

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

August 27, 2023



Gentle Reprove

We live in a time when the day's politics control the culture we are supposed to adopt. If we do not succumb to the culture, we are defined as homophobic, closed-minded, and hateful. This is partly true. Some Christians have become cruel, downright ugly, and so angry nothing about how they approach the subject represents the attitude and character of Christ. At Living Word Fellowship Church, we are first committed to loving each other, which is the greatest of all the commandments (Matthew 22:36-40), and without it, the scriptures state we have nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Without love, Christ is so displeased He would instead leave our presence (Revelation 2:1-5). The issue is love has been defined by those who write love novels and Hollywood, so when God defines love, it appears emotionless and insensitive to feelings and thoughts.

When my parents instructed me to eat vegetables, I was not too fond of vegetables or them. I tried the dog, my little brother, and the trash when they were not looking. So, my parents had to go to different means like belts, stern warnings, and even punishment; like, who takes desert from a kid; mean, huh? None of this I liked, but all of it I needed. This is because the receiver does not define love; the Giver defines love. When the Giver's very nature is love, like water is wet, He then becomes the person who determines it. As a result, love is defined by God, not our feelings.

LGBTQIA community lifestyle violates the scriptures, but how do we treat them? When we address subjects like homosexuality or the LGBTQIA community from a Biblical perspective, the scriptures define our attitude and mindset. We must serve with a spirit of gentleness for restoration (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1-5). We cannot demonstrate this attitude without the Holy Spirit dominating our words, the wisdom we provide, and the character we display (Philippians 2:1-5). It is not about us. First, it is about His purposes for His children. When we serve based on His purposes, first, we should remove biases and hate because His nature, in us, displaces those attitudes shaped by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25), which includes love and kindness.

When we address this issue from the scriptures with the attitude of Christ, it then serves to build up a believer, not tear them down. This is the purpose of love, and it is for this purpose we strive as we address this very sensitive issue this month. Let us remain in the Word, keep growing, and trust because the Lord is our salvation. This way, our feelings do not become our God but our point of growth as we pick up this cross, committed to following Christ and Christ alone (Luke 14:25-33).

We must commit to grow up in Christ, not the world, which is temporal (Romans 12:2).

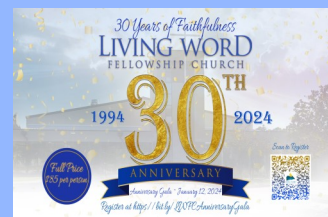
UPCOMING Events



IDENTITY LIVE PANEL DISCUSSION—AUG 29TH
Throughout youth & children's month our pastoral staff will be tackling difficult conversations on gender and sexuality. To be sure to address all of your questions our pastor's will lead a live discussion panel on Tues. August 29th at 7pm. **Please submit your questions to Keron Brown through Aug. 25th via text or email, (281) 507-0102 or keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org.**



WOMEN OF GRACE MINISTRY BREAKFAST & FELLOWSHIP 9/2 9 A.M.
Attention Ladies, we invite you to FREE FUN FOOD & FELLOWSHIP at the Women of Grace Ministry Breakfast on Saturday, September 2, 2023 from 9 - 11 am. Come connect, fellowship, hear about upcoming activities and events, and enjoy a marvelous breakfast. Register on the events page of our website and for more information contact Women of Grace at wog77088@gmail.com



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF FAITHFULNESS
Join us January 12, 2024 for our 30th Anniversary Gala. This is a formal event including entertainment, mocktails, fellowship, and more! Tickets are on sale now for \$85. Payment plans are available. **Visit bit.ly/LWFCAnniversaryGala to purchase your tickets today. For more information, contact the church at (281) 260-7428.**



MARRIAGE MINISTRY MEET & GREET SAT. SEPT. 9TH 3:30—6:30 P.M.
Married or dating couples who have recently joined LWFC, we invite you to come dance and have fun with the Marriage Ministry on Saturday, September 9th from 3:30 - 6:30 p.m. Come connect with us in fun, food, dancing and fellowship. This event is free. Registration at <https://bit.ly/MarriageMinistryMeetandGreet> See you there couples! For more information contact Terry or Sherri Randle at lwfcmarriagemin@gmail.com



LWCA BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIAL
Back to School is almost here! Sign up for our LWCA S.T.E.A.M. (science - technology - engineering - arts & math) before and after care for ages 5-12. students will learn chess, robotics, arts and crafts, cooking classes, outdoor sports including tennis, and godly principles. Special lock-in price of \$55 if you register by August 31st Register at www.lwcaacademy.org or by calling (713) 686-5538



