

The Joy of Growing Old Together

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Text: Song of Solomon 7:1-13¹

Date: November 28, 2010, 10:30am

Series: Song of Solomon (Passion, Purity, & Fidelity)

Introduction: Open your Bible to **Song of Solomon 7:1-8:4**. We continue in a series of messages entitled “Passion, Purity, and Marital Fidelity”. The title of the message is “The Joy of Growing Old Together”.

The world sees marriage kind of like “As the World Turns”. You fall in love. You have a passionate honeymoon. And then you bear with or exist with one another. You put up with one another until Mr. or Ms. Perfect comes along, and then you “find happiness” with someone else. What a sad and selfish state marriage is in today. When you ask someone how long they have been married, it is rare to hear 40, 50 or 60 years. But God designed marriage to endure to the end. If you are married, he wants you to grow old together in true, deep happiness centered around Him. Till death do you part. “What God has joined together, let not man separate”.

God’s design for marriage is very happy, thrilling pathway. Dissatisfaction in marriage is not God’s plan. God designed marriage be deeply satisfying and to last a lifetime.

If we follow God’s way, we will find that marriages need to mature and deepen. The harvest of a godly marriage is unimaginably amazing.

God designed marriage to get deeper and happier as each day goes by. Your marriage is exactly what you put into it. If you are dissatisfied with your marriage, you need to look in the mirror. We reap what we sow. Can I ask you, what are you putting into your marriage?

Married people, if you want to grow old together with your spouse, listen up. Single people, you might be married one day soon. You might not believe me, but you need to hear this message too!

The love and security that King Solomon gives his wife is an example that all married men ought to attain to.

If you want to have a strong growing marriage, you must treat it like a plant. A plant must have plenty of water. Your marriage must have six special fountains to grow deep for Christ.

These actions are not found within yourself, but in Christ. Look to him for strength. He is the ultimate Fountain of Living Waters.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

I want to give you SIX fountains that will grow your marriage. All of them reflect Christ. They spell “F-R-I-E-N-D”. Is your spouse your friend?

I. The fountain of **Favor** will grow your marriage (vs. 1a). Do you communicate that God has favored you in giving your spouse to you?

Solomon looks at his bride, and the text seems to indicate it is several years after the honeymoon. He says to her something he might not have noticed when he was courting her. He says, “How beautiful are your feet in sandals” (Verse 1a). *The commentators picture King Solomon upon his knees before his wife, humbly unlatching her sandals.*

Illustration: Several times a day I tell my wife I love her. It’s a way for me to get bow down in my spirit and say, “God has favored me with you”. I tell my wife constantly, “I’m not worthy to have you”. “I don’t deserve you”. “Thanks for putting up with me—I know I’m hard to live with”. She needs to hear this.

- She needs to know that you appreciate every part of her—even her feet! You are favored by the least things about her. Most women are not going to boast about their feet. But Solomon notices this farm girl’s feet.
- Illustration – BURNT CHEESE. I can remember the first time Jill cooked for me at her home with her parents and brother, we had a special dish with cheese on top, and the cheese was slightly burnt. I told the whole family, “I love burnt cheese!” And I did and I do. It was a sincere compliment about something that could have made Jill feel bad, but instead it endeared me to her.

Application: It is important for a husband to verbally compliment and admire his wife. Feet are not normally a comely part of the body. But Solomon notices everything. Even though she’s a farm girl, he says the way she holds herself in her sandals bespeaks a princess. He perceives everything about her. He loves her. She knows it.

On the honeymoon in chapter three he noticed her face, her eyes, her cheeks, and her lips. Now he notices everything about her. Even the little things. Solomon’s intimate knowledge of his wife has deepened. He cares about every part of her. He loves her from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet, and he tells her.

Application: Married men, your wife wants you to notice her. Ladies long for that special attention. They long for appreciation. If you are not appreciating your wife, then its not wonder she’s lost that twinkle in her eye. If you’ve stopped pursuing her and telling her how sweet and beautiful she is, then you are not planting what you ought to plant in marriage. If you plant seeds of selfless admiration in your marriage, you will reap a harvest of holy happiness in your marriage.

Do you appreciate something in your spouse? When's the last time you told her? I want to grow old together with my wife appreciating every little thing about her!

