make such a statement, then this book must be very, very spiritually important!

To understand the symbols and secret words written to His bride, you must know who the individuals are in this song. The girl represents you, the bride of Christ. King Solomon (called the beloved) represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is called "**the Beloved**" in **Matt. 17:5** and in **Eph. 1:6-7**. Solomon's name means "*peaceable*". Jesus is the Prince of Peace (**Isa.9:6**). Jesus alone gives peace (**John 14:27; Eph. 2:14**). Solomon was the wisest person who had ever lived (**I Kings 4:29-34; Matt. 12:42**). Jesus is wisdom itself (**I Cor.1:30; Col. 2:3**). Solomon was Israel's most glorious king. Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords (**I Tim. 6:14-16; Rev. 19:16**). There was no one richer than Solomon. Christ is the epitome of true riches (**Eph. 1:7,10; 2:4,7; Phil. 4:19**).

Why did Solomon have so many wives? These ladies were family members of rulers from other countries. By giving a powerful nation a member of your family you were trying to insure peace between the two nations. These ladies were called "*treaty wives*". This would tend to discourage war between the countries.

When Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh, the daughter of Pharaoh was sent along as part of the treaty agreement (**I Kings 3:1**). Since God blessed Solomon with great wisdom, his kingdom expanded and so did the number of treaty wives. The fact that we read of only 60 queens and 80 concubines in **Song of Solomon 6:8** strongly indicates that the events of the book took place very early in Solomon's reign. The number of wives reached one thousand late in his reign according to **I Kings 11:3**. When this Song was penned by Solomon through the leading of the Holy Spirit he was very young and tender toward God (**I Kings 3:5-14**).

Some might complain that Solomon cannot represent Jesus since he fell so miserably toward the end of his reign as king. Then you must reject Jonah as representative of Jesus because he failed miserably as a prophet in action and attitude (see **Matt. 12:39-41; Jonah 4**). Jesus Himself refers to Solomon in **Matt. 12:42** in a good way.

The Heavenly Father speaks of the eternal Sonship of Jesus in **Heb. 1:5** by using **II Sam. 7:14** where God speaks about King David's son, Solomon. Even David was called "**a man after God's own heart**" in **I Sam. 13:14** and **Acts 13:22**, yet David certainly failed the Lord by committing adultery with Bathsheba. No biblical type, shadow, or illustration of Jesus could ever be perfect!

As the Holy Spirit pulls back the veil, step into the wonders of your Beloved's "**first love**" heart. He is ready to lavish upon you the secrets of His heart concerning you! You are now abiding on holy ground. Not all believers are able to receive this revelation knowledge because they are not surrendered to Jesus as Lord of their life.

Surrender simply means that you have taken your hands off the controls of your life and given permission to the Lord to do anything He wants to do with you because He has a specific plan for your life (**Jer.29:11**). What He plans, the Lord Himself will do it through you (**Isa.46:11; Phil. 1:6; 2:13**).

You are allowing Him to touch any area of your life because God is good and God is love (**Psa. 106:1; I John 4:16,18**), knowing that no matter what the devil puts against you it will always end in a glorious blessing (**Rom. 8:28**)! Right now will you simply say to the Lord in prayer that you not only trust Him with your eternal life but also with your daily life? Will you surrender it all to Him?

PRAY WITH ME: "*Dear, dear, God of my heart, I gladly turn over my will to You. Take my heart and may it be filled up with Your Word and Holy Spirit love! Take my mind and let me begin to think the way You desire me to think. Take my eyes and cause them to see only what You want them to see! Take my ears and let them hear only what You want them to hear! Take my mouth and cause it to speak words that will be in agreement with Your Holy Word! Take my hands and cause them to do the work You have planned for my life! Take my feet and may they walk in total obedience in surrender to Your Holy will! I completely belong to You now. I give to You all the rights to my life: my talents, gifts, money, finances, desires, friends, family, social relationships, job, habits, hobbies, and anything else. Use them for Your glory. I know You have given them all back on loan to me. They are no longer my possessions. I am now only a manager (steward) of Your property. They all belong to You. You are in total control of them. Lead me in Your Word so I will know what You want to do with each one of them! As I read make me sensitive to hear in my spirit what Your Word is saying so that I may freely and lovingly obey it. Since my heart and will are surrendered to You, I absolutely know I'm in Your will, even though I do not know exactly what it is! Thank You Lord for that assurance in my heart. Your Word declares it so and You cannot lie! You are the truth! I stand on Your Word! Thank you dear Bridegroom of my life for it is in Your wonderful and mighty Name I pray, amen!"*

PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STORY

(Keep in mind as you read that Jesus is the Bridegroom (Beloved) and you are the bride in this precious Song)

CHAPTER ONE: The bride desires to be more than an ordinary believer always caught up in all sorts of religious activities. She longs to have a personal, intimate fellowship with her Beloved King. He shares His innermost thoughts about how wonderful she is to Him. She responds by revealing secret thoughts concerning her love for Him. The Bridegroom had touched her spirit and for the first time she felt a freedom to pour her heart out completely to Him.

CHAPTER TWO: The bride cannot understand why the Beloved considers her to be so special since she is a very common person. He continues to reveal lovely thoughts about her from His heart. He demonstrates to His bride that He has conquered all problems she would ever face. The Beloved Bridegroom now asks her to go with Him but she hesitates; she only wants to have Him all to herself in private fellowship. He pleads with her, but she will not go with Him. There is now a division between them. This severing of fellowship will cause her great spiritual pain.

CHAPTER THREE: The division (mountains of Bether) has caused great emotional pain to sweep over her soul. She lost what she desired most, continued loving fellowship with her Beloved. However, after many sleepless nights of depression, she searches for "*Him whom her soul loves*". The watchmen of the city tell where her Beloved may be found. Joyous fellowship is restored. The bride takes Him to her family. She is emotionally exhausted and her Beloved beckons her to go to sleep and find needed rest. While sleeping the bride is given a vision of her Beloved in all His power and glory. This Holy Spirit given vision is the answer to victory over any temptation which would attempt to entice her to go it alone again.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Beloved describes His bride in detail reassuring her that His love has not diminished one degree because of her sin. Jesus declares that her love for Him overwhelms His heart. The Spirit leads her to the Mt. of Crucifixion in order to deal with areas of her life which are holding her back. After that, to her amazement, He begins to describe her as a garden possessing different kinds of fruits and spices. She prays that He will come into the garden of her life and enjoy the fruits and spices for Himself. Her Beloved Bridegroom first takes for Himself what He desires from this garden and then shares it with others.

CHAPTER FIVE: Time now passes since He came into the lovely garden of His bride. The Beloved has been busy out ministering and fellowshiping with other surrendered believers (lilies). He comes to the place where she lives and knocks on the door. At first she hesitates to answer. The bride finally decides to go to the door, but to her great dismay, He has departed. Desperate, she attempts to find Him. She searches in the streets of Jerusalem for Him asking the daughters of Jerusalem if they have seen Him. Not knowing who she is talking about, they ask her to describe Him. As a result, something wonderful happens to her and to them. Immediate deliverance is at hand! She is just a few moments away from His loving arms.

CHAPTER SIX: So overcome were the daughters of Jerusalem by the description of the Beloved that their hearts were drawn to Him also. Immediately after the bride had gloriously described her Beloved, the Holy Spirit reveals just where He's having fellowship. After finding Him, the bride is filled with shame and guilt. Gazing directly in her eyes, He reassures her that the fervency of His love for her has not changed one iota. The bride declares His lordship over her life. All the ladies in the King's court have a new, deep appreciation for her. Days of joy and blessed fellowship fill all and for the first time she willingly leaves with her Beloved.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The bride is now ready for service. With His heart filled with joyful anticipation the Beloved describes features of His bride which had not been considered before. The Bride is completely convinced that His desire is for her good only. She acts upon that revelation and suggests they both go out into the villages and country and minister. What He had so desired from her in **chapter two** ("*come away*"), she initiates! She has the mind of her Beloved - the mind of Christ!

CHAPTER EIGHT: The bride in blessed union and communion with her Beloved, ministers to her younger, spiritually immature sister. As the bride and her Beloved come up out of the wilderness, she leans completely on Him for strength and guidance. One of the most sacred moments in the life of the bride comes when the Beloved asks her to set Him as a seal upon her heart and her arm. The Beloved entrusts her with His vineyard, her personal one, as He leaves to minister in other vineyards. There is no hurt but just a longing for Him to return to her very quickly. The Song ends with the Mountain of spices instead of the mountains of Bether (division). There is wonderful harmony between the Beloved and His wonderful bride.

THE DESIRE FOR INTIMACY - (1:1 - 2:7)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER ONE: The bride desires to be more than an ordinary believer always caught up in all sorts of religious activities. She longs to have a personal, intimate fellowship with her Beloved King. He shares His innermost thoughts about how wonderful she is to Him. She responds by revealing secret, loving thoughts concerning her love for Him. The Bridegroom had touched her spirit and for the first time she felt a freedom to pour her heart out completely to Him.

To spiritually receive all the love intended for you from this love song, ALWAYS see yourself as the lady. As she converses with the Beloved, it will be you talking to Him. When He responds to her it will be your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to you personally! And now allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the fullness of God's loving heart to your heart. Get ready for a spiritual intimacy you never thought possible with Him who sees you as everything His heart needs! Wow! What a blessed thought!

V.1 *"The song of songs, which is Solomon's."*

This is the greatest song ever written, for the Holy Spirit, Himself, testifies that this is, **"The song of songs..."**, and rightly so for it is directly from the heart of Jesus the Bridegroom for His bride. May you, dear reader, allow the Spirit of Christ to play the melody of this song upon the strings of your heart and soul. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon writes that he had explored every kind of thing possible which claimed would give satisfaction and meaning to life (**Ecc. 2:1-11**).

Without the Lord as the purpose for living, then at the end of it all you will come to the terrifying conclusion with Solomon calling your life the **"vanity of vanities"**. Solomon by the Holy Spirit repeated the word **"vanity"** as a conclusion to life without God over 23 times!

The Lord Jesus Christ said, **"Without me you can do nothing."** (**John 15:5**). That is, nothing of value! To please Jesus as the sole purpose of living, your life will go from the **"vanity of vanities"** to becoming **"the song of songs"**! The Song of Solomon portrays the heart seeking Jesus the Bridegroom alone for satisfaction.

The Holy Spirit, through Solomon, warns us that seeking after things can never, never satisfy. At the conclusion of Ecclesiastes the Holy Spirit writes, **"...fear God and keep His commandments...."** I might hear an objection from someone saying, **"It is impossible to keep the law!"**

Trying to keep the law to merit salvation is absolutely futile (**Gal. 2:16; 3:10-13**). However, when you are filled with the love of Christ (**Rom. 5:5**) the **"righteousness of the law"** will be fulfilled in you by being controlled by the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 8:4**). The Holy Spirit declares that **"love is the fulfilling of the law"** in **Rom. 13:10**. By love we keep His laws!

