

# Intimacy: the Yearning of God's Heart

© 1991-2004 Chris N. Simpson, Houston, Texas; All rights reserved.

Presented by <http://www.newwineonline.com>

---

God wants intimacy with you FAR MORE than you can ever imagine!

In the beautiful allegory of the Song of Solomon, we can hear the voice of God calling to His bride:

'My beloved spoke and said to me, 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the tender grapes spread their fragrance. Arise, my love; my beautiful one, come with me. My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountains, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.' (2:10-13)

He's calling His bride to come and join Him in celebrating the glories of Spring. But, look at the Bride's response:

'Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.' (2:15)

Notice, while He's saying: 'Come out from your hiding places; let me see your face and hear your voice,' she begins to complain about the little foxes that spoil the vines. Rather than leaping and responding quickly to her Beloved, she starts talking about the little foxes - those little things in her life that were spoiling and distracting her.

## IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT ROB YOUR JOY

Have you ever noticed how it's the little things that tend to rob your joy? The Lord is calling us to live an overcoming life, to live above the sin and misery of the world. But instead, we're often caught up with the little, petty things of life. It's not the big things that distract us from the things of God, but the little ones. It's those petty little annoyances - like an easily besetting sin or the tendency to judge others, that tend to mess up the vines.

Many might say, 'My life is not so bad, it's just these people!' How often do you find yourself stumbling because of those around you? Do you tend to judge others for their faults and failings? You know what I'm talking about. While You're spending some time with the Lord all you can do is think of so and so, and what they did to you. And you're mad. Then you forgive them, 'I forgive them! I really Forgive them!' And then, those resentful thoughts come back -- little foxes spoiling the vine.

So what do you do then? Do you run off to hide in secret places away from God -- secret places of sin? If you do, then you'll find yourself less and less enthusiastic about living an overcoming life. And all because of those little foxes. Foxes speak of the devil: those little demonic temptations and attitudes that rob and spoil. Another translation of verse 15 reads, 'The foxes that rob and steal.'

## IN YOUR WEAKNESS HE IS STRONG

The Bride also says in that verse, 'Our vines have tender grapes.' Now here's an interesting revelation. She's seems to be saying, 'Oh my vine, it's tender, it's fragile and it's so weak.' She's telling the Master two things. First, 'I can't come because of all these little things in my life,' and second, 'I'm too weak - my vine has tender grapes.'

The Master responded, 'Your tender grapes spread their fragrance.' In other words, 'I can use your weakness because when you're weak, that's when I'm strong.' To live the overcoming life you must understand that you don't have to be strong or 'together' for Jesus. Until you're free to be 'who you are' with God, you'll never really advance in the things of the Spirit. Many want to attend spiritual 'graduate school' - to have a collegiate or peer relationship with God. But you have to go to grammar school before

graduate school. When Satan says, 'You're not where you should be,' tell him, 'It's O.K. because God loves me wherever I am.'

We've just looked at the two excuses that keep the bride from responding to her Beloved's call: the little, petty things of her life, and her depressing sense of unworthiness due to her weaknesses. Now let's look at the next chapter in Song of Solomon where we hear the bride saying:

'By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loved. I sought Him but I found Him not.' (3:1)

Why couldn't she find her Master? Could it be because she didn't respond to His voice back in chapter two? She listened to the lies of the vine spoilers, and believed that in her weakness she couldn't come to him. So, when she went to seek Him in chapter three - she couldn't find Him. As a result, she's frustrated and discouraged. She's entangled with those little foxes. Let's see what happens:

### **WANDERING AROUND, TRYING TO FIND GOD**

'I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loves...' (3:2)

Notice - she's up and wandering around. She can't find God in intimacy and quietness so she seems to be saying, 'I'll find Him in action.' She begins to look for Him in things, people, places, and events. Do you identify with that? When you've lost intimacy with the Lord because of petty things, do you try to find satisfaction and fulfillment in everything else? Then she said, 'I sought Him, but I still didn't find Him.' (3:2) Deep inner peace is found only in intimacy with Jesus. Once you've heard His voice in your heart, you'll never be satisfied with anything else.

