

STRAWBERRIES ARE SWEET

AN EXPLORATION OF BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

THESIS: Much of what the Bible has to say about sex is in the form of metaphor regarding our spiritual relationship with God. A proper experiential management of our sexuality grants God the highest revelatory potential for teaching us the sublime truth of the atonement. Sexual purity opens up within us deeper psychological and emotional passageways into intimacy with God. The Bible views sex as a holy divine creation that affords us the most beautiful and elevated understanding of God's love. Preserving (or regenerating, as the case may be) sexual innocence is vital to marital bliss, and it also allows us access to the most expansive relationship with God possible.

Love Is Meant To Be Sweet

Song of Songs 2:3, Glk.—*Shulamite*: As the apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. In his shade I long to stay, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Song of Songs 4:11, NLT—*Solomon*: Your lips are as sweet as nectar, my bride. Honey and milk are under your tongue.

Song of Songs 7:8, Msg.—*Solomon*: Your breasts will be clusters of sweet fruit to me, your breath clean and cool like fresh mint, your tongue and lips like the best wine.

The Large Parameters of Our Freedom

Psalms 119:32, NIV—I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.

James 1:25—...the perfect law of liberty...

Romans 13:10—Love does no harm...

Psalms 36:7-8—**7**How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. **8**They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.

Psalms 16:11—You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Genesis 2:15-25—The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden...

Genesis 3:23—...the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden...

How I Wish He Would Kiss Me: *The Longing Stage*

Song of Songs 1:2-4, Glk.—*Shulamite*: How I wish he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your lovemaking is better than wine. For fragrance your perfumes are wonderful, and perfume poured fragrantly is your name. Therefore young maidens love you. Draw me after you! Let us run together! How I wish the king would bring me to his chambers!

1:13, Glk.—*Shulamite*: A pouch of myrrh is my beloved to me, which lies all night between my breasts.

NOTE: References marked Glk. are from Dr. Craig Glickman's translation of *The Song of Songs*. This is an excellent translation that has sought to achieve linguistic accuracy while endeavoring to preserve the poetic form of the song.

NOTE: The lovers in the Song of Songs are *Solomon* and *Shulamite*. As a brilliant poetic mechanism *Shulamite* is the feminine form of the name *Solomon*. Solomon is portraying her as his second self, or as one with him, and therefore the two of them as making up a complete whole. She is likely the beautiful young virgin named Abishag, who was nurse to David in his old age (1 Kings 1:3, 15; 2:17-22).

NOTE: *The law of sweet things* is that refined, mono sugars diminish the capacity of our taste buds to experience the far more flavorful, poly-dimensional flavors of pure sugars in their whole-food state. *The law of sexuality* is similar: indulgence in illicit pleasures diminishes our capacity for experiencing the truer and far greater pleasures of sexuality within the parameters of God's design. Sin may be described as "an ever-increasing craving for an ever-diminishing pleasure" (C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*).

NOTE: See also Deut. 5:29.

NOTE: "Eden" means *pleasure*.

NOTE: This is the *longing* stage. No pre-marital sexual engagement has occurred. She is wishing Solomon would enter into passionate love with her.

1:15, Glk.—*Solomon*: Behold, you are beautiful, my darling companion. Behold you are beautiful; your eyes are doves.

Do Not Awaken Love Until It's Time: *The Waiting Stage*

2:7, Glk.—*Shulamite*: I want you to promise me, O young women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and by the does of the field, not to arouse, not to awaken love until love pleases to awaken.

4:12-15, Glk.—*Solomon*: **12**You are a garden locked, my sister, my bride. You are a garden locked, a fountain sealed. **13**Your tender shoots are a paradise of pomegranates with delicious fruit. . . **15A** fountain of gardens you are, a well of fresh water.

A Locked Garden Now Opened: *The Married Couple*

2:8-10, Glk.—*Shulamite*: **8**The voice of my beloved! Behold! He comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. **9**My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold! He is standing behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice. **10**My beloved responded and said to me, “Arise, my darling companion, my beautiful one; come away.”

4:16, Glk.—*Shulamite*: Awake, O north wind, and come, wind of the south. Blow upon my garden and cause its spices to flow like a stream. May my beloved come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit.

5:16, NCV—*Shulamite*: His mouth is sweet to kiss, and I desire him very much. Yes, daughters of Jerusalem, this is my lover and my friend.

Reclaiming Spiritual Virginit

Revelation 14:1, 4—**1**Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. . . **4**These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins.

John 3: 7—You must be born again.

2 Corinthians 5:17—If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Hebrews 10:22—Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Run From Sexual Sin

1 Corinthians 6:16, Msg.—Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, “The two become one.” Since we want to become spiritually one with the Master, we must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever—the kind of sex that can never “become one.”

1 Corinthians 6:18, NLT—Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body.

Hebrews 13:4, NIV—Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

NOTE: One of the remarkable features of *The Song of Songs*, which indicates that it is indeed inspired by the Holy Spirit, is that it is completely out of sync with the prevailing conceptions of the woman's place in relation to the man common in eastern culture at the time. She is conversant in the relationship and expectant of mutuality. He is shown to be as interested in her voluntary attraction as she is of his, and he is even hurt by an instance in which she does not reciprocate his passion. There is no sense of male superiority or dominance at all. She is portrayed as the man's companion in a love relation that promises an equality of pleasure for both. And while the song is flush with sexual imagery, there is no mention of child bearing as the objective. Mutual love for love's sake is the theme.

NOTE: One of the remarkable realities of God's love is its power to regenerate or make new. This means that it is possible for a sinner to reclaim a lost virginity, to become a spiritual, born-again virgin, so to speak, by means of receiving the restored innocence that come through forgiveness.

“Behold Your God”—Isaiah 40:9