It is obviously no accident that Ecclesiastes precedes the Song of Solomon! Fearing God is the beginning of true wisdom in the spiritual life. In you, godly fear will increase spiritual obedience! In you Godly fear will expand your spiritual love for God. I like to express it this way, **"I fear to hurt the One I love."** TRUE FEAR OF GOD PREPARES YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE SURRENDERED LIFE OF LOVE FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Meditate on this wonderful subject of **"fear"** which includes in it worshipful awe or reverence: **Prov. 16:6; 19:23; Acts 5:11-12; 10:1-4; Eph. 5:21; I Pet. 1:16-20; 2:17; Rev. 19:2,5,6.**

Being filled with a surrendered heart, we are to be imitators of how our God walked on this earth (**Eph. 5:1-2**). Did you know that Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord? Read **Isa. 11:1-4** which speaks about the coming Messiah. Note especially **v. 3**. Jesus had to grow in wisdom and stature (**Luke 2:52**). How did that happen? Read **Psa.111:10**.

Relying on temporal relationships and things will never truly fulfill you. For a moment you are satisfied but the emptiness within returns. God compares that kind of life to a **"broken cistern that holds no water"** (**Jer.2:13**). But when you cry out to God in your emptiness He will fill you! Out of sheer love for Him you will desire to keep His commands - love God and love one another (**Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18**). It will lead you into the fullness of God's love found in this Song.

Dear believer, are you ready to go from the **"vanity of vanities"** and have Jesus' love in the Song of Songs played all through your heart? Our wonderful Lord is not looking for perfect believers but a pliable bride who is willing to grow and be changed by Him through His infinite love. Does it not say, **"the love of Christ constrains us"** (**II Cor. 5:14**)? My heart is so full right now that I must pray. Join in and...

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Abba Father, I worship You. Thank You! Thank You! Thank You for bringing me to an end of myself. You broke me and allowed me to see the emptiness of my life as a lukewarm believer. I tried so many other things to find joy, even as Your blood-bought child! Thank You Holy Spirit for not giving up on me. Thank You for filling me with Godly fear. Thank You for Your patience, grace and mercy. The moment I cried out in my emptiness You filled me with a longing for intimacy as I had never experienced before. In these last many years You have transformed me. That yearning for more of You in my life burns more passionately than ever. Even in these last years some deep, deep valleys of suffering have come trying to extinguish it. At times I thought it had happened. But praise Your holy name at those moments there was one set of footprints with a nail scar in each carrying this child of Yours to new heights! Praise You, praise You, praise You dear Lord Jesus for taking this little child through it all and intensifying love's flame. Abba Father, dear Bridegroom, gentle Holy Spirit I am ready to travel once again through this Song. Fill me Lord! We are going to start walking together with loving hearts bursting with heavenly anticipation and expectation. Make us more like You dear Lord, in Jesus' wonderful name, amen!"*

True love is a lifelong growing experience. The surrendered life is best illustrated in this way, when you first fall in love it is all consuming. All you want is to be with that person. You talk about, dream about, write about him/her! The more you get to know him/her, the deeper that love grows. I can truly say this about the relationship I have had with my wife these many years.

I love her so much more now than at the beginning. What I thought was so full in the beginning I now see was only a small drop of love. The same is true with lifelong best friends. The love for them grows deeper and richer as the years pass. So also in the surrendered life to Jesus, as you begin to truly know Him year after year this love will grow and expand as you never dreamed possible! Just be patient and let the Holy Spirit have His way!

Accept circumstances and leave them in the Lord's hand. His love for you will bring you through every time! And your love for Him will absolutely increase! The Spirit of your Bridegroom is now going to sing this love song to your heart! It is one thing for you to sing to the Lord but it is unimaginable that He is going to personally sing this Song to you! Praise God for the wonderment of it all! Join me in asking Him for the full blessing of this Song.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord I want this song, Your song, to be the only music of my heart. I open my heart in full surrender to You so that it may be permanently etched on my soul. Let this Song of Songs be the melody which You said I would make in my heart as You fill me with the precious Holy Spirit! This will be the beginning of many spiritual melodies placed in my spirit which I will sing unto You my dear Savior (Eph.5:18-19)! Thank You Lord, that You **'...put a new song in my mouth, even praise....'** (Psa.40:3). Lord, You are my song! Make this song, which is so special to You, real to me. Thank You dear Bridegroom of my heart for the deeper experiencing of Your love which is to come. I now sit beside You to read Your love letter written just for Me. I wait with a holy, intensive expectation to have Your deep thoughts of Your passionate heart revealed to me. In Your name which is above all names, the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen and amen!"*

*"I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, and it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith, and be closer drawn to Thee." Fanny Crosby*

The Meeting:

What could be wrong with the young lady who was such a blessing? She came to know the Lord when she was quite young and became faithful in doing what her spiritual leaders asked of her. I'll call her Ruth in order to identify her in this story. One thing everyone knew, you could count on her!

There were others with her, intimate believers who were loyal to the fellowship. These young ladies (virgins in the Song) became best of friends. They would meet together each week and have a home bible study. There was always the singing, praying, Bible study and then fellowship afterwards. This evening's meeting would never be forgotten. It would be life changing.

Come with me dear reader and eavesdrop on the quiet work of the Holy Spirit in this young lady's life. Little did she know what lay ahead for her and the spiritual transformation yet to come. Unbeknownst to her closest friends, deep unanswered, very troubling questions filled her heart this particular evening.

After a time of talking to one another about all that had been going on in their lives since they last met, it was time to have their weekly devotional bible study. They had been considering Ephesians. The lady of our story displayed an uncharacteristic somber mood. Some of her friends thought that the Lord would use the Bible study to lift her spirit. One of the young ladies chosen the week before to lead the discussion said, *"Let's read aloud the passage for study tonight."*

"...And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Eph. 5:18-21).

The discussion leader made a few comments about the passage. Others followed with thoughts gleaned while studying it at home. Normally Ruth would offer an occasional comment during sharing time, but tonight, strangely, not a word. Her eyes were riveted on each one who spoke, intently listening to every word.

She was looking for an answer. Then it happened, it all poured out of her at once. *"As all of you have studied this passage from Ephesians ahead of time so did I. I read it over and over and realized, to my dismay, I know very little about this filling of the Holy Spirit. I have been troubled in my spirit all week. It won't leave me, it plagues my mind. When I fellowship with other believers I rarely talk about the scriptures. I really don't know anything about making melody in my heart to the Lord. Oh I love Him alright but I know it's not that deep or intense."*

"Why is it that unless we are in a Bible study we seldom talk about our Lord? I don't have an answer for that. I've been thinking about this all week. I don't even come close to what this passage is describing about a person filled with the Holy Spirit. I have examined my life the last few days and I don't like what I see. O yes, I go to church. I enjoy the sermons. I find pleasure working with the younger kids in Bible school. The mission trips have been special. And who couldn't enjoy the conferences? But none of these religious activities cause me to experience what is described here in Ephesians."

One of the believers interjected glibly, *"Maybe you need to spend more time in prayer? I have some great tapes entitled, 'The Spiritual Woman: Working Harder - Accomplishing More!' I'd be glad to share them with you."* Ruth retorted, *"I have been faithful to pray almost everyday. I have listened to spiritual tapes periodically about how to be a godly woman. I'm not meaning to be rude at all, you know me better than that, but I don't need another tape, another book, another ministry. All I know is that what is written here in our Bible study tonight, I truly don't have, but I desperately want it. I long for it but I don't know how to receive it. I have never felt this way before."* One of her friends replied, *"I have to admit that your spiritual experience sounds like mine and probably, if the truth were known, that's exactly how we all feel right now. I want what this passage is saying too."* All silently nodded their heads in agreement.

Then a stranger in their midst, a relative of one of the young ladies, who was visiting from out of town, was asked what she thought. Everybody in the group had fallen in love with her right away during the fellowship time just before Bible study. There was a quiet joy about her. Her name, well I'll call her Marybeth. She said, *"I don't want to intrude, I'm only a visitor, but I will share my heart for a moment."* The discussion leader responded, *"Feel free to speak, concerning our dilemma."* Marybeth said politely, *"You're very gracious, thank you so much. At one time I struggled as all of you are tonight. Then one day the Holy Spirit revealed to me the simple way in which He would fill me. I too used to look at this passage in Ephesians and longed for what it said was possible. The Holy Spirit is commanding us here to be continually filled with Him. I realized that this was not talking about the time when He came into my spirit at salvation. That was forever. However, I was puzzled with these verses. How can I be continually filled with Him as this scripture teaches?"*

Marybeth paused, slightly bowing her head as if she were listening to someone prompting her. Everybody in that room was on the edge of their seats. Something was happening. There was a holy presence, an expectancy so strong that it felt as if the Lord Himself was speaking, and He was! Marybeth lifted her head and looked at each one. There was a far away look as if she were thinking about someone very, very special. She spoke gently, *"What you are looking for is not in more ministries, programs, prayer, Bible studies or church meetings. All of these are absolutely important but when you enter into what the Holy Spirit is talking about it will make all those things greater than you ever imagined. Look at that passage again, it says, '...making melody in your heart to the Lord....' Doesn't this sound like cherished intimacy with someone?"*

Ruth broke in excitedly, *"Yes, yes, that's right! I want to be more intimate with Jesus but I don't know how!"* Marybeth was as excited as Ruth. *"You know, it's as fresh today as it was the very moment when I learned the simple secret. Actually it's fresher. It's so precious. O my dear friends, you need a melody! God's song!"* A bewildered Ruth asked, *"But what song Marybeth? I sing beautiful hymns and chorus' here and at church but I don't have that intimacy you are talking about. What song? Tell me, please!"*

Marybeth chuckled, *"Pardon me for being tickled, but I see the Holy Spirit working all over you. He's making you spiritually hungry. That happened to me and it's grown deeper ever since! Ruth, it's not a song like you mentioned. And they are all wonderful. When you have God's special song all these others will have meaning you were never aware of! God's going to give it to you. Can you imagine that? It's given to you! You don't have to do a thing except deeply long for it and you certainly have that. Look at **Psa. 40:3, 'And he has put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God....'**"*

"Ruth, what you and everyone here longs for cannot be achieved. It is like salvation, given to us. You're not the only ones who have sought this wondrous filling. Men and women of spiritual renown who were already in ministry found this secret and it dramatically changed them. They finally heard His song, missionaries such as Hudson Taylor the missionary to China, Dwight L. Moody the great evangelist, Charles Finney the amazing revivalist, Amy Carmichael, Oswald Chambers, Eugenia Price, John Bunyon of 'Pilgrim's Progress' fame and others to name a few. The filling came, their ministries overflowed with power and a personal strength for endurance."

Marybeth paused and then asked, "Before a container can be filled, what must first take place?" All of them answered at the same moment, "It has to be empty!" She responded excitedly, "Yes, yes, that's it, that's the secret! There's an old hymn which some of you might remember, it expresses it so beautifully.

