

THE DANGER OF HESITATION WHEN HE CALLS 5:2 – 5:5

AN OVERVIEW OF 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 had 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.

Between 5:1 and 5:2 there is a time lapse. The wonderful experiences she and her Beloved received in the garden needed time to be savored. A few days later the Lord knocks on the door of her heart once again. But this time it is for a different reason. He knew that she no longer had a problem of going with Him for she had gone with Him to Amana, Hermon and Shenir. It was now time to test her commitment on the mount of Myrrh and the hill of Frankincense to see if she will go with Him even at an inconvenient time! Notice her restlessness as the bride speaks...

V.2 "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of night.'"

There is a warning to us hidden in this verse. She falls asleep after having experienced ultimate joy when all the choice fruit and spices of her garden were accepted by her Beloved. You might ask, "*What is wrong with her going to sleep, she had done that before in 2:7 and again in 3:5?*" Upon closer examination of the passages in **chapters two and three** you will notice an important difference. He was present and had directed her to sleep! However, in this verse His words are conspicuously absent!

There is a time for spiritual rest but only when the Lord gives that permission to do so and He will be right there in intimate fellowship to see to it that the sleep is true rest for your soul.

After this wonderful mountaintop experience (4:9 – 5:1) she did what so many do, lean upon the experience rather than keeping focused on the Lord Himself. Yes, we are to absolutely enjoy the blessings. We are never to forget them! There will be times the Holy Spirit will bring them back to our remembrance to be strengthened for a new step of faith. However, the bride here decided to go to sleep not realizing that her Beloved had left. Her sleep was not very restful, for her heart was awake. The Holy Spirit began to disturb the bride's sleep in order to get her attention. She was uncomfortable and restless! At this point the bride should have inquired of the Spirit, "*Is there something wrong? Are you trying to tell me something?*"

So often in our Christian walk we begin to unconsciously coast ever so slowly. Spiritually she is coasting! Instead of being out there ministering with Him, moving from grace to grace, glory to glory and blessing to blessing, she is sleeping. Ever so subtle a spirit of dullness has crept into her soul. Her spiritual discernment is being impaired. The voice of her Beloved is becoming less distinct. She is alone! He is away from her. We know this because He comes and knocks on her door.

Jesus longs to have her minister with Him. He knocks on the door of her heart. Praise God for His persistent grace and longing patience with her and with us. Will she open without hesitation? Dear blood-bought one, listen to the voice of your Beloved knocking at your heart's door, the door over which you had written, "**...wither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people...**" (Ruth 1:16). Will you respond? Will she? He pleads with her...

"...Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled..."

The Beloved Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, is so polite and courteous. Her heart has been purchased by His blood. He has every right to barge in, yet He still knocks. He will never force you to go with Him in ministering to others. He looks for a heart which will readily respond in love to Him! The implication of His request is that He wants her to leave and go with Him. Her response in v.3 indicates this is what she understood, but she was saying "*I don't want to go out because I will get my feet dirty!*"

How could one ever, ever hesitate with such love-filled words? Listen to His pleading, "Open to Me on the basis that I am your kinsman Redeemer ('sister')! Open to Me on the basis that you alone are the bride of My heart ('love')! Open to Me on the basis that you still have only eyes for Me alone ('dove')! Open to Me on the basis that your garden is pure ('undefiled')! Open your will fully to Me! Give to Me final and total access to your heart of faith. Step out and see the strength, peace, wonders and fulfillment awaiting you!" Will she rush to open the door of her will "...to Him whom her soul loveth"?

"...for my head is filled with dew..."

With the above words drawing at her heart to open to Him, the Beloved adds these words, "**my head is filled with dew**". He is reassuring her that He is filled with God (**Hosea 14:5**). He is saying by the reference to the "**dew**" that God's favor, His grace, will be with them continually (**Prov. 19:12**). He is "**filled**", meaning there is more than enough! Why would she hesitate? Her love is so great for Him, yet she hesitates. O my dear Christian friend, be careful about the "**little**" hesitations in your life when you definitely know your Lord is prompting and leading you to do something under His guiding anointing!

"...and my locks with the drops of night."

Earlier His friends were brought near to her to receive fruit from His garden (**5:1**). Now He wants to share her fruit with others far away (**7:11-12; 8:5**). He has been ministering in the night to those who are groping in the darkness. He is asking her to take a step of faith and be led by Him to the hurting, then she will give Him to them for their healing! Do you hear Him saying, "**...it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.**" (**Rom. 13:11-13**).

Lost men, women, boys and girls walking in darkness and yes, believers can also walk in darkness because of disobedience! He wants us to go out into their darkness with Him who is the light of the world. Will she respond? Will you? Jesus doesn't always "*show up*" at the most convenient times (the **Matt. 25:35-40** principle). Will you say "yes" to the Holy Spirit's gentle beckoning? Will she? Jesus stopped at a well in Samaria and He was weary (**John 4:6**). It was inconvenient for Him to take time with this woman but He did! The immediate rewards were tremendous. His hunger subsided. He received supernatural energy from Abba Father and was rewarded with great joy (**John 4:32-34**)!

If only she would go with Him and step out in loving, obedient faith for a whole new world of blessed intimacy and service awaits her! This is where He is escorting her all through this Song. He wants her to give His heart to others. His great joy is for Him to minister through us in blessed, intimate fellowship. You might be thinking that this approach here is really reading too much into the text. This is exactly what will take place later (**7:11-13; 8:5,8**)! For now, at least, there is a desire on her part to go with Him.

In **chapter two** He yearned for her to go with Him. Praise God this is a learning experience here for the bride and not condemnation. She will never be the same after this failure. It will lead her into a deeper, fully surrendered relationship. She excuses herself by saying...

V.3 "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

Listen carefully, and you will be able to hear a slight tone of irritation in her voice. Have you ever been somewhat "*put upon*" with an "*untimely*" request of the Lord to do something or go somewhere? You said in your heart, "*Lord, I don't mind doing it but not right now! I just need to sit and relax for a little while.*" But His voice quietly persisted, "*Open to Me and let Me take care of that irritation.*" You had no idea that a "**little leaven**" of hesitation has been sprinkled over your "*will*" (**Gal. 5:9**)! The sad result will be seen in **Song 5:7**! O the "**little leaven**" of my rights, rights of convenience. "*O Lord, expose the leaven so I will not begin a destructive, downward journey.*" She had taken off the coat of practical righteousness (**Isa. 61:10**). It was the mind of her old nature making the choice and not the mind of Christ! She asks, "**how shall I put it on**"? The answer is by declaring, "*Not my will but My Beloved's will!*" But alas, she continues with the excuses of leaven, "**I have washed my feet...**" Will He not wash her spiritual feet with the water of the Word when they are through ministering (**John 13:8-12; 15:3; Eph. 5:25,26**)?

Although she is truly surrendered in heart to Him and in no way wants someone else, the bride falls back into the trap of inconvenience which constantly pleads, "*not now, but later!*" We would never say it that way. We dress it up in a more spiritually acceptable tone. In **vs. 2 and 3** the little word "I" appears five times. She is saying to her Beloved, "*You know how much I love You but don't You see, I need to relax now and sleep? I thought You really cared for me! I want to spend some*

time reading Your Word before I go to sleep. I absolutely don't want to take another bath later!" Notice the words, "**my coat**" and "**my feet**!" She is in control of their use! They are not totally submitted to Him! Ministering to the Samaritan woman He met at the well was certainly inconvenient for Him. He was tired, weary and hungry! But He laid aside that which was of temporal importance to deal with the emptiness of a longing, hurting, wounded heart!

