

Session 14 God's Loving Discipline (Song 3:1-5)

I. REVIEW OF SONG 2:8-17

- A. The maiden received a new revelation of Jesus as the King, or “Lord of all,” who conquered the mountains. Jesus was like a gazelle who leapt victoriously over all the mountains (obstacles).

⁸The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. ⁹My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag [adult male deer]. (Song 2:8-9a)

- B. Jesus called her to rise up and come away with Him to the mountains (high places). This would involve embracing new assignments that required a new measure of faith and obedience. This challenged her security and comfort. In the maiden’s original prayer she cried to Jesus, “**Draw me away! We will run after you**” (Song 1:4). Jesus now called her out of the comfort zone to a new place in the Spirit so that she might experience a deeper partnership with Him.

*¹⁰My beloved...said to me: “**Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.**” (Song 2:10)*

- C. The maiden does not obey the call to rise up but rather tells Jesus to turn and go to the mountains without her. She does this because of her fear (spiritual immaturity not rebellion). The day break comes in the morning when new light is present and the dark areas in her life are gone.

*¹⁷Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, **turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bethel.** (Song 2:17)*

II. OVERVIEW OF SONG 3:1-5

- A. The Lord’s response to the maiden’s refusal to obey is to lovingly discipline her by causing His manifest presence to be lifted off her heart. He is not angry with her, but jealously wants her to share His values as a mature Bride so that she might walk in deeper partnership with Him.
- B. The Father loves us too much to allow us to come up short of being the glorious mature Bride of Christ. He did this for her spiritual well-being. The Lord pries our fingers off of the things that hold us in bondage. The cost of obedience is high. However, the cost of disobedience is higher. To neglect to obey the Holy Spirit’s leadership is costly.
- C. The Lord lifts the sense of His presence from the hearts of His beloved for several reasons. First, to alert us to the seriousness of our compromise that refuses to more deeply embrace the Holy Spirit’s leadership. Second, to humble us so as to cause us to be aware of our need for Him. Third, to awaken deep hunger in us for Jesus.
- D. We must be confident that God, in His love for us, will manifest His zeal or jealousy over us. God jealously requires that we live in wholehearted obedience. He zealously insists on that which deepens our relationship with Him and results in our greatness.

*⁵Do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “**The Spirit...in us yearns jealously?**” (Jas. 4:5)*

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

- A. The message of the Song is that God enjoys us even in our weakness. However, this does not mean that He approves all that we do. He corrects the areas of our life that He disapproves of so that He might remove all that hinders love (holiness) in us.
¹⁰ *...He [disciplines us] for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. (Heb. 12:10)*
- B. When the Lord disciplines us, He reveals His displeasure with an area in our life. This is not the same thing as God's displeasure with us as a person. God can be displeased with a certain behavior without despising us as a person. Some mistake divine correction for divine rejection, but it is proof of His love. God hates the sin yet delights in the one He disciplines (Heb. 12:6).
¹² *Whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)*
- C. Jesus rebukes, yet loves, believers that are in need of repentance. Jesus rebukes them and calls them to repent because He loves them. Then He invites these very people to sit on His throne.
¹⁹ *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent..."²¹ *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne..." (Rev. 3:19, 21)**
- D. To be disciplined means God cares and has not given up on us. It is a terrible thing to "get away with" sin long term because that means God is giving that person over to their sin. God's discipline is proof that He has not given up on us (Rom. 1:24-28).
²⁴ *God...gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts... (Rom. 1:24)*
³² *When we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11:32)*
- E. God feels the pain of those He disciplines and continues to consider them as His dearly beloved.
⁹ *In all their affliction He was afflicted...in His love...He redeemed them... (Isa. 63:9)*
⁷ *"I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies." (Jer. 12:7)*
- F. When we neglect to honestly and thoroughly confront sin in our heart we are not loved less by God but we do suffer loss in several ways. We minimize our ability to experience the joy of our salvation, the spirit of revelation, godly fellowship, and to receive eternal rewards.
- G. God has tender patience for a season with believers who do not repent. They must not confuse His patience with His approval. Jesus gave Jezebel and her disciples in Thyatira time to repent.
²¹ *"I gave her [Jezebel] time to repent of her...immorality..."²² *I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent..." (Rev. 2:21-22)**
- H. God patiently suffers long with us in His love as He works to lead us to repentance.
⁴ *Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)*