*'Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, a clean vessel in Thy hand;
With no power but as Thou givest graciously with each command.
Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water from our inner man may flow.'*

Isn't that the cry of your hearts?" In an almost imperceptible holy whisper Ruth spoke for everyone, "Yes, Marybeth, that is the hunger of our hearts. By giving Him all the rights to your life your loving Bridegroom will draw closer to you revealing His song of intimacy to your heart. Why don't you ask Him? It's obviously His will for you. Didn't He say, '**Ask and it will be given to you**'? Ask, then wait. Let me tell you a little secret, the Song is already in His Book. Why don't you read it? Ask Him to spiritually kiss you and He will." At that very moment everyone in that room felt completely overpowered by a heavenly love flowing into the depths of their souls. Ruth thought she would burst. The presence of God filled the room as they all began to quietly praise the One who was baptizing them in His **first love, love!** Time stood still in their adoration of Him. Then Ruth (now the bride of the Song) spoke quietly and asked...

V.2 "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine."

Tired of seeking after fleeting joys in everything else, this bride of the Lord hears the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit deep within her heart saying, "Give yourself completely to the One who is your Savior and allow Him to have full rights to your life. You will begin to experience the joy and satisfaction you have so long sought after. You will be filled with Me and as you walk deeper and deeper in surrender, this glorious filling will grow and grow." She knew, positively knew, that in one brief moment giving everything concerning her life to Him would begin a new spiritual walk never experienced before.

A holy, intensive expectation filled her soul 'till she thought she was going to burst just as the Psalmist himself had experienced (**Psa. 42:1,2**). Her lips opened and from the depths of her heart she declared to her Lord, "I am ready, Oh I am ready dear Lord Jesus. Take all the rights to my life. Do what You must! For You are what matters to me now!" Then she asks...

"Let him..."

Here is the true beginning of the surrendered life; she requests, He is to fulfill. She longs for approval. A spiritual kiss from Him will do just that. She wants to be filled with Him alone and no longer is satisfied with just religious activities anymore. Notice that she does not make a move toward Him to initiate the relationship. She invites Him. He must be satisfied that she is ready for this kind of spiritual intimacy. Are you dear believer? A truly surrendered heart always waits for Him to move in whatever circumstances. She asked and with great joy of assurance she knew He would answer!

Listen to her pray: "Lord, I am ready to surrender my heart to You! I have been focused on things, thinking they would give me happiness. Even ministries Lord have not satisfied but now I know the secret, it is Your love that is so much better than those things. O how I long to be in total communion with You alone! A spiritual kiss from You will assure my heart that You consider me ready for this surrendered relationship!" Is this your prayer request? He will come and spiritually kiss your heart and soul. How can you know when you have been kissed by Your Heavenly Beloved? The answer is coming.

"...with the kisses of his mouth..."

What does it mean to be spiritually kissed by the Lord? Your Beloved Jesus is the living Word itself. He spoke and the heavens and the earth were created (**John 1:1,10,14; Gen. 1:3,6,9**). The very Bible you hold in your hands is the mouth of the living God. Your Bridegroom said, "**...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life**" (**John 6:63**). His mouth is the Word; "**And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword....**" (**Rev. 19:15; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12**). As He "**kisses**" you with His Word you will receive it in your spirit.

But how can you know a **"kiss"** has been given to you? As you meditate upon His holy Word, the Holy Spirit will reveal some special truth to you, some beautiful word of revelation about your Beloved. It will instantly fill you with His joy! Your response should be, "Wow! I never saw that before!" or *"Lord that was so wonderful, let me have more! O how I long after Your heart and all of its secrets."*

Your response will be the same as the Psalmist who said, **"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great the sum of them!"** (Psa. 139:17). A kiss from your Bridegroom is having Him open your eyes and seeing wonderful things from His Word! (Psa. 119:18; See also Psa. 40:5).

That very moment, when something new has been revealed to you, is the moment He places a heavenly spiritual kiss of His love on your heart. You then must respond. Your Beloved beckons to you saying, *"Let me have your love once again! My heart longs for your 'first love' love. I kissed your heart with My Word. Will you respond to Me? Take a spiritual journey with Me into My heart, filled with love that you never dreamed possible, greater than your greatest thought about Me. We will be gloriously one!"*

PRAY WITH ME: *"O my Beloved, Your mouth is life; Your words melt my heart with full satisfaction; O to be kissed by You; to have Your Word of love permeate my whole being; to feel at complete rest; complete peace; complete protection; O how good it is to be complete in You (Col. 2:10)! I open my heart totally to You. In Your glorious name Lord Jesus, amen."*

That wonderful kiss assures you of His total approval! Emptying out all of your rights to Him gives you the filling for which you have so longed. You ask, *"How may I know that I am totally surrendered to Jesus?"*

Surrender is simply saying to the Lord, *"I trust You completely and I give You the right to do whatever You want with my life."* Surrender is not giving up things but giving up your rights to Him alone. It is doing what **Prov. 3:5,6** instructs, **"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."**

Little does this bride realize what spiritual changes will begin to take place throughout her life because she asked to be kissed by Him. She will be spiritually kissed throughout the journey of her surrendered life in this Song, even in the dark, difficult valleys when it seemed her Beloved was far distant.

When she reached true spiritual maturity in this journey toward the end of this Song, the Holy Spirit will reveal to her heart all the spiritual kisses she had experienced in her blessed walk with Jesus. Worship and adoration for her Beloved will cause her heart to burst in glorious praise! It all begins with surrender.

"...for thy love is better than wine."

The Hebrew word for **"love"** in this verse is pluralized. It was their way of making it a superlative! In other words, the Holy Spirit is telling you that no amount of words can describe it. His **"loves"** far surpass any earthly love to be found. O what a love it is: a forgiving love, a healing love, a providing love, a protecting love, a tender love, a peaceful love, an assuring love, a guiding love, a comforting love, a strengthening love, an overcoming love, a sanctifying love, a bridegroom's love! It is His love alone!

"Wine" in the scriptures represents earthly joy (Psa. 104:15). She is saying that even legitimate earthly joys cannot be compared with His love! Can you say with her, ***"...for thy love is better than"*** Everything else in your life should be placed in that blank. Only those who are totally surrendered to the King can truly know this in their heart; O how wonderful it is when the Holy Spirit reveals it to you! I keep repeating myself, it begins with total surrender and then you will grow in this wonderful relationship.

V.3 "Because of the savor (pleasant fragrance) of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee."

The bride had asked to be spiritually kissed and immediately she was blessed with revelation concerning Jesus' name! Listen to her speak, *"Your name is everything to me. The perfume of Your name is being poured forth into my heart. I am filled! I am filled! I am ready to have You take me into that deeper relationship. Here I am my Beloved, take my spirit and move on me as never before. I love You alone. I only ask that You increase the capacity of my heart to be able to love You more!"*

PRAY WITH ME: "Each blessed characteristic and glorious attribute of Yours, my dear Beloved Bridegroom, is thrilling for my heart to meditate upon. O yes, You alone, fill me with unspeakable wonder and love. You are love itself and I know that You alone can satisfy the longings of my heart (**Lam. 3:24**). May your spiritual fragrances flow through me to others (**Gal. 5:22-23**). May they be attracted to You through me! Let Your Name be written all over my daily activities and attitudes."

"...thy name is as ointment poured forth..."

This ointment is costly, perfumed oil. Oil was used on sheep to keep parasites from causing them extreme agony and irritation. Also there were oils used for the healing process. The Holy Spirit speaks of the "oil of joy" in **Isa.61:3**. His spiritual oil gives light to the lamp of our life. Praise God for the name of Jesus! In His name are all the blessed spiritual characteristics for our eternal and temporal needs. It saves (**Mt. 1:21**), heals (**Acts 3:6**), gives authority to deliver (**Acts 16:18**), leads (**Psa. 31:3**), protects (**Psa. 124:8**) and forgives (**Psa. 79:9**)! O what precious spiritual oil is the Name of our Bridegroom!

PRAY WITH ME: "I praise Your Name, my Bridegroom: You are my Jehovah Savior (**1 John 5:13; John 1:12**); my Healer (**Acts 3:6**); my Lord (**Phil. 2:9-10**); You are my Wonderful Counselor; my Mighty God; my Everlasting Father; my Prince of Peace (**Isa.9:6**)! You have given to me Your name and Your name is my name (**Rev. 22:4**)! **JESUS! JESUS! JESUS! JESUS!** Purify me now with the ointment of Your Name poured out in my spirit! Your Name dispels demons and activates angels on my behalf. It is the authority I pray in! May Your Name and all its provision be poured forth from my life to others, causing them to praise You!"

"...therefore do the virgins love thee."

Spiritual virgins are those who have a single, pure desire, to please the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not perfect in their walk but they are perfect in their commitment to Him. All the Lord ever wants from us is that longing desire in our heart for more of Him (**Psa. 42:1,2; 73:25**). Paul himself, late in life, stated that he had not reached a perfect (totally mature) walk, but he had a perfect commitment to press on (**Phil. 3:12-14**). Do you have a virgin heart, a heart with pure motives which yearns to truly please the Lord? That is all our Beloved Bridegroom is looking for! Then He will take you by the hand and you will begin to walk, little by little, in an amazing deeper relationship with Him as you never thought possible. It is all about love for Him!

A spiritual virgin is one who thirsts for holiness to be worked in her heart and walk. She will pursue love (**1 Cor.14:1**) and holiness (**Heb. 12:14**). A spiritual virgin has no desire to read or watch those things she knows would displease her Beloved. Is that your attitude? If it is, get ready for the inner chamber (**v.4**). But you might be burdened with the guilt of having given up your spiritual virginity, the enemy of your mind says it's too late! O my friend let your Bridegroom do a miracle here. There is second virginity! He declares it in Jeremiah! Israel, His wife, had committed spiritual adultery with other gods (**Jer. 30:15-17**). The Lord pours out His heart to her (**v.17**). Read now **Jer. 31:2-4**. If she repents she will become His "virgin" again!

Wow! He did not have to use the term "virgin". He could have said, "**O my people, Israel**" since they had lost their spiritual virginity! Praise God He can remake us over anew! Only our Bridegroom can do that! He is our miracle worker Husband! Glory to God!

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Father, there is still so much of me in my daily walk; such impurity that I often become discouraged. Dear Bridegroom of my heart, I now cease trying to deal with the impurities. I humbly ask You to do the purifying as only Your Holy Spirit can do. Work **Ezk. 36:27** into my walk. May the power, peace, and presence of Your name be poured forth in and through my life. May You see me as a pure virgin bringing joy and love to You. May You see me as Your virgin wife! Lead me to other spiritual virgins who have only hearts for You. We will love and serve You together! Praise Your Holy Name Lord Jesus."

V.4 "Draw me..."

Here is the secret to a life filled with Jesus, filled with His Holy Spirit. I have no power to literally draw myself to the Lord. As in salvation (**John 6:44**) so also in surrender! My part is asking and then presenting myself! He must fulfill it and He will! He then receives all the glory for it is done not with my might or power but by His Spirit alone (**Zech. 4:6**)! O my dear bride, look with me and see what happens. Observe carefully the pronoun changes from "me" to "we"!

"...we will run after thee..."