Lovingly He asks her, "Have you forgotten that I gave up all My rights (**Phil. 2:5,6**) for you My love?" Will she respond? Will you? Her concern about defilement is admirable, but a "little" defilement has taken place already in her hesitation to respond! So many of us think we are clean, when, in actuality, there is still spiritual dirt clinging to the feet of our will. Her spiritual feet, which were clean, have now become polluted. This wouldn't have happened if she had bound all decisions to the "**mind of Christ**" which is in her (**I Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5**). This is the mind which causes us to always make the right decisions!

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Lord, may I never, never hesitate in responding to Your prompting! I long to do Your will and Your will alone. Cause me to walk in Your ways (**Ezk. 36:27**). May my response always say, 'I love You with all of my heart. Your desire is my desire. In Jesus name, amen!'"

V.4 "My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels (feelings) were moved for Him!"

The doors were quite thick and had large holes in them where a person could reach through and unlock the door. Do you see the hand of your Bridegroom through the hole in your heart's door? Do you see the nail-scarred hand there, desiring a quick, loving response from you to go with Him? O how your Blessed Lord wants you to share in the work which He had already chosen just for you in eternity past (**Eph. 2:10**). There is no reason for reluctance. Our Omniscient God has the work all planned out and the dear Holy Spirit provides the power to accomplish it! Surely there will be no hesitation on her part! It is unthinkable!

Her emotions were moved because of His voice just as our feelings are touched when we read the Word of God and the voice of the precious Holy Spirit speaks to us through it. That should have been enough for an immediate, positive response to submit. But are stirred emotions enough to cause us to obey His voice and answer, "yes" to any request of our Bridegroom? No! The feelings, which she is experiencing, are from the soul. God made us with emotions. The Holy Spirit tells us in **Psa. 103** for our soul to bless Him with all that is within us. But emotions alone will not necessarily move her feet. An inalterable decision should have been made in her spirit long before this, that whenever her Beloved calls she would go, with no questions asked! Each day as we hug on Him during that special "first love, love" quiet time, by the Spirit we should look Him in the eyes and say once again, "My Husband, I will obey You today because of Your grace-filled, loved-filled heart for me which never changes!"

This indecision will cost her dearly. He will go away grieved having His purpose for her to share in His work unfulfilled. **Eph. 4:30** tells us that we can grieve the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ (**Rom. 8:9**). Previously when asked by the Beloved to go with Him she declined because of the desire to have Him just for herself alone. That decision brought on an unexpected and fearful separation (**2:17**). Since that time her heart has changed. She will go with Him but only at a convenient time. The good news is, the bride does arise and goes to the door. All seems well, but is it?

V.5 "I rose to open to my Beloved; and my hand dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet myrrh, upon the handles of the lock."

The door handles smelled of myrrh. His nail scarred hand had touched it leaving a reminder of the cross there. She loved that fragrance. It had become so much a part of her life since going to the mountain of Myrrh. Her heart beats faster as she detected the scent of the myrrh. O how well she knew what it meant. It was the symbol of total and complete love for her and how He had shed His blood for her sins making her heart beautiful. That very moment blessed thoughts of His infinite, giving heart raced through her mind. "O my Beloved, I see the cup Your Father offered to You in the garden. Dear, dear Lord You saw my dirty soul in that cup, then, without hesitation, You reached forth Your hand to take the cup of wrath, knowing full well what it meant! You went to the mountain of Myrrh for me. It was a bitter taste to You, but it was there that You placed the very costly myrrh on my soul. I remember skipping and jumping all the way down to the hill of frankincense in holiness. Thank You, thank You my Love!" Her heart, bursting with excited love for Him, couldn't wait to put her arms around Him and say, "I love You so much for Calvary and the myrrh!" As she put on her garments the bride raises her voice in panic, "My Beloved, I'm coming! I will be there in just a minute! Wait! Please Wait!" Instead of joy there would be shock and dismay as she said...

V.6a "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone..."

She gets to the door quickly! Her heart pounds anticipating the joy of His fellowship. She opens the door with great anticipation calling out to Him, *"Here I am my Beloved!"* Her heart sinks! He's gone! She runs outside shouting, *"I am here, don't, don't leave me! I'll go with You! I'm sorry I hesitated, I won't do it again!"* But there is no answer, just the quiet sounds of the night! Tears fill her eyes as she shouts over and over again, *"He's gone!" "He's gone!"* Sharp pains pierce her heart and mind. The depressing realization hit her, *"I have deeply wounded Him!"*

Howling winds of doubt begin to swirl in her mind! *"Will He come back? If He does, how long will I have to wait?"* The enemy of her thought life begins to build a stronghold there. Thoughts rush through her mind, *"He won't come back, I have deeply grieved my Love! There is no way He will ever want me again! It's too late!"* Despair floods her soul! She cries out, *"O my soul why, why did I hesitate? I'm so sorry Lord, I hurt You again."* Weeping and sobbing uncontrollably, she falls asleep. A cold, spiritual distance begins to creep into her heart. He now seems so far, far away! The hurt is so much greater than before.

She awakes from an uneasy sleep realizing all over again what she had done. O the pain of the voice of her heart, *"No! No! No! It can't be! He's gone, really gone! O my Love how could I have done this to You? How could I give You the impression that I did not want to be with You anymore; that You were not worthy of my immediate obedience and attention? What can I do to change what has happened? I love You so much and now You're gone! My Love, please, please give me just one more opportunity. In anguish my heart cries for You!"* The Lord has to allow her to go through this terrible emptiness so she will never again permit the leaven of her will to detract and divert her from the blessed filling and sensitivity of the Holy Spirit.

That very moment the enemy came rushing to speak to her mind. *"Yes, you blew it, He no longer loves you. You are worthless. He will find someone else who really loves Him. He knew that your heart was just a lie. The fruit He saw in your garden was just an illusion. What good are you?"* Oh, these terrible, evil lies from the enemy; the enemy bombards her mind over and over again with them. Were it not for the unseen angels holding on to her she would have been entirely crushed in despair. (**Psa. 91:11-12**). A confusing cloud of darkness sweeps over her soul.

We cannot open to the Lord whenever we *"feel"* like it. There is a line that is crossed by the well-intentioned believer which derails their walk with the Lord for a time and brings much needless agony, emptiness and distress. All of the pain this bride will go through could have been avoided if she had kept her heart and eyes on **"Him whom her soul loves"**.

Learn a great lesson here. What seems to be a meaningless act of reluctance may turn out to be an extremely painful experience. Be on the alert for a little *"leaven"* creeping in. May your heart be sensitive to that *"quiet, gentle voice"* of the Holy Spirit warning you of danger. Weigh carefully every decision you make, for it can cost you days, months or even years of blessed fellowship and walking in Abba Father's plan for your life. The more you are in love with Him, the more responsive you will be to His voice!

Notice that there is activity in her walk **"I rose up to open"** and there is correct action **"I opened to my beloved"**. What caused this lack of sensitivity to His loving invitation to go and minister with Him to those hurting in the darkness? Possibly she was coasting on the great blessing which had just taken place a few days before, where her heart garden was totally pleasing to Him. She was now leaning on the blessing and not the Blessor! It is so easy to do that. Yes, we are to savor the joy of being used as a blessing by Him for His heart and others. Yet, we are never to take our eyes of worship off of Him. At least the lady in this long song is quick to repent. Read **Heb. 12:1-3** once again. The answer to all of our needs is to keep our eyes upon Jesus! It's not how much we know about the Word! It's how often we keep our gaze upon Him!

V.6b "...my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer."

Look at her heart, she immediately realizes what she has done and begins to search for Him in the streets, *"...I sought him, but I could not find him..."*. This bride, who has brought so much joy to His heart, is now wandering the streets of Jerusalem. There is grief and pain in her voice, *"My Beloved, where are You? Please, please answer me! I'm so sorry for what I have done! I need You more than ever before! Please let me hear Your voice!"* But there was no answer. The agony within would be enough suffering in itself, but now there will be excruciating pain from without. She will be confronted with hurt as never before! Yes, she had changed her mind and went to the door. But that was not enough! She calls out to Him again and again, but all she hears is an unbearable, deafening silence. O how hard it is to read these words, **"...he gave me no answer"**. (Please read all of **Psa. 6**, in your tears He will hear!)

