

## **The Beauty and Delights Of The Christian Bedroom<sup>1</sup>**

### **Song of Songs 4:1 – 5:1**

In an article entitled, “What They Didn’t Teach You About Sex in Sunday School,” Peggy Fletcher Stack writes, “Many people assume the Bible has just one message about sex: Don’t do it.”<sup>2</sup> Anyone who says that obviously has not read the Bible. God, in His Word, has a lot to say about sex and much of it is good. Indeed God is prosex when it is enjoyed His way and for His glory. Yes, God should be glorified when we engage in the act of sex.

Sex as God designed it is good, exciting, intoxicating, powerful and unifying. The Bible is not a book on sex, but it does contain a complete theology of sexuality: the purposes for sex, warnings against its misuse, and a beautiful picture of ideal physical and spiritual intimacy as set forth in the Song of Songs. The “one-flesh” relationship (cf. Gen. 2:24) is the most intense physical intimacy and the deepest spiritual unity possible between a husband and wife. God always approves of this relationship in which a husband and wife meet each other’s physical needs in sexual intercourse (cf. Prov. 5:15-21).

Paul indicates that sexual activity in marriage can affect the Christian life, especially prayer (cf. 1 Cor. 7:5). Both husband and wife have definite and equal

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<sup>1</sup> This message draws extensively, but not exclusively, from *God on Sex*, pgs. 136-160.

<sup>2</sup> Peggy Fletcher Stack, “What They Didn’t Teach You About Sex in Sunday School,” (*RNS*, 10-13-00).

sexual needs and responsibilities which are to be met in marriage (1 Cor. 7:3), and each is to strive to meet the needs of the other and not their own (Phil. 2:3-5). Our great God gave us this good gift of sex for several important reasons. These purposes include: (1) knowledge (cf. Gen. 4:1), (2) intimate oneness (Gen. 2:24), (3) comfort (Gen. 24:67), (4) the creation of life (Gen. 1:28), (5) play and pleasure (Song of Songs 2:8-17; 4:1-16), and (6) avoiding temptation (1 Cor. 7:2-5). There is maximum pleasure, protection, purity and partnership in married sex between a man and a woman.

A husband is commanded to find satisfaction (Prov. 5:19) and joy (Eccl. 9:9) in his wife and only in his wife. And he is to concern himself with meeting her unique needs (Deut. 24:5; 1 Pet. 3:7). A wife also has responsibilities. These include: (1) availability (1 Cor. 7:3-5), (2) preparation and planning (Song of Songs 4:9-11), (3) interest (Song of Songs 4:16; 5:2), and (4) sensitivity to unique masculine needs (Gen. 24:67). The feeling of oneness experienced by husband and wife in the physical, sexual union should remind both partners of the even more remarkable oneness which the spirit of a man and a woman experiences with God in spiritual new birth through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3). The union of husband and wife is to provide a picture to the watching world of that spiritual union of Christ the bridegroom and the Church which is His bride (Eph. 5:22-33).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Much of this introduction is drawn from *God on Sex*, pgs. 136-37, and is adapted from *The Believer's Study Bible*, notes on Song of Solomon 3:4-5, p. 912.

There is beauty and blessing in the Christian bedroom. Here God says “Eat, friends! Drink, be intoxicated with love!” (5:1). We have arrived at the wedding night. The bride and groom are alone with only God as the unseen but welcomed guest. Here the couple consummates their marriage in intimate sexual union. Our passage, in exquisite poetry, provides for us a portrait of what a Christian bedroom should be. This is a return to the Garden of Eden and the promised land God provides for those who love and trust Him. What are the activities God desires to take place when a husband and wife are alone in the marriage bed? We make 4 overarching observations from this awesome text.