What a blessing it is to have others, who are filled up with Jesus to overflowing, share in this wonderful intimacy. O the joy of pursuing Him together with others through praise, worship and adoration. They are proclaiming their heart's longing to Him (**Heb. 12:1-2; Phil. 3:11-14**). They are saying, *"We are not pursuing anything else in life but Thee."*

Only after this declaration of desire will He draw her into His chamber of spiritual revelation. What are you running after in this life? What is your consuming passion? Love loves to be pursued and to pursue. When two people are deeply in love they pursue each other with a fervency that knows no bounds! They pursue to bless each other. They can't do enough to demonstrate their deep love for each other's heart! As you pursue your Bridegroom He is pursuing you! Glory to God!

The excitement of **"first love"**, love is the driving force. After each pursuit there comes that very special spiritual embrace. O how powerful, O how fulfilling when you and your Bridegroom **"find"** each other. You share the gift with each other – a thought, an item, an embrace. O dear Lord, how many times have you pursued to bless in those **"little"** things for me. Notice **"we will run"** and **"the King hath brought"**! They both are pursuing each other!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Jesus, I will run toward You with a Holy Spirit fervency. I will not run alone but with those who love You as deeply as I do! My fellowship will be with them. I choose now to fellowship with Your surrendered friends!"*

"...the king hath brought me into his chambers;..."

It is only when Jesus is King of your life that He will bring you into His secret chamber; the chamber where the Holy Spirit begins to reveal Jesus' heart to You in ways you never thought possible. What an awesome privilege, to be taken into the secret chamber of the King. He knows when you are ready and at the precise moment He will draw you into a deeper experience with Him. Does it not say that the Beloved brought her into the chambers?

It describes Him as the King. If He is King of my life then I will love to keep His commands. In loving the King, the Holy Spirit will reveal the secrets of the King's heart to you! So marvelous is this experience that no words could describe your inner joy. Jesus died that He might be your Lord (**Rom. 14:9**).

The key to the secret chamber is His lordship. O surrendered one, when you taste the joys of your Beloved in His chamber, you will want absolutely nothing else except more of Him. May **Psa. 73:25** be true of your heart.

"...we will be glad and rejoice in thee..."

The only real joy and gladness is **"in"** Him. All true spiritual blessings are found **"in Him"**. Stop and read the **"in"** references and meditate on them. Let Him bless your heart through them (**Eph. 1:4,10,11,13; 2:18; 3:6; Col. 1:19; 2:6; 2:7; 2:9-11; I John 2:5**). David the Psalmist said it so well in **Psa. 16:8,9**. In setting the Lord before us in all we do; making Him our sole purpose for living, then our heart will be made glad and rejoice! Being drawn into His chamber gives us the time to meditate quietly upon Him and the result is **Psa. 104:34**! O what gladness it is to be with others in His chamber pouring out their hearts to Him. Observing God's joy on the countenance of another surrendered believer multiplies your own joy.

"...we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee."

The pursuers had tasted the Beloved King's special love in the chamber of His heart. Once you taste your Bridegroom's love you will only want to talk about Him with others who have experienced the same. You will relive it over and over again with them as you share together. Everything that is truly unnecessary fades into insignificance. He loves to be remembered (**Isa. 43:25,26**). That is why He instituted the Lord's supper. He will never allow the precious moments of remembrance concerning Him to be forgotten (**Mal. 3:16**)! Your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, will not allow one word spoken in heartfelt prayer and praise to be forgotten. They are being kept for a very special moment in eternity (**Rev. 5:8**). Only those who have an upright (surrendered) heart will be granted this intimacy. **"...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. (I Cor. 2:9,10)."** Don't you feel the holy determination in the words **"we will"**?

Overwhelmed with awe and knowing they were changed forever, these ladies found a private place where they could share all that had transpired between them and their Beloved King. Upon entering they sensed an awesome presence of the Holy Spirit filling the room just the same as it had been when they gathered round the Beloved. Some

quietly sang praises, a few wept from overflowing hearts, others raised their hands in worship. It seemed like only minutes had passed by but it was more than an hour. Then there was a moment of absolute quietness.

Filled 'till they thought they would burst, all began trying to share at the same time, then they broke out in laughter! Each one glowed as children do when unwrapping presents at birthday parties. Something had happened to them and they knew they would never be the same. This beautiful group of ladies shared all that was on their hearts. Everything was new and fresh. With a joy filled countenance, the bride spoke excitedly, *"Did you see the joy in His eyes as we walked into the room? I have never seen Him so happy! Remember how He had us all sit close around Him? The moment I sat down I felt a burst of love flow all through my soul. I have never experienced anything like that before! I have been in many meetings with other believers but this was different. It was as if I had been transported to Heaven itself."*

One of the ladies said, *"You know, I have been in Bible studies all my life. I have heard much shared concerning the meaning of passages. It was enjoyable and instructive! But this, this far surpasses those times. Talking about Jesus with others who are in love with Him is indescribable joy! Praise His holy Name that I am with you all! You understand how I feel. Only you can. You were there!"* They hung breathlessly on every word, wanting to relive over and over again the deep experience with Jesus.

All of a sudden the bride remarked, *"Do you realize what has happened? Have you heard what we have been saying to each other? It's a miracle my sisters!"* Some looked puzzled not understanding, but with intensive expectation they knew they were in for a blessing. The bride continued, *"Each one of us has shared something very different, yet infinitely precious about our Beloved King. He didn't speak individually with us. We all heard the same words from His lips. He kissed each one of us individually. Yet He gave each one of us a different and very personal revelation from His heart!"* They sat there stunned! A holy presence fell all over the room. One remarked very quietly, *"This must be the filling of the wonderful Holy Spirit. I have heard others talk about it but I had no idea what it truly meant."*

They began to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord (**Eph. 5:18-21**). Having poured out their hearts in praise and thanksgiving to the Lover of their souls, the bride exclaimed, *"I have never, never experienced anything like this. My heart was so full to overflowing! You felt it ladies. Look what happened when we came together. We were compelled to worship or we would have burst. This must be the springs of living water flowing from our innermost being by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit."* (**John 7:38;39**). Another asked, *"What caused Him to choose us for this unspeakable joy? Why us?"* At the very same moment, the Holy Spirit spoke the answer in their hearts. Then at the exact same moment they whispered one word, *"Surrender!"* The bride said, *"Yes, yes that is exactly what we all have in common. We surrendered our all to Him before He invited us into His chamber! Every one of us in this room is gloriously in love with our King!"* Hours which seemed minutes passed by. Filled with unspeakable joy they departed.

Surrendered love activates faith! His love for me and my love for Him is the catalyst for all spiritual blessing and strength. **Gal. 5:6** teaches us that it is, *"...faith which works by love."* Is not our Beloved King love itself (**I John 4:8,16**)? Look at how important love is: **Deut. 23:5; Psalms. 145:20; I John 3:1; I Cor. 13:1-13; I John 4:7-21; Rom. 5:5; 8:26; I Cor. 2:9,10; II Cor. 5:14; Eph. 3:17; John 14:21!** The enemy came to ruin this holy experience. A group of the daughters of Jerusalem meet her. She is hated because of ethnic pride. To them she is not pure! She is not a Hebrew. In a demeaning tone and with a look that could kill, they ask, *"Who do you think you are? Your blood is not pure! You are an unclean Gentile. We are Hebrew daughters! How dare you even think that the King would give you the time of day."* It was as if knives had pierced her heart. The enemy had done his work. **"Persecuted but not forsaken. Cast down, but not destroyed"** (**II Cor. 4:7-9**), filled with the Spirit of Christ, she looked up with the power of her Beloved all over her and said...

V.5 "I am black, but comely (lovely), O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon."

When the daughters heard this they became indignant. This woman before them was not an Israelite but simply a treaty wife given to the King. She is **"black"** - a Gentile without the rights which a daughter of Jerusalem possesses because of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This lady is a foreigner, yet the king had singled her out above all the others and had given her his heart. She mentions **"the tents of Kedar"; "kedar"** means **"dark"**. These tents were black because of the color of the goats hair used in making them. These were the tents of the second son of Ishmael (**Gen. 25:13**). The Jews would not come near those tents (**Psa. 120:5**)! This is the same attitude the Jews displayed in Jesus' day concerning foreigners. He told His very own people that salvation was not only for the Jews, but for the whole world (**John 3:16**). The hated Samaritans (half Hebrew/half Gentile) understood this in **John 4:9,39-42; 8:48!** How appropriate and exact is this depiction of us! She is a Gentile and Solomon's Gentile bride who had no rights and we are His spiritual Gentile bride and we had no rights according to **Eph. 2:8-22**. It's all of grace! Hallelujah!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Abba Father, I praise Your Holy name! You gave me to Your Son as a gift to be His bride (John 10:28,29; 6:37)! I had no rights and I was dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1)! Lord Jesus, You accepted me as a gift from Your Father's hands (John 10:29), and then You died for me. O dear Bridegroom, You gave me life so I could love You. You washed me with Your blood so that You could reside inside of me (Gal. 2:20). Thank You dear Father for giving me the most wonderful gifts ever, salvation and Your dear Holy Spirit, because I am the bride of Your Son. How could I ever love You, my Bridegroom without Your Holy Spirit? He alone makes You real to me. I love You Father! I love You my dear Bridegroom! I love You dear Holy Spirit! Hallelujah! In Jesus' name, amen!"*

"...(lovely) as the curtains of Solomon."

What makes you lovely in the sight of your Bridegroom? The beautiful curtains of Solomon represent the veil in Solomon's Temple dividing the holy place from the holy of holies. What did this veil represent? It represented Christ's flesh (Heb. 10:19-20)! He took all of your sins and bore them in His own body on the cross making you clean (1 Pet. 2:24)! Not only that, you are now His body (1 Cor. 12:27). The Beloved looks at your spirit and sees that you are as beautiful and lovely as He! How can this be? It is because He dressed your spirit up with His garment of salvation and His robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10)!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, Your veil, that is Your flesh, was torn from top to bottom when You were on the cross (Matt.27:51). Your body was torn by the whip, the beatings and the nails! You became ugly to make me Your beautiful bride. I am beautiful because I am dressed up in You! Thank You dear Lord Jesus! Thank You for giving me the beautiful "garment of salvation" and the glorious "robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10). O how I love You! In Your name Lord, amen!"*

Satan will try to tell you how unworthy you are! Yes, in myself I am unworthy! But I am a new creation (II Cor. 5:17)! The Holy Spirit indwells me. I am the bride of the King and a child of Abba Father. I have been made worthy because of His grace and mercy; because I am in a blood relationship to my Lord!

Everything that belongs to my Bridegroom belongs to me. ***"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed (me) with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."*** (Eph. 1:3). I am as lovely as the curtains of Solomon! That spiritual curtain drapes my heart! I am lovely as Jesus, my Lord and my God! *"Enemy of my soul, I cast your thoughts out of my mind in the name of Jesus, who is my Lord!"*

V.6 "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me..."