He had left and moved on in the divine schedule of ministry. The Beloved had to be some other place at a specific time to meet the needs of others and fellowship with them. He deeply desired for her to share in all this glory (**John 17:22**).

Previously the attention of her heart had been wholly on Him, but now she lingered too long on self-rights to minister with Him. There is a place in your Christian life when your Beloved calls on you to, "...**endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**" (II Tim. 2:3). It might be in the middle of the night but you will go with Him. His arm will be around you all the way. (However, for now the tears continue: **Psa. 31:9; 38:10; 88:9.**)

Why would He not wait? Because her hesitation was sin! With all the blessings she had experienced thus far, the bride should have responded to her Beloved immediately! Think of all the love-filled compliments lavished on her from His heart! Think of the description of her heart garden by Him! Think of the fruit which was enjoyed by Him and shared with others! What a spiritually productive life! Yet, there was hesitation. This was no spiritual baby. This was a full grown, surrendered believer who should have known better. He is going to allow her to experience a few moments without Him again to let her know the dangers of hesitation. He is cleansing her. She will never be the same again. An incredible intimacy awaits her from which she will never turn back. Praise God, **Psa. 116:8** will soon become true of her.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Holy Spirit please have such control of my will that I will never hesitate at the voice of my Beloved. Cause me to be so sensitive with my spiritual ear that I will be able to hear His slightest movement. O Lord Jesus I never want to hurt You as this lady must have. Father, I ask You to grant this for it would glorify You and Your Son (John 14:13,14). In Jesus' name, amen."*

THE DESPERATION AND DEPRESSION OF LONELINESS 5:7 – 5:8

V.7 "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me."

Can this really be happening to one who has had such a beautiful heart garden; to one who has been so intimate with her Beloved? This verse presents a terrible scene and yes, it can happen to the dearest Christian who decides not to obey the voice of the Beloved. She has a double problem: first, it is her emotions (v.6) for the bride cannot find Him in her desperate search. As the watchmen attacked her, a dark cloud of fear and loneliness enclosed her. Second, the enemy has been given opportunity to attack her unmercifully through well-intentioned "spiritual" leaders. The very people who should be helping her, the enemy uses.

Hear what the Lord has to say to those shepherds who hurt His flock, **Jer. 23:1 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture! declares the LORD."**

"The watchmen that went about the city found me..."

At first sight she was relieved to see the watchmen. She thought, "Maybe they will help me once again." But in their eyes was not help, but anger and judgment. Hope turned into fear as they approached. The watchmen represent those who care for the Lord's sheep in some way. It speaks of them in **Heb. 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls..."**. She who needs comfort and guidance from the watchmen, will only receive scorn and punishment. These watchmen had previously given her direction (**3:3**), but now, they have become angry and disgusted with her. One of the watchmen thought, "Has she not learned her lesson? Is she spiritually stupid?" How sad that these "**watchmen**" immediately judged her without an honest, caring inquiry in hopes of restoring her (**Gal. 6:1,2**).

"...they smote me, they wounded me..."

They remind me of Job's friends who wept with him for seven days (**Job 2:11-13**), then began to beat him unmercifully with their words of condemnation (**Job chapters 11,15,18,22**)! Amazing how ready they were to quickly pounce on this lady! Harsh, unloving, critical, sarcastic words "**smite**" and "**wound**" so many believers who have sinned. How sad that many counselors (pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, etc.) in the church are quick to condemn if their advice is not obeyed! Yes, there is need for discipline in the church. But we had better be careful how it is administered! Do we want to crush or restore the spirit of the offender? Is the problem pride in the counselor because the advice was seemingly not heeded? Where is **Gal. 6:1,2** in all of this? "**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**"

Verbal blow after verbal blow is brought against her! Finally the beatings and the insults cease and the "**watchmen**" and "**keepers**" of the wall stand there looking at this pitiful sight satisfied she will never be that brainless again!

"...the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me."

They rip her veil from her face. These keepers are now going to expose her sin for all to see. The watchmen thought, "Maybe others will get the message that they had better listen to 'spiritual' correction the first time or suffer the consequences." How sad that they did not heed **Prov. 10:12**, "**Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.**". A loose word from our lips can make it so difficult for an erring believer to be properly restored. The enemy of our souls loves to have the "**veil**" torn away and expose our sin to those who are younger or less mature in the Lord. Even if the one corrected returns, many times there is a coldness from those who formerly were warm in their relationship. All those who truly counsel must keep the "**walls**" up in order to protect the hurting believer. Love does not expose another's sin but keeps it within the spiritual confines of only those who need to know, bringing the offender into restoration. How often "**spiritual**" Christians expose the sin to others by saying, "You need to pray for brother.....! Did you know he.....?" It's called "gossip" in all of its ugliness.

As she lies there spiritually bleeding, the cold and darkness of night fell around her. She is left unveiled out on the street with her shame exposed for all to see. The enemy of her soul comes quickly to attack her mind. The sharp arrow of self condemnation pierces her soul with such accusing thoughts as, "You deserve all of this! You are worthless! The best thing you can do is to end it all. No one will ever care for you again. You can't even go back to your own country for they have been shamed with what you have done! Nobody cares for you! Just end it all." What a lie from the lips of the enemy! Dear Christian, don't ever entertain such attacks against your mind. Do battle (**II Cor. 10:3-5**). Begin to praise Him no matter what state you are in (**Psa. 8:2; Matt. 21:16**). Quote the Word in faith (**Jer. 31:3**, etc.).

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Father, thank You for making me a gift to Your Son even in my horrible sin-sick condition. Thank You dear Lord Jesus that You would never insult Your Father by trashing His gift to You (me) (**John 6:37,39; 10:28,29**). Thank You Holy Spirit that all three of You care so deeply for me and are transforming me more and more into Jesus' beautiful image!"

As the light of morning dawns the daughters of Jerusalem appear on the street going to get water from the public well. They stop and cannot believe what they see. Astonished, one of them remarked, "*It looks like the King's beloved wife. It can't be! Impossible!*" They hear a moaning sound coming from this unveiled, beaten woman. With tears of unbearable shame streaming down her cheeks she tries to explain to the daughters (those palace ladies who served her **v.8**) just why they have found her in this frightful and appalling condition. Can you not feel the utter pathos in her voice as she personally recounts to them what was done to her by the "**watchmen**" and the disgrace of not going with her Beloved?

This sobbing lady, bruised all over her body ("**wounded**" Heb. "*to bruise*") tries to explain to the women why she does not have her veil (shawl) and appears as a common prostitute! She blurts out a word or two, then more sobs, broken sentences punctuated with convulsive crying. All they could really make out was her mournful, repentant heart saying, "*I'm so sorry my Beloved! I'm so sorry! Please forgive me! I am so utterly alone without You!*" Cradling the bride in their arms the daughters lift her up, give her water, brush her hair back, bind up her wounds and lovingly embrace her. Her sobbing then begins to ease.

Dear loved one of Jesus, what would you do under these circumstances? Would you give up and say, "*It's not worth the effort anymore, why stay where I am not wanted? He won't love me in this condition anyway for I have violated His heart's purpose for me and now I have been spiritually violated by those I thought really cared for me. How could He love me looking so spiritually repulsive?*" Many believers in this condition will simply stay home away from fellowship. But this will not be the case with this truly surrendered bride. If she had been a quitter, she would have missed the glorious blessing of **chapters six, seven and eight!** This is exactly what your enemy wants you to do, have nothing to do with fellow believers. God has given you spiritual love to pass on to others in the body of Christ (**Eph. 4:16**). If you give up you will have fallen into Satan's trap!

