

Session 5 A Believer's Identity in God's Beauty (Song 1:12-2:7)

Additional Study Materials

ANSWERS TO THE FILL-IN THE BLANKS FOR THIS SESSION

At His table, she is moved to worship (v. 12) as she feeds on Jesus as the One **WHO SO VALUES HER** that He went to the cross (embraced myrrh, 1:13) to have relationship with His people and as the One who is as delightful to her as fragrant flowers (henna blooms, 1:14).

God has provided a table that we may feed on **THE CROSS AND ITS BENEFITS** (1 Cor. 10:21).

We are to reckon or see ourselves as those who are alive to God or **FULLY ACCEPTED** by Him.

Her **WORSHIP** ascends as the fragrance of perfume.

Jesus' love and value for His people is seen in His going **TO THE CROSS** to have relationship with them.

Through the night speaks of **CONSISTENCY** (it rests on her heart even throughout the night).

The Bride saw the **BEAUTY** and delightfulness of Jesus (1:14).

First, the Bridegroom declared that she was **BEAUTIFUL** to Him.

Secondly, He revealed His **AFFECTION** for her as the one He called, "My love" or "the one I love."

The beauty that God possesses is the very beauty that He **IMPARTS TO HIS PEOPLE** (Isa. 61:3).

This speaks of being **SINGLE-MINDED** and **LOYAL** to Jesus.

She begins her journey into being **FASCINATED BY GOD'S BEAUTY**.

The more the Bride sees of His beauty and love, the more she loves Him and **ENJOYS HER RELATIONSHIP** with God.

The Father promised to give Jesus an **INHERITANCE**—one that He knew Jesus would desire.

The rose speaks of **LOVING GOD** with all our heart.

A lily speaks of purity, of **OBEYING GOD** with all our heart.

Our identity is based on the way we define our value or **MEASURE OUR SUCCESS**.

The Bride declared that the King is the apple tree who **REFRESHES HER HEART** spiritually (2:3).

As we sit before God, we experience more of the **DELIGHT** of His presence (2:3b).

Jesus declared the **WISDOM** of Mary of Bethany's life as she sat at His feet (Lk. 10:39).

Jesus' plan for each of us is to lead us to God's banqueting table—to the place where we **CELEBRATE HIS LOVE** for us and ours for Him.

Left hand of God: this speaks of the activity of God that we **CANNOT SEE** with our natural eyes.

Right hand of God: this speaks of the activity of God that we **CAN SEE** and easily discern.

Daughters of Jerusalem: they represent believers who lack discernment of the various operations of the Spirit and the **DIFFERENT SEASONS** in one's spiritual life.

Additional Notes

I. THE BRIDE FEASTS AT THE KING'S TABLE (1:12-14)

A. The Bridegroom King continued His answer as to how He feeds His people (1:12-14).

¹²*While the King is at His table, my **spikenard** [perfume of worship] sends forth its fragrance.*

¹³*A bundle of **myrrh** [burial spice] is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.*

¹⁴*My Beloved is to me [as delightful as] a cluster of **henna blooms** in the vineyards of En Gedi. (Song 1:12-14)*

B. **His Table:** God has provided a table that we may feed on the benefits of the cross (1 Cor. 10:21).

²¹*...you cannot partake of the **Lord's table** and of the table of demons. (1 Cor. 10:21)*

1. The prodigal son rejoiced to see truths about mercy at his father's table (Lk. 15:20-28).

¹*There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ... (Rom. 8:1)*

C. **Spikenard:** Her worship ascends as the fragrance of spikenard (perfume).

1. A prostitute worshiped Jesus as she broke a vial of perfume on Jesus' feet (Lk. 7:36-50). In God's eyes, the perfume that filled the room spoke of the *fragrance of her love*.

⁴⁶*...this woman has anointed My feet with **fragrant oil**.* ⁴⁷*Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for **she loved much**. (Lk 7:46-47)*

D. The Bride received more understanding of God's love and her value to God (1:13).

¹³*A bundle of **myrrh** [burial spice] is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts. (Song 1:13)*

E. **Myrrh:** an aromatic gum resin produced by various trees and shrubs in India and Arabia, etc.

1. It has a great fragrance, yet a bitter taste, and is very expensive.

2. It was used in making perfume (Prov. 7:17), the anointing oil (Ex 30:23), and in preparing a body for burial (Jn. 19:39-40).

3. Myrrh spiritually speaks of the fragrant, yet bitter, reality of embracing death to fleshly ways throughout the Song (3:6; 4:6, 14; 5:1, 5, 13).

- F. **Lies all night:** The Bride proclaimed that He was like a bundle of myrrh that lay continually on her heart even through the night.
1. *Through the night* speaks of consistency and also of the dark night of temptation and/or trials.
 2. We are to remember His love continually as we meditate on the cross (1:4d).
 3. In the natural interpretation, King Solomon gave his bride this expensive, extravagant gift as a statement of his love for her.
 4. Jesus' death on the cross is His great gift to His Bride. It reveals how much He loves us and how valuable we are to Him. Many feel worthless, unloved, and unnoticed. They feel that their life is not worth living and has no value to anyone.

