

THE MARRIAGE PROJECT

"PUTTING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER"

SONG OF SONGS 6:4-13

This Week's Core Competency

Love – I unconditionally and sacrificially love and forgive others. 1 John 4:10-12, *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another: No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

Love entails forgiveness. Love that refuses to forgive falls short. In the case of Solomon and his beloved, the Shulammitte's indifference to her husband distanced them from one another. The first step in eliminating that distance and restoring intimacy involved a change in her attitude toward him. One author writes: "Once Solomon's wife renewed within her mind a right attitude and a loving perspective toward her husband, she went in search of Solomon. She had a desire to find Solomon and to make things right" (Tommy Nelson, *The Book of Romance*, 127). But what about Solomon? Unless he was willing to forgive his bride, the rift between them would remain. The same writer describes Solomon's response to his bride once she found him. He writes:

"Much can happen in a very short period if one person will make a positive move toward breaking an icy silence or cooling off a heated discussion. In the conflict between Solomon and his bride, we might have written one of these two scenarios as the next phase:

1. The bride came very apologetically to her husband, he stood in silence until she apologized fully, and then he forgave her.
2. The bride came to him and before she could say anything, the husband lashed out at her for

what she had done wrong. In her repentant frame of mind, she took his scolding in silence and then asked for forgiveness, which he granted.

"The Song of Solomon, however, presents a very different approach. We have a wonderful example of how God desires for us to reconcile our differences and to deal with a spouse who has hurt us. [See 6:4-9] Rather than displaying silence in expectation of an apology or an angry response, Solomon greeted his bride with genuine compliments, telling her essentially, 'You are as lovely as I remember you on our wedding night, and I respect you fully as my wife. You are my delight [which is the literal meaning of the word Tirzah] and my soul's refuge of peace [which is the literal meaning of Jerusalem]. I feel the same excitement in your presence as I have always felt, just as much excitement as a kid watching a parade with banners and pageantry!'

"Solomon spoke to his wife in the same terms that he used on their wedding night, noting very specific aspects of her beauty—her eyes, her smile, her blush. She was so beautiful that he stated he could not concentrate on what he was saying. He asked her to turn away her eyes because they confused him. What reinforcement!

"In a nutshell, Solomon was conveying to his bride that in his eyes, she was the only woman in the world who mattered to him. She was one of a kind in his love. She had no equal.

"What was Solomon doing? He was forgiving his bride even before she had a chance to ask for forgiveness. He was granting her a full reconciliation and a full pardon for any offense she might have committed against him.

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"She was already feeling repentant, but Solomon didn't know that. He forgave her out of the generosity of his heart. He freely forgave, without demanding an apology or penance for her misdeeds. His bride no doubt fully accepted the generous outpouring of forgiveness and was grateful for it" (145-47).

In Song of Songs 5:10-16, the wife, empowered by love, conveys her changed attitude, from that of indifference to that of appreciation; in 6:4-9 the husband, empowered by love, conveys his forgiveness, even before his wife has the chance to ask.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Song of Songs 6:4-13

Lover

4 You are as beautiful my darling, as Tirzah
lovely as Jerusalem,
majestic as troops with banners.

5 Turn your eyes from me;
they overwhelm me.

Your hair is like a flock of goats
descending from Gilead.

6 Your teeth are like a flock of sheep
coming up from the washing.

Each has its twin,
not one of them is missing.

7 Your temples behind your veil
are like the halves of a pomegranate.

8 Sixty queens there may be,
and eighty concubines,
and virgins beyond number;

9 but my dove, my perfect one, is unique,
the only daughter of her mother,
the favorite of the one who bore her.

The maidens saw her and called her blessed;
the queens and concubines praised her.

Friends

10 Who is this that appears like the dawn,
fair as the moon, bright as the sun,
majestic as the stars in procession?

Lover

11 I went down to the grove of nut trees
to look at the new growth in the valley,
to see if the vines had budded
or the pomegranates were in bloom.

12 Before I realized it,
my desire set me among the royal chariots of my
people.

Friends

13 Come back, come back, O Shulammitte;
come back, come back, that we may gaze on you!

Lover

Why would you gaze on the Shulammitte
as on the dance of Mahanaim?