### **I. Express Your Love For Your Mate                      4:1-7**

These verses are a song of admiration spoken by our Shepherd-King to his bride. They are alone in the bridal suite. The time for the sexual consummation of their marriage has arrived, but this will not happen until verse 16. True romance is “an environment of affection” in which sexual union will occur more often and with greater satisfaction. In other words, some essential preliminaries must precede the main event. Unfortunately, this is not always clear, especially to a male. Having been aroused sexually, a man is now on the prowl as a predator, and his bride can certainly feel the part of prey. This Shepherd-King was sensitive to this, and so he begins with the most important sex organ we have: the brain!

Thinking about how his new wife might feel, he wisely cultivates an atmosphere of love, safety and affection through carefully chosen words.

1) A godly husband will bless his wife with his words 4:1-7

Three times, both at the beginning and the end of this section, the King tell his queen that she is “beautiful.” He tells her she is “beautiful, very beautiful” in v.1. He says she is “absolutely beautiful” in v. 7, “with no imperfection in you.” Twice he calls her his “darling” (4:1, 7). In his eyes she is the perfect woman for him. She is “his standard of beauty.” Mark Driscoll shares some valuable words of wisdom in this context when he says,

“This is why we tell you, “Don’t cohabit. Don’t fornicate. Don’t look at pornography. Don’t create a standard of beauty that is not your spouse and then compare your spouse to the standard of beauty. Have your spouse be your standard of beauty.” This is the Biblical principle: one-woman man; the Bible’s against lust; those kinds of things. If she is his standard of beauty, then there is no flaw in her because she looks like her. He is not comparing her to other women, and the same is true for both husbands and wives. Your standard of beauty is your spouse. There is not a standard of beauty that you evaluate your spouse by. This is one of the great devastating effects of pornography. You lust after people, compare your spouse to them. It’s impossible to be satisfied in your marriage if you don’t have a standard that is biblical. The standard is always your spouse.”  
(Sermon)

Women are verbal creatures. They are moved by what they hear and by what they feel. Tommy Nelson notes, “To a great extent, she thinks and

feels [about herself] the way a man leads her to think and feel.”<sup>4</sup> A man must learn to touch her heart (her mind) through her ear. This helps her feel good about herself in a God intended way. It relaxes her, prepares her, and motivates her to give herself in passionate lovemaking to her husband. A wise man will understand the value of words, the right words, in preparation for sexual intimacy.

A study in *Psychology Today* noted that women are more likely to be disappointed with marriage than men, especially in the context of romance. Why? “One explanation is that as compared with men, they have higher expectations for intimacy, and thus react more negatively to conjugal reality. In a major national survey more wives than husbands said that they wished their spouse talked more about thoughts and feelings, and more wives felt resentment and irritation with husbands than vice versa. The researchers conclude: In marriage . . . women talk and want verbal responsiveness of the kind they have had with other women, but their men are often silent partners, unable to respond in kind.”<sup>5</sup> A godly husband will bless his wife with his words. He will remember that LOVE is a beautiful 4-letter word. Sometimes it is best spelled TIME, and sometimes it is best spelled TALK.

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<sup>4</sup> Nelson, 89.

<sup>5</sup> Carin Rubenstein, “The Modern Art of Courtly Love,” *Psychology Today* (July, 1983), 49.

2) A godly wife will bless her husband with her body 4:1-7

If a woman is a creature of the ear, a man is a creature of the eye. He is moved by what he sees. Verses 1 – 7 are a portion of Solomon’s song of admiration (it actually goes all the way thru v. 16) as he praises eight different parts of his wife’s body. This would continue to bless her with verbal support. Interestingly, he focuses on her upper body. Later, he will praise her from toe to head (7:1-10)! These verses also teach us something about the male and how visual he is when it comes to intimacy. Her body is in full view and Solomon liked, he loved, what he saw. Still, he is patient and understanding. What an incredible example he sets for husbands everywhere.

Women in the ancient Near East wore a veil only on special occasions such as the day of their wedding. Solomon says, “Behind your veil, your eyes are doves.” The veil both hides and enhances her beauty. His comparing her eyes to doves conveys ideas of peace and purity, tranquility and tenderness, gentleness and innocence (cf. 1:15; 2:14; 5:2). Her eyes speak, they communicate to her husband that she has been calmed and set at rest by his kind and affirming words.

“Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down Mount Gilead” are words that are strange to our ears, but they would have blessed Shulamite. Viewed

from a distance, a herd of black goats streaming or skipping down a mountainside as the sun glistened on their black hair was a beautiful sight. As this wife prepared to give herself to her husband, she let her hair down. Cascading down her neck and across her shoulders, her beautiful wavy locks excite the sexual desires of her husband. Mount Gilead was a mountain range east of the Jordan River and northeast of the Dead Sea. The region was known for its good and fertile pastures. Shulamite is herself vigorous and fertile on this their wedding night. Letting her hair down signals to Solomon her readiness for him.

Verses 2 and 3 focus on the beauty of her mouth. Her teeth are clean, bright and white; none are missing! Her “lips are like a scarlet cord” (lit. “thread”). Indeed, her “mouth is lovely”. It is beautifully shaped and enticing to her man. There is some question, because of the unusual Hebrew word used here for “mouth,” whether Solomon has in view physical or verbal pleasures which come from her mouth. An either/or decision is unnecessary. “Her mouth is . . . a fertile oasis with lovely words flowing out of it – not to mention possible heavy wet kissing.”<sup>6</sup> Her lips and her words both are delights of enticement and pleasure.

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<sup>6</sup> Snaith, 61.

Her “brow” or temples behind the veil are compared to “a slice of pomegranate.” They blushed red with desire and the sweetness of their fruit invites Solomon to kiss them. Pomegranates were considered an aphrodisiac in the ancient world. Attractive to the eye and sweet to taste, the image appeals to our senses of both sight and taste.

Her neck was “like the tower of David constructed in layers” with the shields and weapons of Solomon’s mighty men (4:4; cf. 3:7-8). She stands tall and graceful. She is neither cowed nor timid. Why should she be in the presence of a man who loves and admires her with such passion and specificity?

Verses 5 and 6 draw attention to Shulamite’s breasts. First, they are compared to, “two twin fawns, of a gazelle that feed among the lilies.” They are soft and attractive, tender and delicate, making her husband wants to touch and caress them gently. Secondly, he describes or names them as two mountains: one he calls the “mountain of myrrh” and the other he calls the “hill of frankincense.” Both spices were expensive and used as perfume for the body and the marriage bed. (Prov. 7:17 informs us that the harlot perfumes her bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.) The senses of sight and smell are aroused. So enraptured is Solomon that he desires to make love to his wife all night long: “Before the day breaks and the shadows flee.”

Time and tenderness are essential twins for a sexually and romantically attractive bedroom. Here we see that slow, romantic foreplay is underway. He praises her specifically and in detail for everything he sees. He gives before receiving. He is as much concerned, if not more so, for her pleasure and satisfaction than he is his own. He is loving her as Christ has loved us (Eph. 5:25ff).

I find it fascinating, at this point, that we really don't know what Shulamite looked like. We have no idea. What we do know is what she looked like to her husband. She was his beauty! In his eyes she was pretty, beautiful, gorgeous; no one compared to her. This bedroom is a place of unrestrained love: both to our Shepherd-King and his lovely bride.

## **II. Express Your Desire For Your Mate 4:8-11**

1) One can sense the passion that is building in the bedroom as this man lovingly and tenderly prepares his virgin bride for the moment of marital consummation. The two are about to “become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). And, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before the Fall, “Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame” (Gen. 2:25).

2) It is also interesting and instructive to see the shift in emphasis from “your” to “my!” The word “my” will appear 20 times in this section, 9 times in 5:1

alone (O'Donnell, 80). She is now his and he delights in the gift that she is. She is twice given: both by God and by herself (cf. 8:10-12). He will continue to treat her with honor and respect. He will nourish her and cherish her just as Christ nourishes and cherishes his bride the Church (Eph. 5:29).

1) Invitation: I want you 4:8

Solomon's complete attention is on his wife. There is only 2 first person references in the first seven verses (v.1, "my" and v. 6, "I"). Biblical intimacy and sex will always be focused on one's mate before it looks to one's self. Then, and only then, is it the right time to take lovemaking to the next level. The Shepherd-King has called his wife his "darling." Now he calls her his "bride."