This woman is frustrated. She can't find her Beloved anywhere, and on top of that we find the watchmen of the city looking for her. Notice verse 3:

'The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. I asked, 'Have you seen the one my heart loves?' (3:3)

Who are these watchmen? They are none other than her spiritual elders who watch for her soul. God told Ezekiel that He was a watchman over His people. Paul tells us in Hebrew 13:17 that those over you in the Lord watch for your souls. So she went to her elders. There's something for us to learn in this.

If you can't find God anywhere while you're looking for Him in everything, go and HUMBLE yourself to an elder in the Lord.

Go to someone that does know where He is. She found an elder, a pastor, or a friend who was walking in the intimacy she sought. She needed someone that would speak truth to her. The elder helped her refocus her life. It was when she humbled herself that her relationship with her Beloved was renewed. You can see this in the next verse,

'It was but a little that I past from them that I found Him whom my soul loves.' (3:4a)  
Now, look at this:

'And I held Him and I wouldn't let Him go until I brought Him into my mother's house, into the chamber of her that conceived me.' (3:4b)

She'd lost Him once. This time, though, she wasn't going to let Him go. If you've ever been away from the Lord for a while and then find Him again, you won't be so quick to walk away from Him the second time. She said, 'I wouldn't let Him go!' She finally found what she wanted!

Have you ever found yourself wandering around, squandering yourself in the pleasures of the flesh, feeling miserable inside? Oh, to find Him again is so good! She was going to do whatever it took to keep that estrangement from happening again. She disciplined her prayer life. She was determined to stay open and vulnerable with others. She said, 'I'm not going to lose that intimacy with Jesus again!'

But guess what happened? In spite of all this, she lost it again! Look at chapter five. Many days have gone by and many things have happened. We come back into her life a year or two later. The chapter opens with the Master saying:

'I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk. Eat, O friends, and drink; drink abundantly, O beloved.' (5:1)

The Master had experienced different levels of fellowship with His bride in chapter two and three, but now in chapter five He's calling her to something far deeper. He seems to be saying, 'I want to enter your innermost gardens and dine with you. I don't want you to just have life, I want you to have life much more abundantly.' God longs for you to enter the abundant life of intimate companionship with Him. 'Come and eat, my friends. Drink deeply.'

### MOST BELIEVERS HAVE A 'CAT AND MOUSE' RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Believers today have little understanding of the depths that God longs to draw His people. Most are too busy playing cat and mouse with God. They're in fellowship with Him one day, until the old foxes (those petty sins and resentments) spoil the vines. Then they're worried about how tender their grapes are (all they can see is their weakness) and they lose their intimacy with the Lord. After a period of spiritual misery, they end up needing ministry from the watchman (those with a more consistent walk) in order to find that close walk with God again.

Does all this sound too familiar? Can you hear the Lord's voice in these verses saying,

'Leave all that and come higher! Enjoy deeper intimacy with me!'

In spite of this, the Bride is still not ready to enter those deep places, for she says:

'I slept but my heart was awake. My beloved is knocking at the door:' (5:2a)

Many believers often say, 'My heart's desire is to go deeper with God.' But when you look at how they actually live, it's as if they were sound asleep! The beloved then says:

'Open to me my sister, my love, my dove. My head is drenched with dew and the drops of the night.' (5:2b)

Can you see what's happening in this scene? The bride is asleep while her beloved is knocking at the door, wanting to enter and commune with her. Jesus said a similar thing to the lukewarm Laodicean church,

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him....' (Rev 3:20)

What an amazing verse. Jesus is 'outside' of His own church asking to be let in. These passages in Solomon's Song reveal the same thing. The bride here depicts a passive, lukewarm believer. Her heart hears her Lord, but she's become dull from not responding and doing what He says. Look carefully at what He's saying, 'My head is drenched with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.' The 'dew' and 'drops of the night' represent the anointing that God brings with His Holy Spirit. The beloved is telling her bride: 'I'm coming to you with an anointing. I want to anoint you with the same anointing that rests on me. I want to anoint your life with power, signs, wonders and gifts, my beloved.' He keeps knocking, 'Open to me, open yourself, open up! I have so much for you!' But she's asleep!