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

* Underline "like" and "as" indicating *comparison*.

* Circle "Tirzah" in v. 4.

* Circle "majestic" in v. 4.

* Circle "overwhelm" in v. 5.

* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 9.

* Bracket "queens," "concubines," and "virgins" in
v. 8.

* Bracket "majestic as the stars in procession" in
v. 10.

* Circle "I" in v. 11.

* Highlight v. 12.

* Circle "Shulammitte" in v. 13.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Express the point of the three *comparisons* in verse 4 in one word.
2. What does "your eyes . . . *overwhelm* me" mean?
3. What does the *simile* (see "like") in verse 5 say about the beloved's hair?
4. Explain how "teeth" can be *like* "sheep."
5. Put the point of the *simile* in verse 7 in your own words.
6. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 9.
7. The very same Hebrew phrase found in verse 10 is translated differently in verse 4. How so?
8. Assuming the words in verses 11-12 are the beloved's and *not* the lover's, did the beloved find what she was looking for in the garden? Explain.
9. Something thrilling apparently happened to her according to verse 12. What?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about how 6:4-13 resolves the issue raised in 5:2-6:3.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

Many commentators recognize the unity of Song of Songs 5:2-6:13. Put more specifically, 6:4-13 resolves the issue described in 5:2-6:3. Here's one possible outline that reflects the unity of this passage (see Jack S. Deere, "Song of Songs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1020-1022):

- A. Indifference and Its Resolution (5:2-6:13)
 1. The Problem of the Wife's Indifference and the Husband's Absence (5:2-8)
 2. The Attractiveness of the Lover (5:9-16)
 3. The Lover in his Garden (6:1-3)
 4. The Reconciliation: The Lover's Praise of His Beloved (6:4-13)

Solomon's praise of his wife (6:4-9)—in which he repeats some of the same flattering compliments he whispered to her on their wedding night (4:1-2)—despite her indifference toward him (5:2-8), indicates that he still loves her. His unconditional love of her coupled with her changed attitude toward him (5:2-8; cf., vv. 10-16) puts an end to their separation and marks their reconciliation. As one writer says: "Nothing brings about reconciliation quicker in a relationship than these two elements: (1) a repentant heart on the part of the person who has wronged another, and (2) a heart overflowing with unconditional love and forgiveness on the part of the person who has been wronged" (Nelson, 147).

The unity of 5:2-6:13 raises a question regarding the beloved's dream. In 5:2 she says: "I slept but my heart was awake." If her words indicate that she is dreaming—rather than simply near-sleep—when she hears her lover knocking, where does her dream end— in 5:8, 6:13, or somewhere in-between? Commentators disagree (cf., Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on The Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes*, vol. 6, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, by C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, 97, and Thomas Constable, "Notes on Song of Solomon," 2016 ed., 34, www.soniclight.com). The view that her dream ends in 5:8 seems to undermine the significance of her lover's forgiveness in 6:4-9, since her indifference toward him is only a dream. The view that her dream ends in 6:13 seems to undermine the import of the whole passage, since what it records is *only* a dream. Perhaps one commentator's thoughts on the relationship of dreams to reality will help. He writes: "It cannot be thought that such an interview [see 5:2-

3] actually took place; and yet *what she here dreamed had not only inward reality, but also full reality*. For in a dream, that which is natural to us or that which belongs to our very constitution becomes manifest, and much that is kept down during our waking hours by the power of the will, by a sense of propriety, and by the activities of life, comes to light during sleep; for fancy then stirs up the ground of our nature and brings it forth in dreams, and thus exposes us to ourselves in such a way as oftentimes, when we waken, to make us ashamed and alarmed. This it was with Shulamith" (Delitzsch, 93, italics added). In other words, the beloved's dream, regardless of its boundaries, mirrors her reality as well as her lover's, that is, her indifference overcome by his unconditional love.