He calls his bride to leave where she is and come to him. Lebanon was near her home. The other mountain ranges mentioned are in the same general area as well. The "dens of the lions and the mountains of the leopards" perhaps represent fears Shulamite may have. Therefore he does not command her; he calls to her. He does not demand; he invites. He invites her to come to him and to leave her fears behind. He will care for her. He will protect her. He will love her. She is his love, his darling. She is his bride, his wife. Five times in verses 8 – 12 Solomon will refer to her as "his bride". Sensual anticipation must be clothed with words of safety and

security if it expects a warm reception. Solomon's invitation is beautifully delivered.

2) Captivation: There is no one like you 4:9-11

Solomon tells his bride that she has "captured" or "ravished" his heart (4:9). Her love was so overpowering that he could not resist her. Her love had captured his heart and he could not escape. Just "one glance of her eyes" or seeing "one jewel of her necklace" nearly made his knees buckle. She was enchanting, and he was powerless to resist her spell.

Solomon then says something that again is very strange to our ears. He again calls Shulamite his "bride," but he also refers to her as his "sister," something he will do no less than 5 times (cf. 4:9-10, 12; 5:1-2). We must understand the use of the word in its historical context. In the Ancient Near East, *sister* was a term of affection and friendship. In addition to its literal meaning, it could indicate a close and intimate relationship which a husband and wife enjoyed. True lovers will also be true friends, even best friends. This is something Solomon understood well.

Repetition is often a wonderful teacher and in verse 10 Solomon again calls Shulamite his sister, his bride. He tells her that her love is delightful, and that "it is much better than wine." Wine is intoxicating and sweet, but it could not compare to this. He was drunk with love for her. Charles

Spurgeon, the great British preacher of the nineteenth century, said her love was better than wine because it: 1) could be enjoyed without question, 2) would never turn sour, 3) would never produce ill effects and 4) produced a sacred exhilaration.<sup>7</sup>

Her smell also got Solomon's attention. The fragrance or scent of this woman was superior to "any balsam." For a man, sight is closely followed by smell in the sensual realm. Shulamite knew this and so she prepared herself in a way that would draw her man to her, both in sight and smell and later, sound (4:16).

Verse 11 moves us into even greater sensual and romantic territory. Her lips, he says, "drip sweetness like the honeycomb," and "Honey and milk are under your tongue." The idea that a particular kind of kissing began in France is put to rest by this verse! Deep, wet, sweet and passionate kissing is at least as old as this Song. Canaan was a land of milk and honey (cf. Ex. 3:8). It was a land of promise, joy, blessing and satisfaction that God graciously provided for the nation of Israel following her enslavement in Egypt. It was a land of sweetness to a people who had been enslaved for more than four hundred years. Solomon found immeasurable joy in the

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Patterson, 73.

deep, long and intimate kisses of his bride. He could, as we say today, “just eat her up!”

Besides smelling good herself, she also applied attractive fragrances to her clothes. Lebanon flourished with cedar trees (cf. 1 Kings 5:6; Ps. 29:5, 92:12, 104:16; Isa. 2:13, 14:8; Hos. 14:5-6). The fresh aroma of those mountain cedars filled the room as the couple made preparation for lovemaking. Virtually all the senses—taste, touch, smell, sight and sound—have played a role in this sensual symphony in this bedroom. The lovemaking which we enjoy will only be enhanced as we follow their example.

### **III. Express Your Availability To Your Mate 4:12-16**

One of the greatest gifts a person can give their mate in marriage is exclusive and exciting sex. To enter marriage as a virgin is indeed a precious treasure to bestow on our spouse. Unfortunately, it is also a rare treasure. The Bible is crystal clear on the issue: any sex outside of marriage is sin in the eyes of God. This includes premarital sex, extra-marital sex, or unnatural sex (such as homosexuality). “Run from sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18) is God’s command, and a wise person will always listen to God. Shulamite had listened to and obeyed

the voice of her God concerning her sexuality. Note the beautiful imagery Solomon uses to describe his virgin bride on their wedding night.