Praise God, this lady in the Song teaches us what it truly means to love Jesus with all of our heart! She doesn't quit! She was persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed (**II Cor. 4:7-9**)! You see, she has a treasure inside of her! Many would have given up Christian fellowship under less difficult circumstances to never return.

And now, the bride asks one of the most important questions of her life in the next verse. Keep in mind that although she has been totally devastated, physically and emotionally, the eyes of her spirit are immediately focused on her Beloved and not her circumstances! In a pitiful, deeply distressed tone she pleads with the daughters...

V.8 "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem if ye find my beloved that ye tell him, that I am sick of love."

(paraphrase: "*my heart is breaking!*")

The word "**sick**" is also translated "*to grieve*" or "*faint*". The prospect of losing Him is so intense and her love is so great for Him that she is on the verge of fainting with grief. In such a terrible physical and emotional condition her spirit still longs for Him! Notice that there is not a word of bitterness toward those who heaped such indignities upon her. In her heart she is living out the forgiveness of **Eph. 4:31,32** and **Mt. 6:14**. She forgives those who have hurt her, so that her Beloved will forgive her.

How often have surrendered believers been wounded deeply in their spirit by a spouse, a son or daughter, a parent, a friend, a church minister or fellow worker? It is almost unbearable as **Prov. 18:14** proclaims, "**...but a wounded spirit who can bear?**" Praise our God, she remembers her Beloved has carried all of her sorrows and griefs (**Isa.53:4,5**). She can forgive as He did on the cross. The Lord Jesus allowed the Father to forgive through Him when He cried out, "**...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.**" (**Luke 23:34**)! When you find it almost impossible to forgive a terrible wrong done to you, allow the Lord to forgive through you. Just say in your heart, "*Lord, I allow You to forgive (name of person) through me as You did to Your persecutors while hanging on the cross. Your forgiveness is my forgiveness since I am one with You dear Lord (John 17:22)*!"

Upon what do you dwell when passing through a deep valley of testing? Is it the hurt itself (self pity)? Is it the people from whom the affliction came (bitterness, revenge)? Or is it upon your Beloved alone (for forgiveness, healing and strength)?

The Holy Spirit will direct her thoughts back to the Beloved by having her answer a question asked by the daughters of Jerusalem. What is about to take place will change her life and enhance her relationship with Him forever. She will be so changed that He will not have to ask her to go with Him again. Instead, she will ask Him to go (**chapter 7**)! This is the spiritually defining moment in her life!

THE DRAWING OF HER HEART BACK TO HIM: 5:9 - 6:3

(The Daughters of Jerusalem speak)

V.9 "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest (most beautiful) among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?"

To their credit they did not judge and condemn her. The Daughters of Jerusalem knew who the Beloved was and that He had a special place in His heart for His beautiful bride (**2:7; 3:5,10,11**). They knew about Him from what they had heard from the virgins who also served the bride.

They are asking a very serious and important question concerning the Beloved. The bride is in terrible condition. She is almost unrecognizable. So to make sure that she is the one they had served in the palace, they ask a very probing question. These daughters well know what He looks like. If she is the bride it will be no trouble to give an accurate description. What the bride and these daughters don't realize is, this description will be more than they bargained for. It will be a soul changing revelation to all! The answer will restore her to the Beloved once and for all. As the bride describes the greatness of His person and the wonders of His heart, their souls will be drawn to Him as never before.

Dear bride of the King, what would be your response to their question? Would you only say that Jesus is your Savior and leave it at that? O He is so much more, yet very few Christians are able to give more than just a simple answer to this question, "*Who is your Beloved?*" The Holy Spirit will bring to her memory awesome thoughts of her Beloved's greatness and glory. Now, in her direst need, these memories will miraculously bring restoration to His presence and lead the daughters to pure joy!

In the moment of crisis what has been planted in your heart will surface as **Prov. 23:7** declares, "**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...**"! What is it you meditate upon (**Psa. 1:3**)? The Holy Spirit is going to use the Daughters to plumb the length, breadth, depth and height of the glories which reside in the Bride's wounded spirit concerning the only Love of her heart!

Keep in mind that this bride is not backslidden. What is the difference? A backslidden sheep's heart finds something else more important than the Lord. This is not the case with the bride. The intensity of her love for Him still fills her heart! There is no coldness or lukewarmness here. This is just a moment in growing into a greater intimacy with her Beloved, a very difficult one but a spiritually necessary one to enter again into the surging, cascading waters of His glorious presence.

Think about this, who is really going to minister to whom here in these passages before us? Amazingly, it is the bride who will minister to the Daughters' hearts rather than visa versa. In our worst condition, if we are filled up with Jesus,

the dear Holy Spirit will use us to draw others hearts to the Beloved. The answer to their question is found in **6:1** when the Daughters beg the bride to tell them where her Beloved is, so they may seek Him too! They will see Him first hand for themselves. They will understand that even her description was extremely inadequate in comparison to His real presence.

For the moment let's consider the Daughters of Jerusalem. They truly want to help her. The Daughters can minister to her wounded body but not to her wounded spirit. They have no answers. Lying there before them a hurting lady cries out to them, *"I desperately need your help, tell my Beloved I need Him! Only He has the power to restore me fully."* The wonderful thing is that the bride, without realizing it, will minister to their hearts and lead them to her Beloved (**6:1-2**).

When a person is truly in love they can talk and talk and talk about the object of their love. The Lord allowed His bride to be injured so that many would be led to His heart! What was meant for evil by the enemy, the destruction of the bride, resulted in an enormous blessing for many! Read **II Cor. 1:3,4**. No trial is ever wasted by our caring, loving, leading Lord.

What you are about to witness is the answer to how the Holy Spirit draws a believer's heart back to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of truth clearly states the principle in **John 12:32**, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."* In that passage Jesus spoke of His death. But the principle of drawing a believer back to Himself is there. Lift Him up and your heart will be drawn back to Him. Praise is the prime way to lift Him up.

The Holy Spirit did just that in order to draw back the Ephesian believers to the heart of the Lord. The first three chapters lift up the Lord in so many marvelous ways. Then He begins to deal with real difficult problems in that church (**chapters 4-6**)! The heart of the Ephesians was tenderized toward the Lord (**chapters 1-3**) so they could be drawn to Him (**chapters 4-6**)!

As she lifts Him up to the Daughters, this bride will be drawn immediately to her beloved and find Him in **6:2,3**. She will never be the same! There will be no more departure from His presence and fellowship! Come now and hear what has been locked up in the deep recesses of her heart for Him alone. The secrets He had revealed to her in private, now will gush forth as rivers of living, healing water. In pain, the bride slowly lifted up her head and said...

V.10 "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand."

With thoughts of her Beloved rushing through her memory, her countenance is transformed with joy! Praise God she can still say, *"My beloved...!"* He is *"white"* (Heb. - dazzling, glowing, clear), in other words, there is not one bit of impurity in Him. He is righteousness and purity personified. The precious Holy Spirit described the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, in **Heb. 1:3** as, *"...being the brightness (radiance) of His glory..."*! *"Ruddy"* (Heb. - "to make red") seen in one's face connotes perfect health. Just the beginning thoughts of Jesus, the Living Word, is health itself! **Prov. 4:20-22** declares, *"My son, attend to my WORDS; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and HEALTH to all their flesh."*

Relying on the promises in His Word and obeying its precepts, then stress, which causes much of our sickness, is almost eliminated. Jesus Himself stated that He is the Word of God (**John 1:1**). His very words are *"life and spirit"* (**John 6:63**)! Praise God for spiritual, soul and physical health, all found in the One who is *"ruddy"*! He who was pure became totally impure for us at the cross. But thanks be to God for the victory of His blood over our sin! He rose in purity so we might possess His glorious, dazzling, clear, eternal purity in our souls! Hallelujah! It is progressive in this life! We are becoming more and more like Jesus. Not until heaven will we experience it completely.

