

CHAPTER 7 - THE DELIGHTS OF HIS HEART REVEALED (cont.)

AN OVERVIEW OF 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!

The bride is ready to disciple others with Him. The symbolism of the feet and nose are very significant. Never before had He described them. All of this is leading to her new walk of ministry. This is the believer's crowning moment while living in this dark wilderness scene. A path of service has opened to her and a spiritual intimacy seldom experienced by the average Christian.

As they walk hand in hand in His garden (**6:11**) the Beloved's heart continues to be filled with glorious joy. Thoughtfully He pauses for a moment admiring her feet, then shares...

V.1 "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints (Heb. "roundness") of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hand of a cunning workman (artist)."

For the first time the Beloved describes His bride's feet and hips. What has made the difference? Prior to this He described her from head to waist, but now she is ready to walk in holiness, power and service. He observed with great delight her joyful dancing just a few moments ago. Her feet were clean in (**5:3**) but they were not ready for action. These feet are ready and willing to go with Him anywhere. With her shoes on she is ready to stand! What are these shoes? **"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."** (**Eph. 6:15**). With that kind of firm foundation she is able to stand, **"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, stand therefore...."** (**Eph. 6:13,14**). O to walk with peace while the storms of life gather 'round you and the enemy's weapons are formed against you.

With joy He says, *"I died for you My bride that I might experience this moment with you. Now there is nothing in you that will hinder our intimate fellowship anymore. You have reached full maturity. I look at your feet and see that they will walk with Me and for Me without any hesitation. You have no idea what happened in My heart when you, My dear dove, said, 'I am my Beloved's!' It was at that moment your will became My will! My heart is pounding with great anticipation with what lies ahead for you and Me together! Thank you, thank you, thank you for not giving up, but always seeking Me whom your soul loves! One last time I am going to describe the beauties of what I see in you. Keep this love description deep in your heart. It will be a strength and joy to you throughout your wilderness journey."*

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs flooded her Spirit-filled soul (**Eph. 5:18-21**)! Heavenly melody upon melody was played upon the heart of her spirit to her Beloved. O so thankful! O so pure! O so submissive! O so filled with incomprehensible joy! She was about to burst!

Your spiritual feet are important to the Lord. You must first allow the Prince to wash your feet (**John 13:5-17**). Your walk becomes dirty. He will do it through the Holy Spirit applying the Word to your life. If you do not allow Him to cleanse you then the Prince cannot share His ministry with you (**John 13:8**).

Let's pause for a moment and consider what the Word has to say about "walking" and "feet". She had to receive His Word first before she could walk in His will. The Lord proclaims in **Psa. 119:105, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."** At the very beginning of their relationship (**1:4**) she had prayed for the activity of her feet as well as the daughters of Jerusalem, **"Draw me, we will run after thee... "** Feet must move in order to run. That spiritual request was being answered progressively in **6:1,13; 7:11**! She had to first hear the Word before her feet would heed His call! It took time! Be patient dear reader, God's timing is the only timing for a true sanctified, Holy Spirit led walk for Jesus! Don't try to figure things out, just lean on Him and know His purposes are being fulfilled in your life daily.

When the Beloved decided to inspect His garden and orchard, He started to leave (**6:11**). He did not ask her to come with Him. His bride did something she had not done before - she followed Him **"down"** to the valley where the garden and orchard were located. Previously, she was willing to go to the mountaintop. But it is in the valleys of life where the gardens find the best nutrients and weather to produce quality fruit! Don't reject the valleys! O my friend, this is true beauty, walking where Jesus is walking in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit! Jesus cannot help exclaim, **"How beautiful are thy feet!"**

The Holy Spirit said to the Bride's heart, "Look once again at the feet of your Beloved. Remember how He leaped upon the mountains and skipped upon the hills (2:8)? His feet were bringing victory over every difficulty in this dark world. As Jesus loves your feet so also the Father loves His Son's feet. Shhh...the Father is about to speak to your Beloved Husband, **'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publisheth peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that says unto Zion, Thy God reigneth (Isa 52:7)'**! No wonder Jesus is excited about your feet. They are becoming like His feet! And the more believers surrender to Him the more the Father's joy is increased. Why? Because He sees His Son's feet in them walking all over the world fulfilling the Word of Isa. 61:1-3".

So many believers who love Jesus, praise Him and study His Word with great expectation, then the Holy Spirit bids their feet to move in a new direction and they hesitate! Their feet are not beautiful! They come to the very edge of great spiritual blessing and then fall short! Within reach is everything that they had ever longed for in their Christian life but miss it! There is a beginning desire to **"run after"** Him! But they are unwilling to have the Word of correction (**Heb. 12:6-14**) do its work in their lives. Emotional enthusiasm for Jesus is beautiful but it must be coupled with spiritual determination! Many are in love with the principles of the Word, but not with the Prince of the Word! If so, then this would be true, **"...if a man love me, he will keep my Word...."** (John 14:23).

The Bridegroom declares that she is now totally separated unto Him (true sanctification) from head to toe. What kind of walk truly pleases the Prince? It is to: **"...walk in the Spirit..."** (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:4) and walking in the Spirit is to walk: **"in faith"** (II Cor. 5:7); **"in love"** (Eph. 5:2); **"in wisdom"** (Col. 4:5); **"in the light"** (I John 1:7). All of these are accomplished by leaning totally on the **"...sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"**. (Eph. 6:17). How do you know when you are filled with the Spirit – it is the moment you have surrendered all your rights to the Lord – overall and in specific circumstances. When you do that your spiritual vessel has become **"emptied"** and the Spirit immediately comes and fills it every time! Your burning desire is to obey the Word of God because it is the Word of your Beloved! You can't force yourself to walk in this manner. You become filled with His Spirit and totally in love with the Bridegroom! This **"walking in the Spirit"** is accomplished by the Spirit, as you abide in Jesus' Word which is making you free (**John 8:31-32**). Freedom in the Spirit brings fulfillment in your walk (read **Rom. 8:2-4**). Freedom in the Spirit turns everything back over to Jesus. Do you have a problem facing you? It's not yours it's your Prince's problem! Speak His precious Word over it and then leave it in your Beloved's hand. He has never failed to work out a problem given to Him!

"...O prince's daughter!..."

Who is this Prince? It is none other than Jesus who died on the cross, **"And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."** (Acts 3:15); **"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins."** (Acts 5:31). Glory to God, our Bridegroom is the crucified, risen Prince of Life. Everywhere a surrendered believer walks he steps into a footprint that has a nail scar in it. Pause and read **I Peter 2:21-25** and see what it says about walking in His footsteps. O to walk daily having the imprint of the Prince of Peace in my footsteps! O to be recognized that I belong to my Lord, the Beloved! May those who watch my life see the imprint of a nail in every step I take! Don't miss this thought, He goes before us and a surrendered believer walks in His steps. **"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."** John 10:4!

PRAY WITH ME: "Lord, thank You so much for the shoes You placed on my feet. Thank You for having made them Yourself. Praise Your Holy name for the shoes of the **"preparation of the gospel of peace."** (Eph. 6:15). I stand strong in them in You against the enemy. I now run and am not weary! You, dear Lord, slipped Your shoes over my feet and all fear has disappeared! What a God You are, when I am following after You I am actually walking in the plans You prepared for me. (Jer.29:11) In Jesus' name, amen."

They continue to walk through His garden. The Beloved pauses again and just looks at her, feasting on the heart that is gloriously one with His. He whispers to her, **"I'm so, so pleased My Father gave you to Me! You are so spiritually beautiful to Me My dove, My bride, there is nothing in the universe more lovely than you for..."**

"...the joints of thy thighs are like jewels..."

The word in the Hebrew for **"jewels"** carries with it the idea of **"ornaments"** and is so translated in **Prov. 25:12**. Women of the ancient east wore strings of ornaments attached around the waist, flowing down over the hips or thighs (**Gen. 52:25; Ex. 32:27; Num. 5:21; Psa. 45:3**). Spiritually He is admiring the lovely sixty-six strands of ornaments flowing from the hips over the spiritual thighs – lovingly obeying His Word that are guiding her heart and footsteps!

The spiritual ornaments given to us are every facet of His truth received in our heart. Does not the Word say, **"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...."** (Eph. 6:14)? Our loins give strength of movement to our feet that now walk in His truth. We walk unencumbered up the King's highway in holiness (John 17:17). Our daily walk (manner of life) demonstrates to all around that we are free of doubt, fear and worldly pollution. May the Lord be able to say about you and me as the apostle John said, **"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."** (Ill John 4)

"...the work of the hands of a cunning workman."

Notice, what makes her beautiful is done by someone other than herself. It is an expert artist. It is not so much the hips that are in view but the ornaments. To walk one must have hips which are unimpeded. **"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."** (II Cor. 3:17). Who is this expert artist? None other than the Lord Himself. Let Him tell you from His Word, **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."** (Eph. 2:10; Zech. 4:6; Jer. 18:1-6)

Her heart about **"melts away"** with the fervor of His loving description. She asks, **"My Love, my heart is about to burst, please allow me to sit down and rest in Your presence!"** He takes her by the hand and leads her to a very special spot. They sit down together under the shade of the Tree of Life (2:3). She lays her head on His breast. After a time of blessed quietness He continues to pour out His heart...

V.2 "Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth (Heb. "lacking") no liquor (Heb. "blended wine"); thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies."