When you have surrendered all to your wonderful Bridegroom, expect to be misunderstood and misrepresented. Others will still see the old you, they will remember your past and bring it up in gossip. Satan will try to distract your loving gaze from Jesus onto yourself or others. When this happens speak to your mountain and pray for them (Luke 6:27-28), then return your gaze back to the eyes of your Beloved! People will look on the outward appearance but remember, God looks on the heart (1 Sam. 16:7)! Don't get focused on what others think. Remember Mary of Bethany? She kept her eyes upon the Love of her heart!

The very presence of a fully surrendered believers, filled with the Spirit, brings conviction to those who are lukewarm. Because Jesus has become your all consuming reason for living, you will find those who used to be close to you, seldom seeking your fellowship. You are really not the problem but it is the Lord shining through you who disturbs them! Pray for them. The following statement is a description of her spiritual walk before entering into the joys of the surrendered life!

"...my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

The Holy Spirit reminds her of a problem imbedded deep in her soul. O how gentle He is with us. He doesn't expose everything all at once. It will be little by little throughout our lifetime. She has had all kinds of trouble with her brothers. They care not one bit about her obligations in the home or how tired she gets just trying to keep up. They just want an extra hand to do chores that they themselves should be doing. There were times when they ridiculed or mocked her in "fun".

And out of sheer frustration, she said cutting things to them in return. Then she would bury these unkind words in her heart and they seemed to "go away"! Sometime she is going to have to deal with these hurts when she has grown in her surrender. The Holy Spirit will choose the perfect time. Later you will see how this happens.

When your heart is totally surrendered to the Lord you will want to get involved in various kinds of "good" activities. Be careful that you do not get involved in that which was not intended for you. When asked by others in the church to volunteer you may be the first to do so. You may feel spiritually obligated to do anything and everything.

The enemy loves to get us so busy in legitimate projects that we find no time for the inner chamber; no time for intimate fellowship with the Bridegroom of your heart. He particularly likes to do this to new believers. After a while you grow tired and weary, wondering what happened to the joy you experienced before!

Don't be afraid to give up some of those duties in order to get back to the chamber. Some will show their disappointment and criticize you as being unspiritual, when, in reality you want to do only that which your Beloved intended for you. Remember, God was not in a hurry to put Moses, Elijah and Paul into the work He had planned for them. The Lord knew they needed time with Him before they were thrust into their life's work. Be patient!

May I lovingly counsel you again? Be careful about becoming involved in so many activities ("**vineyards**") so that the vineyard of your heart cannot be cultivated by the Holy Spirit. Don't be a Martha, but a Mary (**Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-5; Mark 14:3-9**). You need quiet, meditative time alone with your Beloved. Don't fill your time up with so many religious activities and miss giving Him your adoring heart for which He so yearns! Give your Beloved what He desires most - "**first love**" love (**Rev. 2:1-5**)! Don't ever forget, you are His portion of joy. **Deut. 32:9** declares it!

Now for the question, will she ever be able to truly minister in the vineyard her Lord had chosen for her? Before there would be a vineyard to harvest, the garden of her heart would need to be developed. Preparations for her to actually be allowed to minister in her vineyard have begun with this initial surrender. However, not until **chapter 8** will the Holy Spirit answer that question.

V.7 "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loves, where thou feedeth, where thou makes thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turns aside by the flocks of thy companions?"

After recognizing that she is an undeserving foreigner; after receiving demeaning stares from others; after the hurt of misunderstanding inflicted upon her by her own family; after realizing the emptiness of busyness; will she give up in utter despair? With such an onslaught of discouragement will she cease in her quest for an intimate relationship with her Beloved?

No, praise God! This truly surrendered bride runs to her Beloved. Hesitating before approaching Him, she ponders, "*Is He deeply disappointed since He allowed me to have intimate fellowship with Him, then I got focused off into many other things and had little time for Him?*" The bride sets these nagging doubts aside. She thinks within herself, "*He alone knows my hurt; my frustration; my weariness; the longing of my heart to have time with Him.*"

"O how I love Him only, He will lead me to where I can be fed. He knows exactly what I need! I just want to be with those who thirst for what I desire - listening to the voice of His Word feeding my soul. O how blessed they must be in His gentle Shepherd's care!" With these burdens upon her heart she sees Him and then with a longing tone inquires:

"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loves, where thou feedest, where thou makes thy flock to rest at noon?"

Why don't you ask Your Beloved the same question as the bride did in this verse? The Holy Spirit will then lead you to a place of quiet rest with your Beloved. Before you will be set everything you need - His wisdom, discernment, love, faith, intimacy, immutable promises and so much more. He will lead you into joyful fellowship with other sheep who dearly love Him as you do. Your Beloved will ask you to sit next to Him and He will personally feed you and give you His rest. Her stress concerning the vineyard problem will be answered in **Phil. 4:6,7; John 14:27** and **Matt. 11:28**.

"...at noon..."

This is symbolical of the hottest part of the day. Satan will try to burn you out and dry you up spiritually. Only your dear Bridegroom is able to protect you from the attacks of the enemy. He alone has the right to decide what is needed for your healing and recovery. Be careful about deciding for yourself how to find rest for your soul (hobbies, TV, worldly activities, movies). Go to Him first!

Listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit from the Word and then you will say, "***He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.***" (**Psa. 23:2,3**). You will receive what you thought impossible: a refreshing renewal flowing down over your tired soul.

"...For why should I be as one that turns aside as one who is veiled by the flocks of thy companions?"

She desires **"rest"** above everything else. Now that she has given herself over completely to Him, the Holy Spirit leads this Bride into what is truly important. Too many in God's family keep so busy they miss Him! Her soul longs for that **"rest"** which can only come from Him alone. Apparently the enemy is attempting to focus her attention off of Jesus onto His people. He would have you look at the **"flocks"** and not the Shepherd! The **"flocks of thy companions"** are separate ministries of those who are actively serving Him in their God-given ministry. What a trick of the enemy, to rob her of peace and rest and rob Jesus of her intimate love. Catch this truth and the danger of this **"turning aside"** in **John 21:19-22**. Peter, after being restored by the Lord, was simply told by Him to **"follow Me"**! In **v. 20** it says, **"Peter, turning around...."** Immediately after following Jesus he began to wonder about John. The Lord basically said, **"that's none of your business Peter, you follow Me. I'll take care of John, you take care of simply following Me."** She immediately recognizes what is happening and so asked the very pointed question in the above verse.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Bridegroom of my heart, may I never make You ashamed of me. May You never find me in the arms of another seeking momentary pleasures which will never satisfy. Keep me from wandering. I submit my mind, heart and body to You, dear Lord. I will not turn aside to find rest in any other place. I have tried all of that emptiness. I want You alone! 'Order my steps in Thy Word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' (Psa. 119:133). In Jesus' blessed name!"*

The Beloved responds:

V.8 "If thou know not, O thou fairest (most beautiful) among women...."

With joy He immediately answers the longing of her heart. He is not bothered at all that she **"knows not"**. She **"knows not"** and runs immediately to Him who absolutely knows! With His eyes focused on her, He tenderly and lovingly declares to her heart, **"to Me you are the most beautiful among all others. Why? Because you will not allow anything to distract you from Me!"** This is said to you, dear reader! Is it hard to accept? Yes! But do it! See yourself as He sees you. You are most beautiful in your Bridegroom's eyes because of the fervor of your desire towards Him. It's the Mary of Bethany heart He sees in you. Can you imagine what it does to His heart seeing your love-filled eyes? Be assured He will direct you to the food of **"rest"**! He must. It is His will (**I John 5:14,15**). Praise God! Hallelujah!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Beloved Lord Jesus, my heart is overwhelmed by such thoughts. I overflow with joy and adoration for You. Cause me to see more and more of what You see in me. Cause me to grow in my surrender to You. Take out all things that do not please You. I love You too much to have anything knowingly come between us and disappoint Your heart! Thank You Father for having set me in Your plan for my life. (Psa. 139:16; Isa. 46:11). Consider O my soul the Beloved's Word, 'For I know the thoughts (plans) that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts (plans) of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' (Jer. 29:11). May I walk in it by the power of the Holy Spirit alone. In Jesus' name, amen."*

"...go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids (young goats) besides the shepherd's tents."

He now answers her. She wants the younger ones to know what she knows. Why should they have to wait as she did? She had been kept busy in church programs and missed the filling. She had never been taught about it until a stranger, Marybeth, was sent to their Bible study. She is not going to let that happen to those young ones who love her. **"Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock"** those who follow in surrender to the Lord (**John 10:27**). They are the ones who stick close to THE SHEPHERD'S TENT! Lead them to the Mary's of Bethany! You'll find them always waiting patiently at His tent. There you will find rest. They are those who consistently have the fruit of the Spirit in their daily walk. Fellowship with them and follow their footsteps.

Learn His secrets from them. He will share Himself with you through them. (**Eph. 3:14-19; 4:15-16**). **"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end (result) of their conversation (behavior)."** (**Heb.13:7**). Feed **"the kids"** by your example through a life of surrender. Take them under your wing and watch-care. The Holy Spirit will cause them to desire what you have - that glow and joy of love for Him whom your soul loves.

The early church knew where the power came from (**Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4, 42,46; I Cor. 10:16,17; Heb. 10:25; Luke 14:33**). O what unspeakable joy when Spirit filled (truly surrendered believers) meet to love, worship and exalt the Lord! These **"kids"** will be fed in their spirit by observing the Lord flowing all through their mentors' manner of living.

The young need to see how important real, true spiritual fellowship is to the life of the believer. It's not just talking about everyday things such as: clothes, sports etc., and that's ok, but that is believers having fellowship. Spirit-filled fellowship is when Jesus is the center, focus and purpose of the gathering together.

Yes, Jesus is always with us but His very special presence comes when two or three are gathered together in His name (**Mt. 18:20**). When the "**kids**" see a deep exchange of "**first love**" love between you and Your Bridegroom then they will rise to a level of fullness which was previously beyond their comprehension! It is not enough to have the "**kids**" memorize scripture. They must see the image of a living Jesus in us, then their lives will be transformed (**Rom. 8:29**).

V.9 "I have compared thee, O my love (dearest one), to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."

The word "**love**" here is not the usual Hebrew word. The form of this Hebrew word is only found in the Song of Solomon. It comes from a Hebrew root word meaning "**to associate with**" or "**dearest companion**". It is a word just for her. You, dear surrendered bride, are His special companion, not just an ordinary friend but the one and only choice of His "**first love**" heart.

Listen to the heart of Jesus speak to you, "I love you, O how I love being with you. You are the dear companion of my heart! There are so few of you who have given Me complete control. You are My joy. Many whom I indwell bring Me much sorrow. They do not consider My heart when they go to places which are against what has been revealed to them from My word. They belong to Me and know better, but they drag Me into their sin anyway. They watch things that mock My name. I died and rose again that My purity would flow through them. These that belong to Me listen to the whispers and enticements of the enemy much more than they do Me. I lay down at night with them and I hear their innermost thoughts of emptiness. All that they have experienced has been unsatisfying and unfulfilling.