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Visitor's Welcome

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

"Still Got It"
Song of Solomon 2:3-6 & 4:1-7
Dr. Pierre Cannings
Assistant Pastor

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship
Please remain seated at this time

Benediction



Still Got It
Song of Solomon 2:3-6 & 4:1-7

I. Her Delight 2:3-6

- a. Tree v. 3
 - i. Tree - “The other men are dangerous, like the inhospitable forest that was the haunt of wild animals in ancient Israel” She views Solomon as safe and completely trustworthy.
 - ii. An argument against the sexual angle being present is 2:3 is that she is said to delight to “sit,” not lie down, in his shade (Estes, 319). The point of the extension of the comparison seems to be closer to viewing him almost like an oasis in the burning sun of the region. Not only is the protection of the shade of the tree to be found there, but also the refreshment of the fruit of the tree. In addition, none of the immediately preceding context (1:15–2:2) is explicitly sexual, thus making it unlikely that the images in 2:3 should be taken in that manner.
 - iii. and she responds that he compares to other men as the apple tree to the trees of a forest. The point of comparison is of course that the apple tree bears delicious fruit but that forest trees do not.
 - iv. In short, classical evidence for the association of apples with women and sexuality is fairly strong: the woman’s claim that the man is to her like an apple tree is in keeping with this motif. She speaks of taking pleasure in his shade and his fruit and abiding with him.
 - v. He is “like an apple tree,” that is, protective (“shade”) and pleasurable (“his fruit”).
- b. Banquet Hall v.4
 - i. Banquet Hall- House of Wine
 - 1. Since Solomon owned the vineyard the Shulammite’s family leased and worked (8:11–12), he could simply tell them he was going to use the facility, paying them (generously, no doubt) for whatever was used/consumed, while inviting them to attend his (perhaps spontaneous) public proclamation of his love for her.
 - 2. If a wedding banquet is in view here, the “house of wine” is on one level the banquet and on another level the anticipated love play. In the Song, wine often connotes or is associated with lovemaking, especially kisses (1:2, 4; 4:10; 5:1; 7:3
 - 3. Such interpretations, however, are misguided. It is clear from v. 6 that she is in his embrace; in vv. 4–5 she describes her experience in a series of comparisons. The “house of wine” is, as Fox indicates, simply any building where wine is drunk. As a metaphor it means that he is bringing her to pleasures that are almost intoxicating, and the experience causes her to swoon (v. 5c). His intention (rather than “banner
 - ii. Banner
 - 1. However, as king, there is no reason why a “banner” would be out of place in such figurative imagery. In fact, for Solomon to openly proclaim his love for the young woman in such a group setting would be quite a bit like the public display of a banner.
- c. Lovesick v.5
 - i. In what sense has love wounded the woman or made her ill, and why does she ask that they lay her on raisin cakes and apples? Scholars often take this text to mean simply that she is flushed with excitement over love and that she needs raisin cakes and apples to restore her strength. Also, many interpreters point out that these foods probably were thought to have an aphrodisiac quality.
 - ii. On the other hand, lying down has sexual implications, and sweetmeats such as raisins and apples probably connote love play. Lying down in these foods also betokens luxuriant extravagance. Her request is thus an appeal for both strength and for affection, but it suggests a paradise setting.
 - iii. It is better to take this as mental pain produced by profound anxiety and conflict. The solution to her anxiety, here metaphorically described as lying down in a bed of raisins or apples, is the affection of her beloved. It is his affection that will enable her to overcome her internal conflict. She has already described her lover as an apple tree in Song 2:3; it is hardly an interpretive leap to take “apples” here to refer to his affection.
 - iv. In either case, the object of her desire is not real fruit but his love.) As in 2:3 she associates the pleasures he gives with various fruits
- d. Embrace v.6
 - i. The verb סמך in the qal means “to rest upon, support, lean against.” In Gen 27:37 It is probable that the pī’el of סמך(used only here) means, “make (me) to rest upon”
 - ii. Here in the Song, the right-hand-left-hand dyad only implies affection and support, not genital stimulation.
 - iii. This verse answers the request of the previous verse. The man lets her rest upon his left arm while he caresses her with his right hand. He sustains her with tender affection; his love is the raisins and apples upon which she rests