The word **"naval"** is the Hebrew word for **"umbilical cord"**. As with the original purpose of the navel, the lifeline to the unborn child, so also with our spiritual lifeline, He alone is our life, **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21); "...Christ, who is our life..." (Col. 3:4); "...nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..." (Gal. 2:20)!**

The navel symbolizes how we were sustained by someone other than ourselves. As an unborn child we were totally dependent on our mother's nourishment. The navel continually reminds us that we were totally dependent on someone else beginning at our conception. He not only is her Bridegroom but He is the One who caused her to be birthed by His Spirit (**the Spirit of Christ, Rom. 8:9**). As a babe she drank the spiritual milk of the Word (**I Pet. 2:2; John 6:63**) He was the One Who had nurtured her (**Eph. 6:4**) as a child. The bride was totally dependent on her Beloved and still is. He has become her life! As in the pregnancy stage, the umbilical cord was filled with nutrients for the baby so also here symbolically it has the spiritual capacity to be filled with Bread of Life and the fruit of the Spirit. The Beloved envisions it as a round goblet filled with blended wine.

"...which wanteth (Heb. "lacking") no liquor (Heb. "blended wine")"

The Hebrews would blend their wine with some other substance in order to protect themselves from drunkenness (milk in 5:1). They were not to **"look upon the wine when it is red"** (Prov. 23:31). Red wine represented full strength. For individuals to drink blended wine indicated that their motives were pure not wanting the wine to adversely affect them. In our spiritual umbilical cord flows the blood of Jesus, the wine of God! It carries the spiritual nutrients needed to sustain our spirits and souls while walking in this world. Without the blood of Jesus there are no spiritual nutrients: no Holy Spirit, no living Word, no transformation, no joy, no real purpose, no healing and no pleasing God. She is filled up with joy and gladness (**Psa. 104:15**). O to be filled up with Jesus' joy (**John 15:11**)! O to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 5:18-21**). The joy of the believer is found in the blood of Jesus! Read **I Cor. 10:16,17** and see how living the Blood of Jesus truly is.

What is to be blended into your spiritual cup of wine in order to have the **"joy of the Lord"** (**Neh. 8:10**) which is your strength? Into the cup of your spirit and soul the Holy Spirit will pour heavenly revelations about the Lord Jesus Christ! These thoughts will come while meditating on His Word, during prayer, while praising or at the most unexpected times. He will reveal the deeper things concerning His heart, glory to God, and you will be sustained!

Song of Solomon 2:4 tells us the Beloved brought His bride into the **"banqueting house"**! The literal translation of that phrase is **"house (sometimes "palace") of wine"**. In this house, set aside for joy and fellowship, her Husband placed a banner with **"love"** emblazoned on it over His bride. It was the blood of Jesus that brought ultimate joy to her heart. Inscribed on the walls of His **"banqueting house of wine"** were these words, **"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."** (Rom. 5:8,9)!

And now, the Beloved of her heart saw the wine in her spiritual lifeline! The blood was ever on her thoughts and was her daily victory. Jesus very clearly proclaimed to the leadership of Israel after the feeding of the five thousand (**John 6:5-14**) that unless they ate His body and drank His blood they could not have eternal life nor would they abide in Him in the Christian walk. Jesus stated that His body was true food and His blood true drink (**John 6:51-58**)! Praise God for the "blended wine". Praise God for the blood of Jesus! Enjoy again a devotional review concerning the blood of Jesus: (**Exo. 12:13; Lev. 17:11; John 6:55; I Cor. 10:16; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Heb. 10:19,20; 13:12; I Pet. 1:18,19; I John 1:7; 5:8; Rev. 1:5; 7:14; 12:11**)! Jesus is the Bread - we must fill up on the Word! The life of the flesh is in the blood (**Lev. 17:17**). His blood runs through the Word. Without the shedding of His blood, the Word from Genesis to Revelation would be powerless. Drink in His Word fully!

"...thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies."

The word "**belly**" in other passages is translated, "womb"; "birth"; "body"; "stomach" and "inward parts". In other words it is the center of the body. It is the place where the Lord forms new life! The Holy Spirit tells us in **Psa. 147:14** that wheat represents being satisfied and filled by the hand of God. There is so much here in this verse. He knew us while we were in our mother's womb. He birthed us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He gave us a spiritual body. He fills us with spiritual food to satisfy our inward spiritual cravings. Wheat or its grain is full of spiritual meaning for us. It is symbolical of satisfaction (**Psa. 81:16; 147:14**); true believers (**Luke 3:17**); the Word of God (**Mt. 13:25**). Jesus, Himself, is the grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died (**John 12:24**). Praise His holy name, He rose from the grave and produced much wheat - us! Yes, our wonderful Savior and Lord is the "heap" of spiritual food to our souls so that from the very core of our innermost being a "heap" of praise and worship must flow back to His heart!

PRAY WITH ME: *"You, my wonderful Bridegroom, are the good seed planted in my heart by the Holy Spirit. Your glorious kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, has taken deep root in the garden of my heart (**Mt. 13:24,25**). The water of Your Word has caused it to grow into the wheat of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 14:17**)! O my King, You are my grain offering (**Lev. 2:1**) of pure wheat flour that I offer to Abba, Father! My Beloved, You are the wheat of my soul for You alone satisfy and fulfill my life! Glory to Your name alone, Lord Jesus! Amen and amen!"*

"...set about with lilies."

Lilies were etched into the temple (**I Kin. 7:19:22; Hos. 14:5**). That was the place of worship. Her Beloved sees her now worshipping and rejoicing with other lilies. They desire to gather round her because she is filled with Him! Lilies surround her "**wheat**". Only when we fellowship with other lilies who are filled with wheat will we ever truly be satisfied. She is seen as an army (**6:10**) worshipping Him, loving Him, adoring Him and caring for Him!

A victorious army is filled with joy, praise and exultation! Months, even years later, veterans will come together to reminisce over the momentous triumphs won at great cost. These soldiers will talk about it to their children and their children's children - future generations are never to forget. Whenever these conquering heroes have the opportunity to talk about it they will! It's their continuous delight! What joy there is to be with other surrendered lilies whose great delight is to speak about the triumphs of their Beloved Commander in their individual lives! Any place where they meet to talk about or worship Him becomes His banqueting house of wine! Isn't this what the Lord's Supper is supposed to be all about - a corporate victory celebration?

He is overjoyed that her concern is for the lilies too. They have become part of His bride's life. It is extremely important that we fellowship with other surrendered lilies (**Eph. 4:15,16**). The bride and the Love of her life walk a little further hand in hand without saying a word, but O so much is being communicated heart to heart in the silence. Then He speaks lovingly once again;

V.3 "thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins."

Here, the Beloved repeats the words He uttered in **4:5**. Be reminded that **I Thess. 5:8** unlocks the secret of the two breasts. She is filled equally with faith and love. That is exactly what she needs when she actively goes with her Beloved to minister to Him ("**love God**") and to others ("**love one another**"). And it is faith that is the product of love and only pleases Him (**Heb. 11:6**). It is faith that overcomes the world and blesses others (**I John 5:4**). All she needs is to serve in the faith and love imparted to her! (**Rom. 5:5**; and the last part of **12:3**).

It is significant what is omitted here. The additional words in **4:5** are, "**...which feed among the lilies.**" Faith and love are developed through other Holy Spirit filled believers. We definitely need the fellowship of other surrendered lilies. The Holy Spirit feeds our spirits and souls through their hearts sharing about Jesus. It cannot be described: the oneness, the

love, the unity, the joy, the fellowship, the glory that is experienced when a group of Mary of Bethany's come together in perfect spiritual harmony with the Lord to love Him and share Him!

However, a truly sold out Christian for Jesus must never depend on that fellowship for spiritual sustenance. There will be times of loneliness when no surrendered lily is to be found with whom you may fellowship. Jesus alone must be enough to truly satisfy the inward longings for fellowship. Ultimate Spirit-filled surrender confesses, *"You, my King, my Bridegroom are more than enough to fill all my needs. Thank You for the blessing of sharing together with the lilies. and as thrilling and precious as the lilies are, You alone are my portion. You always will be! I exclaim with Jeremiah in Lam. 3:24, 'The Lord is my portion saith my soul....' "*

There is a touching testimony of a French lady named Madame Jeanne Guyon, a 17th century Christian imprisoned for her deep faith and voluminous writings on the Word of God. This dear Christian had a special place in her heart for the Song of Solomon. It was this deep love relationship she had with her Bridegroom that caused her to survive the many long years of imprisonment in the Bastille where she "lived" in a cell below ground level. She had no light except a candle at mealtime. After ten years in such misery she wrote:

*"A little bird I am, shut from the fields of air;
Yet in my cage I sit and sing to Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee!*

*Nought have I else to do; I sing the whole day long;
And He whom most I love to please, doth listen to my song!
He caught and bound my wandering wing,
But still He bends to hear me sing!*

*My cage confines me round; abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound, my heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul!*

*Ah, it is good to soar these bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore, whose Providence I love,
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind!"*

V.4 "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus."

The neck in scripture represents the human will (see **1:10; 4:4,9** to review). Ivory was first mentioned in describing her Beloved (**5:14**). Now the ivory, His image, is appearing in her character (**Rom. 8:29**). Ivory is a product of suffering and sacrifice. Many an elephant has died at the hands of cruel hunters for the procuring of their ivory tusks. Jesus died willingly at the hands of bloodthirsty leaders for us, but O the glory of the resurrection, O the joy of the victory over evil! He who was crushed in all of earth's ugliness, is now altogether lovely! Jesus is the polished ivory of eternal purity and righteousness!