Finally, in verse three, she wakes up. But look what she says:

'I have taken off my robe-- must I put it on again?  
I have washed my feet-- must I soil them again?' (5:3)

Now we see a passive, lazy streak in the bride. What is she saying? 'It's too much trouble to rise and open the door to you. I'm comfortable here in my nice, warm bed. I've washed my feet and I've cleansed

myself. I might get defiled following you in those deeper ways. If I do, I'll end up dealing with more people! Dirty people. Messy ones. I don't want to mess up my nice, comfortable Christian life.'

This is a picture of most churches today. We don't want to mess up our churches with sinners. We want comfortable 'bless me' clubs. But, that's not where God's heart is. He loves the unlovely. He came to rescue and care for the poor, the lame and the rejected. In fact, He was rejected Himself. Today, many churches would probably ask Jesus to leave because of the objectionable company He kept. 'He eats with sinners, prostitutes and tax collectors,' the Pharisees would say.

## YOU MUST WIN THE 'BATTLE OF THE BED!'

In verse three we see the bride too lazy to get out of bed. The clear message of these passages is this: Until you learn to win the battle of the bed, you'll never know the riches of the Lord's anointing. If you lay in bed and say, 'I don't want to be inconvenienced. I know I need to rise and pray, but Lord, I'm so tired. I'll pray on the way to work today.' Yeah, right. Like you'll really find deep intimacy with the Lord fighting freeway traffic. Solomon tells us:

'The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.' (Proverbs 13:4)

Face it, you've got to win the battle of the bed if you want to get anywhere in your spiritual life. I've heard people say, 'I've tried it and tried it and I just can't seem to discipline myself to get up in the morning to spend time with the Lord.' The truth is, it's not really a question of 'can or can't,' rather it's a matter of 'will or won't.' We always find the time to do what we really want to do. Spiritual discipline springs from a heart that wants the pleasures of the Spirit more than the pleasures of the flesh. Jesus said,

'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.' (Matt 26:41)

Generally, spiritually lazy people won't discipline themselves until life becomes intolerably shallow and superficial. Then they're usually ready to play by the Lord's rules and not their own. However, it's not really necessary to wait until things get really bad before you begin to 'max it out' for Jesus. Hopefully this study of Solomon's Song will help motivate you to press toward the Lord, and avoid the pitfalls and problems encountered by the bride.

God wants us to share the very intimacy that He has with His only begotten Son. Can you believe that? Jesus said,

'If a man loves me he will keep my words, my Father will love him, and we will come unto Him and make our dwelling place within him.' (John 14:23)

Without a doubt, that has to be the most amazing verse in the whole Bible! God, the Father and the Son, wants to commune and dwell within your very soul! As you OBEY and keep Jesus' words, that's exactly what happens. There are no words in any language that can express what this even begins to mean. The eternal, omnipotent Creator desires to share the innermost secrets of His heart with you and I, as we prove ourselves faithful and obedient.

That's what I want. I want a relationship with the Lord where not only I can trust Him, but where He can trust me. It's one thing for you to trust God. It's another thing for God to trust you. Trust you with what? With His anointings, His gifts, His callings, and His abilities to minister to others.

Do you want that? If God were to use many of us to heal a blind eye, straightened a deformed limb, or open the ears of the deaf, we'd probably gloat with pride like a toad. Then He couldn't use us again. Unfortunately, much of what God has cannot be entrusted to His people today. You don't give the keys to the family car to little children. You give them toy keys to a little toy car, but not the real thing. This is why there's so little real power in most churches today. If you're reading this and find yourself identifying with that passive and lazy bride, who found it so hard to respond to her Master's call, pray the following prayer from your heart:

'Lord Jesus, forgive me for hardening my heart to you. Forgive me for preferring the comforts of the world over the call of your cross. I really don't want to have to get miserable before I'll truly obey. Please, change my heart. Do whatever it takes to break me so that I can be a pleasing disciple, a suitable dwelling place for the Father and the Son!'