IV. GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE IS WITHDRAWN FROM THE MAIDEN

- A. The maiden sought God but did not find Him. This was a new experience for her. All through Song 1-2 when she sought Him she found Him in great sweetness.
- ¹By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him. ²“I will rise now,” I said, “and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love.” I sought him, but I did not find him. (Song 3:1-2)*
- B. There are four different “nights” in our spiritual life in which we must seek the Lord.
1. **The night hours:** We sometimes seek God in the night hours because of our godly desperation to know Him through the inconvenience of these hours.
 2. **The night of pain:** In difficult circumstances, as when David ran from Saul and Joseph was in the dungeon; they did not give up by concluding God's promises were false.
 3. **The night of temptation:** In times of failure and darkness we must continue to seek God.
 4. **The dark night of the soul:** In the Middle Ages, some spoke of the dark night of the soul, indicating that God's presence is sometimes temporarily withdrawn even in times of obedience (Song 5:6).
- C. The maiden was not supposed to be on her bed but on the mountains with the Lord. She was on “her bed” as contrasted to “their bed” or couch (Song 1:16; 3:7). Their partnership is disrupted.
- D. Her heart is set on loving Jesus in her struggles. She is not a hopeless hypocrite because of her fear to obey. We can continue to call Jesus “the One I love” even before we have victory in every area of our life. Sometimes we face a mountain of faith/obedience that seems out of reach. That is why it is a mountain. In between mountains are valleys. We're still lovers of God in the valley.
- ¹By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him. (Song 3:1)*
- E. She continues to seek God through the familiar spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditation on the Word as she did in the past (Song 2:3-5). Now she does not feel His presence because He requires a new measure of obedience. Prayer and fasting is no substitute for obedience.
- ⁴When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. (Judg. 8:4)*
- F. When we feel nothing, we must trust God's Word that He will draw near if we draw near to Him.
- ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (Jas. 4:8)*
- ³Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart... (Ps. 24:3-4)*

- G. God requires that we stir ourselves up to take hold of Him when He hides His face from us.
⁷There is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities. (Isa. 64:7)
- H. *The Jeremiah 20:7 principle:* In Jeremiah's youth, the Lord revealed His beauty to him and caused Him to love God. Jeremiah prophesied to the political and religious leaders of Israel. They did not receive him but put him in prison. Jeremiah then decided to quit prophesying. Then God's fire burned in him. You caused me to love You and now I am so connected to you I cannot walk away from You. In Song 1-2, the Lord connected the maiden's heart to God's love.
⁷O LORD, You induced [deceived NASB/NIV] me, and I was persuaded [deceived NASB/NIV]; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed...⁸Because the word of the LORD was made to me a reproach and a derision daily. ⁹Then I said, "I will not...speak anymore in His name." But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not. (Jer. 20:7-9)

V. THE YOUNG BRIDE ADDS OBEDIENCE TO HER PRAYERS

²"I will rise now," I said, "and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love." I sought him, but I did not find him. ³The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, "Have you seen the one I love?" (Song 3:2-3)

- A. The maiden now arises as she was commanded to do in Song 2:10. Jesus withholds His presence to cause us to diligently seek His face and to draw us out of fear, unbelief, and compromise. He holds out until we rise up and come to Him in new areas of obedience. The only safe place is in rising up in partnership with Him in faith and obedience.
- B. The pain of losing His presence motivates her to arise off her bed and leave the comfort zone. Jesus hides His face because He knows He can produce earnestness in our hearts by hiding His face. Jesus knows that she cannot live without His presence. Our soul becomes desperate for more of God as we remember former seasons of sweetness. She adds obedience to her prayer. She understands that prayer alone will not solve her problem. It requires active obedience.
- C. She arises to go about the city among the streets and squares, which is where the people interact. This is the place of risk, conflict, danger, and increased spiritual warfare outside of the comfortable bed and safety of the wall (Song 1:16; 2:9).
- D. Jacob wrestled with God through the night (Gen. 32:24-30). Jacob refused to give up until he touched God. He is a picture of prayer that wrestles with God until the breakthrough comes. Hosea described Jacob as seeking God earnestly with tears and supplication (Hos. 12:2-6).
- E. A friend of mine had a dream of wrestling with his son, who he allowed to pin him. His son smiled and said, "I won, Dad." My friend felt pleasure in wrestling with his son. The Lord said to him, "I allow Myself to be pinned by you because it brings Me pleasure." God's heart is delighted when we wrestle Him so that our hearts may grow in love for Jesus.