Much time is also needed to polish the ivory to perfection. Our wills are dealt with by the Holy Spirit in grace, in truth, with mercy through the application of His loving discipline. This polishing of the "new man" progressively gets rid of the ugliness of the human will and replaces it with the will of the Beloved Bridegroom! What does the Lord use to polish the rough ivory in our necks - the everyday circumstances in a believer's life! There is nothing more beautiful than a Christian totally submitted to the will of God and filled with all glorious Holy Spirit fruit! In the beginning of her surrendered journey (**1:10; 4:4; 6:3**) the bride had presented her body (neck-will) **"...as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...."**

In order to have a polished neck of ivory you need to have His yoke rubbing constantly upon your neck. Jesus commands us to, **"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."** (Matt. 11:29,30). His yoke, which is His will for your life, goes around your neck! It is there to lead and guide you. Why is it so easy? It is because He carries it for you. It is done through the power of the Holy Spirit and His sword! You are so close to Him He carries the real weight!

PRAY WITH ME: *"O Lord, place Your yoke upon my neck! Guide me into the paths and works already planned for me in the councils of eternity past. Thank You for revealing to me the way that satisfies and completes! In Jesus' holy name, amen!"*

"...a tower..."

Her neck (will) had become spiritually, like a **"tower"**. The Lord Himself is a tower according to **Psa. 61:3**. She is becoming more like Him! O to be a spiritual tower! A tower may function as a lookout to spot an approaching enemy or as a light giving revelation, warning, direction and protection in the night. The white of the ivory is symbolical of the bride's pure motives and her will submerged into His. His will is her will! His heart yearns to cultivate young believers into mature, fruit bearing members of His body. That is her heart's desire also (**7:11**)! She has become a tower into which young Christians may run and find His light and protection, and a place into which they may leave their burdens! **"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."** (Gal. 6:2).

Dear surrendered saint, has your neck been highly polished with submission to His will? When your will rises to do something that is contrary to His Word, does your Bridegroom hear from your lips, **"not my will but thine be done!"** said with delight and resolve? This is His joy! This is His satisfaction! This is His eternal reward for Calvary! Ivory is strong. It takes His strength and not ours to do His will.

There is only one real pain of sacrifice that we must suffer and that is placing our will into His hands; but O the Tower of Abba's presence released in us! O the Tower of Jesus' peace, of Jesus embracing us! O the Tower of the Spirit's power flowing through us! O the Tower of God's holy purpose produced in us! O the magnificent fruit of the Spirit that will be produced! The great reward is to hear my Beloved say by the Holy Spirit, **"Your neck is like a tower of ivory!"**

PRAY WITH ME: *"My loving Husband, I recommit my will into Your hands for another day. O my Bridegroom, flow through me today; bless through me today; work only Your works through me today! Receive glory, honor, adoration and praise from me today! Conform all of me to Your beautiful image! Let much fruit be produced in my branch, by You dear Holy Spirit, for my Beloved. Spirit of the living God fill up my vessel for today and let the ivory alone be seen in my neck, then my feet will continually be beautiful for You. May I walk as one who is the Prince's daughter. In Your omnipotent name Lord Jesus, amen!"*

All of these unbelievable descriptions of her swirled about in her mind. Her heart was ready to burst but she is unable to utter a sound! Words are too inadequate to express the onrushing love bubbling up in her soul. Secure in her heart, tears of love spill down over her cheeks. She places her arms around her Beloved holding Him O so tightly while resting her head on His chest. The Beloved's soul is flooded with the purity and fullness of her grateful love and adoration! Filled with her love He looked deep into her eyes and said...

"...thine eyes are like the fishpools of Heshbon by the gate of Bathrabbim..."

It is amazing how one can speak with the eyes alone without a word being said. You can look into the eyes' expression and detect: joy, peace, love, hate, understanding, depression, confusion, etc. Her eyes in the past had been dove's eyes. The Beloved now perceives something new, something beautiful!

"...fishpools of Heshbon..."

We are told that springs of water flow into these deep pools for the town's water supply. They are still, quiet waters ready for use. Her eyes have a spiritual depth to them. These are eyes that are not easily distracted anymore! There is a holy fire of commitment for His plans. Praise God, she is ready to go out and see how the vines flourish. Those eyes can stay steady on the ministry which will require concentration and discernment. She has an abundant supply of the water of the Word residing in her to refresh others. She is ready to minister and in just a few minutes in (**v. 11**) it will happen.

"Heshbon" is a form of the Hebrew word which means *"to plan"; "devise"; "make a judgment"; "actively meditate"* or *"think about something"*. **"Bathrabbim"** comes from two Hebrew words meaning *"daughter of abundance"*.

He can see in her eyes that a life changing decision has been made. She thought deeply about His plan for her life (**Jer. 29:11; Isa. 46:11**) and that His judgment was now her judgment to walk in His plan. She will meditate on Jesus and His Words (**Psa. 63:6; 77:12; 119:78; Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:8**). She desires to, **"prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** (**Rom. 12:2**). She feels deep within her spirit an abundant overflowing like rivers of living water springing up, flowing out to her Beloved and then to others (**Eph. 3:20**). She has been blessed by her Beloved over and abundantly beyond all she could ever have expected. She is filled with Him and filled with His Spirit. Her eyes are saying to Him, *"all I can think about is living for You my Beloved, doing Your will alone. I have tasted the more abundant life and nothing else matters to me anymore but Your will. It is the best and the purest!"* Over and over again she shouted in her soul, *"YOU are my abundance!" "You are MY abundance!"* All those spiritual blessings (**Eph. 1:3**) which belonged to her were now ready to flow out to others in their need. The abundant life that He gives is to be flowing out to others. He reaches over with His left hand and runs His finger gently from the top of her nose to the tip end. As He does this He says...

"Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh (points toward) Damascus."

A tower's function is to discern if there is any movement of the enemy in the distance. Her willingness to allow Jesus to be Lord of her life has activated her spiritual senses needed so desperately in the battle against the evil one. This is the first time her nose is mentioned. Why is it so important? In the natural, the nose discerns between what is spoiled and what is safe to eat. It gives warning if there is a gas leak or an electrical wire burning. Many lives have been saved because of the nose's ability to detect what is normal and what is dangerous. Without its ability to distinguish what is rotten and rancid we would be eating and drinking things that are detrimental and destructive to our health. Praise God He has given us the discerning capacity of spiritual smell to detect that which would harm our souls.

Damascus is the seat of Israel's perpetual enemy, Syria. This tower looked out over the valley or plain in order to spot enemy movements from afar. Lebanon represents stability, pleasant fragrance and fruitfulness (**Hos. 14:5-7**). It also represents transformation (**Isa. 29:17**). Only a surrendered, Holy Spirit filled believer possesses this! Lebanon means *"white"* which represents purity or righteousness (**Rev. 19:8**). It is a tower of purity or righteousness. O how our Beloved loves purity and righteousness in our lives (**Rom. 8:4; II Cor. 7:1**)! The evil one can never defeat the believer who is totally given to the Lord and His Word. It sanctifies unto holiness (**John 17:17**). It is through the receiving and obeying of the Word of righteousness and purity that the senses of our spiritual nose are developed and sharpened. It is extremely important for our spiritual survival and the success in spiritual warfare that we be able to face the enemy and know clearly the subtle temptations by the angel of light (**II Cor. 2:11; 11:3,13,14; Mt. 7:15**)!

Notice carefully that her nose is pointed in the direction of Damascus. A discerning believer is one who knows just where the enemy is located. Most Christians are so distracted by the **"little foxes"** that they have no idea where the enemy is because their vision is on so many other things. The enemy comes from behind and wounds them. They are ambushed or taken by surprise. Her sense of spiritual discernment has to be greatly sharpened and thus, the bride here will not have this problem because her eyes continue to be on her Beloved. If you are focused on Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will give you the sensitivity concerning the whereabouts of the enemy. Peter (**Mt. 16:23**) was insensitive to the enemy's plans for Him, Jesus stepped in and rebuked Satan.

Our enemy would even get us involved with what is good in order for us to miss what is best! O how we need discernment. Someone once said, *"My greatest concern is not that I'll be a failure, but a success at something that doesn't really matter."* How can you have your spiritual sense of smell finely tuned? Stay in the Word! Stay intimate with Jesus! **II Cor. 2:11** says as much, **"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."** The Word exposes his trickery and lies.

Pray that the Lord, ***"...may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."*** That, ***"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ..."*** (**Eph. 1:17-20**)! Pray, ***"...that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."*** (**Phil. 1:9,10**)!

Your Beloved, through His Spirit, challenges His bride to get into the Word for discernment! Read **Prov. 1:1-9; 2:1-12; 3:1-26; 4:5,7, 20-22**! Walk with Jesus through the Gospels. See how He responded to various circumstances and situations. Learn from your Beloved, ***"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*** (**Col.2:3**). ***"If any of***

you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally...and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering...." (James 1:5,6). Because the bride is wholly surrendered to Jesus and His Word, she has His wisdom and knowledge readily available to her for every circumstance by the power and revelation of the Holy Spirit.

The nose enables us to taste the difference between a filet mignon steak and an ordinary piece of bologna. Without it there would be no enjoyment of all the various fragrances of flowers or scents of a mountain forest in springtime. At this point, because the bride is **"being rooted and grounded in love...(she is) 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 (she) might be filled with all the fulness of God."** (Eph. 3:17-20; 4:15,16).