They come away from their worldly videos, music and magazines feeling so empty. My Spirit cries out to them, yet their ears are so dull of hearing. O how sad it is for Me to know the fulfilled life I have already planned for them to experience, yet they do not hear. They will not respond for their old nature has dulled them to any sense of what sin really is. These that I speak of are not truly in love with Me. My Father has had the plan ready since eternity past when the first thought of them came into His Abba Father's heart.

I remember how excited I became when My Father revealed He was giving them to Me for a bride. They would love Me and I would love them. My Holy Spirit would actually live in their spirit. With their free will they would choose to love Me. But I live in sadness with many of them.

However, You My love are very different. I have compared you with the best. I prefer you over angels, seraphim and the cherubim! You bring so much joy to my heart. You don't even realize it now, but your joy and love for Me is going to grow deeper than you could have ever imagined. O My love, dearest companion of My heart, thank you for opening yourself up to Me in surrender! You are not perfect yet, but your heart responds to anything that would displease Me. Hear My heart, I love you!"

When the Lord drew you into His family, you were like the huge marble stone brought to Michelangelo. The stone had no shape. It was for all intents and purposes ugly! Yet the great sculptor saw the magnificent statue of David in it. He saw the final results before he had actually begun. Your Bridegroom thinks the same way about you! You will notice as you go through this love song that when the bride goes against what her Bridegroom desires, He never gets angry with her. She sins out of weakness but not wickedness, much like Peter of whom we will deal with later.

You may not see a thing in yourself that is desirable at this moment, but Praise God, He does and that is only what matters! Do you feel unwanted, unloved and unattractive because of ugly words said to you in the past? It's the enemy whispering in your ear, "*You are worthless, no good! Why don't you give up! Nobody really loves you!*" Reject all of that. With His arms around you, hear the God of the universe, Jesus the Bridegroom saying right now, "*Dearest companion of My heart, you are beautiful to Me beyond description. I love you!*"

"...to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."

To you, surrendered one, He says that you are like the most excellent horses purchased for Pharaoh. These horses were considered the best in the world. Solomon purchased them from Egypt for his special service and pleasure (**I Kings 10:28-29**). These horses were: chosen by and for the King alone (**so were you-I Pet. 2:4-9; Eph. 1:4-5**); costly (**so were you-I Cor. 6:19-20**); swift to obey every command (**so are you-Col. 1:18; I Pet. 2:11**); not distracted by other things for you have the mind of Christ (**I Cor. 2:16; Heb. 12:2,3**).

What a glorious compliment. But you say, *"These horses were perfect, I'm not!"* It took time and training for those horses to become special. This bride will grow in surrender from **chapter one** through **chapter eight**. In **v. 9** He sees a perfect commitment not a perfect walk. He sees her heart and her desire! She is surrendered and that makes her "choice". Isn't it wonderful to see how much you mean to Him; how much joy you bring to His heart through simple surrender? Praise His holy name! Knowing this should defeat the enemy who would cause you to see yourself as unworthy, a nobody, useless!

This verse is a description of sanctification (separated unto). These superb horses were separated for the King's pleasure only. This is what true holiness is all about. So many believers "force" themselves to go to more than one meeting a week, read the Word, pray and praise consistently. But with consumed love there is no forcing but a fire of desire. "**First love**" love can't wait to please!

This is why He is so glowing in His description of her for there is nothing more important in her life than her Beloved. The Beloved takes her by the hand and says, *"My lovely bride, let Me have the joy of sitting next to you. There is so much more I want you to know about how I feel."*

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, thank You so much for revealing what Your heart sees in me. I receive those loving words of Your grace! Knowing Your heart is changing me, I yearn to please You. Whatever good or beauty You see in me is a reflection of Yourself. I want others to see more of You in me. Keep me separated unto Yourself like the horses in Pharaoh's chariots! I am at Your beck and call, for I know this brings joy to You completely! Dear Holy Spirit cause the image of my Bridegroom to ever increase in me. I love You my Savior, my Lord, my Delight! In Your Holy name Lord Jesus, Amen!"*

With infinite love flowing from His heart to her heart He says,

V.10 *"Thy cheeks are comely (lovely) with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold."*

In the regular KJV the words, *"of jewels"* and *"of gold"* are in italics. This means that they are supplied by the translators and not in the original text. The first word *"rows"* is the Hebrew word for *"plait"* or *"turn"* (**Esther 2:15**). In other words, her cheeks are lovely especially with plaits of beautifully braided hair offsetting them. The important thing to notice is that her cheeks and neck are beautiful in His eyes.

She sits there as if mesmerized, glowing with delight and adoration. Those cheeks radiate love for Him. Think about it dear reader, a heart full of surrender to Him causes your Beloved Bridegroom to take notice of the beautiful spiritual expression radiating from your inward countenance!

The second word *"chains"* is the Hebrew word for *"ornaments"*. The neck represents the human will (**Acts 7:51; Exo. 33:3; Prov. 3:3; 29:1**). What is it about her neck that He finds so arresting to His gaze? She has relinquished her will to His will alone! A yielded heart makes for a beautiful neck. No wonder He is thrilled with her. What adorns your neck: obedience, praise, love, prayer, a spirit-filled Word of God directed walk or an unbending, stiff-necked will?

This is the first of four times that the neck is mentioned by the Bridegroom. It is very important to Him (**1:10; 4:4,9; 7:4**)! Was not Jesus' will lovingly submitted to the Father's will (**Mark 14:34-36**)? Oh, but what was the cost for us to have a countenance which would ever please Him? His cheeks were disfigured by the plucking out of all of His hair (**Isa. 50:6**)! His countenance was made ugly (**Mark 14:65**) so that your spiritual countenance could be made beautiful by Him! Does this not cause you to love Him more?

Hear Him speak gently from His heart to her, *"I love to look at your countenance. It says so much to My heart without you saying one word. I look on the heart not on the outward appearance (I Sam. 16:7). Only I can look deep within your soul and see your love filled heart. It's only for Me. What a gift you are to Me! I can never thank My Father enough for giving you to Me."*

PRAY WITH ME: *"Abba Father, may my will always be submerged in Your perfect will by the power of the Holy Spirit through Your Word. Lord, words cannot express the overflowing Spirit-filled love I have for You. May I always demonstrate my love for You, dear Bridegroom of my heart, in willing obedience to Your Words (John 14:23). In Your name Lord Jesus, amen."*

V.11 "We will make thee...."

The word "**we**" indicates that more than one person is involved with the bride and Bridegroom of this love song. In the immediate circumstances they are ladies-in-waiting. They are there to serve the bride. However, as we look beyond the immediate to the spiritual, we see God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit continually at work in us to cause more of Jesus' image to be seen in our lives (**Rom. 8:29**). Never forget that "**we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...**" (**Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6; 2:13**)! Here is a very small list of what our glorious triunity God is doing: The Father (**Eph. 1:3; I John 3:1**); The Son (**John 10:28; Heb. 7:25**); The Holy Spirit (**Rom. 8:26; John 14:26**). They bestow upon us the "**garment of salvation**" and the "**robe of righteousness**" to be seen (**Isa. 61:10**). As practical surrender to Him increases (**John 3:30**) more and more the jewels of His character, "**gold, silver and precious stones**" (**I Cor. 3:11-14**) will be displayed in our walk (**Gal. 5:22,23**)! He does it - we don't! He then receives all the glory!

"...borders of gold..."

God wants "**gold**" displayed on her neck. Gold represents the character, glory and person of God and also value, purity, truth, and honor. In the Tabernacle, the golden table, the golden lamp stand, the golden altar of incense are all made of pure gold and the ark of the covenant was overlaid with gold. All of these holy items in type have the Lord. (**Consider Job 23:10; Psa. 19:7-11; Psa. 45:13; Prov. 25:11; Zech. 4:2-6; I Cor. 3:12; II Tim. 2:20; Rev. 21:18-21**). O what a joy it is for the Beloved to feast His eyes on His lovely bride displaying and reflecting "**gold**" - the beauty of the Lord Himself. Then, He allows the gold in us to be seen by others so that they might be attracted to Himself through us!

"with studs of silver."

The Lord also wants to adorn us with "**silver**". Silver represents atonement, redemption (**Ex. 36:24 and 30:15**). The boards that surrounded the Tabernacle had an enormous amount of silver as the foundation. Think of the eternal weight of our sin and the indescribable cost of our redemption our Beloved had to pay! The boards are representative of believers. Our foundation is Christ (**I Cor. 3:11**). It is His redemption upon which we stand. What a joy it is for Him to see the silver of redemption a reality in our life: habits broken; deliverance from bondages; new attitudes and desires displayed. The order here is interesting, "**gold**" then "**silver**". The eternal, infinite, glorious God (**gold**) bought and redeemed us from our deadness to be His forever (**silver**)!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Bridegroom of my heart, may You alone be seen in my life. Holy Spirit I submit to You and to Your sword of transforming power so that Jesus may increase and I may decrease (**John 3:30**). May the gold and silver of Your character shine through me! Take my life and continue to transform it, especially the thoughts of my mind. As I submit my life to You in light of **Rom.12:1**, make **Rom. 12:2** and **II Cor.3:17,18** real in me as only You can. When I am called to stand before You may there be plenty of gold, silver, and precious stones found in the gift of life You implanted in me. I love You and thank You for revealing so much already to my heart from this love letter to me. I am looking forward to great changes in me as You allow me to experience Your blessed heart! In Your honored name Lord Jesus, amen!"*

The Bride responds:

V.12 "While the king sits at his table, my spikenard (perfume) sends forth the smell (fragrance) thereof."

The "**table**" represents fellowship and provision. Sitting implies a ceasing from all activities. If Jesus is your King in reality, then He will invite you to His table. Just you and Jesus together: talking, caring, and sharing. As you adore Him in spirit and through His Word, He, in turn, feeds your spirit with spiritual food from His Word that is too wonderful for description. You are so taken up with Him that a beautiful fragrance emanates from your innermost being. It is the presence of God on your life - the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The story about Mephibosheth and King David in **II Sam. 9:1-13** is a beautiful example of what it means to eat at the King's table. We who are spiritual cripples and grovel in fear in our own strength (Mephibosheth) have been made to sit with King Jesus at His table! His food, His intimate fellowship strengthen us (**John 12:3; II Cor. 2:15** and **Eph. 5:2**).

Let me strongly suggest for you to begin to practice the presence of God, with your Beloved. It is not difficult. Say with the Psalmist, "**I will meditate also of all thy work....**" (**Psa. 77:12**). "**Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.**" (**Psa. 19:14**). Read **Phil. 4:8**. Begin by planning a 5 minute time of silence. Make **Psa. 16:8** a daily reality, "**I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.**" Look at a verse about your Lord. Just sit in His presence thinking about it. Savor it. Practice His presence in light of **Prov. 3:6**.

Take out a poem or a hymn and just reflect and ponder on the words - maybe just on one stanza only. Sit quietly and in the silence of your heart tell Him, *"I love You with all of my heart!"* Speak to Him as the Lover of your soul. When couples are in love, many times they sit in quietness, snuggled up close to each other. Why? They are savoring the enjoyment of each other's presence! Love Him with a **"first love"**, love of silent quietness (**Psa. 62:5-8**).