- G. **Henna blooms:** The Bride saw the beauty and delightfulness of Jesus (1:14).

¹⁴**My Beloved is to me [as delightful as] a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi. (Song 1:14)**

1. En Gedi was a city on the west side of the Dead Sea whose vineyards were known for their beauty and fragrance.
2. Jesus is seen as a *cluster* of blooms. He is more than one beautiful flower; He is a cluster. This emphasizes the *diversity and abundance* of His beauty.

¹⁶**Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend! (Song 5:16)**

3. Jesus' commandments are not burdensome when the truth about Him is understood.

³**And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 Jn. 5:3)**

II. THE BRIDEGROOM DECLARED BOTH HIS LOVE AND HER BEAUTY (1:15)

- A. The Bridegroom declared that she was beautiful, and He revealed His affection for her (1:15).

¹⁵**Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair [beautiful]! (Song 1:15)**

- B. **Fair:** We are fair or beautiful to God. She saw the beauty of the King in 1:12-14, and now He expressed her beauty to Him (1:15). Previously, the King said, "You are beautiful, and your cheeks are lovely" (1:8a, 1:9b, 10).

III. DOVE'S EYES: LOYAL AND SINGLE-MINDED (1:15)

- A. In the Scripture, a dove is a picture of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵**Behold, you are fair, My love...you have dove's eyes. (Song 1:15)**

- B. We can ask the Spirit to give us "*dove's eyes*" so that we can see Jesus as beautiful as *henna blooms* (1:14), and so that we may be loyal to Jesus with single-minded devotion (1:15).

IV. THE BRIDE SAW THE KING AS BEAUTIFUL, BELOVED, AND PLEASANT (1:16)

- A. The Bride saw the Bridegroom as handsome (beautiful God), as the one she loves (her Beloved). In other words she is saying, "You are the beautiful God, and I love You."

¹⁶*Behold, You are handsome [beautiful], my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! (Song 1:16)*

V. THE BRIDE'S REST, CONFIDENCE, AND ETERNAL GLORY (1:17)

- A. She saw that God provided rest and prepared an enduring house for His people (1:16b-17).

¹⁶*You are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! Our bed is green [couch is luxuriant, NAS].*

¹⁷*The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir. (Song 1:16-17)*

1. *Our green bed* is translated as our *luxuriant couch* in the NAS. Green fields were luxuriant fields or those with much growth.
 2. The Bride asked, "Where will You feed me and cause me to rest?" (1:7). We can be confident in having an abundant relationship with Him described as a *luxuriant couch*.
- B. **Beams and rafters:** The beams of their houses were of cedar, and the rafters were of fir (1:17). They were used in building Solomon's temple, so that its structures would not decay. She refers to the houses as "our houses" or their dwelling places together forever. We will dwell together in beauty and strength forever.
- C. The couch of the Lord speaks of our rest and confidence in the grace of God in two ways.
1. **The rest of forgiveness:** we can rest in the assurance that we are fully and freely forgiven because of what Jesus did on the cross (2 Cor. 5:17).
 2. **The rest of intimacy:** we experience this as we pursue intimacy with God. There is no rest until we conclude the highest purpose of our life is intimacy with God. We only find our ultimate purpose for life in being wholehearted in our love for God. Augustine wrote, "*Our hearts are restless until they rest in You.*" Many with the assurance of forgiveness continue in anxiety and fleshly striving to find a satisfying life purpose
- D. **Summary:** The Bride gives a five-fold response (v. 16-17) to being loved and being beautiful to God (1:15). She sees Him as handsome (the beautiful God), as the one she loves (her Beloved), and pleasant as He leads her life to rest and confidence, both now and in eternity (v. 17).

VI. THE BRIDE'S IDENTITY AND LIFE PURPOSE (2:1-2)

- A. The Father promised to give Jesus an inheritance—one that He knew Jesus would greatly desire. The Father has great insight into what Jesus wants most.
- B. We pray to receive understanding that we are the inheritance the Father promised the Son.

¹⁷*...that the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...that you may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Eph. 1:17-18)*

- C. In poetic language, the Bride declares her purpose and identity is in being Jesus' inheritance (2:1-2).

¹I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. ²Like a lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters. (Song 2:1-2)

- D. We are the *rose* and *lily* whose love and obedience arises as fragrance that moves His heart. The reason we were created and redeemed is to love (rose) and obey (lily) Jesus fully as His inheritance and thus bring joy and pleasure to His heart. God made a great investment in us by choosing us as the *rose and lily* that He cultivates for Jesus as the reward of His sufferings.