His bride is able to discern the various spiritual fragrances emanating from lives of other lilies. She savors in her spirit all of those special revelations of Him given by the Holy Spirit in their lives. O how much Abba Father, Jesus the Bridegroom and the dear Holy Spirit want to share the deep and intimate things found only in the heart of God. O how God loves to have someone so sensitive to Him that He is able to reveal Heaven's secrets to them.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, You are my discernment. I stand upon Your holy promise in James 1:5 by which You will give me the needed wisdom in every situation as I face each day my Damascus! Praise You Lord that I have been delivered from my enemies and my past. I bow before You and worship You my wonderful Lord. I am Yours and because I love You, You will disclose Yourself to me in every circumstance (John 14:21; 15:15; 16:13,14,15). Thank You for making this all available to me, in Jesus' Holy and powerful name, amen!"*

He begins to lightly run His hands through her hair. Her eyes are closed. Enjoy the tenderness of the moment. He says,

V.5 "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries (or "by the locks of your hair")."

"Carmel" means: *"vineyards"* or *"fruitful place"*. **"Carmel"** was the place where Elijah, in the power of God, defeated the prophets of Baal (**I Kin. 18:19-20**). It was there the Lord proved His faithfulness to His devoted, surrendered servant.

What a compliment! Listen to this verse, **"...the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."** **Isa. 35:2!** O the glory of having the mind of Christ in full control and all foreign thoughts cast out (**Phil. 2:5**). The order of the description is interesting. The spiritually discerning nose must be first in order to recognize the presence of the enemy (the world, the flesh, the devil). Next her head is described like **"carmel"** to deal with the attack in the thought life where most of the trouble begins and plagues us! Her mind, under the control of the Holy Spirit, becomes a spiritual vineyard producing the needed fruit to dispel the enemy, the fruit of: righteousness against unrighteousness (**Heb. 21:11**), thanksgiving against unthankful thoughts (**Heb. 13:15**), love against hate, joy against sadness, peace against fear, patience against annoyance, kindness against hurtfulness, goodness against wickedness, faithfulness against disloyalty, gentleness against crudeness, self-control against self-will (**Gal. 5:22,23**)! In truth, that is **"... the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."** Remember that fruit is produced from seeds. In this case it is the Word of God itself (**I Pet. 1:23**).

The Holy Spirit in **II Cor. 10:3-5** tells us that our weapons are not fleshly to fight against that which comes against our thought life. Obviously the weapon we do have is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (**Eph. 6:17**)! May He say of you and me dear reader, **"Your head 'is like Carmel'!"** May we no longer be spiritual babies tossed about by every kind of teaching, thought and ideas which come from the world, the flesh and the devil.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, may You see my head crowned with total devotion to You alone. As I walk may Your glory and excellence be seen in my life. May my mind and mannerisms be a spiritually fruitful place for You. In Your glorious name, amen!"*

"...like purple"

Purple dye was the costliest of all the ancient dyes. It took thousands of shellfish to produce one ounce of it! The Lord directed that purple be used in the curtains of the tabernacle and the temple (**Ex. 26:1; II Chron. 2:14**) which represented sacrifice to Him and His presence. It was a symbol of royalty and wealth (**Judges 8:26; Prov. 31:22**).

Ancient Greek and Roman writers used the word symbolically to describe exquisite beauty! What then does her Beloved really see in her? She now is walking as royalty, as the daughter of the King! The Lord Jesus is captivated by the color of her tresses. Colors are seen by those around us. You need to be seen for what you are. All true Christians are priests unto the Lord (**I Pet. 2:5,9**) but sadly, few truly exercise their privilege as priests and rob the Lord of love and praise. Hair is the glory of the woman (**I Cor. 11:15**). She, like Mary of Bethany in **Mark 14:3-9** and the woman in **Luke 7**, had submitted her glory to the feet of the Beloved. Where did this take place? When she found her Beloved in **6:2,3** and declared, "***I am my Beloved's...!***" Hair is to be seen. She is now displaying her royal heritage. She is displaying King Jesus!

Her glory (hair) has been transformed into His royal glory (purple)! All who come into her presence will see the purple. She will exclaim to them, "*It is no longer I but my King living in me. For my Beloved's Spirit has been changing me into the Image of my Husband!*" (**Rom. 8:29; II Cor. 3:18**). This dear lady has given all to her Beloved and out of that, her royal priesthood is plainly apparent (**I Pet. 2:9**) to Him and others. Her mind and decisions are governed by her majestic, royal Husband! O how this pleases the Bridegroom. Is this a picture of you dear reader?

"**Purple**" speaks of one who is rich. As an heir of your King (**James 2:5; Rom. 8:16,17**), do you know just how rich you are dear bride of Jesus? Let the Holy Spirit, Himself, reveal what true riches you possess:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3

"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:7

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Eph. 3:16

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." Prov. 10:22

Are His riches seen in you? Does your Bridegroom rejoice in what He sees in you? Is His image being progressively worked into your walk and talk (**Rom. 8:29**) by the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit? Praise God for the purple locks of hair! We are looking at a bona fide Spirit-filled believer!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, cause me to have displayed every moment in my life the precious spiritual purple which only comes from a Holy Spirit controlled life. Let all see the greatness of Your royalty in my life. I love You Lord with all of my heart. I thank You for Your wonderful patience in changing me for Your glory and pleasure! In the name of my wonderful Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen!"*

The Bridegroom continues:

All of a sudden the Bridegroom stands up. Reaching down He takes her hands in His and lifts her up, then letting go, He moves back a couple steps, pausing to admire His beautiful bride. There is such happiness in His voice as He proclaims to her,

V.6 *"How fair (beautiful) and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!"*

How many really desire to be made beautiful for the Lord so that He might have the joy of watching with delight the transformation into His glory of what was once dead in trespasses and sins? Do we not want to become His delight? "***For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.***" (**Phil. 1:21**). How did all of this come about? She had died in **6:3**! She died to selfish motives.

She realized that there is no fullness or fulfillment of life apart from His life. "***For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.***" (**II Cor. 5:14,15**). See **Acts 17:28**.

In all the 45 years as His child, I have never seen a believer who held back part of his life for himself ever be ultimately fulfilled. There was always some area in their walk that eroded any momentary joy. However, when they finally

submitted all to His feet (hair) there came about a glorious change in their attitude and demeanor! They were blessed and walked in the blessing. There was an increased intensity of love displayed for the Blessor as never before! Where there is the lukewarmness of the compromised life there will be no hunger for Jesus to increase in our life and for us to decrease.

You must understand that in our spirit we are beautiful to Him. That is where the Holy Spirit resides. But it is in our soul, the place where decisions are made, our feelings are experienced and our mind thinks that a practical and progressive change needs to take place day after day, month after month, year after year so that the image of Christ will be seen in us more and more. O there will be deep problems after you surrender, but you will begin to experience **II Cor. 4:7-9** and **I Cor. 10:13!**

Do you not desire to have Jesus step back and just look at how wonderful you appear to Him, as this bride does? From where did her beauty come? He did it all! She had nothing to do with it except to daily submit her will to His and then lovingly obey! Can you imagine God captivated with His bride? Well He is! Listen to **Deut. 32:9**, "**For the Lord's portion is his people....**" Is He your portion dear reader? Can you say from the depths of your heart **Psa. 16:11** and **Lam. 3:24**? Am I a joy to the Lord? Does He look with satisfaction on how increasingly more I look like His Son than a year ago?

Jesus is completely captivated by His surrendered, submissive, spiritually mature bride. He observes every detail concerning her and you also my Christian friend! He really loves every little thing about you when you simply say, "*Take it all!*" and mean it. You now own nothing. It all belongs to Him; your job, your desires, your mind, your spouse - everything! May He receive joy as He gazes upon each detail of your life. May He say, "*How beautiful! How beautiful!*" His delight is your delight in Him! "**Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.**" (**Psa. 37:4**). And what is your desire? Him! He will give you deeper revelations of Himself by the Spirit! O how it thrills Him when we finally say, "*Take all of me and work Your life into my living!*" Beauty that was never seen before begins to surface. There is a new person walking around. She looks like Jesus and she acts like Jesus! Let this famous hymn and additional lines be your commitment prayer right now!

*Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love!
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee;
Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King!*

*Take my lips and let them be filled with messages for Thee;
Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold!
Take my love, my God, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.* Frances Havergal

*Take my will and make it Thine, it shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart it is Thine own, it shall be Thy royal throne!
Take my thoughts and take my soul - love for You my only goal!
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in endless praise;
Take my ways and always use, every step as Thou shalt choose!
Take my all my loving Lord, guide me with the Spirit's sword! author unknown*

V.7 "This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of (fruit) grapes (more than likely a reference to the dates produced by the date palm tree)."

The surrendered saint is like a "**palm tree**" in the desert. Palm trees in the desert indicate the presence of water, a place of rest and refreshment. Depending on the type of palm tree, it can give the weary traveler something to nourish their bodies. The Palm tree, what a symbol of: strength, victory, joy, abundant supply, nourishing others, standing firm (**Eph. 6:14**)! He had never described her in this manner before! Glory to His name.

The Date palm was highly prized in biblical times as it is today. The fruit was valued more highly than bread. One tree could yield up to 200 pounds of dates in a year and its fruit bearing power increased rather than decreased with age. The taste of the fruit also improved with age! By comparing her to a palm tree the Beloved was stating that now His delightful bride had great possibilities of abundant fruitfulness which would bless Him and many others for the rest of her life.

