

Session 3 The Bride's Life Vision (Song 1:2-4)

**For additional study material pertaining to this session, see mikebickle.org*

I. REVIEW: THE THEME OF THE SONG

- A. The Bride made her request to the One with authority over the King. She said, “Let Him...” She asked the One who could influence the King in personal matters. We cry, “Father, let Him kiss me with the kisses of His Word.” This is a prayer for grace to love Jesus with all of our heart so as to walk out the first commandment. The Word of God is what proceeds from God’s mouth. For 3,000 years, rabbis have referred to this verse as the “kisses of the Torah” (Deut. 8:3).

²Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth [Word], for Your love is better than wine. (Song 1:2)

We are working through the major themes of the Song of Solomon. We are not going to cover every verse. Here is the theme of the first chapter, Song of Solomon 1:2-4, which is the theme of the Song.

We are going to review from the last session. The bride cried out. Her one request was to the only one who had authority over the king, the only one who could influence the king. She said, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His word, the kisses of His mouth.” She gives us the key point that we are going to develop tonight. She says, “I am going to tell you why I want the Word of God to touch me in power. I know something that other people do not really understand. The encounter of the love of God is better than anything this world can give me, positive or negative blessing.” There are many blessings of God.

She says, “Even more than the blessings of God in my circumstance, in ministry, the anointing, finance, and favor, I have a revelation. There is actually something more than that, and it is the primary cry of my heart.” She continues, “It is love that is better than wine. The wine of this fallen world. That is why I want the Word of God to touch me.”

We cry out, “Father, let Your Son kiss us with the kisses of His Word.” Meaning you do not need to use that language. If you use this verse, Song of Solomon, that is how you would pray it. You can pray it, “Holy Spirit, pour out the love of God in my heart.” You could pray it, “Lord, release the spirit of revelation of the Word that touches my heart. Unveil that volcanic eruption of love that is in Your heart. Unveil it to my heart.”

This is a prayer for grace to love Jesus with all of our heart. That is what this prayer translates to in the language of the New Testament. We are reading the Song of Solomon through the language of New Testament truth. This is a prayer for grace, for the anointing or the grace of God. Say it any way you want. To love Jesus with all of our heart. Beloved, that is the premier vision of our lives. I have a number of elements in the secondary vision of my life. I want the Lord to bless my ministry, relationships, many, many things, but I have a primary vision that is bigger than all of the secondary vision. The secondary vision is good. It is important. It is biblical, but I have a vision bigger than all the other ones.

- B. The Bride’s reason for wanting the kisses of His Word is that His love is “better than,” or “more delightful than” (NIV), the wine of this fallen world. Jesus’ affections are better than anything that this world can offer. In the context of marital love, wine speaks of a drink of gladness that celebrates love. She spoke in the second person saying, “Your love is better than wine” (1:2).

The bride gave her reason for wanting the Word of God to touch her in this way. “Your love is better than”—I like the NIV, the New International Version—“Your love is more delightful.”—It touches my heart. The point is

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that Jesus' affections are better than anything this world can offer. Everybody knows it. A lot of songs highlight it, but then believers pursue ministry more than intimacy with God. They pursue promotion. They get stuck in bitterness and competition, comparison and anguish. They get snared in temptations. The Lord says, "Wait a second. Don't you believe that I am a bigger vision than that? Bigger than those things that I will bless you with. Me connecting with you is actually more powerful than that."

Wine here is in this context of married love in this love song. It is a natural song extolling the beauty of married love. That is the natural interpretation. That is a very biblical and important interpretation of these eight chapters. The beauty of natural married love. Wine in this context is talking about the drink of gladness that celebrates married love.

- C. Wine here speaks of the intoxicating things of this world, both good and bad. There is both the "good wine" of God's blessing on our circumstances and the "bad wine" of sin. Encountering God's love in our heart is obviously better than the pleasures of sin, but it is also better than blessed circumstances such as increased favor in our finances, ministry, etc. As wonderful as God's blessings are on our circumstances, they are not to be our primary focus.

*The reason I make that point about wine is that wine in this context speaks of the things that are intoxicating in this world, **both** the good things and the bad things. What I mean by good things, I am talking about blessed circumstances. It is really something if God gives you a million dollars. That is pretty cool. If God wanted to give me a million dollars, I would not say, "Oh no, in the name of Jesus, do not." I would say, "In the name of Jesus, give me two million." Those are blessed circumstance. If the Lord said that He wanted to open a door of favor, I would say, "Yes, more! Give me a double portion." In my appreciation and celebration of the good things of this fallen world—the blessing of favor and increase—I do not want to be confused thinking that is the primary issue that will satisfy my heart.*

It is important that we value the circumstantial blessings of God, but we are not intoxicated by them. Easy to say, but hard to do. I know many believers that can say what I just said, but in the reality of how they carry their private life in God, the way they carry their heart, they actually live in a different place than what I just said. My point is not how bad they are. My point is that we are contending for a higher vision. Some imagine that favor in relationship and favor in finances, favor in ministry, and great impact somehow will answer the cry of their heart. It will not. I promise you it will not. The pursuit of it can be intoxicating. It can excite us as doors are opening and things are increasing. We get excited only to find out when you get deeper into the blessing, it really does not satisfy our heart.