According to the outline above, 6:4-13 describes the reconciliation of the couple. Solomon's first words to his beloved following their separation are words of praise. In his *blazon* or *wasf*, terms used by literary critics to refer to a lyric praising the physical attributes of another, he praises her unique beauty. He repeats compliments he whispered to her on their wedding night (4:1-2). He compares her beauty to that of the two most beautiful cities in Israel, Tirzah and Jerusalem. Moreover, he declares she is awesome like bannered troops. Together these images suggest that she is breathtakingly beautiful. Her eyes are captivating; her dark hair is stunning, comparable in beauty to that of flocks coming down from Gilead. One author writes: "Seen from a distance the dark hair of Palestinian goats was beautiful in the sunset as a flock was descending from the mountains. The beloved's dark hair had the same beautiful quality" (Deere, 1017). Her teeth are white and her smile is symmetrical. The blush of her cheeks can be seen through her veil. She is incomparable, unique, all women—whether queens, concubines, or virgins—pale in comparison to her. She is perfect, her mother's pride and joy, the envy of royals and peasants alike. Solomon's blazon begins and ends with the same words: "majestic as troops with banners" (vv. 4 and 10). The Hebrew phrase is translated differently in verse 10 given the reference to the moon and sun in the previous line, coupled with the fact that "as bannered armies" is used figuratively to refer to stars, which are often compared to heavenly armies.

The NIV ascribes verses 11-12 to Solomon, but they probably contain the beloved's words. "These verses tell the story of the couple's reconciliation from the beloved's point of view. She knew that he had 'gone down to his garden' (v. 2). So she went there to see if their love as still in bloom (v. 11). As a person would look in the spring for new growth, buds on grape vines, and pomegranate blossoms, so she looked form fresh evidence of their love" (1022). And she finds it. Because her husband's first words to her

in the garden are words of praise, "she felt elevated in her spirit, as though she were chief over all the 1,400 chariots in Solomon's great army (1 Kings 10:26). Evidently, in her fantasy, she rode out of the garden in a chariot accompanied by her Solomon. As she did, the people they passed called out to her to come back, so they might look on her beauty longer (v. 13a)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Song of Solomon," 2016 ed., 33, www.soniclight.com).

The Message of the Passage

Free-flowing forgiveness springing from unconditional love paves the way for reconciliation between spouses who are estranged.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the three "living questions" below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 4 **Tirzah** Solomon compares his wife's beauty to that of "an ancient Canaanite city in Samaria which served as the capital of the secessionist Northern Kingdom for some fifty years during the reigns of Jeroboam and his successors until Omri established Samaria as the capital about 879 B.C." (G. Lloyd Carr, *Song of Solomon*, TOTC, 160). The modern site of the ancient city "is one of great natural beauty with extensive gardens and groves encouraged by its abundant water supply (one of the best in Israel)" (160). He also compares it to that of another beautiful city, Jerusalem. "After all, Jerusalem is 'the perfection of beauty' (Ps. 50:2). It is 'magnificent in elevation-the whole earth rejoices to see it!' The sight of Jerusalem excites joy and evokes awe (Psalm 122)" (Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs*, NICOT, 179-80).

v. 4 **majestic** Cf., "awe-inspiring as bannered armies" (NET). The repetition of the same Hebrew phrase in verse 10 "awe-inspiring as the stars in procession" (NET), forms an inclusio that marks the boundaries of the husband's praise. The same phrase is translated differently in verse 10 given the parallelism, "beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun" (NET). "The term 'as bannered armies' is used figuratively (hypocatastasis) in reference to stars which are often compared to heavenly armies" (the NET Bible, 27^{tn} on 6:10). One commentator suggests the translation "splendid to look upon" given "the Hebrew text does not contain the word for 'army', but simply reads 'as bannered'. The context suggest that it is the cities which are thus bedecked, and the introduction of 'armies' here is superfluous" (Carr, 161); cf., "as awesome as bannered ones" (NASB marg.).

v. 5 **overwhelm** Cf., "captivate" (HCSB); "excite" (NCV); "overcome" (NKJV); "enchant" (GW).