1) Save yourself for your mate 4:12

Shulamite is described as “a locked garden,” (and possibly a “locked fountain”). The imagery pictures her purity and virginity. She had sealed up herself for her husband. She had saved a precious treasure that belonged only to him. I have never known a woman or a man who ever regretted saving sex for marriage. I have, however, known many that regretted not doing so. I think of a letter written to Josh McDowell years ago that probably expresses the regrets of so many scarred by the sexual revolution.

*Dear Mr. McDowell,*

*Having premarital sex was the most horrifying experience of my life. It wasn't at all the emotionally satisfying experience the world deceived me into believing. I felt as if my insides were being exposed and my heart left unattended. I know God has forgiven me of this haunting sin, but I also know I can never have my virginity back. I dread the day that I have to tell the man I truly love and wish to marry that he is not the only one – though I wish he were. I have stained my life – a stain that will never come out.*

*Monica*

God is pleased, we are protected, and a mate is honored when we keep ourselves pure. Save yourself for marriage. Stay faithful in marriage.

2) Give yourself to your mate 4:13-15

Solomon extends the imagery of the garden in verses 13 – 14, describing his bride as an exotic array of fruits, flowers, plants, trees and spices. She is paradise regained. She was unique and valuable, rare and desirable. She was a fantasy garden, a lover's dream. "Your branches are a paradise of pomegranates with choicest fruits, henna with nard—nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the best spices" (vs.13-14 *HCSB*). To find all of this in one garden was unimaginable, and yet in his bride he found them all. She will satisfy his sense of taste, sight and smell. He will never be bored. He will enjoy the multiple pleasures discovered in this Eden like garden. Each time would be an exciting time, a new and different adventure. This is redeemed, sanctified sex. The ravaging effects of the fall are reversed!

Solomon now thinks of his wife as "a garden spring, a well of flowing water streaming from Lebanon" (v.15). To other men she is locked up, enclosed and sealed. For her husband she is wide open, accessible and available.

Indeed, her love is overflowing and streaming toward and for him. What she once held back from others she now gives to her husband with unreserved passion and abandonment. Why? Because she had saved herself for this day and this man. She was no casualty of sexual promiscuity. She did not have the wounds of a young twenty-one year old who said with pain and

sadness in her voice, “I have had 17 partners - - too many, I think.”<sup>8</sup> Purity and pleasure go hand in hand when it comes to sex. Again I plead, save yourself for marriage. It is worth the wait. Give yourself in marriage. You will not be disappointed.

#### **IV. Express Your Satisfaction In Your Mate                      4:16-5:1**

Three times in our song we are warned, called to make a solemn vow to “not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). The appropriate time has arrived for our Shepherd-King and his flawless bride (4:7). For the first time in this particular poem the woman speaks. We have reached the centerpiece, climax and crescendo of the entire Song. She invites him to make love to her and he is more than ready to oblige! Jack Deere says it well, “she wished to be his with her charms as available as fruit on a tree (cf. v. 13)” (BKC, 1020). She is available and he is ready. The sexual satisfaction on the horizon is a gracious gift from our great Creator God!

##### 1) There is human satisfaction in marital consummation    4:16-5:1

In beautiful and enticing poetry Shulamite invites Solomon to make love to her. She who has twice said not to “stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time” (cf. 2:7; 3:5) now says, “The time is right. I am yours.

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<sup>8</sup> Patricia Dalton, “Daughters of the Revolution” (*Washington Post*, 5-21-00).

Come and take me.” North winds are strong and south winds more gentle.

In lovemaking Shulamite wants and needs both.