I know men and women of God who have had a mountain of impact in favor and finance, and they have said, "This is that? That is really what this was about?" Several decades later they have made it to the top, only to discover there is nothing at the top that they imagined would satisfy their heart. As young people, why do we want to take two or three decades and waste it pursuing that? Celebrate the blessing of God, but do not be confused by it. Do not make it number one. I am talking about the circumstantial blessing of God.

- D. This passage highlights the superior pleasures that come from experiencing God's affection. These superior pleasures contrast with the inferior pleasures of sin. God frees us from the dominion of the inferior pleasures of sin by allowing us to experience the pleasure of His Word.

This passage highlights the superior pleasures that come from experiencing God's affections. There is something superior when God reveals God to the human spirit. Superior pleasures are in context to the inferior pleasures of sin. The way that God frees us from the dominion of inferior pleasure is by introducing us to the

superior pleasures. Meaning, I know a lot of young people who are saying no to lust, and that is very important. They are resisting lust, but they are focusing on saying no, and it is important in an element of our spiritual life to focus on saying no, but it is their primary focus. They put their energy into, “No, no, no.” They grit their teeth, resist it, and think about it.

The Lord taps us on the shoulder and says, “Turn around, focus on the superior pleasures. After I begin to fascinate your heart with My Son, you can turn around and resist sin as it is trying to chase you down.”

*It is a very, very different mindset. When sin pulls at my heart, whether just the lusts of life which include bitterness, disappointment, pain, or many other things, I know where the answer is. It is not in focusing on resisting. Although resisting is important, it is secondary. The answer is getting intoxicated with the One who I know can liberate me on the inside by encountering Him. The encounter I am talking about is **NOT** a one-time encounter where an angel appears and visits, touches you, and then all of a sudden you have no more wrong desires. You are totally full. I do not know of an encounter that does that. When I was younger, I thought if I had a heavenly encounter, everything would go away. I have had a couple of very powerful encounters over the years, and I know quite a handful of guys and gals who have had powerful encounters, but the thing does not go away. The negative. The temptations. It is that “growing in revelation of Jesus by the Word” day-by-day, inch-by-inch. That is where the exhilaration and the fascination are found.*

- E. There are many different categories of pleasures (physical, emotional, and mental) that we can celebrate under the leadership of Jesus. God made us spiritually, physically, and emotionally hungry or needy. We yearn for pleasure because we are designed by God to be pleasure seekers.

There are many different categories of pleasure in our human makeup. We are supposed to celebrate these pleasures. I am talking about there are pleasures under the lordship of Jesus in our human makeup. God made us, so there are spiritual pleasures. There are physical pleasures that are in the will of God. There are emotional pleasures. There are relational pleasures. There are mental pleasures. I mean just the excitement of learning something that is according to how God designed you, something you are really interested in. That is pleasurable.

We yearn for pleasure. We are pleasure-seekers because God is the very fountain of pleasure, and He created us that way. The key is to find the pleasures in the will of God. The goal is not to live a pleasure-free life. The goal is to live in pleasures that are in the will of God and predominantly locked into the spiritual pleasures of God revealing God to our heart.

- F. God created the human spirit with longings that draw us to Him, with a “God-shaped vacuum” in our heart that can only be filled by God. We are made in His image; thus we have longings that reflect His glory and His personality, which is filled with pleasure and delight. Each longing has an element of delight, pain, and ache as it woos us deeper into God’s presence.
- G. See the book **7 Longings of the Human Heart** by M. Bickle & D. Heibert. These longings are identified as the longing for the *assurance that we are enjoyed by God*, the longing to be *fascinated*, the longing to be *beautiful*, the longing to be *great*, the longing for *intimacy without shame*, the longing to be *wholehearted and passionate*, and the longing to make a *lasting impact*.

*God created the human spirit with longings. We have many longings. Deborah Heibert and I wrote a book about this, called **Seven Longings of the Human Heart**. It is not like there are only seven. There are more longings. You can categorize them in different ways. God created us with these longings. You cannot repent of*

these longings. You can repent of trying to fulfill them in the wrong way, but you cannot repent of the longing itself, because it was built into you strategically by God to draw you to Him.

I think the greatest longing in the human heart is the longing to have the assurance that we are actually enjoyed. I believe that is the greatest, most profound longing in the human heart. To know that we are enjoyed by God.

We have a longing to be fascinated. The entertainment industry has exploited that longing. They seek to fascinate us, over in the other direction. Not all of the entertainment. Praise God, the Lord is raising up those media missionaries who are bringing the will of God and the kingdom of God to the realm of the arts. That is happening right now as I speak. All across the earth God is stirring up men and women in that arena.

There is the longing to be beautiful. There is the longing to be great. Did you know you cannot repent of longing to be great? You can repent of pursuing it in the wrong way. The great God created you with a desire to be great. We just need to pursue it in His way, in His timing, according to what the Word says.

- H. Satan counterfeits the pleasures that God created so that he might draw us from God. We sin, believing it will give us pleasure that is superior to obeying God. The power of temptation rests on “deceptive lusts” which promise that sin will bring more satisfaction than living for God.