II. The fountain of **Reassurance** will grow your marriage (vs. 1a).

Solomon calls his wife, years after the honeymoon, "O noble daughter!..." (**verse 1a**). She was not a daughter of nobility, and yet Solomon calls her that. He makes her feel special.

If you read in chapters 1 and 2, early on he speaks of her as:

- 1:8, "most beautiful among women"
- 1:15, "my love"
- 2:2, "a lily among brambles"
- 2:10, "my beautiful one"
- 2:14, "my dove"

By chapters 5 and 6, his favorite name for her is:

- 5:2, 6:9, "my perfect one"

And now in chapter 7 Solomon calls this farm girl, "noble daughter"—he's calling her the daughter of a prince. Was she a daughter of a prince? No, but he made her feel like one! This woman gets great esteem from the way King Solomon sees her. Remember in chapter 1, she was greatly concerned about her looks. Now she's secure in them. She's not royal. She's not the right stock. But Solomon makes her feel like she is:

- 7:1, "O noble daughter"

Is there "good name calling" going on in your house. Maybe you call her "sweetheart" or "honey". Maybe you have a special name that only your spouse knows. Be careful to call each other sweet names. That will deepen your commitment in marriage.

I want to grow old together with my wife recognizing how precious she is to me!

III. The fountain of **Importance** will grow your marriage (vs. 1b). Solomon makes his wife feel important and beautiful.

Solomon says in **verse 1b**, "Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a master hand." He later says in **verse 2b**, "Your belly is a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies." Today, if you say that to your wife, that's enough to get the cold shoulder for a while!

What is beautiful has changed. Many of the women posing for magazines today are dying of anorexia. They are malnourished. The look of starvation and malnutrition is sadly in vogue today.

Married men, your wife needs to know you love her just the way she is. She is God's gift to you. All women are different, but God crafted her just for you.

Solomon tells his wife that she is a work of art. She looks like she's been made by a master craftsman. Now realize that she's not as young. By the description, she may have had a baby or two.

Application: Married men, do not ever insult your wife's appearance. Don't be immature. Men, you try having three kids, maintain the house, care for your needs—and you're never allowed to get sick. You ought to be attracted to your wife's appearance, and let her know how secure you are in her love.

By the way, women are very sensitive about their appearance. Her goal in life is not to compete with the Hollywood divas. Her goal is to raise children for Christ and to be a helper for you. God made your wife just for you. Appreciate God's masterpiece!

The queen's form has certainly changed since her honeymoon. But Solomon is sincerely satisfied with his wife's form. He's sincerely excited by his wife, and he's not looking elsewhere. A married woman is not going to look like she stepped out of a swimsuit magazine. Why? Because—God has a totally different measure for beauty. I hope you get your value of beauty from the Bible and not from the trash in Sports Illustrated. Having lots of babies and raising them in godliness is attractive to God. Caring for the home and for her husband is attractive to God.

Why are so many who profess Christ getting their values from Sodom and Gomorrah?

Married men, are you sincerely satisfied with your wife's beauty? Do you tell her often how beautiful your wife is? She needs to hear it. Romance is a 24/7 engagement.

IV. The fountain of **Enjoyment** will grow your marriage (vs. 2).

Solomon truly enjoys and is satisfied with his wife.

Verse 2, "Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies." Married men, if you tell your wife her navel is like a round bowl and her belly is like a gigantic heap of wheat, I think she might get really offended!

Solomon speaks of wine and wheat. Wine was the Spring harvest (early June) and grapes were the Autumn harvest (late September).² He says, I am encouraged.

Now the harvest is a gift from God. So it is with a wife.

Proverbs 19:14, “House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.”

V. The fountain of **Nearness** will grow your marriage (vs. 3-9).
He now describes his wife in verses 3-9 as a place of paradise!

He wants to be near her! **Verses 3-9**, “Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. 4 Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus. 5 Your head crowns you like Carmel, and your flowing locks are like purple; a king is held captive in the tresses. 6 How beautiful and pleasant you are, O loved one, with all your delights! 7 Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. 8 I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its fruit. Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, 9 and your mouth like the best wine.”

