

**Solomon on Sex - The One Thing I Can Change Is Me**  
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**March 25, 2012**

Good morning Faith family. We are in the 11th week of the *Solomon on Sex* series. In this series, we follow the ups and downs in the relationship between Solomon and his first wife, the Shulammitte, as described in the Song of Solomon.

Since so many of you are new, let me take a moment to bring everyone up to date in their story. Solomon and his wife are having marital struggles. He is working late and not giving her the attention she craves. Feeling frustrated, she dreams of revenge. She considered locking her bedroom door. When he came home after work and was looking for intimacy in the middle of the night, she would deny him by giving lame excuses.

In her dream, even though she feels like she wants to frustrate him, she knows it is not the right way to handle her husband. Her little plan of revenge wouldn't draw them together. It would tear them further apart. In her dream she pictured him emotionally crushed and leaving their home in the middle of the night out of frustration.

In her dream, she repented of her plans for revenge. She hunted him down. She found him walking in a garden praying to God about what to do with his troubled marriage. Thankfully, in her dream, they recovered from their marital wipeout. She told her friends how much she loved him. He told her how much he loves her.

While everything ended happily in the dream, the question remains; what will happen in reality? She is still frustrated. He is still gone most of the day and into the night.

That brings us to Song of Solomon 6:11, the verse we pick up with this morning. Let me prepare you for this text. The remainder of chapter 6 is some of the most difficult text to understand in the book. When we enter chapter 7, we encounter the most erotic and sexually explicit verses in the entire Bible. So this morning is a mixture of difficulty and excitement. If you still have children in the service, they need to leave right now. I am not going to pay the therapist bill when they learn where they came from.

Let's begin by putting our finger in the most difficult section of the book, and I will try my best to explain it.

What makes this section difficult is deciphering who is speaking. For example, the NIV (New International Version) credits these words to Solomon. The ESV (English Standard Version) credits these words to the Shulammitte. I believe the ESV is right, but it is hard to tell from the Hebrew. Here is what I think is happening.

**When marriage is tough, don't run home to your parents.**

**I went down to the nut orchard to look at the blossoms of the valley, to see whether the vines had budded, whether the pomegranates were in bloom. Song of Solomon 6:11 (ESV)**

The Shulammitte is frustrated with life. While her husband is at work, she decides to go for a walk in the country. Thankfully, she is not an urban socialite that goes for a walk in the mall. Urban socialites soothe their pain by buying

Gucci handbags and fur coats on credit. She is much cheaper. She simply takes a walk where the flowers are blooming because she is a country girl. Those are the simple pleasures she grew to love as a young girl. The countryside is a place of comfort. The city is a place of stress.

**Before I was aware, my desire set me among the chariots of my kinsman, a prince. Song of Solomon 6:12 (ESV)**

In the country, she finds herself overwhelmed by a desire to go home. She wants to be back and be among her people, her kinsman. She wants to run home to mom and dad and the life she left behind. That is not a good idea. Running away from her problems won't solve them. She needs to stay and work through them. It is the same for marriages today. Running away from your marriage won't help.

**When marriage is tough, don't think you married the wrong person.**

If you check the footnotes in your Bible, you will see the English word prince, could also be translated as Ammi-Nadib. I believe she might be thinking about another suitor that was a possibility earlier in her life. That prince came from her own people. If she married him, she would live closer to home.

She is wondering if she married the wrong guy. If she married that local prince, she wouldn't be living in the city. He probably wouldn't be as busy. She would enjoy more time with him than she has with Solomon.

In marriage, when things get tough, sometimes you think you married the wrong person. You may think the grass is greener on the other side. It doesn't work this way. There is no such thing as going back and marrying the right person. Biblically, if you divorce your spouse to marry someone else you are

guaranteed to be marrying the wrong person. Once you are married, there is no such thing as going back. You can only move forward in your marriage. Instead of wondering if you married the wrong person, focus on becoming the right person. When you think the grass is greener on the other side, it is time to start fertilizing your own lawn.

Return, return, O Shulammitte, return, return, that we may look upon you.... Song of Solomon 6:13 (ESV)

This is another difficult verse. In spite of the difficulty, one thing is clear. The key word is clear. It is the word *return*. The Shulammitte wants to run away. In this verse, her friends are urging her to return to her husband.

Interestingly, this verse is the only time in the Song of Solomon that we hear this woman's name. She is called the Shulammitte. Her name has a bit of intrigue. It could mean she is from the area of Shulam, which appears to be a good assumption. Her name is also the feminine form of the name Solomon. It is the equivalent of calling her Mrs. Solomon. In this book, most of the poetry has double meanings, so it wouldn't surprise me if both of these were true.