"...sends forth the smell..."

We were never meant to only enjoy Jesus alone. He gives that others may see and know Him. When you are filled with Jesus the atmosphere around you will be filled with His fragrances. Can you imagine the glory of combined fragrances as we Mary's of Bethany worship Him together? Heaven must be filled with a joyful aroma filled with the love of God!

Again, go to Mary of Bethany's home (**John 12:1-7; Mark 14:1-9**). Mary lavished all of her love upon the Lord by giving Him what was most prized by her, spikenard worth ten months wages, about \$12,000 in modern value! She anointed His head and His feet. She wiped His feet with her hair, her glory. The fragrance filled the house. When you adore and worship your Bridegroom, that anointing fragrance will permeate the very place you live. No matter where Mary went that day, she carried the same fragrance Jesus now had. **Psa. 23:6** tells us what fragrances will follow us as we anoint Jesus' feet in loving submission to Him, ***"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."***

This is the goal of the gospel, to become a Mary of Bethany. Read **Mark 14:9**. It was so, so important that the Lord said this act of Mary's must be mentioned every time the gospel is preached. Why? A true salvation experience is to lead the believer in an all consuming love for Jesus no matter what others may say. We are to give Him the spikenard of our will - that which is most costly to us.

It is very important to see the order in this verse. Before the **"sending"** there must be the **"sitting"**! **"Sitting"** implies rest, peace, fellowship, and trust. Do you give Him what He wants? O how He loves this! When you sit at His table you cannot help but be changed and the fragrance of His presence will go with you the rest of the day!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, I will continually make available to You my body, soul, spirit and my time. Actually Lord they have been given to me on loan from You. I place them at Your complete disposal. My will is Your will dear Bridegroom of my heart! Take it all, I want it no other way! I will make time to sit with You at Your table, to have time together in loving fellowship around Your Word, in Your most wonderful name, Lord Jesus. Amen!"*

V.13 "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he (actually "it") shall lie all night betwixt my breasts."

When her Beloved had to leave on a journey, He gave her the myrrh, a part of Himself, so that sweet perpetual thoughts of His **"first love"** love for her would be close to her heart until He returned! She kept it **"between her breasts"**, so that the **"myrrh"** would be right next to her heart. She never wanted to forget the cost of the fragrance! She went to sleep enjoying the fragrance that spoke of Him; a constant reminder that *"He loves me and I can hear His quiet voice even now speaking it to my heart"*. She would wake up in the middle of the night and smell that fragrance; a reminder that He will be back soon to hold her.

But why **"myrrh"**, what's so special about it? **"Myrrh"** is obtained by crushing (or piercing)! Read **Isa. 53:5,10**. Think about it, Jesus, your Bridegroom, was **"crushed"** (Heb. word for **"bruised"**) for His bride's iniquities. **"Myrrh"** was used as part of the ceremonial purification of the women in the King's court (**Esther 2:12**).

Thus, it is symbolical of being set apart for your King (the meaning of sanctification, holiness). O to be set apart for Jesus so that your daily activities have true meaning (**Col. 3:23,24**). **"Myrrh"**, also, was used as a beauty aid. Is that not the glorious work of the Holy Spirit in your life while you sojourn down here, to change you into the image of Christ (**Rom. 8:29; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 2:20**)? Why? So that He could enjoy looking at your heart, that new creation, reflecting His beauty in those intimate, private times with Him alone. God, who is all beautiful, imparts His eternal beauty to you. It is being all dressed up in Jesus (**Gal.3:27**). **"Myrrh"** was used by royalty as a perfume for their garments (**Psa. 45:8**) and we are royal priests (**I Pet. 2:9**)! Praise God, He not only makes us His bride but also a holy priest to offer up Spirit-filled sacrifices of love, joy, praise, adoration and worship to our Abba Father! It also was used to alleviate pain (**Mk. 15:23**). Glory to God, He took all your eternal pain due your soul, ***"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows..."*** (**Isa. 53:4**). And He still carries our daily emotional and spiritual pain and sorrow even now (**I Pet. 5:7; I Cor. 10:13; Heb. 4:14-16**). Glory to God, the **"myrrh"** is complete for everything we need! How appropriate the Holy Spirit chooses **"myrrh"**

(Col. 2:10). What is the secret of having the **"myrrh"** spiritually placed nearest our heart? Simply surrender each situation to Him. It's all about surrender. When you surrender, the dear Holy Spirit places the bag of Jesus' **"myrrh"** around your neck! He saw this happening to you while He was on the cross. This is the joy which was set before Him (Heb.12:2).

What about you dear believer, do you have a spiritual bundle of **"myrrh"** next to your heart? Jesus is physically away right now, but O to wake up in the middle of the night and realize, *"He's coming soon to get me and take me home."* You smell the wonderful fragrance as thankful thoughts from the Holy Spirit flood through your soul. A precious pouch of **"myrrh"** has been given to you to remind you that He will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5)! He still speaks softly to you through His powerful anointed Word! Just one verse in the middle of the night brings peace! Thoughts of thankfulness pass through your Spirit-filled mind such as: your Beloved's death for you; the pure heart He has given to you; the healing of painful memories and sicknesses; the beauty of peace He has brought into your life! Praise Your Holy name Lord Jesus!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Holy Spirit, stir up the fragrance of His 'myrrh' over my heart so that I'll always be faithful to keep my eyes on Him alone. Cause the voice of the 'myrrh' to speak to my heart! May all know Lord that You alone are the satisfaction of my life. Lord, the night is almost over. I anxiously await Your coming! In Jesus' name, amen."*

V.14 "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of Camphire (henna blossoms) in the vineyards of Engedi."

Henna was a plant that grew to a height of seven to ten feet and was very valuable in the making of an orange-red dye. It produced beautiful white fragrant flowers which the ladies loved to wear and to use in decorating their homes. This same Hebrew word also has the meaning, *"the price of a life or ransom"*. What a cost for us to be resurrected in spirit and soul! We were ugly, dead weeds owned by another! Then our Beloved paid the price and planted us in His garden where He, the water of life and the nutrients of His living Word, turned our life from a barren wilderness into a resurrected garden.

Flowers speak of new life, beauty, testimony, resurrection. It is interesting that Jesus prayed in a garden (Mt. 26:36); was crucified in a garden, was buried and rose in a garden (John 19:41) so that our heart would become His garden. What kind of garden will it become? The Holy Spirit will reveal all the glorious details to you in 4:12-15; 5:1!

Praise God, Jesus is the *"henna blossoms"* of your heart! You, who loved darkness, now have been transformed into His lovely bride! Hallelujah! The **"myrrh"** in v. 13 was hidden, representing that intimate private devotional life you have with the Beloved. The henna flowers were worn to be seen!

Do you only think of Him in secret or is the resurrected Bridegroom seen in your daily walk and talk through the power of a submissive, spirit-filled life? (Prov. 3:5) O how the world needs to see the Henna flowers in your life (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27).

Think about this for a moment, in your speech and in your manner of living, how much attention do you bring to yourself? How much attention is brought to Jesus? In other words, is your lifestyle such that the manner in actions and attitudes reflect Him? You won't even be aware of it but others will! They will know there is something very different, very beautiful about you which they themselves do not possess. It's the henna blossoms being observed in your life.

The Holy Spirit will begin to draw them to the Lord who is inside of you. Does His Holy Spirit life flow through you automatically (John 7:38,39) to refresh Him first then to others around you? It happens most of the time without you realizing it because you are simply surrendered to Him!

"...in the vineyards of Engedi."

Engedi was on the edge of the Wilderness of Judah. A hot spring there provided an abundance of fresh water. It was a place where God defeated the enemies of Judah (II Chr. 20:2). This was a place of plentiful grapes and fruits in the wilderness. Jesus, the Beloved, is your Engedi in the wilderness! (John 10:10; Eph. 3:20).

He is peace for the angry; love for the hated; joy for the sad; healing for the wounded; fulfillment for the empty and so much more! He is the vine of Engedi (John 15:5)! Dear reader, daily surrendering in heart to the Lord causes His Holy Spirit fruit to produce heavenly fruit on your branch. Your vineyard (the responsibilities of life God has chosen you to be part of - family, school, marriage, work place, church, etc.) will be fruitful (Col. 3:12-17, 23-24)! Meditate and be thankful for the following spiritual absolutes: Eph. 1:3; Phil. 4:13,19; Col. 1:17; 2:19; 3:11; Heb. 1:3.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, engrave the adorning of Your Son upon my heart. Your spiritual vineyards are so plentiful, I ask You to adorn me with my Beloved's henna flowers so all can see that I truly love Him only."*

"My beloved is to me a cluster..."

There is nothing boring about your God and never will be! Your Beloved is your multifaceted Bridegroom. He is so many things for so many situations and needs: the Image of God; the Word; the Creator; Judge; Prince of Peace; Healer; Counselor; Sustainer; Shepherd; Bread; Life; Savior; Lord; King of kings and Lord of lords; Husband; Jehovah; Omnipresent; Prince of Peace; Rock; Wonderful; Sacrifice; Truth and on and on. The "**cluster**" is endless and you will be given an eternity to pick, taste and have revealed to your heart His glorious attributes. There will be "**clusters**" of secrets revealed that not even the heavenly hosts will be privy to. Why? Because we are His bride, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, (a new body), mind of His mind (we have the mind of Christ **I Cor. 2:16**) and spirit of His Spirit (He indwells us)! Wow!

Have you noticed the "**cluster**" of descriptions springing forth from her innermost being concerning Him in all of these verses (**12-14,16**)? Visualize a cluster of grapes with me. Consider how close they are to each other and to the vine. They are so close together that they must rub up against each other. May we have pure relationships with each other so that the cluster may be pure. There is a sad thought here of warning. As we remove rotten or unattractive grapes from a cluster, so also the Lord must do the same (**I Cor. 11:30**). Think for a moment what it must mean to Him when the Holy Spirit gathers together only Mary's of Bethany. O what a pure, heavenly cluster it must be to Him and all the angels He brings with Him so they may look in wonder at His glorious new redeemed who are in love with Him, His bride!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Thank You Abba Father for filling me with Your Spirit. You have already given to me intimate revelation knowledge concerning the Lord Jesus Who is the joy of my life. I have barely begun this love letter and You have already opened my spirit to things too wonderful to describe. Abba Father, I give You all the praise!"*

She has touched the deepest recesses of His "**first love**" loving heart with the "**cluster**" of the full, heartfelt love pouring forth from her lips! The bride had responded to His words (**vs. 9-11**). For a moment He is speechless. He just looks into her eyes and sees a spiritual brightness in them that He had never seen before. Dear reader, do you realize that you do the same to Him when you pour your heart out in worship to Him and acknowledge Him in all things (**Prov. 3:5-6**)? He takes both of her hands in His and with love filled words says,

V.15 "Behold, thou art fair (beautiful), my love (precious companion), behold, thou art fair (beautiful); thou hast dove's eyes."