What a compliment from the lips of her Beloved! He sees her as one who displays His righteousness. **Psa. 92:12** declares, "**The righteous shall flourish as a palm tree.**" They will flourish and bring forth fruit even in their old age if they are planted in the house of the Lord (**Psa. 92:12-14**). In other words, her life has been planted in the center and presence of God's will ("**house of the Lord**"). That is exactly what took place in **6:3!** Surrender places you in that fruitful, productive position.

A palm tree has great flexibility and when the winds of adversity (violent storms) blow hard against it, the tree simply bends against the pressure to almost the breaking point. But when the storm passes, the palm tree is found standing tall having weathered the trial of the enemy once again (its branches are a symbol of victory **John 12:13; Rev. 7:9!**) Praise God, He makes me into a beautiful palm tree through praise, His Word, by His Spirit, in my obedience! Glory to His wonderful name!

The temple building was ornamented with palm trees (**I Kin. 6:29-35**). It was the place of His presence, sacrifice, service and true worship to the living God. He sees all of this in her because of the total yielding of her heart to Him. Dear bride of Jesus, you are the temple of the living God. Does the spiritual significance of the palm tree ornament grace your temple?

During the Feast of Booths or ingathering, palm branches were used as part of the Jew's celebration before the Lord at the time of harvest (**Lev. 23:40-44**). By seeing her as a palm tree the Bridegroom makes an indirect reference to His spiritual harvest of joy and rejoicing emanating from her heart. Is the filling of spiritual joy and rejoicing characteristic of your life (**John 15:11; 16:23,24**)? If not, pray **Psa. 139:23,24** and see if there might be a little fox lurking in the shadows of your soul which has not been dealt with. If there is a sin there, then confess it, repent of it, surrender all to Him and go on with the Lord.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, cause the roots of my tree to take in the precious living water (**Psa. 1:3**), then I will flourish and bring forth heavenly fruit to bless You and Your people. I will take in the water of Your word (**Eph. 5:25,26**) and have the dear Holy Spirit quench my spiritual thirst. It's always for Your pleasure and glory Lord Jesus, in Your name, Amen!"*

"...and thy breasts to clusters of grapes."

Keep in mind that breasts represent faith and love (**I Thess. 5:8**). Breasts are mentioned eight times in the Song of Solomon. Here, for the first time, they are likened to "**clusters**" of fruit. O to be so absorbed with Jesus that faith and love flow out freely from your temple. As you abide in Him, stand upon His promises without wavering, life from the vine will flow through your branch and produce much fruit. The Lord will send needy people by your branch so they can pick the appropriate life-giving fruit which will meet their need by the power of the Holy Spirit. For the first time, He sees in her not just "**fruit**" or "**more fruit**" (**John 15:2**); but "**much fruit**" (**John 15:5**) as a result of abiding with Him ("**clusters**")! This description will be borne out in her testimony as we observe the bride's actions in **7:11-13** and **8:8**. Let us end this meditation with the stated purpose of the palm tree by the Holy Spirit in **Psa. 92:15**, "**To show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.**" He continues...

V.8 "I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples."

Dear surrendered bride, is there anything the Lord can take hold of in your life (faith, love, praise, obedience) and from it derive pleasure for Himself? Read carefully **Phil. 2:13** and **Psa. 149:4**. Are you so yielded to Jesus that He has free access to your heart? In **v.7** her breasts are like clusters. In **v.8** they shall be as clusters. He is not only looking at present fruit but also for future fruit bearing (growing in and consistency in fruit bearing). Remember, it is His business to take hold, enjoy and then distribute the blessings in her life (**5:1**)! May it not be once in a while, but everyday.

"...I will take hold of the boughs thereof...."

The boughs are the top of the palm tree. Someone suggested that this represents the thoughts of her mind. What a beautiful point. He has taken hold of her thoughts. O to be so steady that He can take hold of me and have total freedom to do whatever His perfect, caring and loving heart desires. O what inexpressible joy it is to be possessed by Him! Praise God, He has control of her thoughts. She has the mind of Christ (**1Cor.2:16**). Think of it, He can take thoughts out of her mind and enjoy them for Himself. Not only that, she will be guided with His thoughts through the darkness of this world. She will continue to be victorious. "**For as he thinks in his heart, so is he....**" **Prov. 23:7.**

Our Beloved Bridegroom, the God of our hearts, has the right to enjoy the fruit of our lives! Spiritual fruit is to be offered to Him first. Give this some thought! The fruit in this chapter is the fruit from the Tree of Calvary (**Acts 5:30**). The Tree of Calvary was the ultimate Palm tree. Spiritually it was bent in all directions against the tornadoes of sin, the hurricanes of unrighteousness, the hail storms of demonic attacks, the vicious dust storms of iniquity which clouds our minds. Yes, the Tree of Calvary withstood the eternal weight of sin. However, when it was all over, the Tree of Calvary became the Tree of Life. We are the branches (**John 15:1-5**) and His life produces the fruit on it. When He takes hold of it pure joy flows through His whole being. Let Him go up and take hold of the boughs of your palm tree dear lovely saint and let Him enjoy the fruit of your fellowship! This old hymn is my prayer: *Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee! Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love, at the impulse of thy love! Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee! Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King, always, only, for my King! Take my love, my God I pour at Thy feet its treasure Store! Take myself and I will be ever only, All for Thee, ever, only, all for Thee!*

"...And the smell (fragrance) of thy nose like apples."

There is no detail so small about the love of His life that ever goes unnoticed! Everything about her is special! He observes with joy that even the very air of life, which comes from breathing, is likened to that of apples. Who do apples represent in this love letter to the Lord's bride? None other than the Beloved Himself! In **2:3** it states, **"As the APPLE TREE among the trees of the wood, SO IS MY BELOVED among the sons..."** Her whole being is permeated with the life of her Beloved.

Jesus is the very breath of God. Jesus is **"the life"** (**John 14:6**)! What is deep within her, the breath of God, automatically comes out and blesses her Beloved! She is saying, *"My Beloved is my very breath, my life."* (**Col. 3:4**). Can this be said of you by the Lord, my friend? O how He enjoys the fragrance of His pure, holy, righteous life flowing from her nose, the very organ used for discernment. She is filled with the Holy Spirit (He whose name means *"wind, breath"* in the Greek). Glory to God that we are able to bring joy to His heart! (**Heb.12:2**).

V.9 "And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."

And just what is this **"best wine"**? It is the new wine of a spirit-filled believer (**Mt. 9:17**). Her tongue is under the control of the Holy Spirit. What is it that thrills His heart? The words, which come out of her mouth, are in total agreement with the Word of God! This is the best wine! Do you, dear chosen one, watch the words of your mouth? The words of your mouth have the capacity to produce life or death in you and in your hearers (**Prov. 18:21**).

So powerful are your words that the Lord is going to judge every word that has come out of your mouth (**Mt. 12:36,37**). Words are seeds according to (**Mt. 13:1-23**). When you speak you are planting seeds. Seeds produce a harvest of good or bad depending on the seeds planted. You will reap what you sow (**Gal. 6:7**). Thus you need to sow good words out of your mouth and the only good word is that which is in agreement with the Word of God.

Get your mouth in line with the Word of God and *"all heaven will break loose"*! Read **II Cor. 1:20** and **I John 5:14,15**. In each circumstance of life speak it out of your mouth as you are instructed to do by the Lord in **Mark 11:23,24** and then **Eph. 1:3** will literally come alive in your life. Remember, the very Bible which you have before you is the mouth of God! It has awesome power when a truly surrendered believer begins to rely upon it in holy faith (**Rev. 19:15; Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17**).

She feels free to speak to the Love of her heart and to others about what fills and thrills her! O how sad that the lips of believers fall silent so often. A Sunday school teacher asks the class to pray a brief praise to the Lord. The teacher asks for someone to begin. After others have praised the Lord, he will close the time of praise. So often there will only be a few audible praises from those who belong to the Lord. In those moments you can hear the Beloved sadly speaking to the Father about the silence, *"So many of them can speak to others freely about many, many things, but when it comes to Me, their Savior and Lord and You, their Abba Father, their lips fall silent when asked to give Us a brief praise from their lips."*

Jesus declared the Words He spoke were actually living spirit food in **John 6:41-63**. Give your Beloved Jesus the best wine – the daily conversation of your words agreeing with the Word of God.

"...that goeth down sweetly (Hebrew word for "uprightly")..."

When she reads God's Word she does it in faith, fully trusting what she is reading is feeding her spirit (**Rom. 14:23**). Her reading and listening to God's Word is done with the purest of motives, in sincerity and uprightness of heart! It goes

"down", suggests it will become part of her whole being. The "new wine" will affect every circumstance. O to walk uprightly before the Lord and the world! So many read the Word but it never goes **"down"** deep inside to bringing necessary sustenance and guidance so desperately needed in this dark world of emptiness and purposelessness!

"...causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."

Other believers, who are spiritually asleep, will be renewed and refreshed as they watch her faith in action and hear her love filled words. They will walk once again in the land of the living (**Psa. 116:9**) with a revived spirit. Don't miss this! This totally consuming relationship with her Beloved will have an awesome effect on others. Praise God, for the power of His presence in her life.