## QUICKLY RESPOND TO THE LORD

Let's look at the next verse in our study of Solomon's Song:

'My beloved thrust his hand through the latch-opening; my heart began to pound for him.' (5: 4)

If you recall, He'd been knocking and she refused to rise to open the door. Now, He's reaching through the door trying to get her to respond before He leaves. Notice: she does begin to respond - in her heart. Perhaps she sensed He was preparing to leave. There's something deep within each of us that aches and yearns for God. But we must respond when He calls, when He reaches out His hand to us. We're told to,

'Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He's near.' (Is. 55:6)

There will be a time when He pulls back, so when the light flashes upon your spirit, respond! When the dove lands on your shoulder, obey! When the wind blows, yield! David said,

'Oh Lord, how great are your works and your thoughts are very deep, but a dull man doesn't know it and neither does a fool understand it.' (Psalm 92:5-6)

Intimacy with Jesus demands a sensitive spirit. He wants you to readily obey His Spirit when He says, 'Quick, kneel and cry out for help before the enemy attacks you!' Let's now look at verse five and six:

'I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with flowing myrrh, on the handles of the lock. I opened for my beloved but he had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer.' (5:5-6)

Finally, she got up! She reached for the doorknob, opened it and.... Oh No! It's happened again! He's gone! She begins to cry,

'He was at the door with anointing and love, but I was too passive and lazy to even get up. He even reached out to me in a special way, but when I finally responded - He was gone.'

## THE LEAST LITTLE THINGS CAN SPOIL YOUR INTIMACY WITH GOD

I've discovered something about Jesus over the years. The Lord is so holy and meek that the least little impurity or pride (those little foxes) grieves His heart and will spoil your intimacy with Him. This is why so few really know Him! I've learned that you cannot compromise with even the smallest thought of impurity, unbelief, or pride and expect to have deep intimacy with the Lord. David said,

'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' (Psalm 66:18)

These passages in the Song of Solomon show us a picture of a believer with plenty of desire, but not much obedience. Many believers want the intimacy that comes with denying the self, paying the price and counting the cost, but they're unwilling to do what it takes. As a result, they're always aching deep inside their soul. David tells us,

'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after..' (Psalm 27:4)

It's one thing to desire, it's another to do what's necessary to bring those desires to pass. Now let's see what happens:

'The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They beat me, they wounded me; they took away my veil, those watchmen of the walls!' (5:7)

## WHY WE NEED CORRECTION AND REPROOF

Well, what do you know, there are the watchmen again. If you recall, she encountered them before when she was first seeking her Beloved. Now she runs into them again. Only this time it's not very pleasant. They beat her and took away her veil. What does this mean?

This is a picture of her spiritual elders moving in with correction and reproof. That's what she needs. Reproof and correction to a passive and lazy spirit does indeed feel like a wounding. Then they stripped off her veil. What does that mean? The veil speaks of the things she hides behind: masks, fronts and facades. This verse depicts the loving, yet painful, confrontation she's needing at this point.

To enter the abundant life referred to in the beginning of this chapter, you nearly always have to pass through a time of correction and reproof. Solomon tells us,

'Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.' (Proverbs 6:23).

It's really not possible to grow and mature in the things of God without reproof and correction. Because we are by nature so full of pride and self-centeredness, we often need the loving correction and guidance of others in our walk with the Lord.

Look at verse eight. She's been corrected, reproved, and chastened. The veil that covered her has been taken away. Now, look what she says:

'O daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you - if you find my beloved, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.' (5:8)

Do you see what's happening here? Now she can't stop talking about her Beloved. This is the first time we hear her sharing with others about him. It apparently took losing her beloved twice, as well as a season of reproof and correction, to get her to this place of freely talking about him and what he means to her. God wants you and I to talk about the relationship that we have with Jesus. In fact, He commands us to do so in His Word. Now look at how the others respond to what she's said:

'How is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your beloved better than others, that you charge us so?' (5:9)

They wanted to know about this one she so loves. She then pours out her feelings for her Beloved from the depths of her heart:

'My beloved is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven... His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars. His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.' (5:10-16)

Look at the passion in her soul as she describes her Beloved! This is what 'witnessing for Jesus' is all about! The best witness you can have for the Lord is just to tell people how much you love Jesus!