"...chiefest (Heb. - "to look; to behold") among ten thousand."

If all the human race could stand together, her Beloved would stand out amongst them all! There would be no reason to bother looking with interest at any other! Do you feel this way, my dear surrendered reader? Does Jesus really stand out so much in your heart and mind that others become truly insignificant in comparison? I really enjoy reading the first words of **Heb. 12:2**. After reading about all of the others who lived by faith in **chapter 11**, the Holy Spirit directs us to the One who not only is the greatest example of living His life by faith and overcoming but He is faith itself. He possesses it and gives it away to all of us so that we can bless Him (**Romans 12:3**).

The term *"ten thousand"* is actually *"tens of thousands"* and in the Hebrew, it is used as a superlative. In other words, He is the best, the greatest, unsurpassable, outstanding, indescribable among an incalculable number of others. Jesus, the Beloved of the Father, is the eternal dazzling light to her soul. He is the sum total of her existence, nothing else matters. The bride gives us a wonderful overall description of her one and only Love. Is He the, *"chiefest among ten thousand"* to you? Is He your everything? What follows are the holy particulars of why He alone is all glorious!

PRAY WITH ME: "O my King I must bow down and kneel before Your glorious person. O dear, dear, Bridegroom of my heart, I am filled to overflowing with **'first love'** love for You! O my Lord, may this love continue to flow, I only ask that You increase its width, depth, length and height by the filling of the Spirit who resides in the temple of my body! O my Light, You are dazzling with beauty and the brightness of Deity. You radiate all that is good, right and perfect! You uphold all things by the Word of Your power and to think You tenderly hold my heart in Your nail pierced hand. O my Husband this is too much to contemplate. I will just sit quietly in the arms of Your presence meditating upon Your glories! In Jesus' name, amen."

V.11 "His head is as the most fine (pure) gold, his locks are bushy (wavy), and black as a raven."

From the well of her overflowing heart bursts forth all the cherished secrets experienced in her relationship with the Beloved. Words filled with Him flow freely from her lips. The bride glows as she declares, **"His head is as the most fine gold..."**! Gold symbolizes absolute authority, honor, power and strength and the right to rule (read **Dan. 2:31,37**). Gold, when put into the hands of unregenerate man becomes his god, but when God is the center of man's life then it is looked upon as being good, **"...the gold of that land is good."** (**Gen. 2:12**).

The temple within, where God's presence would reside, was overlaid with gold, even the floor (**I Kin. 6:21,22,30**). The heavenly city is described in Revelation as **"Having the glory of God...and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass...and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."** (**Rev.21:11,18,21**). Pure gold represents the manifested glory of God. It represents God Himself! A transparent life is a life lived honestly before the Lord. You quickly admit your weaknesses and sins to the Lord. You don't pretend to be something you are not. It is the humble life (**I Pet. 5:6,7**).

PRAY WITH ME: "Lord, You alone have the right to rule over me. I welcome Your Lordship into my life. Let the pure gold of Your glory permeate my soul. May the gold of Your power and authority daily control and lead me! Lord make me to live a transparent life! In the name which is above every name, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen."

Later, in **v.14** she will describe His hands as gold and in **v.15** His feet are gold! Here, the head of her Beloved is gold. His thoughts, His words, what He sees, what He hears, He is the Omniscient God! Jesus is God (**John 1:1,3; 8:58; 10:30,33; 20:28**)! She is saying to us and to the Daughters of Jerusalem, **"He is my God and He has absolute authority over my life! This is my joy and contentment. His strength makes me feel so safe, for my enemies must fall back in defeat when faced with His strength, power and presence. He is God and His every thought to me is pure, just, holy and righteous! His Spirit puts wonderful, godly thoughts in my mind by which my thinking is transformed (Rom. 12:2)! This is why I hurt so deeply! I dishonored Him by hesitating to go with Him and now depression, sorrow and guilt have filled my mind. But even now, as I speak of Him, I feel a lifting of the heaviness beginning, O praise His Holy name!"**

"...his locks are bushy, and black as a raven."

He has a full head of black hair. He is still young looking. To His own He is ageless. He remains eternally the same for His Bride, powerful, handsome, glorious! Jesus, the Son of Man, sitting on the throne as God in Heaven, will never change physically as He did while on earth. Praise God, **"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."** (**Heb. 13:8**)! Your heavenly Husband will never change, never grow old or weary; He will always maintain that all consuming **"first love"** love for you His bride! Hallelujah!

Think of it, since I am going to have a body like His glorious body (**Phil. 3:21**) then I will never grow old either in eternity! There is another description of Jesus in **Rev. 1:12-16**. It is an awesome and fearful description. This is the Jesus of judgment! This is the Lamb ready to pour out His wrath (**Rev. 6:16**). Thank God, we will not have to deal with Jesus the wrathful God (read **John 3:36; I Thess. 1:10**). O how beautiful and forever youthful Jesus is for His bride! That's love!

PRAY WITH ME: "Lord Jesus, I worship and adore You. Can it be true that You will never lose Your Bridegroom's intensity of love for me? Yes, yes, yes for You cannot lie, You are God! Millenniums will pass and Your Bridegroom's love for me will not diminish one degree! Forgive me for ever hesitating when You called on me to go with You."

V.12 "His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set."

O my dear surrendered friend, sit quietly next to your Lord. Place your hand in His nail-scarred hand and just sit there in His presence with your eyes closed, praising and loving Him in your soul and spirit! Listen quietly for Him to whisper

into the ear of your heart, *"My beautiful one, My sister, My dove, My bride I love you, I will never cease loving you. You alone are the portion of My eternal joy, O blood-bought one of My heart (Deut. 32:9; Heb. 12:2; Zeph. 3:17; I Pet.1:19)!"*

She remembers so vividly how He would take her face in His hands and lift her head so her eyes would meet His. O how often He would do that and her heart would melt. Those Bridegroom eyes spoke so forcefully with tender affection of His pure love and compassion for her eternal welfare. In her mind she can see those eyes of her Bridegroom. When His eyes "spoke" a loving obedience flooded her soul. Every time she looked into those eyes the things of the world became meaningless or less important. That gaze of His was penetrating her thoughts again; she was changing. It was as if she were seeing it for the first time! She could feel a subtle transformation taking place by just describing her Love! He truly has **doves eyes** for you dear surrendered believer. Look at those eyes through the window of the Word of God. You see in those **doves eyes** His sacrifice for you (**Lev. 1:14-15**). Because of your hesitation, you will see a sad mourning in His gaze (**Nah. 2:7**). He missed you so much (**Isa. 38:14**) and you were oblivious to the pain which pierced His longing, lonely heart for your fellowship on life's journey.

"...by the rivers of waters..."

As her mind is flooded with thoughts concerning the joy of His doves eyes, she sees streams of living water flowing from His gaze to her heart. He was forever, infinitely filled with the Spirit! Every time their eyes met, brilliant streams of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance flooded her soul. The very remembrance of just a glance from His eyes brings renewal to her spirit and soul! A strange and beautiful change sweeps over her as she describes Him. The water of the Word is washing away the pain (**Eph. 5:25,26; John 15:3**)!

"...washed with milk..."

The milk of his eyes speak to her of nourishment, satisfaction, purity and refreshment. In her heart she has turned back to Him with a new resolve. The battered bride sees the milk in those eyes: pure, white, sincere (**I Pet. 2:2**). She knew in her soul that His motives were always completely trustworthy towards her. Although practical fellowship with Him ceased, she was still safe in His Omnipresence for these words were forever etched in her heart from His lips, ***"...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*** (**Heb.13:5**). Excitedly she says, *"Oh, He is near! I can feel the power of His presence drawing me!"* And she was right, for in just a few moments (**6:2**) she will be restored to that blessed, Holy Spirit filled intimacy with her Beloved! O how this brings comfort to her heart. The darkness of depression and guilt begin to abate as she continues sharing these marvelous descriptions of her Beloved.