²²**Put off...the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. (Eph. 4:22)**

¹³**...lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb. 3:13)**

Satan counterfeits these longings and these pleasures. The reason I am emphasizing this is because you will read the Song of Solomon in a different way when you understand that God actually wants to fascinate you and fill your heart with the pleasure of encountering Him. Again, it is little by little, step by step. I have had a couple major experiences over the years, but those are not the ones that actually make a big difference in how my emotions feel. I have to do something with the truth related to those encounters related to the Lord; I have to apply those truths day by day. **It is the applying the truth about who He is and who I am to Him that actually fascinates my heart, and it will fascinate your heart if you do it.**

The Bible talks about deceitful lusts. The reason they are deceitful is that they promise they will satisfy us, so we take hold of them, but they leave us empty. I do not just mean evil things. That is what these passages are talking about. I am talking even about blessings that are good, that we want. When they become number one in our lives, they leave us empty. Even good blessings in our circumstance. I love blessings. Again, wherever God wants to bless me, I want the double portion everywhere. I am not putting down His blessing, but I am not exalting it to its inappropriate place in my heart either.

- I. The greatest “pleasures” we can experience are spiritual, and come from encountering the presence of God. They fascinate our heart with beauty and exhilarate our heart with love. God does not call us to holiness so that He can test us by keeping us from a life of pleasure. Holiness is a call to experience forever the perfect pleasure of God’s presence.

¹¹**In Your presence is fullness of joy...at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps. 16:11)**

The greatest pleasures are spiritual ones. There are physical, emotional, relational, and mental pleasures. The greatest pleasures in the human makeup are spiritual ones.

- J. The Bride develops the theme of the superior pleasures in God throughout the Song. The reward of love is the power to love fully. One who loves will always outwork the one who works only for pay. When workers become lovers, the way they view their work changes greatly.

³*I sat down in His shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. (Song 2:3)*

The bride develops this theme of the superior pleasure throughout the eight chapter love song. In chapter 2, she talks about the great delight of encountering the presence of God.

- K. God loves us in the same way that God loves God. The measure of the Father's love for Jesus is the measure of Jesus' love for us (Jn. 15:9). This is the ultimate statement of our worth.

⁹*“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you.” (Jn. 15:9)*

*This is the height of where it goes. This gives us insight into the measure of how powerful the love of God is. Jesus declared, “In the same intensity that the Father loves Me, I love you—in that same intensity.” Beloved, that is impossible to exaggerate the height of what that means! Jesus looked at the apostles and said, “In the same intensity My Father loves Me, that the eternal God, the Father, loves Me, the eternal Son...” Jesus is as much God as the Father. He is uncreated like the Father. They have loved each other from eternity past. He said, “In the same intensity as the Father loves Me, **that** is how I love you.”*

Beloved, a billion years from now we will still be discovering this. I do not want to wait until the age to come to get serious about this journey. I want to take the Word and use it to talk to Him. I want to talk to the Holy Spirit, “Show me how God feels about me. Awaken my own desires for Him, where I walk in the power of loving God with all of my heart, though my love is weak.”

When we give all of our heart to seek to love Him, something is exhilarating on the inside. My love is weak. I am not impressed with my love for God. I want it to grow so much, but I have been going hard after it. The very pursuit of wholeheartedness is actually exhilarating in itself to touch our heart.

II. AFFECTION-BASED OBEDIENCE: MOTIVATED BY SATISFACTION IN JESUS

- A. **Affection-based obedience** flows from experiencing Jesus' affection for us and then returning our affection to Him. This results in the deepest and most consistent obedience.

I have listed three different types of obedience. All three of them are both biblical and necessary. I am not putting one of them down. What I am doing is pointing out that there is one that exists which many ignore. That is the first one. I call it affection-based obedience. This is obedience that flows from experiencing a little bit of Jesus' affection for us. I mean a little bit goes a long way. Jesus' affection for us, that I just talked about in John 15, in the last verse I looked at—returning that love, that affection. This results in the deepest and most consistent obedience. Meaning if you will get into that vein, your obedience will be deeper and more consistent when you are under pressure. What we will do for love is far beyond what we will do for duty.

- B. **Duty-based obedience** is our commitment to obedience, even if we do not feel God's presence.

There is duty-based obedience. Duty-based is not bad, it is just not the most powerful. We obey God when we feel nothing. I know what it means to obey God when we feel nothing. I have done it many, many times. That is not my favorite, but it is biblical.

- C. ***Fear-based obedience*** is motivated by the fear of negative consequences. The approach of many is to use only shame and fear to motivate people into keeping a list of do's and don'ts. Holiness has often been presented in a negative way, with endless lists of threats and warnings of the consequences of sin. The Word of God has many prohibitions, but these laws and restrictions were never designed by God to transform the heart. We must present the consequences of sin, but we must realize that this is not enough to transform hearts; something more is needed.

There is fear-based obedience. That is biblical. Fear of consequences. You really can go to hell. It is real. I do not want to go to hell. I really do not. I do not want to live under the discipline of God in the negative sense because I have resisted Him. He says, "I love you so much, I will disciple you." That is real.

