

Song of Solomon 6:11-7:8

Song of Solomon 6:11,12 One day I was strolling through the orchard looking for signs of spring, looking for buds to burst into flower, anticipating readiness, ripeness. Before I knew it my heart was raptured, carried away by lofty thoughts! (The Message)

Throughout the Song the Shulammitte woman has been seen in a number of contexts. She was the dark skinned shepherd girl whose beauty was not like that of the city girls who appeared to have a social advantage over her. But it was she who captivated the most eligible of young men and who is seen arriving for the wedding in Solomon's chariot, an entry fit for the best known of celebrities. But she remains most comfortable in a rural or natural setting, the city is for her, sometimes a nightmare. Throughout the Song, her relationship with her young man continues to grow, to deepen, to become more intimate and so does own personal joy and fulfillment. In today's passage, she enters the stage with a presence and confidence that suggests that she is where she wants to be and doing what she wants to do. What follows is the community celebrating her achievements and her

young man appreciating her beauty from toe to head. She is not a dumb blond or a vacant beauty. She is a complete and fulfilled woman and all the more desirable for it.

This challenges the assumptions of our own culture where in the popular hip hop music embraced by our youth the status of women has been degraded to that of the baby-mama. On college campuses and in politically correct venues, the most broken among us are celebrated as heroes when they come out and embrace their hopelessness, turning their nightmarish wounds into their destiny.

The joyful fulfillment experienced in the Song is still possible. But to obtain it we cannot be controlled by the insanity of our culture, we will need to choose another way.

Some steps toward the life of the Song:

- 1) Believe in the good will and purposes of your Creator. He has made you uniquely for His calling in your life. Make the most of all of your gifts. Do not be afraid to excel. Lift those around you and encourage them to do the same.
- 2) Allow God to teach you from the circumstances of your life. Know that

negative examples can be even more powerful than the positive. Humbly accept what you cannot change until the day comes when it can be, then do it.

3) Embrace opportunities for the growth they offer rather than for the status they might give. Status will keep you where you are but growth will set you free to experience even more.

4) Learn to adjust your view of yourself so that you will not be held back by what you believe you cannot do or caused to stumble when overestimating your competencies. Take it a step at a time. If you can take the next step then do so. Don't let your anxieties slow you down.

5) Be willing to take risks. A breakthrough is the experience of finding life to be better once a threshold has been crossed. You cannot know what you are missing unless you cross over. Your fears will hold you back but trusting in God and having confidence in His plan will propel you forward.

6) Pursue your dreams. Trust that the good that is in your heart is from the Lord. He is your maker and His love for you is certain and strong. He empowers the obedient and the bold who embrace His will