It is very instructive that just before the momentous, life changing statement to come (**v.10**) her mouth and breath are dealt with. Read **James 3:3-18** and do a spiritual word check. How do you react in unexpected, irritating moments? What does your spouse, children, parents, sisters, brothers, friends, acquaintances, fellow workers see? Has the Lord taken hold of your mind in the morning so that you are ready for the surprise attacks of the enemy? The wicked one wants you to fail and fall in the presence of others in order to try and embarrass Jesus. Do as Mary of Bethany did in the circumstance, say nothing and just look to Jesus to solve it.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Father, I praise You for having given to me the wine of Heaven, Your Beloved Son. Thank You for having placed in me the Power of that wine, Your wonderful Holy Spirit. Lord, thank You, that others are touched and changed because You are actively living in me. I open myself to all the intimacy of Your heart. I submit my mind and my mouth to You! Be blessed in me. Let Your mind control my mind. I love You Lord Jesus, in Your wonderful name, amen!"*

THE DYING TO SELF - 7:10

And now the mystery presented in the beginning of this book will be solved as you consider the next verse. O how important this verse is. The victorious Christian life hinges upon it. She will be able to say in truth, *"It is no longer I but Christ who lives in me."* What has been latent truth in her heart now will become vibrant, active and ready to serve. In this verse, faith and love are working together in this final, ironclad commitment to her Beloved and His plans. Paul rejoiced concerning the Thessalonian believers, declaring, **"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love..."** (**1 Thess. 1:3**). **Gal. 5:6** states that **"...faith which worketh by love."**

V.10 "I am my Beloved's, and his desire is toward me."

Praise God, the bride has reached the place where she can be fully led by the Holy Spirit and bring glory to the Lord. It has been a long journey but a spiritually progressive one. What awaits her is so wonderful that it will make the years before surrender seem as if they had never happened! Be encouraged dear bride of His heart, it will happen to you if it hasn't already! Be patient with yourself. **Verse 10** is the confession Jesus waits and waits and waits to hear from your heart and your lips.

"I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me."

Let's review so we can get the big picture. The Song began with a Holy Spirit implanted desire in her heart, longing for an intimate, personal, holy relationship with the One she dearly loved. She said, **"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth..."** (**1:2**); **"Draw me...after Thee..."** (**1:4**); **"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth..."** (**1:7**). When she entered into His chamber and He kissed her with the Word, I can hear her excitedly exclaim within, *"There is nothing I wouldn't do for Him and I will go anywhere He desires, just so that I have constant fellowship with Him."*

Yet when the Beloved asked her to come away with Him she responded, **"My Beloved is mine, and I am His..."** (**2:16**). In other words, *"Jesus belongs to me first and foremost and I also belong to Him, and I will decide when it is time to go."* There was no doubt about her love but the **"little foxes"** of self shared the throne with her Beloved! Shadows and night appeared in her life once again (**2:17**; **3:1**).

She was not in the will of her Beloved, the Light of the world! Realizing what she had done, the bride searches for Him with a heart filled with longing love. (**"...I will seek Him whom my soul loveth."** **3:2**). The glorious truth is, when you seek you will find, and, praise God, she found Him. What a lesson, never quit seeking! In **chapter 3** the Holy Spirit gives her a vision of the power and glory of her Beloved. In **chapter 4** the Beloved describes her in beautiful, intimate terms assuring her that His love has not diminished one iota.

Because she was separated unto Him alone (**chapter 4**), He describes the garden of her heart in glowing terms. Then, He shares the blessing of her heart garden with others (**5:1**). Then she rests. The Beloved goes out in the night ministering to the needs of others. He returns at a very inconvenient time, desiring that she come with Him. The Beloved asked her to open to Him. She hesitated. Finally she did go to the door but He had left. What is the lesson? There still were a few **"little foxes"** of convenience (self) left on the throne of her heart. She was not one hundred percent submissive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As a result, she suffered in spirit, soul and body (**5:6-8**) for hesitating; however her heart was still filled to the brim with love for the Bridegroom. The transformation came when she began to lift Him up in her mind and confess it out of her mouth (**5:9-16**). Jesus said it, **"If I be lifted up I will draw..."** (**John 12:32**). And now she is right there in Her Beloved's presence and proclaims from the depths of her soul the sweetest words a surrendered heart can say to Him, **"I am my Beloved's, and my beloved is mine..."** (**6:3**). *"Above everything else in life, my heart belongs to You first, my Love, whatever You want is what I want. You are in reality Lord of my life!"* Then, in **chapter 7**, the Beloved begins to describe her, beginning with the feet. Praise God, she was now ready to be actively used in His service. After this glorious description by Him she exclaims, **"I AM MY BELOVED'S AND HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME!"** Thank God the **"little foxes"** no longer have an effect on her!

What's the difference? For the first time His lovely bride realizes it is no longer important that she has Him (**"my Beloved is mine"**) but He possesses her wholly! She is about to initiate something her heart had never dreamed of saying before let alone doing! You will see this in a moment. The words that follow are extremely significant:

"...His desire is toward me."

This is the key to a walk of faith. This heartfelt statement is the ultimate revelation for living the surrendered life consistently. You are absolutely sure of His heart toward you! It changes everything: the way you think, feel, respond, pray, praise and walk! Without this there is no real progress made in sanctification, worship or service. In heart she is saying, *"I am absolutely convinced in my spirit that I'm totally possessed by Jesus. His desire is for my good only and nothing else. I have heard His words of assurance spoken to my heart and I am persuaded that His love is totally for me. What have I to fear? My Beloved's **"perfect love"** is casting out all of my fears! Hallelujah!"* (**I John 4:18**).

For most Christians they have two lives, their real daily life and then, what they call, their spiritual life. They separate them. There is only one life, the spiritual life! It includes my personal life, family life, married life, school life, work life, recreation life, church life - these are but aspects of one true life. This declaration, **"...His desire is toward me"** can be summed up in these words, **"For in him we live, and move, and have our being..."** (**Acts 17:28**); **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die gain."** (**Phil. 1:21**); **"...Christ, who is our life..."** (**Col. 3:4**)! Of what are you afraid? In making this total commitment you will begin to experience **"...the mountains of spices"** (**8:14**)! There will no longer be mountains of separation in your life (**2:17**).

By coming to this place in your surrendered walk, knowing that His desire is always for your good, you will be able to give thanks in every kind of circumstance. Why? Because you know that even in the **"bad"** He is leading you through it, giving you strength in it and, using it in building up your spiritual character to help others who are hurting in the same kind of difficulty! **I Phil. 4:6,7** **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."** **I Thess. 5:18** **"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."** We do not give thanks for what the devil or our sin nature is doing to us. No! But in those things we give thanks because we are completely assured that our Beloved's desire is for our good only. Why? Because we are the number one item on His heart – we are His bride! Knowing all this, these verses will become food to your soul: **I Cor. 10:13; II Cor. 1:3,4; II Cor. 3:18; Rom. 5:3; I Pet. 1:7; II Pet. 1:1-8.**

She has received the ultimate in Holy Spirit confidence! Listen to her heart speak, *"If my Beloved is for me who can be against me? My Husband shall supply all of my needs according to His riches. I am able to do all things through my Bridegroom who is strengthening me! I am trusting my true Love with all of my heart and I will lean not on my own understanding. In all my ways I am acknowledging my Beloved and He is and will continually direct my paths. Since I am delighting myself entirely in Him, whom my soul loves, He shall give me the desires of my heart. I have committed my way to Him and trust my Beloved fully. He will bring everything that is right, good, pure and true to pass in my life. My Beloved is my strength and I will not be afraid what man can do to me."* (**Phil. 4:19; Phil. 4:13; Prov. 3:5,6; Psalms 37:4,5; Psalm 27:1**).

O how gently the Holy Spirit leads you to this point in your Christian walk! Then it finally dawns upon your spirit and you say *"He really does love me with all of His heart. His desire is for my good!"* To walk away from this moment is to insult God Almighty! It is to commit the ultimate discourtesy! To not fall at His feet, joyfully resigning your will to Him is to commit extreme spiritual rudeness. It is impossible for you to even imagine the depths of pain and grief experienced in the heart of

your Bridegroom! Dear caring reader, will you make an absolute quality decision, once and for all? Take her words and make them your own!

It is at this moment she is totally free in her spirit to make the initial move without her Beloved having to ask as He had done previously in **2:10** and **5:2**. For the first time she truly trusts in the promises of her Beloved (**II Cor. 7:1; II Pet. 1:3,4**). She is ready to act upon them. **THE BRIDE DEMONSTRATES IN TRUTH SHE POSSESSES THE MIND OF CHRIST (Phil. 2:5-13)**! How do we know this? In the next verse she speaks with an urgency and excitement, **"COME, MY BELOVED, LET US GO FORTH...!"** She has a boldness that was not there previously. She is spirit-filled and she can't help herself!

"There was a moment in my own life in the excruciating spiritual pain of despair, I cried out to God in my failure and exclaimed, *"O God, I cannot go on like this any more. I am filled up with Christian activities but empty of spiritual satisfaction that I have striven after for so many years! If there is something else You are going to have to reveal it to me."* At that moment I experienced a frightening emptiness. But my Lord knew that it was absolutely necessary. Without realizing it I had simply surrendered it all into His hands for the first time. I had given up my striving.

A very gentle and soft light had been turned on in my heart. The Holy Spirit whispered in my ear, *"Everything is all right."* An unexplainable peace flooded my soul for the first time. I knew that my Lord's arms were tightly enwrapped about me and He was pleased with me. I fell on my face prostrate on the floor and just worshiped Him, filled with praise! After this, everything became new: His word, His work, my prayer and praise life, and little did I realize it, that this was only the beginning! I began to rest in Him for the first time in my Christian life. By simply surrendering all that I was and had to His hand, I knew that as long as I stayed with that heart attitude I was in His will. I seldom knew what His specific will was for each day, I just knew I was walking in it, in what He planned or allowed into my life that day.