When my affection-based obedience runs thin, I think, "You know, I fear the Lord." This is real. It is the fear of consequences. Consequences are real. If someone tells you they are not real because of the grace of God, they are not reading the Bible. It is real. The difference is that the duty base and the fear base were never designed to transform the heart. There has to be more than that.

If the fear of getting caught, the fear of getting shamed, the fear of getting fired, or the fear of being disciplined is all that motivates us to stay true, it will never transform us. We will just be gritting our teeth all the time, trying hard not to step across the line and get in big trouble. That is biblical. It is just not the highest. That is my point. There is more.

- D. C. S. Lewis said: "We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with alcohol and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us. We are like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because we cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea." That's the choice we make when we sin. It looks as if it will satisfy us, when in fact it is spoiled meat. The pleasures of God are a banquet that delivers us from the emptiness of sinful pleasure.

I love the quote by C.S. Lewis. I have heard a number of preachers quote this, so I encourage you to run with this. He said, "We are half-hearted creatures fooling around with alcohol and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us." He says we are like the ignorant child who goes on mud pies in a slum because we cannot imagine that we have been offered the holiday by the sea. Lewis goes on to develop the story, that the poor boy in the slums has been offered this phenomenal vacation and he takes the ticket. That is the imagery. He puts the ticket under his cardboard box where he lives under the bridge, and he just keeps making mud pies. It does not enter his mind there is something bigger that has already been given to him.

Beloved, why do we want to live in spiritual poverty in the wrong sense, because we misapply "blessed are the poor in spirit?" God wants to give us a vision of how far we can go with an encounter of God in our heart. I want to go the whole way.

- E. We sin when our heart is not satisfied in God. The temptation to experience the pleasure of sin is usually more powerful than the fear of punishment. The fear of sin's consequences does not usually overpower the tendency to sin; instead, it causes us to sin in secret.

III. THE FRAGRANCE OF JESUS (1:3)

Let's look at some of the verses now. In 1:3, the bride says, "Because of the fragrance of Your perfumes." I will use the word perfumes. When we think of ointments, not everybody thinks automatically of perfume, but that is the idea. The ointments were perfumes. Many translations will use the word perfumes here.

Because of the fragrance of Jesus' perfumes, two things happen. Your name is perfume poured forth, number one. Number two, Your people love You. Because there is perfume, because of the beauty of who You are, Your name is poured forth. God anoints the name of Jesus and makes it famous in the earth. God pours forth the name of Jesus in the nations; He is doing it through church history. He is going to do it far beyond in the days to come and in the age to come. There is only one perfumed name among men. It is His name. God is going to pour it forth in the nations. That is not the only thing this perfumed name does. It also awakens love. It causes us to love Him.

- A. The fragrance of a rose comes from its internal qualities. In a similar way, the King's perfume in the Song speaks of His internal life, or what He thinks and feels. Jesus' perfume speaks of His thoughts and emotions. Thus the Bride enjoys the perfume of God's thoughts and affection. Paul spoke of the fragrance of Jesus; it is figurative for the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 2:14)

³Because of the fragrance of Your good ointments [perfumes, NIV], Your Name is ointment [perfume, NIV] poured forth; therefore the virgins love You. (Song 1:3)

The fragrance of a rose comes from its internal qualities. You pick up a rose, and you smell it. It is the internal qualities of the rose that you are smelling. The King's perfume in this love song, this love poem, speaks of His internal life. It is the internal life of who that Man is. He is fully God. He is fully Man. It is His internal life that is so fragrant. What do I mean by His internal life? It is what He thinks. It is what He feels.

I remember some years ago, when I was in my twenties. I am fifty-eight, almost sixty. Many years ago I got the vision or the goal of becoming a student of God's emotions. I was captivated in becoming a student of how God feels, by reading in the Bible where it describes how God feels and becoming a student of God's emotions. I believe David was a student of God's emotions. That is where I got the idea. He was a man after God's own heart. One element, he was a student of how God feels. The Bible has much information about it.

I began to grow in my understanding a little bit. I am not very far along the road. I understand more than I did back then. I began to get just captivated by how He thinks and how He feels. Particularly how He thinks and how He feels about me. Okay, sanctified selfishness. I was thinking mostly about me on the front end. I still think about me a lot. I really like me. That is actually biblical in the grace of God. It is biblical to hate our own life and to love who we are in the grace of God. That is another subject for another day. When I began to understand a little bit how He thinks and feels, I tell you I began to see Christianity and the kingdom of God entirely differently. It was not just rules I had to endure to escape hell and not get in trouble. It was not just a ministry assignment to work hard and get other people forgiven of their sins. It was a dynamic exchange with the most beautiful Man who ever walked the earth. O the fragrance of His good perfumes! The way He feels about you. The way He thinks about you. It is remarkable. It speaks of His thought life. His emotions.

- B. Because of the fragrance of Jesus' perfumes (His internal qualities), two things will occur.
1. First, God will pour Jesus' name forth; that is, He will exalt and reveal it to the nations. Because Jesus' life is perfume before God, His name will be supremely honored on earth.