v. 8 **queens . . . virgins** Solomon uses literary devices (v. 8) in connection with *contrast* (v. 9) to establish that his wife is unique among women. By "queens," "concubines," and "virgins" he means not just these three specific types of women but *all* women in *contrast* to his "perfect one" who is "unique." "The increasing numbers sixty, eighty, unnumbered and the decreasing order of rank, queens, concubines, maidens, serve as a dual foil to the uniqueness of the beloved" (Carr, 162).

v. 11 **I** While the NIV attributes verses 11-12 to the Lover (see heading), they more likely contain the words of the Shulammitte (cf., LXX). "It is somewhat difficult to ascribe this speech to either the man or the woman with certainty. It probably should be associated with the following verse, which is one of the most difficult verses in the Song, but which most likely belongs in the mouth of the woman. The NLT associates this verse with the woman; the NIV with the man" (Longman, 184). "Verses 11-12 are probably the Shulammitte's words. She had gone down to Solomon's garden (v. 2), more to see if his love for her was still in bloom, than to examine the natural foliage (v. 11)" (Constable, 33). "Now she expresses her surprise and excitement at the joyous reception her lover has accorded her. I went down is the girl's confession that she has followed her lover to the garden (cf. 6:2)" (Carr, 164-65).

v. 12 **my people** See NIV margin: "among the chariots of Amminadab; or "among the chariots of the people of the prince." The differences in translation in English versions are mind-boggling. "Commentators agree on the incredible difficulty of the text. The meaning of the words is ambiguous and the syntactical connections are dubious; they do not allow the interpreter to get a firm foothold in order even to guess about the meaning of the whole verse with much confidence at all" (Longman, 185ff.). "One of the most difficult verses in the Bible to interpret is verse 12 (see NIV marg.). The Hebrew can be translated in several different ways. One translation which has much to commend it is this: 'I became enraptured, for you placed me on the chariots of the people of the prince' When the husband's first words in the garden were words of praise, she 'became enraptured'; she was beside herself with joy. He then placed her on his own chariot at the head of his entourage" (Deere, 1022).

v. 13 **Shulammitte** "It is either a variant of 'Shunammite' (1Ki 1:3), i.e., a girl from Shunem (see Jos 19:18), or a feminine form of the word 'Solomon,' meaning 'Solomon's girl'" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on SS 6:13). "The Hebrew word rendered 'Shulammitte' is actually the feminine form of the name Solomon. Thus it means the 'Solomoness'" (1022). One commentator surmises "the name would thus mean that she was the feminine counterpart of Solomon, his opposite number" (S. Craig Glickman, *A Song for Lovers*, 76).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Parents, PantegoKids will not be aligning with the adult series, *The Marriage Project*. Instead, we will be studying different aspects of godly friendships in the Bible. In our five-week series, *Better Together*, kids will learn why we should have good friends, how to be a good friend, how to resolve conflict in friendships, and who our best friend is! There is no question that we live in a culture where we want our kids to not just be successful but the MOST successful. It seems making it to the little league playoffs is good, but not quite good enough. We want to be the World Series Little League Champs! We want kids who are the greatest in whatever they do. This is obviously not a new phenomenon. The disciples were consumed with being the greatest as well. In Mark 9 as they traveled along the road to Capernaum, they quietly debated who among them was the greatest. Jesus, who always knows our hearts, confronted them about it. He had a solution to the debate. "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." This is a life-changing concept for our kids to grasp. Do not strive to be first or the best but in humility serve others. A servant's heart is born out of a humble heart. Let's model and teach humility and servanthood this week to our kids!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Mark 9:33-37

1. What question did Jesus ask his disciples?
2. What were they arguing about?
3. What did Jesus say was the answer to their question?

What Do You Think

In verses 36 and 37, Jesus used a child to illustrate a point. It's important to know that children, in Jesus' time, were considered less important than adults. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus thought children were precious and valuable?

What R U Going To Do

Most of the disagreements we get into are usually because we are thinking of ourselves first instead of the other person. Next time you are in disagreement with someone, ask God to help you humble yourself and put the other first person first. Tell your small group what happened.

Core Comp

Humility - I choose to make others more important than me.

Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 13:6 - *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade _____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.