VI. JESUS' PRESENCE RETURNS IN RESPONSE TO HER OBEDIENCE

⁴Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me. (Song 3:4)

- A. She found Jesus only as she rose up to seek Him in obedience. The Lord is bound by His own affection to respond to our earnestness. He will not long refuse us. He wants us to prevail!
- B. ***Principle of spiritual hunger:*** If there is something in the Word that we can't live without, we will receive it in due time. However, if we can live without it, then we will go without it. If you want something in God's will so much that you can't live without it, you'll have it in due time.
- C. We do not have to live spiritually bored and in sin and unbelief. We can walk in the anointing to carefully obey Jesus in every area of our life, even before the mountains (Ezek. 36:26).
- D. She has a new resolution to hold on to Jesus with a determination that results from her painful season of spiritual struggle. She "never lets go of Him" throughout the remainder of the Song.
- E. Times of spiritual turmoil sometimes birth "holy violence" in us to hold on to Jesus and to never again allow compromise to be tolerated in our lives (Mt. 11:12). She has an unquenchable resolution to do the will of God.
- F. The maiden's resolve to obey extended to even the most difficult places.
⁴"I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me." (Song 3:4)
- G. She is an anointed ambassador of Jesus. She actually brings Jesus to places that He will not go without her obedience as a vehicle of the Father's choice. At the end of the Song she brings Jesus to all people (Song 8:2).
- H. The mother is a picture of the Church. Those who do God's will are Jesus' mother and brother (Mt. 12:46-50). Mother Israel gave birth to the redeemed (Rev. 12:5, 17). Often the most difficult places to bring Jesus is among familiar family relationships.
- I. Home represents the most difficult place to some because it is so familiar. A prophet has no honor in his own home. Bringing Jesus to her home is a significant manifestation of obedience to His command to arise.
- J. Home also represents the place of smallness. We do not need to get on a plane before we do ministry. We can minister to the small number in our home and neighborhood.

VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT GUARDS US IN STRATEGIC SPIRITUAL SEASONS (SONG 2:7)

⁷I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up [disturb] nor awaken love until it pleases. (Song 2:7)

- A. The Holy Spirit speaks here. He has ordained strategic seasons in each person's spiritual life. There are seasons where He desires to establish our heart in new and deep revelations of His heart. The Spirit's agenda for the Bride in this season was to awaken lovesickness in her as she went deep in the Word, feeding on apples and grapes at the banqueting house (Song 2:3-5). Many do not see the necessity of dedicating seasons of their life to go deep in God and His Word. John was told to eat the scroll—to understand God's Word in a deep way (Rev. 10:9-11).
- B. The daughters of Jerusalem represent believers who lack discernment of the various operations of the Spirit and the different seasons in God. The Spirit solemnly charges other believers to not disrupt or disturb the devoted ones with the Bride's heart in this season by their opinions and judgments. We can trust Jesus to disturb us when the seasons change as seen clearly in Song 2:8. The Spirit tells those who were insensitive to the ways of the Spirit to not disturb the Bride from this particular season of sitting at the table to be sustained and refreshed by the Word and the Spirit. Many only have one counsel; that is to seek God less and increase in ministry activity.
- C. Solomon charged them by the gazelles or by the does of the field (Song 2:7). By the gazelles or the does speaks of the importance of gentleness and sensitivity in relating to the young Bride in this season. A gazelle or doe has a sensitive nature and can be easily startled. Many are easily distracted from the Word. We must have sensitivity in relating to others in different seasons.
- D. In the phrase, "Until it pleases," the Hebrew can be translated as it, he, or she. The NASB accurately translates the phrase as "Don't awaken love until she pleases" instead of "until it pleases." If the Hebrew was translated "he" it would refer to the Lord being stirred to action by the daughters of Jerusalem. The Lord has no need for this nor does He need to be protected by the gentleness pictured by the gazelles. It is the Bride that must be protected from distraction.
- E. Three times Jesus speaks this phrase, "Don't arouse or awaken my love until it pleases." (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). In 8:4, He uses the same phrase "don't disturb her." He embraces her like the other two times. However in this third reference, He omits the phrase "by the gazelles of the field," because she is no longer immature or easily tossed to and fro (Eph. 4:14).
- F. The Holy Spirit's charge is to not pressure the Bride to move on until she is prepared.
- G. The Lord has each of us on a tailor made journey made for who we are and where we are going. Jesus is telling other believers to not disrupt her. He does not want her disrupted from this particular season by unsanctified mercy and false comfort that undermines the Lord's discipline.