**⁹God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. (Phil. 2:9-10)**

There are two different things the bride highlights here. Because of your good perfumes, number one, God will pour your name forth. He will exalt you above every other name. Because Jesus' life is perfume before God. When the Father looks at Jesus, He said, "That is the name I will exalt in the nations. It will bring glory to Me, and it will fill the earth with love. That is the name I am going to pour forth." What a glorious revelation to connect your heart with the Father's commitment to pour forth that perfumed name! It does not end there.

2. Second, receiving the knowledge of God awakens love in our heart for Jesus (Jn. 17:26).

The virgins love Him—believers love Him—these are spiritual virgins. Who we are in Christ Jesus, because of the gift of righteousness is what it is talking about. Through the lens of the New Testament.

- C. The Church will love Jesus as the Father pours forth, (reveals more of) the beauty of His name. The Bride knows that the beauty of Jesus will cause all believers (the virgins) to love Jesus. The virgins speak of the daughters of Jerusalem in the Song. They are genuine, yet immature, believers who seek Jesus throughout the Song, but are never fully committed as the Bride is.

³Your Name is ointment [perfume] poured forth; therefore the virgins love You. (Song 1:3)

Let's develop this idea a little bit more. The church will love Jesus as the Father pours forth the perfume of who He is, the revelation of His beauty. That sounds like David again. King David was captured by the beauty of God. Not just His external display of power, but the internal makeup of His emotions and His thought life and His personality that is beautiful beyond description. David said, "All the days of my life I will lock into the realm of Your beauty."

The bride knows the beauty of Jesus will cause believers to love Him more. It is so gracious of the Lord. In our early days, thirty years ago plus, in 1983, when the Lord spoke about the International House of Prayer, the verse He used—He spoke it audibly—Psalm 27:4, "This one thing, we will gaze on His beauty."

I remember when Bob Jones told me this. I said, "Well, gazing on God's beauty is not prayer night and day. You are confused."

He said, "It is."

I said, "What? Prayer night and day is all about revival."

He said, "It is about gazing on His beauty, encountering His beauty, and seeing others being released into the revelation of His beauty."

It was a bizarre idea. I actually told him, "You got it mixed up."

He said, "You will see. This will make sense."

The reason I am saying this is that the prayer movement is contending for justice and power, but it is through the paradigm or the perspective of encountering beauty and contending for beauty, the beauty of Jesus. Without that little, progressive increase of beauty, I tell you, the work is too difficult. We get burned out in the task. Without the revelation of beauty, the task is just too wearisome.

- D. There is only one “perfumed name” that can transform our heart and empower us to love God. There is nothing more powerful or pleasurable than when God reveals God to the human spirit.

⁸***I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:8)***

- E. Jesus declares God's name or personality to awaken love in our heart for God.

²⁶***“I have declared to them Your [the Father's] name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me [Jesus] may be in them.” (Jn. 17:26)***

Jesus declares God's name. He declares the Father's name, God's name. That is, He declares the Father's personality as the way to awaken love in the heart. You do not have to have a lifetime verse, but I have one. If you are looking for one, I always recommend people to pick this one. I say that just a little bit of humor. John 17:26. I made it my life verse many years ago. Jesus is praying, in effect, “Father, I have declared My name to them, and by declaring Your name, the love with which You loved Me with will be awakened in them. They will love Me when they see You. They will be so fascinated by who You are, Father, and they will be so exhilarated by You. It will awaken love inside of them.” Jesus has really good theology. How many of you know that? The reason I am saying this, it is this tenacious focus to grow in the knowledge of what God is like, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. One God in three persons. Whether you are studying the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, you will end up in the same place. One God in three persons.

*When we study His name, what His personality is like, what He feels like, how He acts, what He thinks, it awakens love in the human heart. Why do I say that to you? A lot of folks want their love to increase. They want to feel the power of it. They want to feel the love of God for them, and they want to feel love back to God. What they do is, they come to a worship service and want someone to pray for them, to impart it to them. I am all for that, but that is not mostly how you are going to grow in this revelation—by someone laying hands on you. **You are going to grow in it day by day, inch by inch, reading the Word and talking to Jesus, the Spirit little by little touching your heart.** I am telling you, that is how it works.*

People say, “I believe everything you are saying, but I do not read the Word. I am not really one of those guys.” If that is true of you, then you will live a spiritually superficial life. You may have a powerful gifting that opens up big doors for you. You might sell a lot of CD's and make a lot of money. You might be a famous preacher, but you will live spiritually shallow on the inside. To me that is the greatest tragedy a believer can have in this age. To be a sincere believer, but live spiritually shallow.

I want to go after this. I believe this stuff. I really believe this. It is worth laying aside some things to make more time for this. It really is worth it. I am a satisfied customer who is completely unsatisfied. I am discontentedly content. I am grateful, but ravenous in hunger. This is not enough; give me more, but O how much You have given me! Thank You, but I have to have more. I mean it. I do not mean just a worship service where we get really excited, jump really high, and have someone lay hands on me. I like that, but I am talking about far more than that. I am talking about those other eighteen hours in the day. I am talking about that part of our life. What we do in our heart. How we talk to Him through the day based out of those times where we get to lock things away and talk to Him with the Word open. Then we can have that conversation develop throughout the day, little by little, because we have those times when we lock in.