The bride cannot contain herself as she speaks animatedly to the daughters, *"Something is happening to me! I feel it. Healing, I am being healed! My heart is being healed! O praise His glorious healing name! Jesus! Jesus! I love You! You alone! O what patient grace You have even for someone as me. Me who failed you so terribly, yet Your Words, those Words of pure spiritual milk are healing me! I can feel it! I can feel it! Hallelujah!"*

The Daughters of Jerusalem knew they were watching a miracle in progress! *"It is truly the bride!"* they said in absolute astonishment. They were awestruck and pleaded with her to go on with the description of her Beloved. Their spiritual hunger was overwhelming! They couldn't get enough. Something strange and wonderful was happening in them also! There was a long pause, then she whispered to them, *"His eyes, His eyes they are..."*

"...fitly set"

This Hebrew verb for ***"fitly set"*** is used over 1090 times throughout the O.T. and has a multiplicity of meanings such as: to *"sit"*, *"remain"*, *"dwell"*, *"stay"*, *"be enthroned"*. It is used when speaking of Jehovah being enthroned in Heaven (see: **Psa. 22:3; 80:1; 99:1; 113:5; 123:1; Isa. 37:16**). Her heart races with waves of love for Him. She knows that His eyes continually dwell on her alone. She will never be out of His loving, protective gaze. The bride desires that her eyes will not focus off onto some worldly distraction which would pain His heart. She earnestly wants her eyes to be as His, ***"fitly set."***

Listen once again to her worship in the temple of her heart, *"My Beloved Husband You are the One and only true God enthroned in the glory of heaven. You rule over all of the universe (Mt. 19:28; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 4:10; 5:13)".* She sees in His eyes the eternal glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords! *"I am forever enthroned upon His heart (Jer. 31:3) and seated with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6)! I feel so safe when my eyes meet His eyes of forgiveness, mercy and compassion for me!"*

How could she have forgotten those intimate talks with her Beloved and His words of promise? Words such as, ***"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I WILL GUIDE THEE WITH MINE EYE."*** (**Psa. 32:8**). It

is so important to keep your eyes upon His gaze. Do you desire to look into the eyes of your Beloved Lord? Gaze with love within the pages of His Word. The eyes have a language all their own. When you are truly in love with Jesus others will see it in your eyes.

PRAY WITH ME: "O Lord, I am so ashamed that I failed to look into Your eyes and missed Your look which would have kept me from straying away. Be enthroned upon my heart that I might have a clear view of Your loving, caring, correcting, leading and forgiving gaze. I give You praise that You have eyes only for me, Your bride. Thank You for assuring me that You have doves eyes! I love You and long to be faithful to You only. Take me Holy Spirit and cleanse me and make me after the will of my Lord and my Savior. Dear Bridegroom, I do not want to hurt You with my sinful wanderings anymore. Thank You, for Your ever watchful eyes ready to guide me. In the blessed name of Jesus my Lord, amen."

The more she speaks of Him the more healing of her heart takes place. She doesn't understand it but there is great expectancy flooding her soul. Her guilt and shame, the enemy's accusing finger of worthlessness and failure have all but disappeared! With joy she says...

V.13 "His cheeks are as a bed of spices (balsam), as sweet flowers (herbs): his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh."

The Holy Spirit is about to bring to her memory the horrors of the cross, the pain of Calvary and a vision of what she was before she met Him. It will have a profound effect upon her heart in driving her back into the loving arms of her Beloved!

"**Balsam**" is a plant from which is extracted balm to be used for healing. Her eyes filled up with tears seeing in a vision the bloody and bruised cheeks of her Beloved. She watched them being slapped in mockery many times (**Mt. 27:30; Mark 15:18-19; Luke 22:64**) and O how He despised the shame of it all (**Heb. 12:2**)! She saw His beard being ripped out (**Isa. 50:6**)! Then came the spit! Soldier after soldier spit ugly contempt upon those lovely cheeks! All this before He was led away to die for her. His countenance was hideous, marred more than any man (**Isa. 52:14**). The Holy Spirit's voice spoke in her heart, "All this your Beloved allowed because He so desperately desired your love for eternity! All of this is for your healing, your restoration!" She responded, "How could I have ever forgotten what He went through to make me beautiful for Him? O the sin of neglect, putting my comfort over His call to go with Him. Forgive me My Beloved, forgive me!"

All of a sudden she detected the aroma of **balsam**. At that very moment the stripes and wounds on His back and face appeared realizing that by them she is healed (**Isa. 53:5**). She could feel the healing virtue flow through her body, healing all the cuts and bruises she had just suffered (**I Pet. 2:24**). She rejoiced at the scent of sweet smelling flowers and herbs about His person. It reminded her of the garden in which He had prayed, the garden in which He died and the garden in which He was resurrected (**John 19:41**)! It brought back memories of the beautiful garden He had made out of her heart. The scent of resurrection life was in the air. Great expectancy filled her heart.

She understood for the first time that the only way to walk in the resurrection life was to open to Him when He knocked and to go with Him when He beckoned. A beautiful glow of God's presence enclosed her as she continued to describe Him whom her soul loved...

"...his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh." (go back and read about the myrrh in **1:13**)

The bride had wronged Him and now, guilt ridden, feels she is an embarrassment to Him. She desperately needs grace for failing Him a second time and bringing shame to His testimony. Immediately the Holy Spirit reveals to her heart another glorious aspect of her Beloved's "**sweet smelling myrrh**". She hears His voice speak in her mind **Psa. 45:2** that, "**...grace is poured into thy lips...!**" Her heart began to pound with joy! It was grace she needed and grace she was receiving - forgiving grace, loving grace (**I John 1:9 and Jer. 31:3**). He just can't help Himself! He is infinitely in love with her! The constant dropping of sweet smelling myrrh tells us what His abounding, rich grace cost Him - the crucifixion! She felt His healing virtue continue to flow through her body. She looks at her arms and the bruises were disappearing. This priceless myrrh was bringing back the beauty she once possessed. What was bitter to Him becomes sweet to us.

She knew that "**lilies**" represented surrendered believers (**2:1-2**) and also His glory (**Mt. 6:28-29**). True surrender brings glory to Him. The bride speaks of His lips being like lilies. What a blessed revelation about our God! He was the epitome of the surrendered life. Jesus, the Son of Man, taught us how to live. He surrendered His rights to exercise the power of His deity when He took upon Himself the form of a servant (**Phil. 2:5-7**). He "**...made Himself of no reputation...**" (literally - "**He emptied Himself**"). That's surrender - That's a Lily! Every word spoken out of His mouth came from His Father (**John 14:10; 12:49**). That's surrender - that's a Lily! All the miracles came from the Father through the power of the Holy

Spirit; Jesus did nothing of Himself (**John 5:19, 30**). That's surrender - that's a Lily! It is a holy, loving passion to obey and please the Father. When lilies speak, only life is produced (**John 6:63**) because they are under the total control of the Beloved's Holy Spirit.

The ultimate surrender was Jesus' human soul in the garden of Gethsemane. His soul was saying to Him, *"I don't need to die, I've committed no sin!"* But Jesus' spirit surrendered that last right to the Father when the sweet smelling myrrh came from His lips and declared, **"And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."** (**Mark 14:39**). How sweet those obedient words to His Father's heart! That's surrender - that's a Lily's mouth! When we surrender the rights of our attitudes, actions and words we are applying **Rom. 6:6**! When we say "no" to self we are seeing the power of the Cross at work in us (**Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:22; II Cor. 4:10**) producing the sweet smelling myrrh of **Rom. 6:14 and Gal. 2:20**. Jesus never sinned but His human soul sure was tested throughout His lifetime.