## ONCE YOU'VE FOUND INTIMACY, YOU CAN'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

Recently, I had an opportunity to talk to an unsaved man about my relationship with the Lord. I told him how patient Jesus is with me, how often He forgives me and how I'm so ungrateful, in spite of the fact that I've known Him for so long. Then I began to weep. The guy just sat there, not knowing what to do. I looked at him through my tears and said, 'I'm sorry, forgive me. He just means so much to me. He's so merciful.' While I sat there, I sensed the Spirit of conviction come and fall on him. It was a unique moment. I was able to describe Jesus to this guy as the fairest of all, above all that I've ever known. Now, look what the daughters of Jerusalem said to the bride in response:

'Where has your beloved gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your beloved turn, that we may look for him with you?' (6:1)

'Oh, we want that!' they said. This is what people want - intimacy with God! A love relationship with God! She probably shook her head, though, and said, 'You don't know what's involved. Are you willing to be wounded by the watchmen? Are you willing to be smitten and have your veil stripped away?' And so she says,

'My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he browses among the lilies.' (6: 2-3)

This is the voice of a maturing child of God, who's left spiritual adolescence and is beginning to really know the Lord. Notice, leaving those petty attitudes of selfish need and passivity, she's now telling others where they can find Him! She now knows where He is!

Remember those times when she couldn't find Him? She'd gone into the streets looking for him, crying out, 'Where is He?' But now, when asked, she said, 'I know where He is - He's in His garden!'

What do you think that means? What do you find in a garden? Fruit! He's looking for fruit -- that's where He is! Her soul had become a garden of sweet fellowship with her Beloved! She's learned to walk in the garden of her spirit, communing with the Lord. Adam and Eve did the same, if you recall, before they made their most unwise choice. After all of her striving and struggling, she finally found Him where He'd been all along. It's in the garden of your soul, as well, that God longs to have intimate fellowship. Jeremiah said,

'....their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow anymore...' (Jeremiah 31:12)

It was in a garden (Eden) that man made his fateful choice of disobedience. It was also in a garden (Gethsemane), however, where Jesus made His fateful choice of obedience, to go to the cross. Now, He calls us to fellowship with Him in the garden of our souls, in the sweet communion of the fruits of His Holy Spirit.

## GOD COMMENDS THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO OBEY AND FIGHT!

Let's look at the next verse in Solomon's Song:

'You are beautiful, my bride, as Tirzah, beautiful as Jerusalem, majestic as an army with banners.' (6:4)

The Beloved is speaking again. The last time we heard Him speak was back in chapter five when He was trying to wake up His bride... remember? Now, however, He comes with praise and commendation. First, He compares her to Jerusalem, a city surrounded with high, defensive walls. He's saying, 'Your walls have been built; you're a city set on a hill, safely defended from her enemies.'

The Lord wants His people to live behind the defensive walls of His righteousness and obedience. Many believers, however, let their walls deteriorate and allow the enemy easy access into their life. Before you can ever fight effective spiritual warfare, the walls (or hedges of protection) must be securely in place about the perimeter of your life.

Then the Beloved goes on to commend her 'offensive' nature as well. He sees her as a triumphal and majestic army marching to war, carrying banners of victory. He's commanding her for her fighting nature. Unless you're willing to fight the battles of sin and evil in your own life and the lives of others, you'll never know the deep intimacies of the Lord. God wants you to leave your fears, be bold, resist the enemy and stand up fearlessly for what's right.

As you read on in this chapter, the Beloved's praises for the bride grow richer and more intense with each verse:

'Turn your eyes from me; they overwhelm me.... Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique... The maidens saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her. Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?' (6: 5-10)

Jesus once spoke of a man who searched through many pearls looking for one highly prized one. God, too, is ever looking for those to whom He can entrust the riches of His heart and the powers of His Spirit. There are sixty queens, eighty concubines, and virgins without number - lots and lots of folks who desire intimacy with the Lord. But, as was said before, it's one thing to desire something and quite another to seek after it with all of your heart.

As you study the life of Christ, you'll find that Jesus had many people around Him, but only few had any real intimacy with Him. The multitudes came and went, depending on what Jesus was doing or giving away (like bread and fish). There were also many others who wanted to walk with Him, yet were not willing to pay the price necessary to be an intimate disciple. Even of the twelve, we see three that seemed to walk closer than the rest: Peter, James and John. And of the three, John was called the 'beloved disciple,' who leaned his head on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper.