THE DEVOTED LIFE: 7:11 - 8:14

V.11 ***"Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages."***

With these words from the bride, the Lord leaps for joy and begins to sing! ***"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."*** (Zeph. 3:17)!

This is glory, her heart in absolute oneness with the Son and the Father. ***"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."*** (John 17:22). She wants what He desires. Now she is speaking the words her Beloved had spoken to her much earlier. Remember, He had asked her to go with Him in **2:10**. Her mouth is in agreement with His Word. No more backsliding from this point on, praise God! Listen to her heart break forth in singing...

*"So near, so very near to God, I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son I am as near as He.
So dear, so very dear to God, more dearer I cannot be;
The love where with He loves the Son: Such is His love to me!
Why should I ever careful (fearful) be, since such a God is mine?
He watches over me night and day, and tells me 'Mine is Thine.'"*

William H. Havergal

"...let us go..."

One moment of going it alone is repugnant to her soul. Her decision is to go, but only with Him. The where, how, why and to whom are not important to her, He knows best! It will always, always be ***"...LET US..."***! The Holy Spirit reminds her and us, ***"...that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform (finish) it until the day of Jesus Christ."*** (Phil. 1:6).

Oh, if only churches spent much time lifting up Jesus and drawing the young ones after His heart, there would be little pressure needed to get them to go out to the harvest. Lift Jesus up and He will draw. When will the church ever believe and fulfill what Jesus admonished to be done in **Mark 14:9**? We are all to become Mary's of Bethany! That is the goal of the Gospel. Mary of Bethany spiritually panted after her Lord and His heart. She was credited with having led many to the Lord (**John 11:45**). Just like this bride, the trusting, surrendered believer will say, ***"...let us go..."*** no matter what the cost! The Holy Spirit speaks to your spirit once again and says, ***"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*** (Phil. 2:13). Is your response... ***"let us go!"***? The joy is knowing just how pleased He is.

"...the field(s)...villages...vineyards" (v.12)."

Her only concern is to be with Him in His work. It doesn't make any difference if it is Kenya or Indonesia, Alaska or the city in which she resides. She says, "...**let us go to the hungry, hurting, angry, abused, troubled, terrified, depressed and downtrodden.**" Her spirit says, "If I am with You what evil can befall me. I will be attacked by the enemy but not defeated for I have this treasure in my earthen vessel and the greatness of His power will always bring the victory (II Cor. 2:14; 3:17; 4:7-17; 12:9-10; Phil. 4:13,19)! I will be filled with Your joy (John 15:11) because I will be filled with Your Spirit. O my love I will be filled with You!" She began making melody in her heart as the Holy Spirit swept over the strings of her soul!

*Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus, I am blest;
Peace which passes understanding, on Thy breast;
No more doubting, no more trembling, Oh, what rest! Oh, what rest!
Occupied with Thee, Lord Jesus, in Thy grace;
All Thy ways and thoughts about me only trace
deeper stories of Thy glories of Thy grace, of Thy grace!
Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus, I would be;
Finding joy and satisfaction all in Thee;
Thou the nearest and the dearest unto me, unto me!*
Miss C. A. Wellesley

THESE WORDS CHALLENGE THE CHRISTIAN TO SURRENDER HIS/HER LIFE TO THE LORD!

*How I praise Thee, precious Savior, that Thy love laid hold of me;
Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me that I might Thy channel be.*

Chorus:

*Channels only, blessed Master, but with all Thy wondrous power
flowing through us, Thou canst use us every day and every hour!*

*Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand;
With no power but as Thou givest graciously with each command. **Chorus***

*Witnessing Thy power to save me, setting free from self and sin;
Thou who boughtest to possess me, In Thy fullness, Lord, come in. **chorus***

*Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water from our inner man may flow. **chorus***

Mary E. Maxwell

V.12 "Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves."

It is all "**let us**"! "**Let us go...let us lodge...let us get up early...let us see.**" There is not the slightest hint of an independent spirit here. It is **US, US, US!** Do you feel her soul's burning desire and excitement as she says, "**Let us get up early...**"? This is what happens with a surrendered, spirit-filled believer. "**Early**" is having the "**let's get going now!**" attitude, whether it is for prayer, praise or service. This attitude of "**early**" is found in our Beloved Lord (**Mk. 1:35**); Abraham (**Gen. 21:14; 22:3**); Jacob (**Gen. 28:18**); Moses (**Ex. 34:4**); Joshua (**Josh. 3:1; 6:12; 7:16; 8:10**); David (**I Sam. 17:20**); Hezekiah (**II Chr. 29:20**); and Mary Magdalene (**John 20:1**). They rose up early! What about you dear bride of Christ?

"...let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear..."

The Beloved's face glowed with joy, quietly watching His beautiful bride checking to see if the vine flourished, touching the pomegranates to see if there were buds. Great intenseness filled her eyes as she walked among the plants of His garden. He saw how important they were to her heart. She turned and could see what blessed delight He was having in watching her care for what He so deeply cared for.

O how He loves to see signs of life in the vine! A flourishing vine is one that produces fruit. Jesus is the perfect Vine (**John 15:1-6**). The exquisite value of the Vine may only be seen in this world through fruit produced in us, the branches, by the Holy Spirit (**Gal. 5:22,23**). The heart and true image of the Vine is displayed in the fruit. Does the Vine flourish because you are an open channel through which His life may flow? This world is a place of deadness, darkness and dreariness. It desperately needs loving, holy, humble, God-fearing fruit bearing branches in the midst of all the thorns and thistles.

May we who are mature in the Lord disciple those who have just been saved; inundate them with the love of Christ. Let us take these very young branches under our wings and protect them. They are like tender grapes and the little foxes will sneak in and try to spoil the life that has begun (**2:15**)! They first need loving, caring, understanding fellowship. That is exactly what is being provided in this verse, getting close to the vine, touching it to check out the tender grapes. Touching symbolizes spiritual intimacy. You can't minister from afar off. Surrendered believers must establish loving relationships with the new, tender branches. Having a closeness with them helps the new one in Christ be accountable to someone who really cares! They will feel Jesus' love through the one discipling. It is for the young branch's protection. They do not know how to spiritually care for themselves! We who are into discipleship are not only concerned whether the vine is flourishing but that it will continue to flourish!

So many promising new believers fade away because of a lack of encouragement through example and enlightenment in the "how to's" for daily victory through discipleship. They flourish for a while then disappear into a life of mediocrity. These new lilies get excited about the Lord and His Word, then slowly, O so slowly, this spirit-filled drive and energy begins to be eroded. Why? There are some whom these tender lilies hold in high regard tell them not to go overboard in spiritual things saying, "You need balance. You don't want to become a fanatic!" (as if you can divorce your spiritual life from your daily walk!). They encourage them in everything else but the Lord.

Praise God the bride is in love with the garden and especially the budding branches. These are new believers of every age, culture and nationality. The baby buds desperately need to be nurtured right away! The first desire of a new baby believer is, "**the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.**" (**1 Pet. 2:2**). Someone needs to nurture them. They need to learn to fall in love with Jesus so that they will learn to obey for the right reasons. Jesus said it in **John 14:23**, "**If a man love me, he will keep my Word!**" They need to be loved unconditionally by a mentor so they will understand how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit unconditionally love them. As newborn babes (buds) they need to be protected, cared for and warned concerning the enemy who would come and try to seriously harm them. A Bible study only concerning basic church doctrine is not enough. They need a live, mature mentor, in the image of Jesus, showing them the walk of love. Then the doctrinal discipleship will become meaningful. So many think they are doing good because they memorize a few scriptures. How many have made shipwreck of their lives because they only receive church doctrine and a few memory verses?

Then there are those who would put them to work immediately. How sad! Babies don't go to work right off the bat. They are not equipped for it. Some well meaning leaders will quote **Mt. 28:19,29** and **Mark 16:15** and rush these new "buds" into service. But no one ever stops to think that these Words by the resurrected Jesus were said to seasoned followers, not babies! The "*cart is put before the horse*" for they are told to love their neighbor first when the spiritual order is to learn to love God first! We as shepherds are to lead these new believers into a Mary of Bethany – Song of Solomon experience. How sad that most shepherds know little of the admonition of the Lord in **Mark 14:9**. Mary was consumed with love for Jesus! New believers need to see that in the mature believers. What does God expect? What does He consider most important? Read **Deut. 6:1-9; 8:11-14!** As these new "**buds**" grow in love with Jesus there will be new "**buds**" of worship, praise, prayer and loving service and obedience in their lives.

PRAY WITH ME: "O my Beloved, use me to be a blessing in Your vineyards. May Your vine bud and blossom in the place where You have put me. Dear Holy Spirit speak through me, care through me, touch through me, love through me, save through me, heal through me so that the young branches in Your vine will begin to show signs of producing the same abundant life fruit of worship and praise for You their Husband! Pour out Your life producing Spirit in me! In Your powerful name, Lord Jesus, amen!"

"...and the pomegranates bud forth..." (see **4:13 & 6:11** for complete comments)

Are there pomegranates budding? It is spiritually exhilarating to hear and see new believers longing after more of the things of God, devouring His Word, praying with a full heart, involved and serving with the body of Christ, giving out fresh Holy Spirit filled praise! O how the Lord thirsts for the fruit of pomegranates (worship and praise). Why did God save us? "**This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.**" (**Isa. 43:21**; see **John 4:23,24** also). Let us encourage the young believer by example to praise our most Holy God! Let them see in us that the whole purpose of their

spiritual existence is to be, **"to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made (them) us accepted in the beloved."** (Eph. 1:6). Is there anything more joyous to the soul than being with young and old believers alike in a Holy Spirit led praise meeting? When the bride sees the fire of others loving on her Bridegroom through praise and worship it causes her surrendered, lily heart to rejoice and say,

"...there will I give thee my loves."