Why should you look upon the Shulammitte, as upon a dance before two armies? Song of Solomon 6:13 (ESV)

Here is another complex verse. It appears Solomon is speaking. In this section, Solomon urges her to return because he wants to look at her.

Now there is nothing wrong with this. They are married. As we learned earlier in this series, men are visual creatures. Testosterone makes men very responsive to a woman's looks. Some wives don't understand why their husbands are so magnetically drawn to the female figure. That is the way God

designed men. It is not wrong for a man to be visually attracted to the female form. The problem is when a man sees a woman who is visually attractive and he moves from noticing her figure to dwelling on it. It is wrong when he begins to lust over her. That is sin. The fact that he has a strong attraction to the opposite sex is not wrong.

Since men are wired by God to be highly responsive to a woman's looks, it is good for wives to be visually generous with their husbands. If men are wired by God to be drawn to women, it is good when a wife draws her husband in.

In the Song of Solomon, the Shulammitte used her husband's testosterone to her advantage. They are having marital struggles. He is not around enough. She wonders if she married the wrong guy. Yet, he wants her to come home. He wants to see her and enjoy her beauty. That is a fair request for a husband to make of his wife.

She could play out the revenge plan she had in her dream. She could refuse to come home and metaphorically lock the bedroom door. There is another option. Instead of punishing him, she decides to go after him. She decides to draw him in.

**Be your spouse's carrot, not their stick.**

In her dream, she used the stick approach. She punished Solomon by sexually denying him. That didn't work. He didn't want to come home, in fact he wanted to run away. The other way to motivate change is with a carrot. That is facilitating change by encouraging it.

It is drawing someone toward change, not forcing them into it. Instead of punishing Solomon for not being home, the Shulammitte chooses to visually and sexually entice him. Her plan is to entice him so well that he can't wait to come home from the office. I am not making this up. It is in the Bible. I am simply teaching the text.

She decides to come home and dance before her husband. The English text says dance before two armies. In the Hebrew, it says the dance of the Mahanaim. This is a location where the angelic host first appeared to Jacob in Genesis 32. Most scholars believe it is a way of saying that when she dances before him she is so beautiful, she looks like an angel.

Her game plan is to give him such an eyeful that, because of his testosterone, he can't help but think about her all day long. In what follows, she dances before him either naked or wearing almost nothing. It is without question the most erotic and sexually explicit verses in the Bible. It is a marital striptease.

Now, before we get into this, some of you are rolling your eyes and getting frustrated with this couple becoming intimate again. I want to remind you, we are not reading a cheesy romance novel; it is the Bible. Second Timothy 3:16 says all Scripture is God-breathed. We believe that at Faith Church. We believe all the words of this book are God's words to us. He gave them to us because we need to hear all of them. Some of you think this shouldn't be taught in the church. You think it should be an elective course taught to six people in marital crisis. That approach doesn't work. If it did, what I am teaching you would not be new information. Almost nobody in this room knows this book. When it

comes to the book of the Bible that speaks most clearly on marriage, sex and relationships, we are almost totally illiterate. So stop judging the Bible by your prejudice of what you think you need to hear. Let the Bible tell us what we need to hear. Now that we know we need this, let's study it.

**How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O noble daughter! Song of Solomon 7:1 (ESV)**

She is wearing sandals. Some of you ladies are into shoes. Apparently the Shulammitte also liked shoes because this is the only piece of clothing we know she wore. We don't know if this was flats, high heels, or stilettos. We just know she has on some killer shoes that make her feet look beautiful. That is the first thing Solomon notices when she dances in front of him.

**Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a master hand. Song of Solomon 7:1 (ESV)**

Solomon moves his eyes up her body and describes the top of her legs where they connect to her hips. He tells her she has a great pair of legs. The Hebrew implies her legs are in a swaying motion. This is another clue she is dancing.

**Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Song of Solomon 7:2 (ESV)**

Here is where the translators of your English Bible freaked out. Almost all scholars I checked agree that her belly button does not look like a cereal bowl. The Hebrew is clear. He is describing a part of her anatomy further south than the belly button.<sup>1</sup>

**Your belly is a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies. Song of Solomon 7:2 (ESV)**

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Dillow, *Solomon on Sex*, pg. 133; D. Akin, *God on Sex*, chapter 11.