II. His Delight 4:1-5 The Beautiful Details

- a. Beautiful Face 1-3
 - i. Beautiful
 - 1. song seem harsh and unnatural to the modern reader because we take them in too literal a sense. He is not describing so much how she looks but how he feels when he looks at her. Aspects of the woman’s beauty provoke profound emotional responses.
 - 2. There is also a clear effect around 4:1–7. The initial words are “you are beautiful.” Verse 7 goes so far as to say “All of you is beautiful.” As with all such effects, everything between the beginning and ending statements is colored by them. In this case, these verses are focused on the flawless physical beauty of the Shulammite, as expressed in Solomon’s words.
 - ii. Eyes
 - iii. Hair

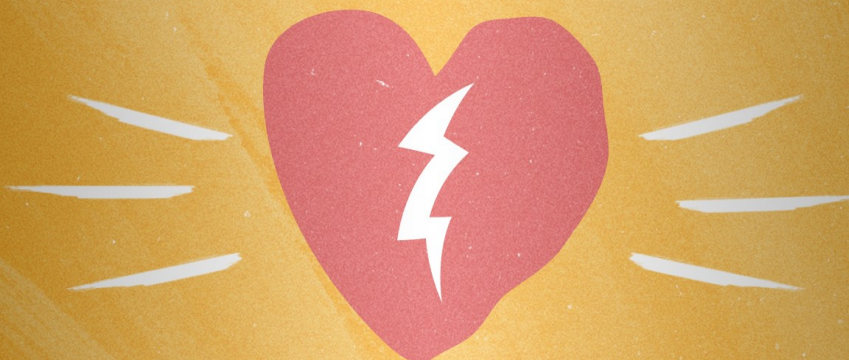
II. His Delight 4:1-5 The Beautiful Details (continued)

- iv. Teeth
 - 1. The fact that every one has a twin means that no teeth are missing. The root דאחwith the sense to “double” or “have a twin” appears in Exod 26:24 and 36:29 The woman has all of her teeth! This may seem like a rather droll bit of praise to the modern, Western reader, but we live in an age of highly sophisticated dentistry and orthodontics. Until very recently, a beautiful, healthy smile with no missing teeth was hardly something people could take for granted. The fact that the teeth are like shorn lambs that come up from washing obviously implies that they are clean and white. Although data on קצב is scarce, 2 Kgs 6:6 is fairly strong evidence that the rare root קצבmeans to “cut off,” or with reference to sheep, “shorn.”
- v. Lips
 - 1. The idea that her lips are “like a scarlet thread” is not particularly attractive to us, since it seems to imply that she has thin lips. This is certainly not the point. The obvious visual link between the metaphor and the lips is the color red, a feature still regarded as attractive for women’s lips in many cultures
- vi. Temples
 - 1. He has already spoken of the redness of her lips, and the point here seems to be that she has a youthful glow. Also, the interior of a pomegranate connotes sweetness and sensual pleasure.
- b. Beautiful Neck v.4
 - i. The military language employed to describe the “tower of David” indicates that the main point of comparison is not that her neck is long and slender, like a high tower (notwithstanding the fact that Egyptians considered long necks attractive).
 - ii. There is a kind of beauty associated with military hardware, but it is a beauty that connotes strength. Applied to walls and towers, this language connotes impregnability. The man’s adoration of the woman arises in part from the fact that he cannot take her at will. He speaks tenderly to her, hoping that she will give him willingly what he cannot take by force. Furthermore, his words imply respect for how she deports herself and possesses her beauty. She is not weak in her beauty but strong.
- c. Beautiful Breast v.5
 - i. Rather, it seems that the comparison is another example of how gazelles in the Song connote playfulness, energy, and sexuality
- d. Flawless v.7
 - i. This verse concludes the wasf with a summation that fairly says everything the man wants to get across: the woman is absolutely flawless

PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Leatrice Sam & family, Jackie Jordan & family, Vivian Phillips& family, Melinda Myres & family, Lula Hayes & family, Beverly Pilson & family, Christopher Chapman & family, Katrina Humphrey & family, Lloyd Lewis & family, Barbara Taylor & family, Bryan Grant/ Joyce Hayes & family, Brenda Bonhame & family, Aray Williams & family, James Thompson & family, the family of Kendra Scott, and Paulette Mayo & family.

Health and Healing: Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Ella James, Pat Crawford, Birdie Williams, Rutha Patrick, Betty Goode, Latifah Brown, Tanisha Collins, Eric Prichett, Rufus Hadnot, Pat James, Lori Lee, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clark, Clara Williams, Betty Cunningham, Dorothy Price, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Calvin Wilson, Elizabeth Bean, and Patsy Gatterson.



still got it

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:3-6 & 4:1-7