The bride is so filled up with thankful love for this new realm of ministering love with her Beloved out in the highways and byways of hurting, lost people. They now sit together. She is so grateful for His patience (1:1 – 7:10) in leading her into this glorious work of service. She is ready to release on Him what was poured out in her spirit so long ago – His love by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5). The opening between her spirit and her soul (mind, will, emotions etc.) is wide open and a torrent of love is ready to be poured out!

Where is **"...there..."**? It is first with Him alone and then with other Jesus-filled lilies who have the same intense desire to simply share His love with each other with Him in their midst. The Hebrew word for **"love"** is pluralized. This makes it a superlative (the very best). He gave you His saving love, covenant keeping love, forgiving love, providing love, accepting love, guiding love, sanctifying love, enduring love, instructing love, personal love, redeeming love, healing love, delivering love, sharing love, intimate love and in so many more ways. Ask Him to bring to your mind how many ways He has demonstrated His love to you past and present. And now, most of all give Him your, **"I am my Beloved's"** love which is the best love. It won't just be in church but an ongoing, inwardly hidden, beautifully blooming pure love that the Lord can enjoy all day long.

Speak to your soul with all the **"first love"** love that is there and say, **"Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name."** (Psa. 103:1). Love God and love one another - let it flow! Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10)!

V.13 "The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved."

The mandrake was considered a fruit symbolical of love. It was said to have special properties enhancing love's desire and increasing fertility. Praise God, she is so spiritually fertile that much fruit will be produced through her life in Him. And the fragrance is the presence and glory of the Beloved. His total possession of her (7:10) causes the spiritual mandrake to grow into maturity. He said, **"... Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."** (Jer. 31:3). O what a sweet smelling scent it is to the Bridegroom of our hearts! The only other place the mandrake is mentioned is in **Gen. 30:14-16** (5x). The mandrakes appeared in the fields at the time of wheat harvest. It was a time of rejoicing and celebration, a time of first fruits offered to the Lord, a time of praising God for His blessings. There is celebration by the angels as the Lord proudly invites them to see what His redemptive love has created - the heaven sent, sweet fragrance of the mandrakes; when His heart is locked in holy unity with His submissive bride. Enjoy the following verses concerning God's people and spiritual fragrances: **Psa. 141:2; II Cor. 2:14; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18; Rev. 8:4.**

"...and at our gates"

Gates represent the many and varied opportunities to serve. She is so overjoyed to share with her Beloved all the blessings that going through the gates of opportunity have brought to her heart. His gates are her gates (**"our"**). He chooses each gate in which they will enter and minister together. There is an indescribable sparkle of great delight in the Bridegroom's eyes as He takes her by the hand to go through each gate. He can feel just in the touch of her hand that she is filled to the full with the Holy Spirit. On her lips were these words, **"I have 'enter(ed) into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise....'"** (Psa. 100:4). She sang songs with confidence in her spirit about the victory and triumph she was about to experience together with Him (**I Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 2:14**)!

There were so many gates and so many victories! When the ministry was finished He would take her by the hand and lead her out of the gate in which they had entered. The Lover of her soul would find a green pasture near each gate where they sat together sharing all the wonderful things that had been accomplished. Every gate was a new experience producing all manner of fruit. What were some of these gates?

There was **"the Valley Gate"** (Neh. 2:13). At first it seemed so foreboding for it was known as the **"valley of the shadow of death"** (Psa. 23:4). So many people walked in the darkness of emptiness and despair. These poor souls had looked everywhere to find peace but there was nothing. As soon as the Lord opened the gate His light shone so brightly that it dispelled the darkness. Many who walked in darkness (**Isa. 9:2**) saw His light (**John 8:12**) and joyfully followed Him.

Songs of eternal life filled the air. The depressive land beyond the "**Valley Gate**" became known as the "**Valley of Berachah**" (II Chron. 20:26; "**Berachah**" Hebrew for "blessing")!

Next came "**the Fountain Gate**" (Neh. 2:14). It was a place where the fountains of this world had dried up long ago. All who lived there had hearts empty and parched to the things of God. All through the streets she went from person to person leading them to her Beloved's special fountain. There was something about her that others longed to have. She told each one who inquired that "*There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains!*" A bright sparkle gleamed in her eye as she continued to share with them that "*The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day; And there may (you), though vile as he, wash all (your) sins away.*" (by William Cowper). The Beloved through His bride also offered them refreshing, spiritual living water without cost (John 4:14). Hour after hour for days the people streamed to receive a drink. So many responded and before her eyes their souls became white as snow! The real Fountain of Life had visited them with the eternal water of the Word and the precious blood. As a result springs of living water flowed continually from their hearts in thanksgiving for all He had done for them.

Her joy was so great that time seemed to fly by. Then the Beloved lifted her up from this intimate sharing which they had experienced together and said, "*Come my love, it is time to go through 'the Sheep Gate'*" (Neh. 3:1). She opened the gate and saw confusion, pain and defeat. Tears of compassion flowed down her cheeks as she paused and asked her Beloved, "*My Love why all this hurt? Why all this defeat and loneliness? My heart breaks for them. They are so defenseless.*" He said, "*Because they were led astray by the enemy.*" (Isa. 53:6). Weeping He said, "*Many are My wounded sheep who have been attacked by the wolf*" (John 10:12). *They strayed away from My side.*"

She joyfully shared that the Good Shepherd, her Husband, was there and that He had died for them (John 10:11) and now He was risen to take care of them. She took them to her Beloved and as He drew them to His side their wounds and brokenheartedness disappeared. There was a beautiful transformation taking place. What joy swept over her soul! The Beloved filled them with the Holy Spirit as they began to be equipped in every good work. They were so thankful that she had led them to the "**Great Shepherd of the Sheep**" (Heb. 13:20,21).

"...are all manner of pleasant fruits..."

As the ministry within each gate was completed she gathered all those touched by her Bridegroom to meet together and just share their hearts about Him. It was a joyous time of communion (I Cor. 10:16,17). She explained to them that having communion together was a personal request of His. All those who had been redeemed came together with a burning desire to share all about their new Lord and God. The bride explained what communion was all about. These new members in the family of God broke out in boisterous praise and worship. Many gave testimony of the greatness and goodness of the Bridegroom.

As they passed the bread and cup to each other a holy quietness filled the place. After they had given thanks for the blood of Jesus some were weeping with tears of joy and thankfulness. Others knelt and still others lay prostrate on the floor. Hands raised everywhere in silence before a holy God. The Beloved leaned over and said to His bride, "*Thank you for bringing these, My redeemed ones together. There is no greater joy than for Me to hear and see the freshness of their first love, love for Me! It makes the shameful suffering of the cross worth it all!*" (Heb. 12:3)! *They are My portion and My joy!*" (Deut. 32:9)." The Beloved simply sat there taking it all in. The glow around Him burst into great glory. When the fellowship of praise and worship was ended she and the Lover of her soul went out, paused and found a place covered with green grass near the gate, the Bridegroom and His bride in a holy oneness were unable to talk, for mere words could not express what their hearts were experiencing!

What joy, what pleasant fruits: glorious fellowship with Him while ministering, souls saved, saints encouraged, hurting Christians delivered and filled with the Holy Spirit, all falling more deeply in love with the Bridegroom and His Word, becoming hungry for much more! Anyone passing near them could smell the delectable fragrance of the spiritual mandrakes.

"...new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved."

It's time for you and me to go and find a quiet place. Let us take out the precious mandrakes and just sit in silence with the One we so dearly love. We will reminisce over what He has done and all the spiritual fruit He has produced in our lives. May our thankful hearts simply reflect on the remembrance of His holy work that has been accomplished in us. Thinking about the old with the new reminds us of just how infinitely consistent the Beloved really is. Placing past and present blessings together will dispel any doubt that He might change tomorrow! What a pleasant reassurance this time is to the soul of the surrendered believer! It will encourage more consistent dependency on Him who never changes (James 1:17). Let us pause and do what the Psalmist did, "***...I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.***" (Psa. 143:5). "***I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.***" (Psa. 145:5). "***All thy***

works shall praise thee...." (Psa. 145:10).

As the Lord walks through the main archway of your heart, there appears a number of gates allowing access to the deepest recesses of your life such as: the gate of Bible study; the gate of praise; the gate of giving and receiving; the gate of earnest intercessory prayer; the gate of witnessing; the gate of intimacy; the gate of hurt and spiritual attacks. You place at these gates for your Beloved, fruit gleaned in each area, sharing with Him the wonderful things His blessed Holy Spirit and Word have done through you. Oh to save up in the memory of your heart all He has done for you. Oh to just sit and savor all of His grace and mercy which has been daily bestowed upon you, thanking Him and thanking Him and thanking Him from an overflowing heart!

Is not this the purpose of the Lord's Supper? When the body of Christ comes together for communion they are to remember Him, His cross, His character, His attributes and the fruit of the cross in our lives today. It is a time to think about all He is to us individually and corporately, sitting in His presence around the emblems of love for us, His bride! It is a continual victory celebration!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Lord, my heart is overwhelmed with Your presence! Thank You for being so real, so personal, so patient! I love You alone! In Jesus' Holy Name, amen!"*

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