She has been listening to every word spoken by her husband, for she picks up on the imagery of the Garden of Eden. She is now that garden for him, and “her love” as she calls him is welcome to come in and enjoy. She invites him and she guides him. She tells him what she is feeling and what she wants. Great sex is the result of good communication. All the physiological parts fit when a man and woman come together, but sex is no mere mechanical union. It is a personal and spiritual union nurtured by careful communication. We cannot be certain of all that is meant by the imagery of coming to the garden and tasting the choice fruits, but it is not difficult to imagine all sorts of good things that this couple will share!

5:1 records the aftermath of their sexual consummation. The couple has made love. They were not disappointed. They had planned for it, saved themselves for it, studied up on it and talked about it. All of their time and effort had been rewarded.

Shulamite invited Solomon to come to “his garden” in 4:16. Now in 5:1 he calls her “my” garden. In fact, nine times in this one verse he uses the word *my*. In tender words he calls Shulamite his garden, his sister and his bride. Coming in to her was indeed a garden delight. She smelled good, tasted

good and felt good; and he told her so. Their lovemaking was delightful. It had been wonderful. She invited him to come to her and he did. In response, he romantically and tenderly expressed the pleasure she had given him.

In a study by Susan Sprecher, Ph.D., a professor of sociology at Illinois State University, sexual satisfaction was greater in relationships in which partners initiated equally or in which women sometimes initiated sex. Why then, do so many couples fall in the pattern of the man being the only one to suggest having sex? Sprecher and other sex researchers speculate that society's norms suggest that men should pursue and women should be pursued. The result may be that women tend to be less comfortable initiating sex. Or it may be that women tend to use subtle, indirect cues - - which may not be consciously noticed - - to initiate sexual activity, while men use more direct verbal requests and other measures. Women who initiate sex frequently are often very sexually satisfied to begin with, Sprecher believes, and this enables them to be more at ease about expressing their sexual desires. A woman who initiates sex also often stimulates her partner's sex drive and his desire for her, which helps drive this entire pattern. Several studies have found that many men like it when their female partner initiates sex.”<sup>9</sup>

## 2) There is divine satisfaction in marital consummation 5:1

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<sup>9</sup> Julie Walsh, “Who’s Lighting the Fire?” (*WebMD Medical News*, 3-16-00).

The last part of verse 1 has created quite a bit of interpretive discussion. Exactly who is it that encourages this man and woman in their lovemaking? Some believe it is the friends of the couple. The HCSB identifies the speaker as the book's narrator. However, the intimate knowledge of this speaker of all that has transpired in their bedroom leads me in a different direction.

Though His name never appears directly in the entire Song of Solomon (but see 2:7; 3:5; 8:4, 6), I believe the one who speaks here is God. He is the unseen but present guest in their bedroom. He has observed all that has happened this night, and He tells us what He thinks about it all. And, He thinks it is a good thing!

“Eat, friends! Drink, be intoxicated with love!” The love shared by Solomon and Shulamite, together with the gift of sex, was given to them by God. Craig Glickman comments,

He [God] lifts His voice and gives hearty approval to the entire night. He vigorously endorses and affirms the love of this couple. He takes pleasure in what has taken place. He is glad they have drunk deeply of the fountain of love. Two of His own have experienced love in all the beauty and fervor and purity that He intended for them. In fact, He urges them on to more . . . . That is his attitude toward the giving

of their love to each other. And by the way, that's also His attitude toward couples today.”<sup>10</sup>

Yes, God is there and He is pleased with what He sees. “He sees the passion. He hears the sighs of delight. He watches the lovers as they caress one another in the most intimate places. He is witness to the fleshly, earthly sights, sounds, and smells . . . . God desires for us to rejoice in our sensuousness, to give in to it.”<sup>11</sup>

A term of tender affection flows from the mouth of God in this verse as He looks upon the couple enjoying His good gift of sex as He designed it. He calls them “friends.” God loves them, and He loves what He sees. How foreign this is to so many persons' thinking when they try to imagine what God the Creator thinks about sex. He loves us, and He likes it when we are engaged in the passion of lovemaking within the covenant of marriage. It can be revolutionary and transforming when we accurately and correctly get the Creator's perspective. We can become like a woman named Beth who said,

Loving my husband can become an act of worship to God. As my husband and I lie together, satiated in the afterglow of sexual ecstasy, the most natural thing in the world is for me to offer thanksgiving to my God for the beauty, the glory of our sexual joy. I don't even think

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<sup>10</sup> Glickman, 25.