When they harvested wheat, they tied it in the middle. He is describing her figure. She has a nice waist.

Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Song of Solomon 7:3 (ESV)

We heard this line before. He used it on their wedding night. Fawns are baby gazelles. They are like puppies. What do you want to do when you see a puppy? You want to touch it, hold it; you want to play with the puppy. That is his response to seeing his wife's breasts. He wants to make contact and cuddle. Remember, this is a married man. This is a healthy response to a wife who is dancing and very enticing.

Your neck is like an ivory tower. Song of Solomon 7:4 (ESV)

Her neck is white and straight, no curvature of the spine. She sat up straight in school.

Your eyes are pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Song of Solomon 7:4 (ESV)

She has a great pair of eyes. They are peaceful and refreshing. They are wet and glistening in the light like the pools by the gate. This great set of eyes is probably fixed on him. They are sending a very enticing message.

Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus. Song of Solomon 7:4 (ESV)

She has a large nose. Some ladies don't like your nose because you think it is too big. You want to get plastic surgery, like Michael Jackson, so you can make it small and cute. Perhaps she didn't like her nose. Interestingly, it is often the very thing we think needs changing about ourselves that our mate loves, because it makes us unique. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. Ladies,

what don't you like about yourself? It may be your nose. It may be another part of your body. Tonight, ask your husband how he feels about your flaw. You may be surprised to discover what is a flaw to you is a mark of beauty to him.

**Your head crowns you like Carmel, and your flowing locks are like purple; a king is held captive in the tresses. Song of Solomon 7:5 (ESV)**

Carmel is a mountain that stands by itself in a wide open plain. He says her head is a thing of beauty that stands on top of her lovely body. Her hair is like purple. I don't think this is describing the color of her hair. We know her hair is black. She let her hair down. It is smooth, shiny and cascading over her shoulders. I think this is saying her hair has the same kind of shimmer as purple cloth in the light.

He admits that he is held captive by her tresses. Tresses are the long unbound hair of a woman.

The point is that nobody can hold him captive. He is the king. The one person who does hold him captive is his wife. She has loved and served him so extravagantly that she captivates his heart. He can't help but go to work constantly thinking about her. Mental snapshots of her enticing dancing continually pop up in the visual rolodex of his mind. They keep drawing him back home. He can't wait to get off work.

**How beautiful and pleasant you are, O loved one, with all your delights! Song of Solomon 7:6 (ESV)**

As you might guess, as a married man with a wife that is trying to serve him like this, he is overwhelmed. He can't but help but tell her verbally what he

feels when she is enticing him visually. We will read through what happens next.

I don't think it requires much explanation.

Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. 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, and your mouth like the best wine... Song of Solomon 7:6–9 (ESV)

He is pretty excited. It doesn't take long to move from seeing her beauty to touching her, to kissing her, and finally into intimacy.

**When you win your spouse's heart, you will change your spouse's life.**

It goes down smoothly for my beloved, gliding over lips and teeth. Song of Solomon 7:9 (ESV)

The Shulammitte took her frustrations, and what was set up to be a marital nightmare, and spun it the other way. The enticement and intimacy she gave her husband was so satisfying that it left his eyes rolling into the back of his head. She describes that intimacy like fine wine. It was pure pleasure. It went down smoothly. In other words, her love was completely and totally satisfying to him. She put effort, enticement and creativity into the sexual aspect of their marriage. I want you to notice how she closes this out, because it shows how her decision to turn up the romantic flame when she was frustrated rather than snuff it out made all the difference in her husband's life.

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

In other words, she gave herself totally to loving him and as a result, his heart was completely captivated by her, just like when they were dating.

She loves the results. He can't get his mind off of her. He is now filled with desire for her. He comes home from work as fast as he can because intimacy with her draws him in like a magnet.

She understands that to change their marriage she needs to be a carrot, not a stick. If she could re-captivate her husband's heart, she could change her husband's life.

When she was faced with a problem in her marriage, she decided to change the one thing she could change. She told herself, "The one thing I can change is me."

Next week, we discover this was only the first step of her plan to rejuvenate her marriage. Next week, we learn the rest of the story. As you leave, I have a few discussion questions for you to work on with your spouse.

### **Homework Questions**

1. Husbands, ask your wife what you can do to encourage her freedom in this area.
2. Wives, ask your husband what are his favorite mental snapshots of you. Add to his visual rolodex.
3. Like the Shulammite, craft a plan to recapture your spouse's heart and mind. Entice your spouse so well they can't wait to come home.



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