

The curse that is upon the marriage relationship and sexuality, although it is taken away in principle by the blood of Christ, is still with us.

Song of Solomon presents a picture of the redeemed relationship. In particular, see 2:8-17

- Verses 8-9, the woman longs for her beloved, but there is a wall in the way
- Verses 10-14 – the beloved longs for the woman, but there is distance. The time is right, but there is an unfulfilled longing. Notice the sight, smell, sounds, textures and tastes reminiscent of Eden
- Verse 15 – The passive voice leaves out a subject “May the little foxes be caught”
  - A fox in the vineyard causes great damage and destroys the fruit
  - Those foxes need to be run out of Eden
- Verse 16a This verse is reminiscent of the great covenant promise, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people”. The idea is that marriage is a covenant of companionship (Mal. 2:14)
- Literally, “he pastures, or, grazes, among the lilies” – the NKJV adds “his flock”, which is not the point. He, because he has tended his garden, is able to delight in his beloved

The idea of this whole passage is that marriage is mutual (I am his, and he is mine), exclusive (come away with me), and yet it must be tended

The great damage of sin plagues us, even as redeemed people. When man is saved from the wrath to come by the blood of Christ, this salvation was preached to him in words, applied by the Holy Spirit, and believed in the heart. Therefore, the words are words of life. But he is not automatically and immediately freed from lust, selfishness, fornication, bitterness, pornography and strife. The re-creation of human relationships, although not complete until our resurrection, is begun on this earth the same way that Christians received life in the first place – through God’s words.

The temptation of the garden remains: did God really say, “Husbands love your wives?” “Wives submit to your husbands”. You can never find what you want that way, the devil says. I have a better way.

The world is strewn with the wreckage of failed marriages, ruined women, corrupted men – all of whom sought life “a better way”.

Therefore, for the Christian, Paul’s prayer is that we would know the exceeding greatness of God’s power, when He raised Jesus from the dead. As long as we remain ignorant of God’s goodness and power, we will still seek our good on this earth – and only fornication, bitterness and strife can result. Since we have been redeemed, we should no longer think like the Gentiles think (Eph. 4:17-18) but think as redeemed people, who have been freed from the cycle of sin, guilt, shame and misery.

We fail when we do not know the scriptures, nor the power of God (Matt. 22:29)

### **The curse reversed (Eph. 5:22-33)**

- Since in the eternal council of God we have been redeemed, crucified, risen together and glorified in Christ, we are not our own, but belong to our faithful Saviour.
- Therefore, we are no longer to live as the Gentiles, as if we belong to ourselves. The Christian life is one of mutual submission.
- Husbands are to love their wives by “giving themselves” for them, as Christ did for the Church. This is directly contrary to our flesh, inherited from Adam. The curse is that the tendency of men is to rule over their wives
- Wives are to submit joyfully to the love of their husbands – the picture of this is the woman in Song of Solomon. Wives are to joyfully say that they belong to their husbands, as their husbands belong to them
- The reason for this is that in the created order, the wife is the body of the husband. This is not organization (as a CEO) but organic (as a biological organism, ie, a human body)
- A husband that refuses to love his wife is refusing to care for his own body.
- The supreme example of this kind of relationship is the relationship between Christ and His Church. Paul is speaking of the sexual relationship of “oneness” as a picture of Christ and his church.

**Song of Solomon 2:4** He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me *was* love.

**Song of Solomon 7:10** I *am* my beloved's, and his desire *is* toward me.

This is what Paul means in 1 Corinthians 7:2

When and marriage is properly regulated, fornication has no appeal. The lovers in the Song of Solomon are smitten with each other, for their lives are properly regulated by God's word, and their relationship is redeemed by Christ.