She responds: “<SHE> It goes down smoothly for my beloved, gliding over lips and teeth. 10 ¶ I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me.”

This is married love. It is holy and beautiful in marriage. It is forbidden and ultimately unsatisfying if trampled on outside marriage.

Verse 3, “Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.” This is exactly what he said to her their wedding night. He’s as happy with her as he was on their wedding day. He is still excited and happy with her.

Verse 4a, “Your neck is like an ivory tower.” There is no such thing as an ivory tower. It does not exist. It would be beyond what could be paid for. He is saying “You are priceless to me”. I could lose my home, my job, everything. But I could not imagine ever living without my wife!

Verse 4b, “Your eyes are pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim.” The pools of Heshbon were an oasis. It is like saying, “Your eyes are like the oceans that surround Hawaii”.

Verse 4c, “Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus.” There was a tower in Lebanon that protected Israel from Syria. This man felt secure

² ISBE, “harvest”.

with his wife. She did not criticize him intentionally. I can say that my wife has never intentionally criticized me in public.

Verse 5, “Your head crowns you like Carmel, and your flowing locks are like purple; a king is held captive in the tresses.” Carmel means “garden”. It’s the ridge above Jerusalem, and it is beautiful and fruitful.

Jill is my crown. I can say that I would not be where I am today without her. Men, if your wife is not your crown, you are missing out!

The king “is held captive in the tresses” (vs. 5). He was the sovereign of Israel, but he was a slave to his wife’s beauty.

Now the final oasis is the marriage bed. But you cannot have verses 6-9 without the first five verses.

You must first touch your wife’s heart and mind and soul before you touch her body!

Verse 6, “How beautiful and pleasant you are, O loved one, with all your delights! 7 Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. 8 I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its fruit. Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, 9 and your mouth like the best wine.”

The love life of a married couple is a barometer of their marriage and spiritual life.

VI. The fountain of **Dating** will grow your marriage (vs. 11-13).

Verses 11-13, “Come, my beloved, let us go out into the fields and lodge in the villages; 12 let us go out early to the vineyards and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. 13 The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and beside our doors are all choice fruits, new as well as old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved.”

Conclusion: I want to grow old with my wife. No matter what, I commit to live with her until death. I know what will grow my marriage. I cannot be a true friend to my wife unless I am a friend of the Lord Jesus.

In Him we have...

- Favor, acceptance—Justification. We are accepted in the beloved.
- Reassurance—We are called nobility, God’s children, heirs.
- Importance—Christ died for us!
- Enjoyment—(wine wheat), we have the joy of the harvest!
- Nearness—Christ is a paradise to us.

- Delight of Companionship—We can say, “I am His and He is mine”.

In 1990, after 22 years as president of Columbia International University, Robertson McQuilkin announced that he would resign to devote full time to Muriel, his wife of 40 years, who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. In March 1990, Dr. McQuilkin announced his resignation in a letter with these words:

“My dear wife, Muriel, has been in failing mental health for about eight years. So far I have been able to carry both her ever-growing needs and my leadership responsibilities at CBC. But recently it has become apparent that Muriel is contented most of the time she is with me and almost none of the time I am away from her. It is not just “discontent.” She is filled with fear—even terror—that she has lost me and always goes in search of me when I leave home. Then she may be full of anger when she cannot get to me. So it is clear to me that she needs me now, full-time.

Perhaps it would help you to understand if I shared with you what I shared at the time of the announcement of my resignation in chapel. The decision was made, in a way, 42 years ago when I promised to care for Muriel “in sickness and in health...till death do us part.” So, as I told the students and faculty, as a man of my word, integrity has something to do with it. But so does fairness. She has cared for me fully and sacrificially all these years; if I cared for her for the next 40 years I would not be out of debt. Duty, however, can be grim and stoic. But there is more; I love Muriel. She is a delight to me—her childlike dependence and confidence in me, her warm love, occasional flashes of that wit I used to relish so, her happy spirit and tough resilience in the face of her continual distressing frustration. I do not *have* to care for her. I *get* to! It is a high honor to care for so wonderful a person.”³

³ For more, see “Muriel’s Blessing” from Christianity Today.
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/februaryweb-only/2-9-12.0.html>. Accessed 11-28-2010.