- F. Jesus knows how the human heart works. He explained to Simon that when people experience the power of being forgiven, they would overflow with greater love. This causes us to grow in gratitude, and it renews our love.

⁴⁷“I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.” (Lk. 7:47)

Jesus knows how the human heart works. He told Simeon the Pharisee in Luke 7:47—this is the passage that will really take you high. This is the 747! It is kind of corny, but I am telling you it is true. That is how I memorized it years ago. I said, “Okay, I can do it that way.”—Jesus told Simeon the Pharisee, “Let me tell you about that woman. She is forgiven much. She loves much.” My point is that this causes us to grow in gratitude. I tell you, when we see the measure of the love: gratitude. And gratitude is our safety from bitterness and disappointment. Gratitude for what we received, not anger for what we did not get that somebody else got or somebody took from us. We can live in bitterness instead of gratitude.

When I see how much I brought into the relationship—not very much—and how much He brought into the relationship, even if nothing else happens positively in circumstances, I am way ahead of the game from what I deserve already. If you get in the way of my blessing and you take it and steal it and run with it, but in the will of God it always bounces back. Put that aside for a moment. The point is I am way ahead of the game right now. Yes, IHOPKC worship leaders, even if somebody takes your drummer. I tell you, they will give up their boyfriend before they give up their drummer! It is a fifteen-year observation. There is something about drummers that are really special. It is only funny if you are not a worship leader. A couple of you are crying right now, “I am going to get inner healing tonight. That guy understands.”

- G. Throughout the Song, the perfume of God is imparted to the Bride. His perfume becomes her perfume. I encourage you to study the place of God's perfume in the Bride's life in the Song.

¹⁶**Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let my Beloved come to His garden and eat its pleasant fruits. (Song 4:16)**

¹⁵**For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved. (2 Cor. 2:15)**

IV. THE BRIDE'S LIFE VISION (1:4)

- A. In Song 1:4, the Bride describes her spiritual goals and primary life vision. She expresses her two-fold life vision in the form of a prayer. Her primary life vision is to be one who is drawn near to Jesus in intimacy and who receives grace to run after Him with others in ministry.

⁴**Draw me away! We will run after You. The King has brought me into His chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will remember Your love more than wine. (Song 1:4)**

The bride describes her spiritual goals and her primary life vision. Verse 4 is her primary life vision. You will see three different facets of verse 4. Verse 4 is loaded. It is one of the most powerful verses in the Song of Solomon. She expresses her two-fold life vision. Her two-fold life vision: she wants to be drawn in intimacy; draw me after You, Jesus. I want to touch You at the heart level. And, she wants to run together with others in ministry. The drawing is singular. The running is plural. Draw me away. We will run after You. There is something dynamic about linking arms with believers that are equally yoked, going hard for God. We are running after Jesus, and we are running together in ministry to bring others. There is ministry, there is community, and there is something together that we are bringing to others. We are running.

Verse 4 starts with her life vision, “Draw me and we will run.” Then the next thing she says, she talks about the chambers. That is the way for the vision to be fulfilled. Those chamber times in our private lives, those personal times when we are with God. Without the chamber times, we are never going to fulfill our vision. Never.

A lot of people have a vision for intimacy and a vision for powerful ministry, but they do not have any place for the King's chamber in their schedule, in their lives. I say this next thing with absolutely no criticism, seriously. There are a lot of folks who went through all the effort and energy to come here to join IHOPKC and raise their support, to be an intern and be all these things. In the prayer room they play video games and do email, and they do not even talk to Jesus. There is nothing wrong with doing email. I do email in the prayer room sometimes, but most of my time I am not trying to get away or endure time in the prayer room. I want to go somewhere with God. I have seen people in the fifteen years of IHOPKC spend an incredible amount of energy, time, sacrifice, and money to get here. They get here, but they do not connect, and they do not talk to Him. They endure the prayer room, just dreaming of their life outside of it. I think, "Why did you put the effort to get here? It is built into your schedule. Your chamber time." I really do not want to do that.

Her third point is, "We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will remember Your love more than wine." That is the spiritual warfare dimension, where she is contending for the vision. She is confessing the Word. She is putting her stake in the ground, so to speak. She is not going to accept the enemy's counterfeit or any other obstacles. She has set her soul to confess. She is rejoicing in Him. She is believing in Him. She is taking time to remember what He says about His love.

I tell you, beloved, a lot of obstacles will get in the way. You can have a vision. You can even have chamber times, get in the King's chamber, but if you do not contend for the truth, you will just live in condemnation and confusion on the inside, even in the chamber times. We have to contend for the vision, for the truth of who He is.

1. Being drawn is *singular*: it speaks of intimacy with God. Being drawn close to God's heart speaks of our relationship and private interaction with Him. This points to developing our secret life in God. The words "after You" modify "draw me" in some translations, as in the NASB, "draw me after You."