### YOU ARE INTIMATE WITH GOD ONLY AS MUCH AS YOU REALLY WANT TO BE

The question is: 'How intimate do you really want to be with God?' It's been said that one is as intimate with God only as one really wants to be. He has no favorites. He offers the same promises of intimacy to all. However, now, as then, there are few that are willing to pay the price and do what it takes to dwell in the deep, inner courts of the Lord.

In conclusion, let's look at what the bride says in chapter seven. It appears that many years have come and gone since those childish days of her youth, when she had that 'cat and mouse' relationship with her Beloved. Those foxes that spoiled the vines are long gone. That veil that blinded her was stripped away long ago. Not sleeping anymore, let's look at what she's saying:

'I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me.' (7:10)

We see here that she has come to a marvelous place. She knows and understands her Beloved's love for her. This is one of the most important things that can ever happen to you as well: to truly know that you're loved by God. This is the answer to every insecurity: knowing God's love.

Everyone feels insecure from time to time. Remember Martha, the sister of Mary, in Luke chapter ten? She was so insecure that she burst in on Jesus and asked, 'Don't you care...?' The disciples said the same thing in the boat during the storm. They woke Jesus up and yelled, 'Master, don't you care that we perish?' In answer, He instantly calmed the raging sea. Once you know His love, you'll find Him as well always ready to calm your fears, anxieties and doubts.

Now, let's read on:

'Come, my beloved, let us go to the countryside, let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their tender grapes have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom - there I will give you my love.' (7:11-12)

### WHAT A 'SOLD-OUT' DISCIPLE DOES

Look! She's talking to him as a peer! This formally timid and passive woman is now urging her Beloved to go with her to the villages and the fields. What's this mean?

It's a picture of a sold-out disciple saying to the Lord, 'Let's go where the people are! I'm not sitting around in bed waiting, I'm asking you to come with me! I want to serve and live for others!' Notice, too, that now she's rising early: no more 'sleeping in.' Too much to be done. Too many people to be reached. 'Let's see if the vines have budded and whether the tender grapes have opened.'

Remember back in chapter two when the bride was worried about her tender grapes (her weaknesses)? Now we see her saying, 'Let's go find others that have tender grapes! I know what it's like to feel sorry for yourself. But I've been delivered. Let's find those weak ones and encourage them to rise early to seek the Beloved!'

Then she says, '...it's there that I will give you my love.' In other words, 'I'm going to offer love for you, God, by loving these people.' Do you see that? She's saying, ' I'll show my love to you as I minister in the vineyards, helping others with tender grapes grow out of their own fears and insecurities.' One sign of a maturing walk with the Lord is when you recognize the fact that you best show love to God when you express love for others. Jesus said,

'Whatever you do to the least of these my brothers, that you've done unto me.' (Matt 25: 40) What we see here is the picture of a matured believer: one whose life is dedicated to caring and serving the needs of others. The bride has no life of her own. Instead, she wants to be poured out for others. What a place of maturity! Then she says:

'The mandrakes send out their fragrance, and at our door is every manner of pleasant fruits, both new and old, that I have laid up for you, my beloved.' (7:13)

Finally, we see the bride fully secure in her relationship with her Beloved. This pictures a believer who, after having labored in the vineyards, is bringing his fruits to the Lord. It's a picture of how a true gathering of believers (a local church) ought to be. Every fellowship ought to have all manner of fruit, new and old: those that are new in the faith as well as those that are seasoned, who have walked and grown in the wisdom of the Lord.

## DEEP INTIMACY IS FOR WHOSOEVER WILL

We've seen the bride come a long way in this study of the Song of Solomon. She started out quite self-centered. Then slowly but surely she responded to her Beloved's call to a more abundant life. After receiving the correction of others, she developed a rich, love relationship with God, resulting in a glorious witness to the daughters of Jerusalem. Finally, she matured to the point of expressing her devotion to God through passionate ministry to others.

The Lord wants no less for any believer! He longs for everyone that calls upon His name to come to that glorious place of intimacy and maturity. All you need to do is heed the call and obey!