1. Our choices to love Jesus with obedience are a part of the Father's reward for His Son.

²¹He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me... (Jn. 14:21)

2. As we see the nobility of loving God and how it matters to Him, then we will measure our success in context to how much we grow in obedient love for Him.

- E. The Bride's first confession was that she was dark in her heart, but lovely to God (1:5). Now she sees more of her life purpose, confessing, "I am the rose"—the inheritance that the Jesus desires.

- F. Paul taught these truths. He wrote we are betrothed to Jesus and are to live in devotion to Him.

²For I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

³I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2-3, NAS)

VII. THE BRIDE DEEPLY ENJOYS HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KING (2:3-5)

- A. The Bride declared that the King is the apple tree who refreshes or fully satisfies her heart (2:3).

³Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons [human race]. I sat down in His shade [resting in grace] with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. ⁴He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love. ⁵Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:3-5)

- B. There is only one Man who refreshes the human heart at the highest level (2:3a). When we see Jesus as an apple tree or the primary source that satisfies our heart, then we seek Him with all our heart. This truth affects many other friendships (marriage, etc.). Jesus is more than our savior who forgives or healer who restores; He is the apple tree who satisfies.

- C. As we sit before Jesus, we experience more of the delight of His glorious shade (2:3b). The Word becomes a great delight, and His presence is sweet to those who faithfully sit before Him.

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

1. The cross is the only tree that can shade us from the scorching heat of our sin and guilt. We only enjoy the shade of God's presence by resting in the shade of Jesus' cross. We cannot rest in our achievements by relating to God based on our spiritual maturity.

2. We put our cold heart before the bonfire of God's presence by seeking Him in the Word. Our inheritance is to experience the sweetness of God's presence and Word. This is for all believers, not just a few. There is a sweetness that is within reach of every believer.
 3. We experience more of the delight and refreshing of Jesus as the apple tree as we sit long hours in the shade of the apple tree by feeding on His Word and talking to the Spirit.
- D. Jesus' banner or leadership over her life was to lead her to experience and express His love (2:4)
- ⁴He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love. (Song 2:4)***
1. His banner is His loving-kindness or tender mercy. When we fail, the banner over our life is confidence in His mercy without fear of being rejected by God. We confess, "His banner over me is love, even when I fail."
 2. His banner over us includes His ability to overrule negative circumstances by causing everything to work for our good (Rom. 8:28). The banner over us is His goodness. We confess, "His banner over me is love, even when negative things happen in my life."
- E. The Bride cried out for greater encounter with God's love (2:5).

⁵Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:5)

1. ***Apples***: Apples speak of being refreshed by Jesus who is compared to an apple tree (2:3)
2. ***Raisins***: Cakes of raisins were used for food on long journeys and for meals while working in the fields. They imply provisions prepared in advance, while apples are fresh, current provisions that are eaten in season. She is speaking not only of food to sustain her in ministry with her Beloved, but also of His continual provision, in season and out.
3. ***Lovesick***: Spiritual lovesickness for God includes two feelings associated with love.
 - a. First, *feelings of love* that are very strong. We are to feel love for God with all our heart. The psalmist said his heart overflowed for God.

¹My heart is overflowing...I recite my composition concerning the King...

(Ps. 45:1)

- b. Second, *spiritual hunger pains* result from the vision to walk in all that God has for us in this age. He does not immediately satisfy this desire. Thus we have a painful, even agonizing, hunger of love and longing for more of Jesus. These desperate hunger pains are proof that the Holy Spirit is working in us (Mt. 5:4).

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Mt. 5:4)

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

A. The Spirit ordains strategic seasons in each person's spiritual life

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)

1. The Spirit's agenda for the Bride in this season was to awaken lovesickness in her as she fed on apples and raisins at the banqueting house (2:3-5).
2. There are seasons in one's spiritual life to focus on going deep in God and His Word. John was told to eat the scroll or understand God's Word in a deeper way (Rev. 10:9-11).

B. ***Do not stir up:*** We can trust Jesus to disturb us when the spiritual seasons in our life change. This is clearly in Song 2:8.

C. ***Until it pleases:*** In the phrase, *until it pleases*, the Hebrew can be translated as *it*, *he*, or *she*. The NAS accurately translates the phrase as "Don't awaken love until *she* pleases." If the Hebrew was translated "*He*," it would refer to the Lord being stirred to action by the daughters of Jerusalem. Obviously the Lord does not need to be protected from distraction by the gentleness pictured by the gazelles. It is the Bride who needs protection from being disrupted or distracted.

D. When we worship, or when we are tempted, we proclaim the ***7 confessions of the Bride*** in 2:1-7: I am the rose of Sharon (2:1); I am the lily of the valleys (2:1); Jesus is like an apple tree (2:3a); I sat down in His shade with great delight, and His fruit was sweet (2:3b); His banner over me is love (2:4); I am lovesick (2:5); His left hand is under me, and His right hand embraces me (2:6).