His heart is so full of love for her. Dear bride of His heart, He is saying these words to you! Did you ever imagine that your heavenly Bridegroom could feel this deeply about you? Think about it, just her words have such a great effect on Him. So much so that all He can say, over and over again, is "*You are beautiful, you are beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful!*" He pauses and again He says in a quiet, very contemplative tone, "*Yes...beautiful.*" Do you find it too difficult to believe? Listen to these words from **Isa. 62:5**, "**...and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.**"

So many believers take and take of His love and seldom give it back to Him. They take the Lover of their souls, Who has provided everything for them, for granted! These believers have gotten "used to" the Lord. He no longer is fresh and vibrant in their thinking and meditation. O the sad condition of the Lord's bride today.

Her hands are so busy with temporal things and her eyes so easily distracted by the meaningless (hours of TV, videos, games etc.)! Spending so much time even on what is considered legitimate, yet it crowds out the best time for fellowship with her heavenly Husband.

The Beloved Jesus longs for that special, sustained look from His bride's eyes. But alas, He only receives a quick glance on the weekend when she goes to hear a sermon. It is then He hears her saying in passing, "*Hi*" and "*goodbye*" or "*I'll catch you later in an emergency.*" That's why His soul cries out for "**first love**" love from you and me!

Earlier I spoke of you being His joy because of what this verse says, "**...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...**" (**Heb. 12:2**). What joy is this? It is you dear bride, loving Him with an all-consuming "**first love**" love. What joy this brings to His loving heart! The lady in **v.15** is so special to Him that He uses the form of a Hebrew word nine times which is exclusive to the Song of Solomon ("**rayah**" - "**my love**" and not the usual word for "**love**" - "**aheb**" **1:9,15; 2:1,10,13; 4:1,7; 5:2; 6:4**). It has a meaning of "*intimate companion*". It is a word for her alone, much like those words shared between husband and wife that only they understand. Think of it, we have the closest relationship possible with God Almighty; closer than the angels, cherubim and seraphim! The Beloved is so filled with emotion for her that He has to repeat it "**my love**", "**my love**" ("**darling, precious companion**")! Praise God that a surrendered heart so affects your Bridegroom's heart! He now looks into her eyes and says,

"...thou hast doves eyes."

She is beautiful because she has "**dove's eyes**". Dove's eyes are mentioned six times in the Song of Solomon. They mean so much to your Beloved. These are eyes that only concentrate on one thing at a time. He was all of her vision! Her eyes never moved off of Him. In her daily life, with a myriad of decisions, she would filter all of them through His eyes. The more she looked into His eyes the more she began to read His heart. She just knew what to do after looking at them. Listen to Him, "**I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.**" (Psa. 32:8). How do you gaze into His eyes? When you gaze into His holy Word then you will hear the voice of His Spirit within your heart and mind!

O the fullness of the spiritual application of the dove. It was considered clean and could be used in sacrifice (Lev.1:14). Are you a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1,2)? Some doves have a mourning sound when their mate is away (Isa. 38:14; Nah. 2:7). Do you mourn when you know you are not in His will? Do you mourn over this old sinful earth because it has rejected your Beloved? Do you long for His return to rule this world?

It was a dove that brought back good news to Noah in the ark (Gen. 8:8-12). Is faith and love your good news (1 Thes.3:6)? Do people see Jesus, the Good News, in your eyes, in your countenance? The Holy Spirit is likened to a dove (John 1:32). Are the characteristics of one who is Spirit-filled evident in your life (Eph. 5:18-21)? O how He loves to see His Holy Spirit in your eyes! Having your spiritual eyes focused on Him is simply being surrendered in heart to His word! (Heb. 12:2)

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Father, cause the eyes of my heart to be fixed on the only love of my heart, Jesus, my Bridegroom! O Holy Spirit I want so much to please Him alone! May You Lord always be able to look into my eyes and see a reflection of Yourself! May You see doves in my gaze. In Your glorious name Lord Jesus, amen."

The Bride responds:

V.16 "Behold, thou art fair (beautiful) my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed (couch) is green."

Notice that she does not get taken up with what He sees in her. She doesn't say, "You know, He is right, I really do look pretty good." O how easy it is to fall into the trap of pride after the Lord has blessed us and spiritually dressed us up in Him (Gal. 3:26,27)! May it never be so (Rom. 12:3)! May you never be taken up with the gifts and talents He has given to you. Never get your eyes on the ministry the Holy Spirit has led you into. Spiritual success is never achieved because you are something but because He is everything in it (Zech. 4:6; Isa. 6:3; John 15:5).

As He looked into her eyes, the Beloved keenly observed that her eyes were truly dove's eyes! This verse proves it to Him. She does not see herself but only His beauty. Whatever spiritual beauty she possesses she knows it came from His hand only - the gold and silver ornaments, jewels and various fragrances, were all given to her by the Holy Spirit from the Father (v.11). Our God is to receive all the glory! (Jude 1:25).

"...our bed is green."

The Hebrew word for "**green**" here gives forth the idea of "*luxuriant or fresh*". O to have a fresh relationship with Him each day. "**Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.**" (Lam. 3:22,23)

Notice it is "**our**" couch, not "*mine*" or "*your*". May it always be "**our**" _____ and you fill in the blank. O the uniting of two hearts as one! There is nothing more beautiful than being one with our Lord (John 17:21-23). This is having the mind of Christ. His will is your will. The couch speaks of rest, contentment, peace and fellowship (Phil. 4:6,7, 11; Psa. 23). What a wonderful scene, the Bridegroom and the bride are quietly sitting together enjoying one another in the Holy Spirit. Do you have this dear believer? Can you hear the bride saying to herself, with His arms around her? "O how I love to be with Him here; resting with Him; secure in Him. My heart is filled with love for Him and O He knows it without me saying one word to Him." These private times are times of unspeakable joy. Can you say, "Our couch is luxuriant."? Or do you ever take much time to sit quietly with Him and rest awhile? (Mk. 6:31).

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Lord Jesus, may I never be so busy that my mind is occupied with everything but You. Cause my mind to be focused on You all day long even in the activities that I must complete! I long to sit with You on our couch! I love You alone. May my eyes be dove's eyes for You forever! In Jesus' name, amen!"

V.17 "The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir (cypress)."

Both of these trees are evergreen trees. Even in the winter they exude a very pleasant fragrance! Praise God for those believers who constantly have their Beloved's fragrance in all kinds of spiritual weather! Evergreens do not change!

The surrendered bride can count on her Beloved to never change (**Heb. 13:8**). Can He count on us to never change in our deep love for Him? Cedars grow to over one hundred feet tall. They are strong and stately, rot-resistant and knot-free.

What a picture of our Beloved who is eternal and without sin (**Heb. 13:7**). He indwells our temple (house - (**I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 3:20-21**). His strength is our strength (**Phil. 4:13**). His purity is our purity (**I John 3:3**). His royalty is our royalty (**I Pet. 2:9**). His authority is our authority (**Eph. 2:6; James 4:7**). The cypress is a hard and durable wood. Our Beloved is our Rock on which the spiritual foundation of this house stands (**Mt. 7:24; Isa. 44:8; I Cor. 3:11**). What a spiritual house! Hallelujah! Read **Eph. 2:19-22**! Notice again, the word "**our**" is used! He is such a sharing Husband. Without Jesus none of the above would be found in our soul or spirit! It is all given to us. It is all of grace. Praise God for **Eph. 1:3**!

But it is only "**our house**" because He takes us as His bride. Without my Bridegroom there would be no house! Without Jesus all I have in myself is an empty, worthless, dirty, run down, old shanty! Think of it, when the Holy Spirit comes in a transformation begins to take place – from a miserable shack to a magnificent temple! Think about His house (**I Cor. 6:19** -temple). It is a place of: beauty (**Psa. 27:4**), abundance (**Psa. 36:8**), sweet fellowship (**Psa. 55:14**), goodness and satisfaction (**Psa. 65:4**), planting and flourishing (**Psa. 92:12,13**), blessing (**Psa. 118:26**), gladness (**Psa. 122:1**), prayer (**Lk.19:46**) and spiritual sacrifices (**I Pet. 2:5**), Jesus, our High Priest, is over God's house (**Heb. 10:21**). We are so precious to Him that He takes up residence in us and we become His house! Wow!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Bridegroom, thank You for the spiritual house You have made of my spirit! You were repulsed by the condition of my house when You prayed in the garden. You despised the shame of my house when You were on the cross, yet You came in and cleaned up the filth and made it fit so You and I could have intimate fellowship! You took a completely worthless spirit unfit for even the lowest of Your angels to inhabit and by Your blood, the power of Your Spirit and the washing of the water of Your Word a beautiful, spiritual mansion has been created in me. I worship! I adore! I bow down! I surrender to You, O my Abba, O my Beloved! In Jesus, the name of the high priest over the house of my heart (**Heb.10:19-21**)!"*

Over and over and over it is "**our**"! He could have easily said, "**My**" and rightly so. It is all of Him – we had nothing to do with it at all. It is a gift of His infinite love and grace for us His bride! But no, He says "**our**". Doesn't that speak to your heart of what kind of Husband He is? He wants to provide everything for the bride He loves to be with. He just wants to love on us all the time in the midst of a cruel and wicked world. The "**rafters**" speak of strength, safety, security. They hold the house together and give it stability. It protects us from the outside elements such as rain, snow, heat, dust, hail, lightning etc. **Col. 1:17** says, **"...and by Him all things consist (hold together)."** Glory to God! The surrendered life makes Him **"...our rafters..."**. He is the Bride's protection from the enemy!

Overwhelmed with unspeakable joy, she rushes to put her arms around her Beloved and says, "**My heart is so full of love for You My dear Beloved Bridegroom! You have provided everything for me (Eph. 1:3). O my Love You really have made me a dwelling place where You can reside forever. And You have made Your heart so big that I can live in there forever. O I love you so much, I feel as if I am going to burst!**" Yes, the enemy will battle us and he will bring hurt because he hates Jesus inside of your house, but it will not do ultimate damage (**Isa. 54:17**). Decorate your house with the armor of God (**Eph. 6:10-17**), then when the enemy comes, sit at your Bridegroom's table (**Psa. 23:5**) and pray **Eph. 6:18** that the armor is activated.

With her head leaning on His breast, He holds her tightly and responds... "**Yes, My beautiful bride, I love to be with you, and you are absolutely right for I have built a new house (heart) inside of you so I can live in you! That means I'll always be with you (Ezk. 36:25-27; Deut. 31:6,8)! I am consumed with love for you My bride. I desire intimate fellowship with you now and throughout eternity. I really love you with all of My heart. Never, never doubt it. Just look at My hands and there will be no question in your soul about My love (Isa. 49:15-16)!"** As the Beloved gets ready to step into this special dwelling place, He pauses and with a look of pride on His face says to angels observing in wonderment, "**This is OUR house!**"

PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK, THERE ARE SOME WONDERFUL SPIRITUAL CLUSTERS FROM WHICH TO PICK. YOUR BRIDEGROOM IS ANXIOUSLY WAITING. SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.