

Finding True Love

(Updated 5/2021; Dr. Baines, Jr.)

Read: Song of Solomon 4:8-5:1a

Summary Highlights: In vss. 8-15, apparently a man is infatuated with a beautiful woman. He really wants to be intimate with her. But circumstances prevent them from getting together. This book is in the poetry section of our Bible because of its figurative language. The *Standard Lesson Commentary* calls this book *Song of Songs*, and it takes the three-person approach. "Sister" ought not to be taken to mean a direct blood line sibling but as an expression of affection.

In vs. 16, the woman responds to her pursuer. She calls for the winds to blow her fragrance towards her lover. She wants the lover to come to her.

In vs. 5:1a, the man appears to have met up with the woman. He compares the meeting with the woman with that of entering his garden. He talks about eating his honeycomb and honey. These are obvious sexual references.

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is that sex is designed to be enjoyed in marriage. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to do a better job of ministering in this area.

Applications:

1. A Black woman. Notice in Song of Solomon 1:5-6 that the woman describes herself as dark but lovely. This is a great text for so many people who think that dark is ugly. All of humanity, including Blacks, are fearfully and wonderfully made. Blacks should be appreciative of their Blackness like Whites, browns, and yellows should do the same. *Let's appreciate who we are, instead of exercising self-hatred or the idolization of others.*

2. Are they married? Notice in vs. 9 that the man refers to the woman as his bride. I agree with the commentator that we are not clear about the couple being married or their being in a betrothal situation. A betrothal situation was considered binding but was yet less than marriage. Those who are married do not tend to refer to one another as bride and grooms but as wife and husband. Whatever was the case in the text, we should know that sex outside of marriage is wrong. To be clear, if a couple is scheduled to get married on today at 4:00 p.m., any sex before they say "I do," around 4:30 p.m., is sin. This is not complicated. If the man and woman in the text are not married and are having sex, they are sinning, no matter how enjoyable it was. The intimate kissing (see vs. 11) is not recommended for those who are not married. It can be very difficult to stop the sequence of events and emotions that lead to sex, after one has gotten to such intimate kissing. *Let's keep godly sex in perspective.* What God tells us to do is godly, not necessarily what we see people doing.

3. Locked gardens. Notice in vs. 12 the woman appears to be unavailable for the man's interaction - including sex. This should be the case for those who are not married. Too often people get caught up in sex outside of marriage because of physical attraction,

infatuation, and availability. As a result, we have too many STDs, KIDs, and too much SIN. *Let's work on teaching our young people, by word and deed, to be unavailable for sex outside of marriage.* Just like staying away from fire can help prevent being burned, staying away from intimate situations can help prevent sex outside of marriage.

4. Sexual desire. Notice in vs. 16 that the woman wants to meet up with her lover. It is a mistake to think that only men enjoy and desire sex. A desire and enjoyment of sex may be as natural as a desire and enjoyment of food, drink, and recreation. We should be sensitive to the conflict that some of us have. On one hand, we want to keep our girls from getting pregnant or infected with STDs. On the other hand, we should not make sex such a terrible thing that even after our daughters get married that they are in a premarital state of mind about sex. Sex in marriage should be great. Sex outside of marriage is sin. *Let's work on nurturing more healthy ways of seeing sex.* Sensitive teaching of young people (i.e., children, youth, and young adults at age-appropriate levels) within trusted relationships can go a long way in this area.

5. Ministry in the area of sex. Notice in Song of Solomon 5:1a there is enjoyment of sex. The church would do well to improve how we address the whole issue of sex. We can be guilty of only talking about the sin of sex outside of marriage. We can be guilty of being mute on the subject all together. These approaches often leave inquiring minds to ask the wrong people about sexual questions. Wrong people tend to give wrong answers. *Let's work on doing better with the area of sex in our ministry work.* Every believer, young and old, should know that sex outside of marriage is sin and sex inside marriage should be for both procreation and recreation (at an age-appropriate level). Married couples should know that sex should be enjoyable to both spouses and encouraged to pay this area proper attention. Most of us would be uncomfortable going into too much detail about the matter. Thankfully, there are some Christian books like *The Act of Marriage* by LaHaye that gives tasteful detail. Failure to give this area proper attention, often leads to one or both spouses seeking satisfaction in the wrong places.