<sup>11</sup> Linda Dillow & Lorraine Pintus, *Intimate Issues* (Waterbrook: Colorado Springs, 1999), 17.

about what I am doing; my heart just turns to the Lord and offers praise. Truly His gift of sex is a wondrous thing.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Practical Applications**

What do happy couples say about sex, this good gift from a great God? *Reader's Digest* ran an article that answers that question with the caption, “With a dash of surprise, a pinch of romance and a word or two at the right moment, love can be kept simmering even in the longest marriage.” Adapting their list slightly, I think at least twelve things can be said. Any couple will be well served to meditate, reflect on and put into practice these helpful ideas.

#### *What Happy Couple Say About Sex*

1. They make sex a priority; it is important to them.
2. They make time for sex.
3. They stay emotionally intimate.
4. They know how to touch and what works.
5. They keep romance alive by meeting each other's needs.
6. They keep their sexual anticipation alive.
7. They know how to play and foreplay (both in and out of bed).
8. They know how to talk to each other.
9. They remain lovers and friends.
10. They maintain a sense of humor and know how to laugh.
11. They want to please each other.
12. They cherish each other as a sacred and precious gift of God.

### **How Does This Text Point To Christ: The King's Beautiful Bride.**

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 19.

1) In our Song we see a bride whose husband views her as perfect, “with no imperfection” (4:7). If only such a bride really existed. The fact is, however, she does! She exists in the people of God called the Church, a people God has redeemed and “purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Made new in Jesus Christ, her divine Bridegroom, she knows He is committed “to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word,” and that He is doing this “to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:26-27).

2) This is how our Bridegroom sees us through His imputed righteousness, and this is who we predestined to be when our marriage is consummated at “the marriage feast of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9, cf. Rom. 8:30). On that day we will “be glad, rejoice, and give Him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself. She [will be] give fine linen to wear, bright and pure. For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev. 19:7-8).

3) The love this Shepherd-King has for his bride is beautiful and precious indeed. However, as Robert Saucy says so well, “This love of Christ for His bride far surpasses anything known in the human level...Never has a husband loved as Christ loved the church. For Christ did not love those worthy of love, but sinners and enemies (Rom. 5:8-10)...Christ loved the church not because it was perfectly

lovable but in order to make it such” (*The Church in God’s Program*, 45. The latter portion of this quote comes from Westcott’s Commentary on Ephesians, 84).

4) Indeed the extent of His love is seen in the price He paid to make us perfect, with no flaw at all. We are indeed His beautiful bride, his darling. This is how Christ sees us! This is what He has made us!

### **The Bride of Christ**

O Church of God, thou spotless bride,  
 On Jesus’ breast secure;  
 No stains of sin in thee abide  
 They garments all are pure.  
 Of unity and holiness  
 Thy gentle voice doth sing;  
 Of purity and lowliness  
 Thy songs in triumph ring.

Thou lovely virgin, thou are fair,  
 Thy mother’s only child;  
 Thy heav’nly music let me hear,  
 Thy voice is sweet and mild.  
 Thy cheeks adorned with jewels bright,  
 Thy neck with chains of gold;  
 Unfurl thy banners in thy might,  
 Thy graces rich unfold.

She stood attired in spotless dress  
 The early morning through,  
 And then into the wilderness  
 On eagle’s wings she flew.  
 And nourished there from heav’nly clime,

She lived for many years;  
Now, in this blessed evening time  
Her glory reappears.

She leans upon an Arm of Love  
No sin her garments taints;  
They're made of linen wov'n above—  
The righteousness of saints.  
The marriage of the Lamb is come,  
His bride all ready stands;  
The Bridegroom soon will take her home  
To dwell in heav'nly lands.

*Clara M. Brook; Andrew L. Byers  
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