The daughters of Jerusalem are overwhelmed. They had never heard such glowing descriptions before concerning any human. A miracle of transformation was taking place right before their eyes as the bride described Him whom her soul loveth! O the joyful, satisfying, sweet words which continually proceed out of His mouth when He looks at His lilies and sees the victory of His bitter **"myrrh"** in their lives. As His lilies apply the cross to their daily lives that bitter **"myrrh"** becomes sweet to His taste and His lilies' taste (**Psa. 119:103**)! Their lives were changing into the image of the Bridegroom (**Rom. 8:29**).

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Bridegroom of my heart, O thank You, thank You for making me Your lily! Thank You for always having me upon Your lips. May my lips be sweet to You! Thank You for the myrrh! Your precious and holy blood is sweet to my soul having changed me from a thorn to Your personal lily. Thank You for the healing which now allows me to have Your glory displayed in me here, then totally when I reach Your arms in Heaven! I love only You dear Lord Jesus!"*

V.14 "His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright as ivory overlaid with sapphires."

She remembered those nail scarred hands which gently held her (**2:5**). *"How could I have taken my hand away from His? If I had only held on to His hand I would not be in the condition I am today! How could I have so easily forgotten? O how secure I felt the time when He took me by the hand and led me away from the dens of danger on the mountains (4:8). He was always there to protect me, even when I was unaware of the menace to my spiritual well being."*

His hands were the hands of God! Her heart raced with excitement as thought after thought flooded her soul, *"Every time He held my hand, it was God holding me."* The Holy Spirit spoke to her heart, *"Remember the time when Jesus held your hand so tightly and whispered into your ear, 'My love, I have given you eternal life and you will never perish, neither will any one ever pluck you out of My hand (John 10:28)?' Yes, it's true you have stumbled but even now He still holds your heart no matter what (II Tim. 2:13)"*. Waves of spiritual anticipation of seeing Him real soon swept over her heart! She just knew all would be well!

"gold rings set with the beryl"

"Rings" – no beginning or ending! Whatever the Beloved, eternal God touches it must respond to Him. Whatever He accomplishes with His hands it is an infinite, eternal work! Thank You dear Lord, since we are in Your hand, then we are encircled by Your **"gold rings"**. O the security, the comfort, the assurance, the peaceful shelter in being surrounded by His hands; to be totally encompassed by God Himself! People wear rings to display their symbolic value, beauty or cherished meaning. Is that not what the Beloved will be doing with His bride in **Rev. 21:1-11**? Glory to God! How befitting that we should be part of His ring (**"beryl"**).

In **Exo. 28:20 "beryl"** is mentioned as one of the twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest and it represented one of the tribes of Israel. These stones were placed over the high priest's heart so that he would never forget how special the tribes of Israel were in the sight of God. He would intercede for them! And Jesus, her High Priest, continually intercedes for His bride (**Heb. 4:14-15**). The bride paused with this blessed knowledge and thought to herself, *"My Beloved must be interceding for me right now (Heb. 7:25)! And thank You dear Holy Spirit for You must be praying for me also since I could not in my bewilderment, pain and shame (Rom.8:26)!"*

All of these thoughts filled and thrilled her but it was the **"beryl"** (Heb. *"tarshish"* or *"precious stone"*) which moved her to tears because His preciousness was enwrapping her soul. The Holy Spirit shares with us the deep thoughts of the Beloved in **I Pet. 2:4-8**. We who are His holy people and priests know how infinitely valuable He truly is – the Beloved is the precious Cornerstone, the Rock upon which her life is established. Then, wonder of wonders, the Holy Spirit discloses that

we are **"living stones"** which make up His spiritual house/temple (**Eph. 2:19-22**). We, His bride, are just like Him – glorious, valuable stones!

PRAY WITH ME: "Dear Lord Jesus, You are the strength and keeper of my heart! You are the precious Cornerstone of my heart and You have made me a precious, living stone in Your temple. Thank You for placing me on the spiritual breastplate of Your heart! Everything about You is precious! Dear Lord, cause me to feel more deeply that preciousness. In Jesus' name, amen!"

Filled with joy she continues...

"...his belly is as bright ivory..."

She continued to speak words that filled the daughters with astonishment. The word **"belly"** is a Hebrew word meaning *"inward parts"* (me'eh) and is sometimes used figuratively to represent emotion or compassion. It is used in connection with God (**Isa. 63:15; Jer. 31:20**) concerning His feelings. **"Ivory"** in Bible times was a rare commodity, therefore extremely expensive. Only those who were very wealthy could afford to possess it. Ivory was obtained at great sacrifice, for the elephant had to die!

So in love was the Beloved with His bride that He was filled with infinite spiritual hunger (**belly**) for her sin-sick soul. He left Heaven and lived and died for her. How rare this was (**ivory**). O what a sacrifice! O what a cost! Only God Almighty could feel this deeply. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** (**John 3:16**). **"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."** (**1 John 4:10**).

The Holy Spirit brought to her mind how Jesus is touched by the feeling of her infirmities. (**Heb. 4:15**). The bride began to experience her Beloved's compassion sweep through her soul. Clean and pure, that's how she felt. It was His righteousness and holiness, the highly polished white ivory! (**II Cor. 5:21**).

"...overlaid with sapphires (lapis lazuli)."

The sapphire, a very costly jewel (**Job 28:16**), is the second exquisite stone that the Holy Spirit reveals to her heart. She felt the strength of a firm foundation holding her up (**Isa. 54:1**) while reflecting the meaning of the **"sapphires"**! It was a precious gem which adorned the breastplate of the High Priest (**Ex. 28:18-21**) representing one of the twelve tribes. Sapphire is also one of the foundation stones used for the new Jerusalem (**Rev. 21:19**), the city in which the Bride of the Lamb will forever reside (**Rev. 21:19,27**). This blessed thought swept through her soul, *"I am on His heart and He is the foundation of my life. He wants me to live with Him forever. As much as I want Him, He desires me infinitely more! His promises and love for me are my firm foundation."*

Joy, peace and contentment swept over her. The daughters were thrilled at this wonderful change continuing to take place right before their eyes as they themselves were being drawn to Him. The bride continued her description of Him...

V.15 "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars."

Marble is extremely hard and durable. It represents stability. His legs speak of His walk or manner of life. The Word of God declares, **"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth..."** (**Psa. 25:10**). Concerning the Lord Jesus, the Word teaches, **"...who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil..."** (**Acts 10:38**). His feet were **"fine gold"** and she knew that His footsteps were actually God walking on this earth. She said to the daughters, *"My Beloved is white, pure, and righteous ("Lebanon" - 3:9) and He is stately and majestic ("cedars" - 1:17). He is my Wonderful Counselor, my Mighty God, my Everlasting Father, my Prince of Peace! He is my King forever! He is magnificent! He is my Husband!"*

She exclaimed, *"I was, '...troubled on every side, yet not distressed;...perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;' (II Cor. 4:8-9). For in me, my '...earthen vessel, is the excellency of the power (Christ living in me - Gal. 2:20; the Holy Spirit living in me - Acts 1:8, II Cor. 4:7). Even though I was unaware of it during my times of great pain and sin, my Beloved's power was bringing me safely through it all. Praise His holy name! There were many times I was so spiritually tired I could not take one more step. I remember the relentless attacks of the enemy bearing down on my soul. Now I know it was my faithful and loving Husband who would pick me up*

and carry me! When I thought I was all alone His ever steady, infinitely strong legs were taking me through the deep mire of my mess. There was not one moment He stumbled! His legs are the legs of God. I feel His invisible, gentle and secure arms holding me as He carries me onward and upward to our permanent home. O praise His holy name!"

