**Song of Solomon 1 – August 15**

A 7-year-old boy was asked this question about marriage, “How do you make a marriage work?” He was evidently wise beyond his years and answered, “Tell your wife she looks pretty, even if she doesn’t.” I agree with Dr. Danny Akin who wrote, “I believe God is something of a cosmic romantic who enjoys a good love story.” The Song of Solomon is such a love story. In it we discover how God feels about courting, patience, marriage, and consummation. It appears to be that what God designed in marriage is meant to be thrilling and breathtaking. Let’s take a look at what we can learn from this exciting book that sometimes makes be blush.

First of all, as I quoted the 7-year-old boy, I am reminded of the value of praising another person. The book opens with the woman expressing deep desire for her soon to be husband to kiss her passionately and often. The sense of touch and taste come together and she declares his love to be better than wine (v.2). This little book gets pretty steamy right off the bat. Read it and enjoy and remember – this was God’s plan. I think He is an amazing God who gives good gifts. Let’s focus today on praise.

Gary Smalley and John Trent wrote a book years ago called, *The Gift of the Blessing.* They wrote, “God has put us together in such a way that we have emotional and physical needs that can only be met by affirmation, acceptance as to intrinsic worth, encouragement, and unconditional love. We all have the desire and need to receive “the blessing” from others.” They go on to say that praise from your spouse needs to include a meaningful touch, spoken words, expressions of high value, picturing a special future, and a commitment to see it come to pass. This type of praise needs to be constant not just occasional. Let’s look at 1:9-15 to put some Scripture to these thoughts.

In verses 9-10, Solomon is specific with his praise of the Shulamite woman – his soon to be bride. Solomon detects in verses 5-8 that she may be insecure about her appearance and so he lavishes her with his specific praise. She needs him to bless her, to affirm her, to tell her she is special and he does. In verse 9 he calls her *HIS* darling. In this chapter he uses that endearing term 9 times. He also calls her a horse. Now before you run off and call your wife a horse, you must know this. The King’s chariots were pulled by the finest stallions in the land. She is a **mare** among the stallions. In other words, she is the only female in a world of males in his eyes. She is unique and special. Then in verse 10 he tells her she is beautiful. Be specific. Friends, there is power in praising your partner. It can be amazing to discover the passion that flows from a little praise.

It is so sad that people are looking for something they will never find without commitment, faithfulness, dedication and such. The idea of ‘sex without strings and relationships without rings” is unfortunate. Think for a moment about God’s commitment to us. His love for us is a covenantal love. It is a love based on sacrifice, commitment, and promise keeping. I thank God that Jesus Christ loved His bride enough to die for her on the cross. We are to model our relationships after His design.