Being drawn is singular. This speaks of intimacy with God. It speaks of our private interactions. Did you know every one of us in this room is each developing our secret history in God. You and I, every believer in the earth, we are developing that secret history, that interaction with God that nobody else can see. Whether you are in a public gathering, whether you are at a workplace, whether you are in a prayer room, whether you are walking in a park, we all carry our heart in a certain way and make choices. We are developing our secret history. I want a rich secret history in God. That does not mean that nobody ever sees what is going on, but most of what happens in all of our lives happens on the inside. It is those choices that we make continually. I do not mean whether to sin or not sin. About how we are going to maintain the dialogue with Him in our heart. How we are going to refuse condemnation. How we are going to resist temptation. How when the devil comes and there is disappointment and we want to just give up and give in, it is not worth it. The Lord says, "Really, do you not know I love you and all things work together for good? Contend for what I told you is true about you."

2. Running after Him with others is *plural*: it speaks of ministry and community. It refers to running after Jesus in ministry with others. She longs to run after Jesus in relationship with those who love Him. Running together represents service that involves reaching out to others, building relationships in the Lord, etc.

Running after him is plural. It speaks of ministry. It speaks of community. I am talking about life in the Spirit. Fellowship is not just entertainment with believers. Fellowship can be entertainment with believers, but it is something that builds us up in our spirit. I know guys who think, "As long as there are three born-again guys, and it is Friday night, we call it fellowship." That is not fellowship. You are living in carnality and compromise.

“Well they are all born again. It is fellowship.” It is not fellowship. It is destroying your spiritual life. It is not building you up in the Spirit. You are socializing in darkness as born-again believers, calling it fellowship. It is a deception. I say that because I love people.

- B. Throughout our spiritual journey we are to embrace both “drawing” and “running.” In each season, we are to be drawn to Him and run after Him with others. We must not neglect either aspect of the kingdom; as we are drawn in intimacy with God we will run effectively in ministry.

Throughout our spiritual life there is an element of drawing after Him and an element of running in ministry, in every season of our life. Sometimes the emphasis is different in different seasons. We are always drawing away, developing intimacy, and we are running, engaged in ministry. We do not neglect one for the other.

- C. Many begin by being focused on running in ministry without being drawn in intimacy. Because running brings conflict and rejection, many soon burn out, even as the maiden did in Song 1:5-7.

Many start off running in ministry. A lot of young believers get involved in ministry. They get so excited. They are going to change the world. They are going to have a great ministry. They have three prophetic words that they are going to take over Reinhard Bonke's ministry. This is it. They get so excited, but they do not develop the drawing of intimacy. Two, three, four, five, six years later, they are burned out. “I am mistreated. Nobody is treating me rightly. God is not listening to me.” Beloved, if you are going to run in ministry, also be drawn in intimacy. Do not do one without the other, or you will end up burned out.

- D. Our life vision is a lifelong commitment to a primary goal, regardless of our occupation, family status, economic status, etc. Without a vision, the people perish. In other words, without a clear life vision, people live *without restraint* (or discipline) in their time, resources, etc.

¹⁸*Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Prov. 29:18, KJV)*

¹⁸*Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint. (Prov. 29:18)*

A life vision is that which we are committed to. We are fiercely committed to it, regardless of our occupation or our family status. Meaning, a lot of folks think, “I am going to go for God until I get married. When I get married, I am going to put God on the side. Then I am going to do family for ten years and then get back to God.” Or, “I am going to go for God, when I get the job I really want. I am going to go for God, but after I get established and ten years go by.” Beloved, I am talking about having a life vision that is bigger than everything else. Something that you are committed to first, and everything else is second. You do not put it on hold when a big opportunity happens. “Well, I am going establish my ministry for a while, so I will let drawing after God be put aside for a while.” No!

- E. When I was young, my leaders emphasized the necessity of writing down my life vision. So I wrote my life vision: to be *an extravagant worshiper of God and an anointed deliverer of people*, so as to walk out the two great commandments (Mt. 22:37-39) and the Great Commission.
- F. The components of a focused life include having an overall life vision with life goals in each of the main areas of our life such as our *spiritual life* (prayer time, fasting days, Bible study, etc.); *relationships* (family, friends, etc.); *vocation* (marketplace calling); *ministry* (in the Church, outside the Church); *economic* (earning, spending, giving, saving, investing); *physical* (exercise, health, diet, etc.); and *rest* (recreation, vacation, play, entertainment, sports, etc.).

- G. We must have an **action plan** for each long- and short-term goal in each main area of our life. We set long-term goals to achieve in 10 or so years, and short-term goals in 3 months to 3 years. We must have a detailed **schedule** for each action plan to help us focus and prioritize our time. For more on this subject, see my teaching series *The Power of a Focused Life* on mikebickle.org

V. BEING EQUIPPED TO WALK OUT OUR LIFE VISION: CHAMBER EXPERIENCES

- A. **King's chamber:** I refer to “chamber experiences” as the times in which God communicates to us in a deeply personal way. In such times He highlights passages in His Word. (Sometimes He confirms them with prophetic dreams.) On these occasions, the Lord draws near to us by His Word to give us promises or new perspectives about our life and future with Him.