With that she sprang to her feet renewed in heart, refreshed in soul, restored in body, rejoicing with thankful tears streaming from her eyes, hands raised toward heaven, her countenance radiating the glory of God and shouting the following words for all heaven and earth to hear...

V.16 "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

As these words fell from her lips, the bride knew deep from within her heart she would never, never hesitate again when her Beloved called (and she never does from this point to the end of this song!). His Words are, **"life and spirit" (John 6:63)** and **"life... and health...." (Prov. 4:22)**. Not until this moment, in confessing His beauty and glory, did she understand how powerful and life changing His Words truly were! This wounded bride remembered that her Husband was **"the Word"** who **"was God"** (John 1:1)! **Prov. 18:21** teaches us that there is life in the power of the tongue. When speaking His Word, life and spirit emerged from her innermost being. She had previously hidden His Word in her heart (**Psa.119:11**) and now the remembrance of that living Word was overcoming her failure in the time of crisis! It was the dark hour of her deepest need. Yet, His Word, which had been stored away in her heart, was transforming her from the pit of despair to the glory of renewal! Joy flooded her soul as she shouted to the heavens...

"His mouth is most sweet..."

His spiritual mouth had been sweet from the beginning. The Beloved had kissed her heart with His Word from the very beginning (1:2) She testifies, *"Sweet! Yes, yes, yes! There is a sweetness of joy in my spirit, where there had just been self-condemning bitterness! There is a sweetness of hope in my soul, where there had previously been the desperation of depression! There is a sweet wholeness in my body, where there just had been defacement! Look at me - every wound has been healed!"* With joyful intensity she speaks, **"How sweet are thy Words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth."** (**Psa. 119:103**). Honey gives quick energy and that is what has just taken place in her spirit, soul and body! Then silence, a holy silence swept across the plains of her heart as joyful tears fall from her cheeks. And after what seemed like an eternal moment of quietness, the bride in an emotional whisper proclaims...

"...yea, he is altogether lovely..."

All of a sudden the bride abruptly stops speaking. Her mind races searching for more descriptive superlatives, then the tense silence is broken as she intensely declares: *"He is altogether lovely!"* Over and over she says it with a heart bursting with liberating love: *"He is altogether lovely!"* All I can say is, **"HIS MOUTH IS MOST SWEET! THERE IS NOTHING OR NO ONE SWEETER THAN HE! HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY! THERE IS NO BEAUTY BEYOND HIM. HE ALONE BRINGS BEAUTY TO MY HEART AND SOUL. HE IS MY BELOVED!"** What was once hideous became totally beautiful.

She thought, *"Who would have imagined that a scar could be so beautiful?"* At that very precise moment, the Holy Spirit flooded her mind with a vision of her Beloved's scar. His hand became larger and larger until she could see what was imprinted in that scar: "I am the Almighty, the Bread of Life, the Chief Cornerstone, the Conqueror, the Deliverer, the Emancipator, the First and the Last, the Great Physician, the Holy One, the Image of God, the Justifier, the Keeper, the Lover of your soul, the Messiah, the Near One, the Offering, the Prince of Peace, the Quick One to bless, the Rock, the Shepherd, the Truth, the Upholder, the Vine, the Word, the Yielded One, the Zealous One!" *She then exclaimed again with a loud voice of conviction: "He is altogether lovely! O how I love Him!"*

If only we could realize how powerful speaking His Word out of our mouth truly is. She had spoken to her mountain and the mountain of despair had disappeared (**Mark 11:23,24**). As she spoke the Word of the Living God out of her mouth, angels were activated to minister to her (**Psa. 103:20; Heb. 1:13,14; Psa. 91:11,12**). O yes, **"His mouth is most sweet"** because His Words break the yoke of bondage in our souls and stops the powers of darkness coming against the soul. Make a study of the following verses: **Deut. 30:14; Psa. 8:2; 119:103; Prov. 10:11,21; 14:3; 18:7; 23:16; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:11; 19:15.**

What the bride has just spoken (**5:10-16**) are the revelations given to her by the Beloved in intimacy of devotional fellowship with Him. She has the heart of Mary of Bethany. It was Mary who sat at Jesus' feet and received the Word from the One with whom she was in love. Jesus said that Mary had chosen that good part which would not be taken away from her. O to have those spiritually intimate thoughts stored in the deep recesses in our heart because we sat with our Beloved and meditated upon Him. When we go through times where we have failed our Beloved, such as this bride did, the Holy

Spirit will bring back to our memory His gracious and merciful Word and long forgotten glories of our Bridegroom's blessed person. Why? So that we may be healed and delivered!

He had asked her to go with Him in **chapter two**. Her Beloved wanted His bride to share these revelations with other lilies. He loves to see the surrendered lilies come together and share with each other the secrets He gave them in private. Our Beloved has great joy watching the angels exulting in what they hear from such gatherings. Because of this we begin to see the Lover of our souls in a much more magnificent light. This is when we are **"...able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God"** (Eph. 3:18,19).

Dear surrendered reader, gaze upon this bride who is so in love with Him, standing there strong, all signs of her bleeding wounds have disappeared! Just look at her with the eye of faith and see her countenance beaming with great delight and hear her voice filled with joy and intensive expectation (hope)! The bride stands before you in His strength, vibrantly testifying of the wonders and beauty of her Beloved, fulfilling in her the words of **Neh. 8:10, "For they said to them, 'go...drink of the sweet...for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."**

However, the best is yet to come. In just a moment her faithful Bridegroom will do what He said He would do in **John 12:32, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."** In times of distress, difficulties, depression and defeat lift Him up. Give Him praise. Speak thanksgivings to His heart. You will feel the intimacy of His arms holding your heart. He will draw you to Himself. So also with this bride, she has lifted Him up and now her spirit will be drawn to Him in **6:2!** She will never, ever be the same!

Doesn't this excite your soul dear Christian? She was restored in but a moment of time. There was no waiting, no lengthy process of restoration, no self-inflicted punishment in order to purge the guilt away! Glory to God! **"Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts."** (Jer. 15:16). Her heart was so filled up with Him that her mouth overflowed with His glories, **"...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."** Mt. 12:34. With what is your heart and mouth filled up dear reader?

The atmosphere is so charged with His presence that a holy silence once again fell upon all. She looks at each one of the daughters and says with all of her heart...

"This is my beloved, and this I my friend"

Her heart continues to beat faster and faster. *"I know now that He will always love me through any and every circumstance because my Beloved is my Friend (Prov. 17:17)." He is, "...a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24). Could I ever ask for anything better than that? No! In my spirit I see those wounds inflicted upon His body because of my sins. Dear daughters don't you know that 'He was wounded for our transgressions...' (Isa. 53:5)? How could I have forgotten that '..with His stripes we are healed'? O how faithful my Husband has been to me even in my unfaithfulness for 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend....' (Prov.27:6). And I am not only His bride but His friend so that I may know the deep things of His heart! (John 15:13,14). I will never doubt Him again nor delay in obeying His Word again!"* The Daughter's hearts were filled with a holy hunger. They all deeply desired to have Him as their friend and Lord also. Nothing else mattered to them. The daughters themselves began to feel this strange, but wonderful, drawing of their heart to Him.

The Daughters spoke to her in amazement, *"Look at you, you are completely changed. When we first saw your condition there seemed to be no hope for you at all. When we came upon you your head was bowed down in shame. Your clothes were torn with bruises all over your body! Yet now we see that your Beloved has truly lifted up your head and made it shine with His glory."* (Psa. 3:3 **"But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head."**)!

With all of heaven we declare, **"BLESSING , AND HONOR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE (of my heart), AND UNTO THE LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER...And (I) ...fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever."** (Rev.5:13,14).

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