⁴Draw me away! We will run after You. The King has brought me into His chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will remember Your love [affection] more than wine. (Song 1:4)

The King's chamber. I talk about the chamber experiences. These are the times when God communicates to us in a deeply personal way. Our times in the Word and in worship. You do not always have to have a Bible open. Those chamber times. Beloved, we have a vision for intimacy in ministry, but that vision is never going to be real without chamber times. You and the Lord together talking. Where you develop that dialogue. A lot of folks have the vision, but they do not have the chamber times. There is no substitute to fulfill the vision without encountering Him.

- B. One example of my personal “chamber experiences” with the King is when I encountered the judgment seat of Christ in a prophetic dream in October 1978.
- C. The Bride declares to the daughters of Jerusalem, with resolution and faith, that together they would “be glad and rejoice in God and remember His love.”

⁴We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will remember Your love [affection] more than wine. (Song 1:4)

It is more than the chambers. We have to contend. It is more than the chamber time. We are glad in the Lord. We rejoice in Him. This is not just something, but an overflow. There is an overflow dimension. This is, “I am lining up with the Word, and when my circumstances tell me opposite, I am believing the Word and rejoicing in what God says. I am going to remember love. When I feel condemned, I am going to say, ‘It is written: I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. It is written: he is an accuser. Jesus loves me in the way the Father loves Him.’” We contend for the truth.

- D. **Remember Your love:** We are to engage our mind and heart intentionally to remember His love. Jesus has a plan to bring each of us to the place of feasting on His love at His table (2:4).

⁴He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love. (Song 2:4)

We are to engage our minds and our hearts intentionally. You can have the chamber times. A lot of people will have the times alone with the Lord, but they will just let lies triumph in their minds. They live in despair continually. The Lord says, “What about My Word?”

"I have the chamber time. I have a good vision." But they do not remember His love. They do not call it to attention. They don't let it change their thoughts.

- E. ***Be glad and rejoice***: We are to be glad and rejoice in God and remember His love in three ways. First, we rejoice in His tender mercy, even in our weakness, as we refuse condemnation. Second, we remember how fascinating Jesus is as we resist temptation (inferior pleasures). Third, we rejoice in and remember His leadership over our lives in times of difficulty.

¹¹We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:11)

We rejoice and are glad. We do this in three ways. First, we remember His mercy in our weakness. We refuse condemnation. "I remember His love. It is written in the name of Jesus, He loves me. His righteousness is mine."

*Number two, we remember how fascinating He is **while** we are resisting temptations. We are developing our life schedules, what we do with our time and our energy. We remember His love, how fascinating this Man is. I talked to the guys; they are busy every Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. I said, "Do you remember who He is?"*

"Oh yeah, I love Jesus."

"Do you ever talk to Him?"

*"Yeah, kind of, on the run. I blow Him a kiss on the way. You know, sure I do." No, we take **time** to remember how fascinating He is.*

Number three, we remember His leadership. When life is difficult, we have confidence in His leadership.

- F. This was the Bride's confession of faith through each season in life. In the face of difficulty, temptation, and mundaneness, she confessed that she would be glad in Jesus and remember His love. This confession is one way that we are to engage in spiritual warfare to resist the enemy's assault against our hearts (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

⁴The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:4-5)

- G. This faith confession in times of despair and testing is an expression of spiritual warfare as we declare that God is good and the devil is a liar. This confession of faith foreshadows the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We will use these very words on the great Wedding Day.

⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)

This is our faith confession in times of testing is an expression of spiritual warfare as we declare that God is good and the devil is a liar, that "We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will remember Your love." It is an expression of spiritual warfare. It is interesting that this "be glad and rejoice" that is in the Song of Solomon is also the confession of the bride on the great wedding day as well.

VI. REMEMBERING CAUSES US TO LOVE GOD

A. When we remember Jesus' love for us, it awakens love in our heart for God (1 Jn. 4:19).

⁴*We will remember Your love [affection] more than wine. Rightly do they love You. (Song 1:4)*

¹⁹*We love Him because He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19)*

B. The Bride knows the way to maintain the fervency for Jesus that she received in "His chamber." In His chamber we receive personal encouragement and assurances in God. It is not enough to know *about* God's love. We are to remember, or regularly recall, His encouragement.

*We are to **remember**; it is not enough to know about God's love. We have to remember it. We have to confess it, we have to recall it, and we have to resist the lies of the enemy. I give you just a couple of simple ways in the handout here on how to do that, really simple. It just has to be done. Amen.*

C. By faith we remember and realign our heart with what God's Word says about His love.

1. In difficult circumstances we rejoice in God and confess His loving leadership, knowing that all things will work together for good.

²⁸*We know that all things work together for good to those who love God. (Rom. 8:28)*

2. In temptation we rejoice in God and confess that His love and promises are better than the wine of this fallen world.

²⁴*By faith Moses...²⁵choosing rather to suffer affliction...than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin ²⁶...for he looked to the reward. (Heb. 11:24-26)*

3. In failure we confess His love as we trust in His mercy and refuse both condemnation and the accusations of the enemy.

D. In difficult circumstances, temptation, and failure, we declare that the Lord is good and His mercy endures forever (1 Chr. 16:34, 41; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Ps. 52:1; 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 117:2; 118:1-4, 29; 138; Jer. 33:11).

¹¹*They sang responsively...giving thanks to the LORD: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel." (Ezra 3:11)*